



Official Publication Department of Massachusetts ★ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States ★ 51.3 September 2023

VFW ELECTS DUANE SARMIENTO AS NEW NATIONAL COMMANDER

The New Jersey native is the first Filipino American elected to lead the 124-year-old organization

PHOENIX (July 27, 2023) — Duane Sarmiento of Gibbstown, New Jersey, was elected today as the new national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), a congressionally chartered veterans service organization comprised of approximately 1 million eligible combat veterans and military service members from all six branches of the armed forces.

“Today, I humbly stand here as a testament to the limitless potential of our great nation and a product of the American dream,” said Sarmiento during his acceptance speech. “As



a kid from New Jersey, I never imagined I would be standing here to accept such a prestigious position in one of the most prestigious institutions in our country.”

Sarmiento’s election as the VFW’s 115th commander-in-chief occurred at the conclusion of the organization’s 124th National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The gathering was the first national convention held

there since 2009. More than 10,000 members of the VFW and its Auxiliary converged on the city to conduct the business of the organization, recognize individuals and organizations for excellence and to elect new leadership for the 2023 – 2024 year.

Sarmiento, who is of mixed Filipino and Italian heritage, is the first person of color elected to lead the 124-year-old organization. He delivered remarks to those attending in person at the Phoenix Convention Center and watching via livestreaming video.

“As I look out into this sea of familiar faces, I am reminded of the shared experiences, the sacrifices and the bonds that have brought us together,” said Sarmiento, to the delegates in attendance from all 52 Departments, which includes Europe and Asia. “We come from different walks of life, but we share a common thread — a deep love for our country and an unwavering dedication to veterans.”

VFW membership eligibility requires honorable service in a war or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters. Sarmiento served in the United States Navy from 1988 to 1997, and the United States Naval Reserve from 2002 to 2006, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Operations Desert Shield/Storm. In recognition of his service, he received the Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Good Conduct Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three campaign stars, the Saudi Arabian Medal for the

Liberation of Kuwait, Kuwait Medal for the Liberation of Kuwait and numerous other medals and ribbons. In 2003, he earned the title of the Naval Reserve Center Sailor of the Year at Fort Dix.

“Throughout my time in the Navy, I witnessed firsthand the power of teamwork and the unbreakable spirit that binds us together as veterans,” said Sarmiento. “Those formative years taught me so much about camaraderie and esprit de corps, it was only natural for me to join the ranks of the VFW, an organization that means so much to generations of veterans.”

Sarmiento joined the VFW in 1990 at Post 5579 in Gibbstown, New Jersey, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels, culminating with his election as the VFW Department of New Jersey Commander from 2018 to 2019. On the national level, he served as the VFW Inspector General from 2019 to 2020, and served on the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, General Resolutions Committee, and as Special Aide-de-Camp. He is a life member of the Military Order of the Cootie, at Ky-Yi Pup Tent #1 in Delaware.

“By embracing a leadership role within our organization, we can unlock its full potential, empowering the VFW to make an even greater impact on the lives of all veterans,” said Sarmiento. “So, no matter at what level – Post, District or Department – step up, take the lead and you can make a difference in the VFW.”

Though much of his speech was spent touting the programs, work and achievements of the VFW, Sarmiento took time to espouse the value of the members, showing his passion for the fraternal side of the organization.

“We have entrepreneurs who have built successful businesses, educators who have shaped young minds, and community leaders who have made a lasting impact. We have advocates who have fought tirelessly for the rights of veterans, and caregivers who have provided unwavering support to those in need,” said Sarmiento, who retired as a police officer and director of Veterans Affairs in Gloucester County, New Jersey. “I’m here to tell you the most valuable resources to the Veterans of Foreign Wars are you – the members.”

In addition to Sarmiento, other national officers elected were Al Lippardt, a Vietnam War veteran from the Department of Georgia, as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and Carol Whitmore, an Iraq War veteran from the Department of Iowa, as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. The final day of the convention also saw Adjutant General Dan West and Quartermaster General Marc Garduno reconfirmed in their positions.

