

Membership Program

2025-2026



**William Roland
Commander**

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Department Headquarters
4002 Fenton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
phone: (717) 234-7927 Fax: (717) 234-1955
www.vfwpa.org

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Table of Contents

Message from the Department Commander Bill Roland.....	1
Message from our Department Membership Team.....	2
2025-2026 Membership Programs.....	3
Individual Membership Awards.....	4
Post Level Contest Post Divisions (1-6) (7-11).....	5
All-State Commanders and Quartermaster Contest.....	5
All-State District/Post Commanders & Quartermaster Criteria	6
All-State District/Post Commanders & Quartermaster Worksheet.....	7
District Awards.....	8
Membership Plaques and Awards.....	9
Post Divisions and District Map.....	10
Membership Team.....	11
Planning Calendar.....	12-13
Tools to Recruit Members.....	14-16
A Piece of History.....	17

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

When I first became a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I had no idea where it would take me. As I traveled the chairs at the post, district, and Department level I met so many great Veterans that inspired me to do more than I thought I was capable of doing.

Over the past few years, I learned that recruiting new members can be an adventure. But I also learned that Veterans are capable of doing things non-Veterans do not even attempt.

A few concerns I heard from Veterans have about not joining our great organization.

1. Meetings are too long. (Remember, young Veterans have family and work many shifts).
2. Too much drama at meetings! Talk about Veteran, family, and community)
3. Smoking
4. Do not feel welcome when they enter a post.

We will put emphasis on new members as well as reinstated members.

This year's membership goal is 101%. There is no doubt in my mind that it is a reachable goal.

Reach out with any questions or ideas.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Roland
Commander
Dept. of PA

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Message from 2025-26 Department Membership Team

“No one does more for Veterans” is the motto of the VFW, and if everyone lives by this motto, membership will grow as services expand. Yes, membership is the fuel that drives our organization and gives us the strength to push for more legislation, like the PACT Act, but we need to stand strong and fulfill the purpose of why our organization was created. Sometimes, we get lost in the pursuit of acquiring members and lose sight of what our main goal should be. We are an organization in place to help our fellow combat veterans and serve their needs. If we start every conversation asking the veterans we meet how we can help them, membership will automatically fall into place. If we are to expand, we need to adjust to the needs of younger veterans. We need to reach out and provide the new generation of vets with the feeling of purpose and camaraderie that many feel they are missing from their time in the service. Welcome every veteran you meet with a handshake and ask them what we can do for them. We need to let all veterans know that the VFW is here for them, and not that we expect them to serve the VFW. Younger vets are looking for community and want to be a part of something they see as a support network for them. Once their needs are met, they may feel it is their purpose to recruit and help others. Retention of the veterans who are members of our posts is as simple as showing them we care about their needs. Every member should be contacted at least once a year, and the first thing we should ask is, “What can your post do for YOU?” Remember, paying it forward will pay big dividends in the end. Be there for veterans, and they will follow.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

2025-2026

Special Notices and Exceptions

- Membership Divisions for Posts will correspond with National Divisions
- 101% will be District and Post goals
- Membership numbers will be verified by National Headquarters
- Department membership contests end April 30, 2026
- Individuals, Posts, and Districts are limited to one win in each contest category, unless otherwise stated. All checks will be made out to Post or District Quartermasters.
- All requirements must be met by April 30, 2026
- All membership transmittals for All State Status to receive a cap at Department Convention must be recorded at Department Headquarters no later than April 30, 2026.
- All membership transmittal for All American Status must be recorded at National Headquarters no later than June 30, 2026.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Individual Membership Award

Contest #1 – Lead the Pennsylvania Team

The Post in each division with the highest new, continuous, and reinstated members by August 28, 2025 will receive a Life Membership.

Contest #2 – Upgrade Contest

Any Post who reaches 95% by September 30, 2025 will be entered into a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is a Life Member, it will upgrade to a Legacy Membership.

