

“Recruit, Reinstate and Retain”

Message from the Department Commander – Barbara "Barb" Loncar

I am deeply honored to lead our VFW Department during the 2024 – 2025 year. Pennsylvania has some of the best VFW leaders in the Nation and we thank you for your dedication and energy to moving our Membership Program to even greater heights.

Over the past years, we have learned that if we pay more attention to recruiting new members; what about memberships that are about to expire, we can easily retain them. Likewise, if their membership has expired, we can reinstate them and retain them. The trick is to be constantly aware of your Post's annual members expiration status. To help with this, make sure that your post has a monthly membership roster, and work that unpaid list monthly.

Contact the members on your rosters before their memberships lapse. We do a great job in recruiting new members to join our organization, and we need to do a better job of retaining those new members and getting them involved. It is very important that we contact those members; give them a "buddy check" call, text or email.

Also, we need the right mix of ingredients to increase our membership numbers. First, we start with a plan to increase our membership, then we add knowledgeable recruiters to do the job. Secondly, we create recruiting opportunities while adding recruiting incentives. We need to encourage members at large to join/transfer into a local Post. **A member at large listing is available for you if requested from Department Headquarters.**

Membership is **NOT** just the responsibility of the officers of your post, district and/or department. It should be **every** member's highest priority. I am asking that everyone recruits at least one new member this year.

This Year's Membership Program is **101%** and the Mandatory All-State worksheet is required to be submitted to Department Headquarters no later than **APRIL 30, 2025**. **National Membership of 102% is our ultimate goal and every Post should try to obtain this goal!**

Our Department Membership team is composed of professionally trained recruiters to help you in your post's recruiting and retention efforts. If you need assistance, reach out to one of them.

Please remember to practice the three key R's.....**RECRUIT, REINSTATE, RETAIN!**

Sincerely,

Barbara "Barb" Loncar

Department of Pennsylvania Commander

Message from the Department of Pennsylvania Membership Team

“Please engage and encourage your members, motivate, mentor and educate your new and younger members, and always strive to increase your membership and expand your involvement in your community.”

"Membership", that ten letter word that causes most people to cringe during a Post or District meeting. Yet, it is the lifeblood of our organization. Here in PA, we have had a trend of a declining membership for far too long. If each of us attempted to renew, reinstate or recruit just one member, we could more than double the size of our organization in one year. Obtaining new members and reinstating previous members shouldn't be the only objective. We need to encourage participation in meetings and events. There is nearly a 30-year gap between the Vietnam War and the start of the Global War on Terrorism. The Desert Storm/ Kosovo/ Bosnia and Somalia generation isn't large enough to carry our organization at every level. We should all work to train and mentor the younger veterans and encourage them as they seek responsibilities and opportunities in our post and districts.

Teamwork, mentorship, and a purpose will give our members a reason to want to participate. It is up to us to become the change that we wish to see. We all must make the effort to recruit and reinstate members, mentor them and make them feel at home in our Posts, Districts and Department. Please contact our Membership Team for assistance.

We wish you all a successful membership and program year!

2024-2025 Membership Programs Special -Notes and Exceptions

- Membership Divisions for all posts will be the same as National Divisions.
 - The membership quota for all Department contests is 101% unless otherwise noted.
1. Continuous, new, reinstated and Life Members will be verified by National Headquarters for all Department Contests.
 2. All Department Membership contests end **April 30, 2025** unless otherwise stated; National contest ends June 30 2025 and requires **102%** in membership.
 3. Individuals, Posts and Districts can only win one time in each contest or category unless otherwise stated. The Department will make the final determination of all Department awards.
 4. All contest checks will become the property of the Post or District unless otherwise stated. All checks will be made out to the Post or District Quartermaster unless otherwise stated.
 5. All requirements for All state Awards must be met by **April 30, 2025.**
 6. All membership transmittals for All State Status to receive a cap at Convention must be recorded at Department Headquarters **NO LATER THAN April 30, 2025.**
 7. All membership transmittals for All American Status must reach National Headquarters. Submissions must be received NO LATER THAN June 30, 2025.
 8. Please note that the requirement for **National membership is 102% and FOUR Community Service Reports (CSR's).**
 9. Posts who are in arrears and receive a monetary award, the arrears will be deducted from the award.
 10. To encourage thorough reading of this important membership program, Commander Loncar has inserted a special graphics into the booklet. You can Claim a special prize by locating these symbols and sending a note to the State Adjutant Quartermaster via U.S. Mail, Fax (717-234-1955) or E-mail quatermaster@vfwhahq.org noting the page and location of the symbol listed below:

Individual Membership Rewards Contest

Contest # 1 - "All Got One - Veterans Day". Every Member that recruits one new or re-instated VFW Member, verified by the National Membership Program, between **July 1, 2024, and November 11, 2024**, will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$250 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Contest # 2 - "All Got One - State Convention". Every Member that recruits five new or recovered VFW Members, verified by the National Membership Program, between **1 February 2025, and 30 April 2025**, will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$250.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Contest # 3 - Helping Hands - "Military Order of the Cootie"

Every VFW Member that recruits over 5 new or recovered VFW Military Order of the Cootie Member (**between 01 August 2024 through 30 April 2025**) verified by the Grand Quartermaster will be entered into a drawing for a Life Membership. If a member already is a life member then an upgrade to the next level will be awarded. If already a Gold Legacy Member then a \$300 gift certificate to the VFW store will be presented.

Contest # 4 - Helping Hands - "VFW Auxiliary"

Every VFW Member that recruits over 5 new or recovered VFW Auxiliary Members (**between 01 August 2024 through 30 April 2025**) verified by the VFW National Auxiliary will be entered into a drawing for a Life Membership. If a member already is a life member then an upgrade to the next level will be awarded. If already a Gold Legacy Member then a \$300 gift certificate to the VFW store will be presented.

Contest # 5 - Helping Hands - "Auxiliary VFW Recruiter"

The top three (3) Auxiliary Members who recruit the highest number of new and/or reinstated VFW Members by **April 30 2025**, will receive \$100 and a special gift from State Commander Loncar.

- Must have at least 5 Members to qualify.
- Auxiliary members must submit a Membership Program Award Certificate form.

Contest # 6 - Life Membership, PTI Attendance. Award Members that attend Pennsylvania Training Institute sessions will be eligible for a drawing of four (4) life memberships or if already a Life Member, an upgrade to the next tier of Legacy Life membership. If the member is already a Legacy Life Gold member, they will receive a \$ 400.00 Certificate to the VFW Store. Drawing for these memberships will take place at the conclusion of the PTI sessions (validated by Department of PA VFW).

Contest # 7 - Continuous to Life Membership. Monthly Award A special monthly drawing for two (2) life memberships to be awarded each month and will take place from August 2024 through 31 May 2025. Life Membership to Legacy Life Membership Upgrade.

Contest # 8 - Life Membership to Legacy Life. Monthly Award Life Members will be entered into a Legacy Life drawing for two (2) Legacy Life Memberships each month. Bronze and Silver Legacy members are eligible for this contest. If the member is already a Legacy Life Gold, then the winner will receive \$ 250.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate. The contest runs from 1 August 2024 through 31 May 2025.

Post Membership Awards

2024-2025 Membership Achievement Awards. Post Level Contests (**Divisions 1-6**) All Posts that properly report **101%** in membership, including 15 new/reinstated members, will receive a life membership and a \$200.00 VFW Store gift certificate. See dates listed below:

Contest # 9 - December 31, 2024

Contest #10 - February 29, 2025

Contest #11 - April 30, 2025

Grass Roots Posts Contests (Post Divisions 7-11)

Grass Roots Posts that properly report **101%** in membership, including 10 new/reinstated members, will receive a life membership and a \$200.00 VFW Store gift certificate.

See dates listed below:

<u>Contest # 12</u>	December 31, 2024
<u>Contest # 13</u>	February 29, 2025
<u>Contest # 14</u>	April 30, 2025

Contest # 15 - Lead the Pennsylvania Team The post in each division with the highest new, continuous and reinstated by **August 31, 2024** will receive a Life Membership or Legacy Life membership.

Contest # 16- Let's keep pushing on, Any Post who obtains **97 % by 31 September 2024** will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, or an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded.

Contest # 17- Early Bird Special All Posts with 101% membership reported by **December 31, 2024**, will receive a bonus of \$.75 cents per member. Post will receive a bonus of \$ 1.00 per member for each member properly reported over 100% as of **December 31, 2024**.