“Regardless of your pecking order in this organization, keep this in mind – you don’t need a title to lead. You just need to care,” said Sarmiento. “People would rather follow a leader with a heart than a leader with a title.”

Sarmiento resides in Gibbstown, New Jersey with his wife Ellen.

VFW STATE COMMANDER 2023-24



June 10th, 2023, Mansfield, MA—VFW Department of Massachusetts elects James Morrissey as its Commander at its 103rd State Convention. James Morrissey joined the Navy after high school and spent a total of 10 years on active duty. His assignments included the USS Macdonough (DDG-39), NAWS Pt. Mugu, and the USS Independence CV-62. He attended aviation ordnance school and F-14 Armament school. Jim earned his VFW eligibility by receiving two Navy Expeditionary Medals and a Southwest Service Medal. He also received two good conduct medals, three Sea Service Ribbons, and two National Defense Service Medals. He is a life member of VFW Post 3264 in Mansfield, MA. Where he has served in various positions

including Post Commander 2006-2014 earning all-state Post Commander and all State Quartermaster award. He was an All-American Post Quartermaster in 2017, and served as District Six Commander earning all-state District Commander in 2018-2019. Jim served as Jr. Vice Commander and later as Sr. Vice Commander for the department. Originally from Marshfield Jim now lives in Wareham with his wife Beth.

VFW MASSACHUSETTS COMMANDERS EARNS COVETED TRIPLE CROWN



KANSASCITY, Mo. (July 27th, 2023) — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is pleased to announce Eric Segundo and Michael Raymond have achieved the distinguished title of Triple Crown Commanders. To achieve this honor, VFW Commanders must achieve All-American commander status at the Post, District and Department levels.

Segundo, a Gold Legacy Life member of Post 3236 in Ludlow, MA and Raymond, Gold Legacy Life member of Post 2498 in Needham, MA, are only one of 15 VFW Post, District and Department commanders worldwide to earn the title of Triple Crown. Their hard work played an integral role helping the organization

successfully remain focused on its service to veterans.

“Commanders like Eric and Mike exemplify the best of the best, and their exceptional leadership ensures the VFW is left in a better place than when they started,” said VFW Membership Director Rick Butler.



What's Inside the News...

Officer Reports	2-3
VFW Auxiliary	4
Women Veterans' Column.....	4
PACT Act.....	4
Commander's Special Project	5
All-American Honors 2022-2023	5
Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Co.	5
2023 Priority Goals.....	6
Legislative Conference photos	6

Patriot's Pen Official Entry Form	7
VFW State & National Conventions.....	8-9
What's Happening Around the State	10-11
Voice of Democracy Official Entry Form.....	12
Smart/Maher Teacher Award	13
OTI Training Agenda	14
Membership Minute.....	14
Membership Program	15

VFW Department of Massachusetts
24 Beacon Street
State House – Room 546-1
Boston, MA 02133-1043

Telephone: 617-727-2612
Fax: 617-727-3876
Web site: www.vfwma.org

State Commander



James Morrissey
State Commander

My special project this year will be MEDIC NOW FOUNDATION. It's a non-profit that

Comrades

I wish to thank everyone for electing me as your State Commander for 2023-2024. We will have some challenges in the coming year but with everyone working together, we can accomplish amazing things.

This year our membership goal as set by National will be 102%, this is the goal for the next 3 years. We must get back to 1 million members nationally so we can have more power in issues affecting Veterans and their families. When we advocate before Congress it is important that we have the numbers to back up what we are fighting for. The more members we have, the bigger the voice we have. Remember the VFW was the lead Veterans Organization getting the PACT act passed in Congress.

helps veterans and families with medical expenses that are not covered by their insurance company. More info will be forthcoming.

Please send donations to the VFW Headquarters with Special Project in the memo line, this is an amazing Non-Profit with NO paid employees.