Contest- 3 Early Bird

All Posts who reach a 101% membership by December 31, 2025 will receive \$1.00 per member.

Contest #4 – Veterans Day Contest

Every member that recruits two new or reinstated members between July 1, 2025 and November 11, 2025 will be entered for a Life Membership or a legacy Life Membership upgrade. If the member is already a Gold Life Member, they will receive a \$300.00 gift certificate from the VFW store or give a Life Membership to a Veteran of their choice.

Contest #6 OTI Attendance Award

All members that attend an OTI training session will be eligible for a drawing to provide one of four life memberships they can award to members of their Post to include themselves.

Contest #7 – Five Recruits

Every member that recruits five new members or reinstates a VFW member, verified by the National Membership Program, between February 1, 2026 and April 30 2026 will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, They will be upgraded to Legacy Life Membership. If member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member. They will have a choice between a \$200.00 VFW store gift certificate or \$200.00 cash.

Contest #8 – Continuous to Life Membership

A special monthly drawing for a life membership to be awarded each month from August 2025 through May 2026 for a continuous member to Life Membership.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

2025–2026 Membership Achievement Awards

Post Level Contest (Post Divisions 1–6)

All Posts that properly report 101% in membership including 15 reinstated members, will receive award as listed below.

<i>Contest # 9</i>	December 31, 2025	2 Life Memberships
<i>Contest # 10</i>	February 28, 2026	1 Life Membership
<i>Contest #11</i>	April 30, 2026	\$250 VFW Store Gift Certificate

Post Level Contest (Post Divisions 7–11)

All Posts that properly report 101% in membership including 10 reinstated members, will receive award as listed below.

<i>Contest # 12</i>	December 31, 2025	2 Life Memberships	
<i>Contest # 13</i>	February 28, 2026	1 Life Membership	
<i>Contest #14</i>	April 30, 2026	\$250 VFW Store Gift Certificate	

Contest #15

Every Post who obtains 101% in membership, plus meets all mandatory criteria on page 10 by April 30, 2026, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Membership.

Every Post who obtains 101% in membership, plus meets all mandatory criteria on page 10 by June 30, 2026, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Membership.

All State Commander and Quartermaster Contest

Contest #16

All-State Commanders and Quartermasters will receive the distinctive VFW Cap, 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, 2026** and will receive a special gift from State Commander Roland at the State Convention.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

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, 2026 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/Home Association **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 [] Must have minimum of one (1) entry to District Judging
- Patriot's Pen Entry. Yes [] No [] Must have minimum of one (1) entry to District Judging
- Donation to Commander's Special Project (at least \$100.00) Must be sent to Department Headquarters **Earmarked Special Project (Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey)**. Date: _____ Check # _____
- All Posts must submit a total of four Community Service reports for 2025-2026: One report each Quarter starting July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 . Filing monthly is an option and preferred.
- Donation to Arthritis (\$50.00) Date: _____ Check #: _____
- Donation to Diabetes (\$50.00) Date: _____ Check #: _____
- Donation to Barger Nursing Scholarship (\$50.00) Date: _____ Check: _____
- Donation for National Home (\$50.00) 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 December 15, 2025**)
- All Post Quarterly Trustee Reports Including June 2025 must be on file.
Dates Trustee Reports sent to Dept. June: _____ September _____ December _____ March _____
- Post must have QM Bonded and on record at Department HQ. **by November 30, 2025** 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 attend 50% of ALL District Meetings)**.
- Post/District must not be in arrears for the current or prior year (e.g., dues, audits, Reports, etc.)
- Post Inspection is recorded for 2025-2026 by January 31, 2026. Date Inspected _____ By _____
- All-State requirements must be completed July 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026, to receive cap at Convention.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

*To be considered for All State Status, this worksheet must be submitted to the Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
Postmarked no later than April 30 2026
ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS REQUIRED*