Contest # 18 - ``March Membership Madness'' To be announced!

Contest # 19 - ``We did our best'' Contest

Every Post who obtains at least **101%** membership, plus reports all mandatory criteria on Page 10 by **April 30, 2025**, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Memberships.

Every Post who obtains at least **101%** membership, plus reports all mandatory criteria on Page 10 by **June 30, 2025**, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Memberships.

* Note: The Post that obtains 101% by April 30, 2025 would be included in the June 30, 2025, but would only be eligible to win one (1) drawing, not both. The worksheet on Page 10 must be completed and sent to Department Headquarters postmarked by June 30, 2025 **for only those Post who need the extra time to make 101%.**

Contest # 20

The Post Commander and Post Quartermaster from each All-State Membership Division with the most new/reinstated members **over the membership goal** by February 29, 2025, will receive a special award from the State Commander.

All-State Post Commanders and Quartermasters Contest

Contest # 21

All-State Post Commanders and Quartermasters will receive a distinctive VFW Cap, All-State Commander's Pin and special recognition at the State Convention. An outstanding Post Commander and Post Quartermaster will be selected Captain of the All-State Team based on the scoring of the All-State worksheet & membership over the goal by **April 30, 2025** and will receive a special gift from State Commander "Loncar" at the State Convention.

ALL-STATE POST DIVISIONS & QUOTA

<u>Division</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Minimum %</u>
<u>Division 1</u>	<u>951+</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 2</u>	<u>750-950</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 3</u>	<u>356-749</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 4</u>	<u>246-355</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 5</u>	<u>185-245</u>	<u>101</u>

Division 6	143-184	101
Division 7	112-142	101
Division 8	88-111	101
Division 9	68-87	101
Division 10	51-67	101
Division 11	1-50	101

All State Post/District Commanders and Quartermasters Worksheet

To be considered for All State Status this worksheet must be submitted to
Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue. Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
Postmarked no later than April 30, 2025 to receive Cap at Convention

ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS MANDATORY

Name _____ Post # _____ District# _____

Commander's Hat Size: _____ **Mandatory Criteria** **Quartermaster Hat Size:** _____

- Membership Properly Reported as attaining percentage goal of **101%**. All Post and Home Association By-Laws (if Applicable) **must** be Current (**within 5 years**) Date: _____/_____/_____
- Post/District **must** have Articles of Incorporation on file with Department Headquarters. Date: _____/_____/_____.
- Purchase Buddy Poppies (minimum 100 Poppies). Date: _____ Check # _____
- Voice of Democracy Entry. Yes [] No [] (Donation of \$250.00 may be made in lieu of entry) (Check Must be sent to Department Headquarters earmarked **Voice of Democracy no later than December 31, 2024**).
- Patriot's Pen Entry. Yes [] No [] (Donation of \$250.00 may be made in lieu of entry) (Must be sent to Department Headquarters **earmarked Patriot's Pen no later than December 31, 2024**).
- Veterans and Military Support Fund Raiser or donation to VMS Fund (**Dept. Division 1-6 \$100 –Dept. Division 7-11 \$50**) (Must be entered on National's Website Dashboard).
- Must have entries in the State Coloring Contest for Children by the Deadline set.
- Donation to Commander's Special Project (**\$100.00 Prior April 30, 2025**). Must be sent to Department Headquarters **Earmarked Commander's Special Project (VFW Department Headquarters)**. Date: _____ Check # _____.
- VAVS Donation (**\$100.00 No Later than April 30, 2025**) Must be sent to Department Headquarters Earmarked VAVS. Date: _____ Check # _____.
- All Posts must submit a total of four community service reports for 2024-2025: Two separate reports covering the dates 1 July to 31 Dec 2024; Two separate reports covering the dates 1 Jan to 30 April 2025. Post's may submit monthly reports if they choose. The preferred method would be monthly reports. All monthly/quarterly reports must be on file with the department chairman and **NOT WITH THE DEPARTMENT, and also submitted on the Dashboard.**