In this year's budget we allocated \$50,000 into a life membership fund from which the state will cover half of the cost of a life membership and the member pays the other half. You must be a member for 1 year or over 70 years of age to qualify plus a few other rules. The life membership program will be first come first serve, so please send in your payment as soon as you can to the Department Headquarters.

Let's have a great year and get to 102% for your Post, District, and Department.

Sincerely,
James Morrissey
State Commander

State Sr. Vice Commander



Jody Freitas
Sr. Vice Commander

First and foremost, I would like to apologize for missing our last issue. I was extremely busy at the time and just missed the deadline.

We have all just recently returned from Phoenix from a very successful National convention which was on the heels of a very successful state convention. I can tell you that our Senior Vice class or the Tribe as we call ourselves is a cohesive unit. Our department had a banner year and I tip my hat to our two Triple Crown Winners PSC Michael Raymond and PSC Eric Segundo.

We are full swing into the 2023-2024 year and by now you should all have seen the Commander's membership programs, both the department's and national's. It may seem like a steep challenge, but together as a team it is achievable. Start now, don't let up and stay strong. As always if you need any help with recruiting reach out to the department and remember that membership materials are free from national. Make sure you are ready to answer the question "What does the VFW do?"

Back in March we visited Washington for our Legislative conference and we spoke to our elected officials regarding the suicide epidemic. We told them that we need to move this program to the enterprise level at the VA because it is more than just a mental health issue. It encompasses housing security and financial security amongst other issues. Did you know that female veterans are the fastest growing demographic amongst the homeless population? Let us find ways to engage our female comrades and bring them into the VFW so we can be a lifeline to vital services they may need.

Now let's get this year into full gear and support Commander Morrissey with our best and remember #everymembercounts #noveteranleftbehind.

State Sr. Vice Commander



Troy Henke
Sr. Vice Commander

With a new year and a new office, I'll look back briefly on the very successful, banner year that we had as I served as your Judge Advocate and Membership Chairman. Attaining 101% membership was a phenomenal achievement that every Post partook in. This year's 102% requirement is well within our ability and I know we will do it!

The School of Instruction that the State Quartermaster and I offered regarding Incorporations and Tax Matters for your organizations was well received and very much needed. Unfortunately, our tax house was found to be a bit deficient at the individual Post level and I want to extend our hand at the State to help each of you in either ensuring or reinstating your 990 tax exempt status if it has been revoked due to non-filing for three years. We have a lot of expertise in these areas, so please don't hesitate to reach out for guidance if you've found this to be the case locally.

I'm hitting the ground running this year as your State Jr. Vice-Commander with my appointment as the State Commander's Special Project and National Home Chairman.

This year's fundraising goal is at least \$50,000 for the State Commander's Special Project; which is the Medic Now Foundation. In addition, we must also raise a minimum \$8,000 annually for our house at the National Home for maintenance and upkeep.

This year's State Commander's Special Project is truly unique and special as the funds raised will go directly into the hands of Veterans to assist them in paying their uninsured medical expenses for themselves or their dependents. If every Post is able to afford donating just \$3.00 for each of its members, we will have exceeded our goal for the year. Is your Post able to afford more than the \$100 minimum? Is it able to donate \$3.00 per member? Is it able to afford even more, perhaps?

Any amount helps and is graciously appreciated. Checks for the Commander's Special Project should be made out to:

Dept. of MA. VFW Foundation

Write "State Commander's Special Project" on the memo line.

Checks for the National Home should be made out to: **VFW National Home**

Write "Massachusetts House" on the memo line.

All donations should be sent to the State House HQ or given directly to the State Quartermaster or myself.

I am very much looking forward to making these presentations at the end of the year and I am confident that we will exceed our goals with your help.

Quartermaster's Report



Ernest Carruthers
Quartermaster

Greetings, Comrades:

Congratulations to Past State Commander Mike Raymond and each and every member who helped make the Department an All American Department!

I'm looking forward to being part of Commander Morrissey's team and achieving All American for the second consecutive year.