Point Criteria	Points	Points
Purchase Three (3) Buddy Poppies per member	10	
Membership % December 31, 2025	20	
Or Membership % by February 28, 2026	15	
Or Membership % by April 30, 2026	10	
New or Reinstated Members by December 31,2025 Max 75 pts.	5 ea.	
Donation Commander’s Project	20	
Donation to Barger Scholarship	10	
Voice of Democracy Student (Donations do not qualify)	50	
Patriots Pen Student (Donations do not qualify)	50	
Donation to National Home	10	
Law Enforcement, Fire Fighter, 911 Dispatcher, EMT/Dispatcher (Any one (1) of them)	30	
Post/District Inspections submitted to Department by January 31, 2026.	10	
VFW Member of the Year Nomination	30	
Participate in Smart Maher Teacher Entry	10	
Donation to Homeless Veterans	10	
Department Headquarters will validate		

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

District Awards

2025–2026 District Membership Awards

All Districts that properly report their membership goal of 101% will receive an award for the district. Dates and awards are listed below.

<i>Contest # 17</i>	December 31, 2025	3 Life Memberships
<i>Contest # 18</i>	March, 2026	2 Life Memberships
<i>Contest # 19</i>	May 31, 2026	1 Life Membership

2025–2026 District Commander Award

Contest #20

All District Commanders who have attained their membership goal of 101% by April 30, 2026 will receive:

- All-State Commanders Cap at Department Convention
- Jacket (Style to be determined by State Commander)

Contest #21

All District Commanders who have attained their membership goal of 101% by May 1, 2026 and June 30th will receive:

- Outstanding District Commanders Cap
- Jacket (Style to be determined by State Commander)

Contest #22

All District Membership Chairpersons who attain their membership goal of 101% by April 30, 2026 will be entered into a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is a Life Member they will be upgrade to Legacy Life Membership. If they are a Gold Life Member, they can choice either a \$300 VFW store gift certificate or award a Life Membership to a member of their choosing. Drawing to be held the next business day following April 30, 2026

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Membership Plaques and Awards

Contest #23: Joe Salvo Award for Individual Post Members

The individual member that recruits the most new and reinstated members (Over 25 members) between July 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026 will receive \$250.00. Membership team members and Certified National Recruiters will not be eligible. National Recruiter Report will be used to verify.

Contest #24: Certified National Recruiters

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

Contest #25: Robert Musser Memorial Plaque

This plaque will be awarded to the post having attained the greatest number increase by April 30, 2026

Contest #26: Van Zandt Award

To be eligible, a post must recruit at least 20 new and reinstated members prior to April 30, 2026. The post recruiting the most new and reinstated members as a number of existing memberships receives a plaque.

Contest #27: Chosnyk Award

A Life Membership or upgrade is awarded to the District having the greatest number increase as of April 30, 2026.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