- Donation to **Arthritis and Diabetes** (All Post \$50.00 for each program \$100 total). Date: _____
Check #: _____.
- Post/District must have submission of one EMT or 911 Dispatcher or Firefighter or Police Officer Candidate for Dept. Safety Award (**Entries must be received in Dept. Headquarters by 15 December 2024**).
- All Post Quarterly Trustee Reports Including June 2024 must be on file at Department Headquarters. Dates Trustee Reports sent to Dept. June: _____ September _____ December _____
March _____.
- Post/District must have QM Bonded and on file at Department HQ. Date: _____ Check # _____.
- Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice Commander and/or Jr. Vice Commander and/or Quartermaster ***must attend all*** District Meetings (**Post/District CMDR must attend at least 50% of ALL District / Dept Meetings**).
- Post must have a **registered** Service Officer (**Current Fee Paid**).
- Post/District must not be in arrears for the current or prior year (e.g., dues, audits, Reports, etc.)
- Post/District Inspection is recorded for 2024-2025 by 31 January 2025.
Date Inspected _____ By _____.
- Post/District Officers attend (the minimum of 1 elected officer from each Post and 1 elected officer from each District must attend) the **Pennsylvania Training Instruction (PTI)**.
- All-State requirements must be completed **July 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025**, to receive a cap at Convention.

**To be considered for All State Status the worksheet must be submitted to
 Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue. Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
 Postmarked no later than April 30, 2025
 "ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS MANDATORY"**

The score will be calculated at Department Headquarters. The points will be used to determine the All-State Captains. **Records must be on file at Department Headquarters to Qualify.**

POINTS CRITERIA: _____ POINTS: _____

- Purchase 1 Buddy Poppies per member 10 _____
- Membership 101 % goal by Dec. 31, 2024 20 _____
- Or Membership 101% goal by Feb. 28, 2025 15 _____
- Or Membership 101% goal by Apr. 30, 2025 10 _____
- New or Reinstated Member by Dec. 31, 2024 Maximum 75 pts 5 ea. _____
- Youth Activities Participation (e.g., Scouts, JROTC, etc.) 10 _____
- Participate in the "Smart Mather Teacher" Entry Award. 10 _____
- Donation to Barger Nursing Scholarship. 10 _____
- Post/District Officers attend (the minimum of 1 person from each Post and each District 1 elected officers must attend) the **Pennsylvania Training Instruction (PTI)**. 10 _____
- Post/District Inspection submitted to Department by **31 January 2025** (must be on file) 10 _____
- Donations to the Homeless Veterans Program. 10 _____
- Voice of Democracy Student (Donations do not qualify) 50 _____
- Patriot's Pen Student (Donations do not qualify) 50 _____

- Donations to State Commander's Special Project. 20 _____
- Law Enforcement Candidate, FireFighter Candidate, 911 Dispatcher Candidate, Emergency Medical Services/Dispatcher Candidate (any 1 of them). 30 _____
- Entry into the State Coloring Contest for Children 30 _____

(*Dept. Headquarters Validates all requirements!)

Contest #30 “All American Department”

If we become an All-American Department, all District Commanders, State Membership Team, and Certified National Recruiters will receive an incredibly special reward from State Commander Loncar – (To Be Announced)

Contest # 31 - “District Membership Chairman” Contest

All District Membership Chairman who attain their membership goal of **102%** by April 30, 2025 will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$300 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Note: In order to Qualify for this award all, the following must be Completed and Submitted to Department: District Inspections, Post Inspections and Post and District Quarterly Audits (including June 2024, District and Post By-Laws (must be updated within the 5 years) and all posts/district Quartermaster Bonds.

Membership Plaques and Awards

Contest # 32 The Joe Salvo Award for Individual Post Members

A **\$1000,00 cash award** will be presented to the ***individual member*** who signs up the most new and reinstated members (over 25 members) between July 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025. This award will be presented at the 2025 Department Convention. The National Recruiter Report will be used to verify the member. Membership Teams are not eligible for this award. Certified National Recruiters do not qualify for this contest.

Contest # 33 Certified National Recruiter

Certified National recruiters with the most recruited members according to the membership report will receive a special gift from Commander Loncar and a \$ 200.00 gift certificate for the VFW Store.

Contest # 34 “Robert Musser Memorial Plaque”

This plaque will be awarded to the Post having attained the greatest number increase as of April 30, 2025.

Contest # 35 “Van Zandt Award”

To be eligible, a Post must recruit at least 20 *new/reinstated members* prior to April 30, 2025. The Post recruiting the *most new/reinstated members* as a number of existing memberships receives a plaque.