I hope everyone had a great summer, but it's time to get back to work. Bonds were due on August 31st and as a reminder we are not mailing these out to posts this year. Your bond receipt and being checked off on the audit and bond tracker is sufficient proof for inspection purposes that you are bonded.

Audits are due by the end of the month following the close of the quarter. June 30 audits were due on July 31st and September 30 audits are due on October 31st.

Last year I started hosting "Ask the State Quartermaster" on Zoom. I offered 2 sessions each month and will be starting these up again in September. These are geared towards post QMs, but are open to any member. These meetings have no agenda other than your questions. The 2023-24 schedule will be:

1. Third Tuesday of each month at 11:30am
2. Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

Hopefully one of these sessions will work for you!

Keep in mind the trainings provided myself and JVC Troy Henke at district meetings last year... your annual reports filed with the Massachusetts Secretary of State are due on November 1st. Don't forget about your tax returns either! They are due the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of your tax year (December 31st year ends are due May 15th; May 31st year ends are due October 15th).

Please reach out to me with any questions as the year progresses. I'm happy to work with each member to make their post the best it can be.

State Judge Advocate



Christine Tron
State Judge Advocate

Comrades, thank you to all the posts, districts, and individuals who provided their support and endorsements to me throughout the year to result in my election as State Judge Advocate at June's 103rd State Convention in Mansfield. I promise to continue working hard to earn your trust and confidence in my leadership.

Attendance to the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona was as beneficial as always. Despite the unprecedented heat wave, where temperatures often started out at 100 degrees and rose as high as 118 degrees daily, I eagerly anticipated each day's activities whether they be Eastern Conference Caucus, joint memorial service, committee and business sessions, patriotic rally, workshops, or the pomp and circumstance of the nomination, election, and installation of national officers.

Highlights of changes made to the National Bylaws will be distributed in one of my bulletins. Just as I had done as State Surgeon, information will be sent out in bulletins that I will develop. Topics include clarification learned at the national convention in workshops relating to parliamentary procedures and post quartermaster responsibilities as they relate to audits and bonds.

I look forward to serving as State Judge Advocate and Parliamentarian and visiting districts and posts throughout the state in these roles. I hope to see many of you at Officer Training Instruction, which has resumed as an in-person activity this year. Don't let the title mislead you; this training is developed for all members. It is also a great opportunity to informally discuss issues with members of other posts.

Let us each strive to make the Department of Massachusetts VFW a successful year and achieve 102% membership!



State Surgeon



Craig De Old
State Surgeon

Greetings, Comrades!

It is a distinct honor and pleasure to have been elected as your State Surgeon for this year! I am truly humbled to serve you and all our Posts in this vital role!

Over the past few years, the health and welfare of our members, families, and the veteran community at large has been top priority. Now that we have the global pandemic in our rearview mirrors, it is not the time to ease up on the pressure and scrutiny that we have placed on state of veterans' healthcare on both the State and Federal levels. While it is exciting that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has finally broken ground on a new facility, we cannot take our eyes off the Executive Office of Veterans Services to ensure that they fulfill their promise to provide world-class healthcare, to include long-term care, for all Veterans throughout the Commonwealth. The Chelsea Soldiers' Home is also off to a good start with their new facilities. The VFW needs to remain actively engaged with our comrades and family members that are residents at the Homes. It is feedback directly from them, both good and bad, that will hold the Commonwealth accountable to providing top-notch care. To accomplish this, the Commonwealth needs to hire and retain the best medical and healthcare professionals. As we live in close proximity to one of the "Medical Meccas" of the world, high quality of care is the benchmark! It should be the goal of the Commonwealth to make our Soldiers' Homes competitive, not only in quality of care, but also quality of pay and benefits of the providers. This will make our Soldiers' Homes an attractive employer to attract the best healthcare providers out there! This is NOT an indictment of the caring, hardworking providers currently providing our Comrades care! It would incentivize them to want to work with our Comrades, grow professionally with the Homes, and attract other like-minded, high quality healthcare professionals to work with them. When you see your State representatives, please let them know your thoughts. This will be a long term investment of both time and money that we will need the State's backing to ensure that the funds to provide the highest quality of care for our Comrades.