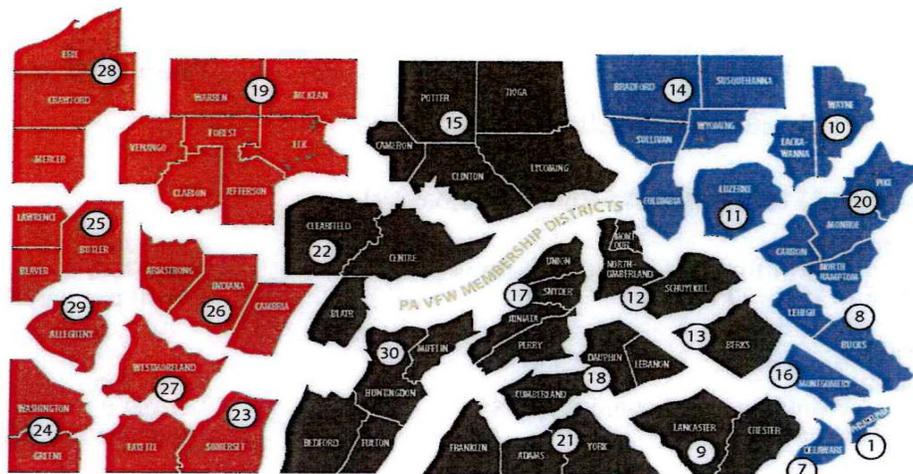
ALL-STATE POST DIVISIONS & QUOTA

Division	Membership	Minimum %
<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>
<u>Division 6</u>	<u>143-184</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 7</u>	<u>112-142</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 8</u>	<u>88-111</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 9</u>	<u>68-87</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 10</u>	<u>51-67</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Division 11</u>	<u>1-50</u>	<u>101</u>

WEST:
19, 23, 24, 25,
26, 27, 28, 29

CENTRAL:
9, 12, 13, 15,
17, 18, 21, 22, 30

EAST:
1, 7, 8, 10,
11, 14, 16, 20



Teach – Coach - Mentorship

2025-2026 Department Membership Team

Department Membership Chairman

Thomas A. Sally
2638 Geryville Pike,
Pennsburg PA 18073
Cell Phone (484 794-3194)
Post 5954 District 16
Email: tsally1964@gmail.com

Membership Team

Henry Mannella
456 Dennison Drive, West Mifflin, PA 15122
Cell Phone (412 500-3501)
Post 7632 District 29
Email: h.mannella72@yahoo.com

John Walker
16 Lukens Mill Drive S Coatesville, PA 19064
Cell Phone: (610-220-5053)
Post 928 District 7
Email: fstsgtwalker@comcast.net

Craig Fisher
51 North Wolf Street, Manheim, PA 17545
Cell (717) 405-0980)
District 9
Email: cofish17@windstream.net

Joseph Magnotta
657 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433
Cell Phone: (570) 991-7010)
Post 4712 District 16
Email: jmatcret@gmail.com

Walt Hartnett
349 Spring Mill Avenue Conshohocken, PA 19428
Cell Phone: (484) 362-3957)
Post 1074 District 16
Email: walt.hartnett4@gmail.com

VFW Certified National Recruiters (CNR)

Henry Mannella

Phone: 412-500-3501

Email: h.mannella72@yahoo.com

Earl Stump

Phone: 760-443-6811

Email: gstump.90@gmail.com

Dave W. Gyger

Phone: 717-991-1473

Email: dje57@verizon.net

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

2025-2026 Planning Calendar

2025

June 19	Juneteenth (Department HQ Closed)
June 28	VFW National Home 100th Anniversary Celebration Eaton Rapids, MI
July 4	Independence Day (Department HQ Closed)
July 11	Barger Scholarship Golf Scramble, The Bridges Golf club 6729 York Rd., Abbottstown, PA 17301 717-624-9551
July 11 -12	Department Flying Squadron, Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel 4650 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 (Invitation Only)
July 13	Central PTI - Captain Phillips VFW Post #4129 District 30 (8:00 AM) 603 Lower Main St, Saxton, PA 16678 (814) 635-3079
July 14	Central PTI – Millersville Manor VFW Post #7294 District 9 (6:00 PM) 219 Walnut Hill Rd, Millersville, PA 17551 (717) 872-2177
July 19	Eastern PTI – Abington Memorial VFW Post #7069 District 10 (8:00 AM) 402 Winola Road, Clarks Summit, PA 18411 (570) 586-9821
July 20	Eastern PTI - Douglas A Post- Harry C Wilson II Memorial VFW Post #6493 District 8 645 Louis Drive, Warminster, PA 18974 (215) 773-0693 (8:00 AM)
July 26	Western PTI – SSG Albert E Moss, Jr. Memorial VFW Post #7842 District 28 6913 Gehrton Road, Linesville, PA 16424 (814) 683-5404 (8:00 AM)
July 27	Western PTI – Natrona Heights VFW Post #894 District 29 (8:00 AM) 894 Veterans Lane, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 (724) 904-7649
August 9-13	National Convention Columbus, OH
September 1:	Labor Day (Department HQ Closed)
September 11	Patriot's Day
September 19	POW-MIA Day
September 25-28	Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming, De Moines, IA
September 28	Gold Star Mother's Day