Contest # 36 “Chosnyk Plaque”

This plaque is awarded to the District having the greatest number increase as of 30 April 2025.

Special Note

Districts and Posts must meet their membership goal, inspections, and report participation in Community Service, Patriot’s Pen Essay, Voice of Democracy, Safety, Youth Activities, Buddy Poppy, Citizenship Education in the current Commander’s Membership Year to qualify for plaques and awards. The plaques and the Van Zandt Award will be presented at the first general session of the Convention.

Tools to Boost Membership

Recruiting Tips

- 1. Know the VFW – As a recruiter, being aware of our programs and purpose will prepare you to successfully engage prospective members.**
- 2. Network for Prospects – Ask family, friends and coworkers if they know veterans who may be eligible. Follow up on leads quickly.**
- 3. Make Personal Contact – Try to meet prospective members face-to-face whenever possible.**
- 4. Don't Be Afraid to Ask – Many veterans have never been asked to join the VFW. If you speak up and ask them to join, you may be pleasantly surprised at their response.**
- 5. Be Persistent, Not Pestering – If they decline to join at this time, respect their decision.**
- 6. Look for Common Experiences – Ask questions to learn about military experiences, family, and daily life. Describe the benefits of membership in a way that relates to the prospective member.**
- 7. Listen Carefully – The best salespeople are active listeners. Listen for excuses and objections, and then be prepared to overcome them with facts.**
- 8. Share Your Story – Consider why you are a part of the VFW and tell others why you are so committed to the organization. Your experiences with the VFW are the greatest recruiting tool available.**
- 9. Be Prepared – You may meet potential members anywhere so be sure to keep an application with you at all times. If you use a smartphone, learn about the VFW app and how it can be used to recruit new members. Stay current as VFW National Membership provides updates and assistance on new processes.**
- 10. Enjoy Yourself – If you are enjoying yourself, prospective members will sense your enthusiasm and be more likely to join.**

Successful Membership Booths

The following is a general outline for setting up a successful membership recruiting booth.

Start Early:

- **This will work best as a joint VFW and Auxiliary operation. Cooperation is key.**
- **Contact the manager of a shopping mall, trade show, state or county fair, or any place there is a large public gathering. Ask for permission (or pay) for space to set up a membership booth.**
- **Give advance news releases to your local newspaper and radio stations regarding your membership booth. Place recruiting posters and signs in store windows, post signs at the entrance to your city and along major thoroughfares or any place the public will notice them.**
- **Obtain an adequate supply of recruiting and informational materials. Some material is available from the Department and National Headquarters. Other material can be obtained from the VFW Store.**

The Operation:

- **Decorate your booth with recruiting posters. Display informational material on the table. At least one VFW member and one Auxiliary member, wearing VFW caps or ball caps with Post or VFW logo, should be in the booth at all times. Display a sign large enough to let everyone know you are there.**
- **If local and state laws allow a drawing, get a member or merchant to donate a gift. Prepare tickets with stubs that request name, address and phone number. Hold the drawing for the prize and save the stubs for later contact.**
- **As eligible veterans visit the booth, inform them of the VFW programs and pass out informational material.**
- **As eligible veterans visit the booth, have them fill out a form giving information on their military service and whether they are interested in**

joining the VFW. If they wish to join, **SIGN THEM UP**. If they don't wish to join at this time, don't be discouraged. Make sure you get their name, address and phone number and contact them at a later date.

The Follow Up:

- **Within a few days, have your membership team contact the eligible veterans and talk to them about joining the VFW. This is the time to verify their eligibility and collect their dues.**
- **Be sure your membership team is prepared to answer questions about the various programs the VFW sponsors.**
- **When a veteran joins, make them feel welcome. Ask them to take an active part in the Post and to help recruit others.**

It is not the responsibility of the Post membership team to do all of the work. Every member should be involved and made to feel a part of the membership program. Post activities attract members. A strong, active Post helps promote membership. Some membership builders are:

- **Activities in community service, Americanism and youth programs.**
- **Capable service officer to assist veterans in the community.**
- **Dances, dinners and other social functions for VFW members and their guests.**
- **Publicize all Post events.**
- **Maintain a clean, well-managed Post home and canteen.**
- **Hold interesting and informative Post meetings.**
- **Have active cooperation between your Post and Auxiliary.**