On the Federal level, it's been an exciting time, now that the PACT Act has been passed and enacted! The Veteran's Administration has flexed to accommodate the massive influx of claims from newly eligible Veterans and is hustling to resolve all these claims as quickly as possible. Again, we are looking at a funding issue. The Federal budget is a political "hot potato" each year with our elected representatives jockeying for precious dollars to fund an infinite list of "top priorities." It is incumbent on all of us to make sure that the VA does not suffer the budgetary ills of political wrangling. If we do not remind our representatives that the healthcare of all Veterans is the top, top priority, we run the risk of allowing them to sacrifice Veterans' healthcare for "pork" and "pet projects."

As your State Surgeon, I charge each of you to be the "eyes and ears" of the Veterans Community with regards to how our State and Federal providers are doing. Let your Post Surgeons know so they can pass along to the Department the good, the bad, and the ugly. I am your voice to ensure that they are doing the right thing with our healthcare. Throughout this year, I will strive to visit each of our Veterans' healthcare facilities to see how they are doing. I will share my findings with you as my journey progresses!

Together, we will ensure that Veterans' healthcare in Massachusetts is the BEST in the country! The BEST healthcare for the BEST Veterans in the BEST Department!!

Yours in service,
Craig De Old
State Surgeon
cdeold@vfwma.org

State Adjutant



Bill LeBeau
State Adjutant

Comrades,

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Let us each strive to make the Department of Massachusetts VFW a successful year and achieve 102% membership!

Chief of Staff

Comrades

I would like to thank State Commander Jim Morrissey for asking me to be his Chief of Staff for 2023-2024. He will have some challenges for the coming year, and I will be there to advise & assist him when asked.

As Jim has said, our membership goal will be 102% percent this year. As it is a 3-year plan by National. We must get back to one million members nationally so that we can continue to push Congress to pass legislation in support of veteran's issues. There is strength in numbers.

This year the Department has created a life membership fund the Department will pay half, and the member pays the other half. You must be a member for 1 year or over 70 years of age plus some other requirements. It will be first come first serve as there is only a limited amount of funds available.

I urge all Posts to please pay attention to the deadlines to submit your quarterly audits and bonds. Also, we need participation in programs like the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, teacher awards etc.

So, let us get to work & help our Commander, and most importantly the Department of Massachusetts to have a fantastic year.

Sincerely,
Bob Graser PSC
Chief of Staff

Elected Officers 2023-24



JAMES MORRISSEY
JODY FREITAS
TROY HENKE
ERNEST CARRUTHERS
CHAPLAIN
JUDGE ADVOCATE
SURGEON
ADJUTANT

COMMANDER
SR. VICE COMMANDER
JR. VICE COMMANDER
QUARTERMASTER
DOUG WOOD
CHRISTINE TRON
CRAIG DEOLD
BILL LEBEAU



VFW Massachusetts 2022-23 Accomplishments & Accolades

Community Service Report

57 Posts submitted reports.
Volunteer Hours: 10,010.
Value of Hours: \$325,960.
Dollars Donated: \$317,674
Total Value: \$643,634.

Veterans & Military Support (VMS)

55 Posts and 2 Districts Donated.
Total Donations: \$6,055.

Voice of Democracy

232 Students Participated.
\$41,905 from Posts & Districts.
15,000 from Dept.
Total Awards: \$56,905.

Patriots Pen

568 Students Participated.
\$25,802 from Posts & Districts.
\$2,000 from Dept.
Total Awards: \$27,802.

Teacher Awards

55 Nominations.
Total Awards: \$8,795.
Buddy Poppies
Total Ordered: 112,250.

Unmet Needs

Total Cases — 90.
Total Grants: \$148,793.