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

October 13	Columbus Day (Department HQ (Closed))
October 24-25	Eastern States Conference – Wilmington, DE
October 31-Nov 1	Commander’s Testimonial – DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh Cranberry
November 4	Election Day
November 11	Veterans Day (Department HQ Closed)
November 27 -28	Thanksgiving Holiday (Department HQ Closed)
December 24 -26	Christmas Holiday (Department HQ Closed)
December 31-Jan 2	New Year’s Holiday (Department HQ Closed)

2026

January 1	New Year’s Day (Department HQ Closed)
January 15-18	Mid-Winter Conference: Eisenhower Hotel, Gettysburg, PA
January 19	Martin Luther King Jr (Department HQ Closed)
February 16	President’s Day (Department HQ Closed)
Feb 28-March 5	Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
March 27-29	Women Veterans Conference– Pittsburgh Marriott North
April 3-6	Good Friday & Easter Holiday Weekend (Department HQ Closed)
May 1:	Loyalty Day
May 25:	Memorial Day (Department HQ Closed)
June 17-20	Department Convention: DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh Cranberry
June 22:	Juneteenth Observed (Department HQ Closed)

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Recruiting Tips

1. **KNOW THE VFW:** As a recruiter, be aware of the VFW programs.
2. **NETWORK FOR MEMBERS:** As coworkers, friends, and family if they know Veterans. Follow up on leads as quickly as you can.
3. **MAKE PERSONAL CONTACT:** Try to meet prospective members face to face when possible.
4. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK:** Many of our fellow Veterans have never been asked to join the VFW. When you ask, you may be pleasantly surprised.
5. **BE PERSISTENT< NOT PESTERING:** If they decline, respect their decision.
6. **LOOK FOR COMMON EXPERIENCES:** Ask questions to learn about their military experiences, family, and daily life. Describe the benefits of membership in a way that relates to the potential member.
7. **LISTEN CAREFULLY:** Be a good sales person by being an active listener. Listen for excuses and objections and be prepared to overcome them.
8. **BE PREPARED TO SHARE YOUR STORY:** Consider why you are a member of the VFW and tell others why you are so committed to our organization. Your experiences with the VFW is a great recruiting tool.
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 you can use it to recruit. Stay current as VFW National Membership provides updates and assistance.
10. **ENJOY YOURSELF:** If you are enjoying yourself, potential members will feel your enthusiasm and be more likely to join.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

Successful Membership Booths

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 a 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 entrances 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 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 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 membership teams are prepared to answer questions about the various programs the VFW sponsors.
- When a Veterans joins, make them feel welcomed. Ask them to take an active part in the Post and to help recruit others.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

It is not the responsibility of the post membership team to do all 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 and Canteen.
- Hold interesting and informative Post meetings.
- Have active cooperation between your Post and Auxiliary.

Teach – Coach - Mentorship

A Piece of History

What does Gold, Blue, White and Silver Represent?

During World War I, an Army officer of the 5th Ohio Infantry, Captain Robert L. Queissner who had two sons serving on the front line, designed and patented the Blue Star Service Banner. This service flag/banner quickly became the unofficial symbol of a mother and/or father who had a child in military service.

Throughout WWI, American women who had family members serving their country wore a Blue Star around their left arm. As the war progressed and the number of dead escalated, mothers wanted to express their loss as well as the pride and honor they felt for their country. Those mothers of the fallen began sewing a Gold Star over the blue star and began calling themselves Gold Star Mothers.

If the family member symbolized is killed in action or dies while serving in the military, the blue star representing that individual will be superimposed on it a gold star of smaller size so that the blue forms a border. The traditional Gold Star Mothers and Families Day is the fourth Sunday in September.

A White Star Family is one who had a close relative that served in the military and lost them to suicide. The purpose of the White Star Family program is to honor those service members and provide proper care and support to the families.

The Silver Star Families are those who's loved ones has been wounded, contracted a serious illness or injury in a war zone. On Silver Star Service Banner Day, traditionally May 1, we recommit to caring for those who return to us wounded or ill.

Many Gold, Blue, White, and Silver Star Families reside within our community. Their sacrifice has been great and may their courage and patriotism inspire us to greater service for our country.

As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we ask you to remember the sacrifices of these Families as their loved ones gave their "last full measure of devotion" to preserve the ideals of a free America.

May we, in grateful remembrance never forget Freedom is Not Free and that much has been sacrificed for our freedoms.



VFW National Membership Program
2025-2026

Carol Whitmore
Commander-in-Chief
“For Veterans, By Veterans”

VERSION DATE: April 14th, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commander's Introduction	3
Commander's Statement	3
Membership Mission	3
All-American Program	4-6
Triple Crown	6
Individual Recruiting Awards	7
Early Bird Award	7
Legacy Life Membership Acquisition	7
101% Membership Streamer	7
Divisional Recruiting Challenge	8
Department Above & Beyond Award	8
Top Department Recruiter	8
Elite Recruiter	8
Recruiter of the Year	9
Life Member Recruiter Award	9
New Post Development Department Grant	9
Commander-in-Chief's Challenge	9
Membership Notes & Resources	10
Membership Contacts	10

Commander's Introduction:

Carol Whitmore was elected Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on Aug. 1, 2024, at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Carol served in the U.S. Army from 1977 to 2013, earning her VFW eligibility by serving in Iraq. In recognition of her service, she received the Legion of Merit Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal (six), Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, among many others.

She joined the VFW in 2012 at Post 9127 in Des Moines, Iowa, where she maintains her Gold Legacy Life membership. In 2022, she was elected as designee for National VFW Commander-in-Chief for the year 2025, becoming the first woman and first Iowan to hold the position.

Commander's Statement:

Commanders, this will be the longest year, with the shortest days. It will test you in more ways than you can imagine. If it were easy, everyone would do it. Membership is tremendously important in our organization, but it is not the only thing. When you go through your year, change what you can, do the right things and leave the rest. Prioritize and organize.

I have three main focuses: Advocacy, service officers and our POW/MIA mission. They all tie together, and it is what the VFW was founded on. They impact fellow veterans and their families lives. Be the change for a fellow veteran. Honor those who came before us. If we promote these three things, I know we will evoke more interest, which will bring more members.

101% membership is our goal. The OIF/OEF community is ready to be involved. Let them know what we do, how we can change lives, and how they can feel a part of the military community again. Tell our story, tell your story!!!

Have no regrets, don't take anything personally, never assume anything....be the transformation to the future! Honor the dead, by helping the living!

FOR VETERANS BY VETERANS

Membership Mission:

To build a strong organization through recruiting new members while retaining our current membership, building a solid foundation for the future. To assist in mentoring our leadership and members, coordinate programs to support our Posts, Districts, and Departments in their membership efforts, and to provide training for all levels of VFW membership.

All-American Program:

The All-American program exists to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork, authentic accomplishment in membership growth, and participation in VFW core programs.

All-American Post Criteria

All Posts who have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2026 will be named as All-American Posts:

- At least 101% in membership, based on adjusted prior year totals.
- Must have a Post election report submitted and be in good standing.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2026:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot’s Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Donate to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services, minimum of \$125.
- Must participate in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May and registered at todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/ no later than May 15th. Participation may count as community service for All-American quarterly requirements. The event must meet certain criteria aimed at making a meaningful difference in the community. The criteria and more information can be found here: <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service-faq/>
- A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-March, and April-June.
- Must purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies.