Sports Clips—Help A Hero

15 Scholarships Awarded.
Total Scholarships — \$71,861.

Military Assistance Grants

15 Units Supported.
Total Support: \$34,316.

Foundation — Community Support

28 Posts Participated.
Total Support: \$58,000.





Department of Massachusetts VFW Auxiliary



VFW Auxiliary President Mary M. Christian



I am looking forward to working with State Commander, Jim Morrissey, as we "SOAR TO HIGHER EXPECTATIONS."

One way we plan to work together is our joint special project, Medic Now Foundation.

We were honored to have our National Buddy Poppy/VFW National Home Ambassador, Lisa Jackson, and Vice President of the VFW National Home Board of Trustees, Keith Jackson, at our annual Program Kickoff.

The Hospital/Veterans & Family Support Workshop date is Saturday, October 7, 2023, at the Medway VFW Post, commencing at 9:00 a.m. See the flier elsewhere in this newspaper for complete information.

It is time, once again, to set up membership tables and ask people to join the VFW Auxiliary. Keep those applications with you and let the people know we are here to help our Veterans and their families.

JOINT HOSPITAL/VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 7, 2023

9:00 a.m. Registration — 9:30 a.m. Workshop

Medway VFW Post #1526

123 Holliston Street

Medway, MA 02053

The Hospital/Veterans & Family Support Workshop will be an informative session highlighting the programs at the VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics, and Soldiers Homes.

Representatives from each facility have been invited to speak about their particular issues and needs and how we can assist them in contributing to the welfare of the patients. Veterans Service Officers will also be addressing you and providing incite into benefits for our veterans and their families.

Gifts decorated with Buddy Poppies will be collected for the hospital representatives to take back to their facilities.

Homeless Shelter representatives will accept donations of new and gently used clothing. Shelters are in need of towels, coffee, and new undergarments. "Glad Bags" for the homeless shelters, tied up with a Poppy, will also be appreciated. Remember, our Homeless Veterans are women, as well as men.

Continental breakfast will be served at a cost of \$9.00 per person. Please return the coupon below to State Secretary-Treasurer, Betty Rosa, if you are planning to attend. Checks are to be made out to: Dept. of MA VFW Aux. **DEADLINE FOR TICKETS IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023. EVERYONE MUST PRESENT A TICKET TO BE SERVED.**

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$_____ for _____ tickets to the Hospital Workshop in Medway on October 7, 2023, at \$9.00 per ticket.

Name _____

Address _____

Post # _____ Auxiliary # _____ District # _____

Return this coupon to VFW Auxiliary State Secretary-Treasurer **Betty Rosa**, 93 Church Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719-3703. Make checks payable to **VFW Aux. Dept. of MA**.

DEADLINE FOR TICKETS IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023.



On Loyalty Day April 30th, 2023 held at the American Heritage Museum in Hudson, the winner of the Department of Massachusetts Patriotic Art Contested was announced. She is Mariella Barrios of Noth Andover, sponsored by VFW Auxiliary Post #8164 Tewksbury. Mariella was inspired by the return of her mother from war. State Commander Michael Raymond signed up the mother, Vivian Barrios, as a VFW member and State Auxiliary Membership Chair Michelle Perras-Slowick signed up the father, Marc Barrios, as an Auxiliary member. A win all around!

Photo Description submitted by
Past State Photographer Christine Tron

Women Veterans' Column

By Women Veterans Advocate Dawn Slaven

This Issue's Topic: Opportunities for Women Veterans to Connect

Did you know that every year there are a plethora of events geared toward women veterans throughout the Commonwealth? These are wonderful opportunities for women veterans to connect!