All-American Post Award

All Posts that meet the listed criteria will receive: An All-American Post Streamer, a Post Home Citation, and will be recognized in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 15 Posts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American Post Commander’s Citation
- All-American Post Commander’s Cap
- All-American Post Commander’s Badge
- All-American Post Commander’s lapel pin

These awards for the top 15 Posts will be presented on stage at the 127th National Convention.

The Top five Post Commanders in each division will also be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th VFW National Convention. The top two Post Commanders in each division will be named as Captain and Co-Captain of the All-American Team, and their caps will bear a special designation.

All-American District Criteria

All Districts that have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2026 will be named as All-American Districts:

- At least 101% in membership, based on adjusted prior year totals.
- District Election report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2026:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot's Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)

All-American District Awards

All Districts that meet the listed criteria will receive an All-American District Streamer, an All-American District Commander's Citation, and recognition in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 10 Districts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American District Commander's Cap
- All-American District Commander's Badge
- All-American District Commander's lapel pin

These awards for the top 10 District Commanders will be presented on stage at the 127th National Convention.

The top two District Commanders in each division will also be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th VFW National Convention. The Top Two District Commanders in each division will be named as Captain and Co-Captain of the All-American Team, and their caps will bear a special designation.

All-American Department Criteria

All Departments that have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2026 will be named as All-American Departments:

- At least 101% in membership, based on adjusted prior year totals.

- Department must submit Department legislative chairman reports monthly through the Program dashboard tool.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2026:
 - o Voice of Democracy – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Patriot’s Pen – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Veterans & Military Support Programs – must complete State/Department fundraiser with proceeds donated to Veterans & Military Support Programs, Kansas City, MO.

All-American Department Awards

All Departments that meet the listed criteria will receive the following:

- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department Commander’s Citation
- All-American Department Commander’s Cap
- All-American Department Commander’s Badge
- All-American Department Commander’s lapel pin
- Reimbursement for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th National Convention.

These awards will be presented on stage at the 127th National Convention.

All-American Notes

- Any member of a Post that is named as an All-American Post may purchase a All-American Post Member cap from the VFW Store after the 127th National Convention. Post, District, and Department Quartermasters and Adjutants may purchase an All-American Post Member cap bearing their title. Quartermasters may also purchase an All-American Quartermaster pin from the VFW Store.
- Donations made to replace Program Participation by eligible overseas Posts, Districts, or Departments as well as fundraising donations must be made through the All-American Dashboard, not through any other means.

Triple Crown:

The Triple Crown is one of the most prestigious membership awards that an individual can achieve. It requires being named as an All-American Commander at Post, District, and Department level. Leaders who attain this level of excellence will be recognized at the 127th National Convention with a special Triple Crown pin.

Membership Programs and Awards

Individual Recruiting Awards:

5/10/15 members recruited: corresponding recruiter pin

25 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Coin

50 members recruited: Recruiter's Medical Bag

75 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Medallion Set

100 members recruited: Century Cap and Citation. Recruiters may opt to receive a \$50 credit to the VFW Store in lieu of a Century Cap.

Individual Recruiting Awards will be sent out periodically during the membership year to the Post, to be given out at a Post meeting to recognize those members who have helped achieve the membership mission. Mailings will take place near the end of October, January, March, May, and then after the end of the membership year.

Early Bird Award:

The top two Posts in each division as of January 1, 2026 will each be awarded a \$1,000 gift certificate to the VFW Store.

Legacy Life Membership Acquisition:

Each Post that achieves the cumulative benchmarks of 25, 50 and 75 Legacy Life Members will be awarded a Legacy Society Post Proclamation. Proclamations will be sent out to the Post along with recruiting awards throughout the year.

For each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100, 250, or 500 Legacy Life members by June 30th, 2026, their commander or Post representative will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for travel / lodging for the National Convention, reserved seating at the 127th VFW National Convention joint opening session and a Legacy Society Post Proclamation presented at the National Convention.

101% Membership Streamer:

All Posts, Districts, and Departments that reach the goal of 101% membership based on adjusted prior year totals by June 30, 2026 or before will receive a distinctive streamer.

Divisional Recruiting Challenge:

The top two Posts in each membership division based on new and reinstated members according to the table below will receive a \$1,000 membership grant deposited into the Post's account.

Division	Size	New Member Quota
1	951+	At least 125 new/reinstated members
2	750-950	At least 120 new/reinstated members
3	356-749	At least 100 new/reinstated members
4	246-355	At least 75 new/reinstated members
5	185-245	At least 60 new/reinstated members
6	143-184	At least 50 new/reinstated members
7	112-142	At least 40 new/reinstated members
8	88-111	At least 30 new/reinstated members
9	68-87	At least 20 new/reinstated members
10	51-67	At least 15 new/reinstated members
11	Under 50	At least 10 new/reinstated members

Department Above & Beyond Award:

Each Department that exceeds the membership goal and reaches 102% membership on June 30, 2026 will receive a \$2,000 award deposited into the Department account. If the Department reaches 103% membership, the award will increase to \$4,000. If the Department reaches 104% or above in membership, the award will increase to \$7,500.

Top Department Recruiter:

The top recruiter in every Department as of June 30th, 2026 will receive a Commander's Medical Bag. A minimum of 25 new/reinstated members is required to win this award.

Elite Recruiter:

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new and/or reinstated members as of June 30th, 2026 will also be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th VFW National Convention as well as a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge. In the event that an Elite Recruiter is already being reimbursed for travel/lodging from another award, a \$1,000 stipend will be issued at the 127th National Convention.

Recruiter of the Year:

The Elite Recruiter who signs up the greatest number of new and/or reinstated members greater than 250 as of June 30th, 2026, will receive an additional \$1,000 stipend, reserved seating at the 127th VFW National Convention joint opening session, a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge, and the Commander-in-Chief's Crystal Eagle trophy.

Life Member Recruiter Award:

Any VFW member who recruits at least 50 new and/or reinstated Life members by June 30th, 2026 or before will receive a special citation from the Commander-in-Chief and a Recruiter Satchel with the Commander-in-Chief's logo.

New Post Development Department Grant:

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership Department.

Commander-in-Chief's Challenge:

To emphasize the importance of Life Membership as the backbone of our membership strength, the Commander-in-Chief is issuing the following challenge to all VFW Posts. Each quarter (July-September, October-December, January-March, April-June), Posts will accumulate points as follows:

New Annual Member: 1 point

Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life Member: 5 points

New Life Member: 10 points

Each quarter, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the challenges will be recognized at the 127th National Convention for their achievements.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES AND RESOURCES:

- Awards given to a Post may be transferred to any member of that Post.
- No more than one stipend will be awarded to an individual for a given event.
- Posts, Districts, and Departments must reach a minimum of 101% membership to qualify for any award. This does not apply to the Early Bird Award.
- NOTE: Cash stipends paid by the VFW will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099 if the total of payments made to you during any calendar year equals \$600.00 or more. The reimbursement you receive from the VFW will be deemed by the IRS to be taxable income. Since the circumstances of each individual are different, it is recommended that you consult your tax advisor to determine the effect these payments may have on your personal tax situation. It is your responsibility to keep receipts and other records as you and your accountant and/or tax advisor deem necessary in order to document your expenditures.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends or awards in this program unless otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General and/or Quartermaster General.
- Awardees receiving reimbursement for travel and lodging costs for the 127th National Convention must provide receipts to the VFW Membership Department no later than August 31st, 2026 in order to receive reimbursement. Reimbursements shall be made by ACH deposit.

For information on how to use the All-American Dashboard, scan the QR code below:



Membership Contacts:

David Prohaska, Director – 816-968-1114, dprohaska@vfw.org

Matt Nute, Associate Director – 816-961-1122, mnote@vfw.org