Many of these events take place annually and on/around the same week and month, so **save the date for these events in the coming year! And most importantly, tell women veterans you know about these events!!**



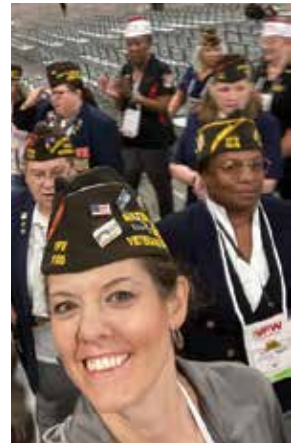
SPRING

- Marching in the South Boston St. Patrick's Day/Evacuation Day Parade with women veterans
- Local Memorial Day Remembrance events - featured speaker opportunities for women veterans!



SUMMER

- Beginning/middle of June - Bedford VA Medical Center Women Veterans' Health & Wellness Fair. See more info on [Facebook](#).
- June 12th - Women Veterans Recognition Day - Executive Office of Veterans Services, Massachusetts State House.
- Mid-June - Annual Women Veterans Network (WVN) Conference. See more info at the WVN website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-women-veterans-network> and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MAWomenVets/>
- Mid-June - MA VFW State Convention
- Worcester Stand Down
- Late July - Veterans Voice Music Festival & Expo - Quincy, MA
- Late July - VFW National Convention



FALL

- WVN Family Day
- Military Women's Memorial Anniversary events (Washington, DC area)
- Veterans Day Events in towns throughout MA - featured speaker opportunities for women veterans!

WINTER

- Dec 17th - Celebrations for heroine Deborah Sampson's Birthday

Dawn Slaven of Watertown Post 1105 is the Women Veterans Advocate for the Department of Massachusetts VFW. She can be reached at dawn.slaven@gmail.com.



VA & Veteran Services



PACT Act

The VFW worked tirelessly to champion the PACT Act and secure this life-changing legislation FOR VETERANS! Now, we're ready to make sure every veteran receives the care and benefits they've been promised by our country. VFW Accredited Service Officers are ready and waiting to help you avoid PACT Act scams and file your VA claim today absolutely free of charge.



Commander’s Special Project
MEDIC NOW Foundation



The “Medic Now” program assists our service members with out-of-pocket costs through our stipend program as a thank you for their service and promotes access through our developing relationships with the healthcare community. The Medic Now Foundation is working hard to help our military members receive the medical attention they deserve when and where they need it.

The backbone of America are the Men, Women, and Families that serve and protect our country. It is our duty as Americans to never forget why they have always answered the call. “It’s because we asked”. - Medic Now Foundation

VFW Honors Local Post, District, and State
Commander for the 2022-23 VFW Year

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (July 27, 2023) — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is pleased to announce the following posts and districts that has achieved All-American status. To achieve this honor, Post and district commanders must meet strict requirements in their role to include exceptional leadership, authentic accomplishment in membership growth and strong support of VFW core programs.

There were a total of 854 VFW Post Commanders, 232 District Commanders, and 48 State Commanders worldwide to earn the title of All-American commander. Their hard work played an integral role helping the organization successfully remain focused on its service to veterans.

These Commanders are a fine example of VFW leadership, and it’s their hard work and dedication to the mission and values of our organization that has rightly earned them this great honor,” said VFW Membership Director Rick Butler.

All-American Honors for 2022-2023

All-American Honors for 2022-2023

All-American Districts & Commanders:

District 5: Craig Deold	District 10: Kim Emerling
District 6: John Moore	District 11: Thomas Lehman
District 7: Heath Joseph	District 15: Patrick Logue
District 8: Joseph McMahon	District 18: Robert Hardy

All-American Posts by District & Commanders:	
District 5: (106.08%)	District 9: (98.38%)
561 South Boston – Thomas McCarthy	8183 Housatonic – Michael Casey
613 Quincy – Peter Smialek	8348 Great Barrington – Richard Hotaling
864 Brookline – John Tynan	9144 Clarksburg – Edward Denault
1018 Boston Police – Craig Deold	
1526 Medway - Andrea Crow	District 10: (100.74%)
1702 Braintree – Robert Williams	1240 Swampscott – Patrick Burke
2452 Norwood – Carl Rossi	2104 North Andover – Jeffrey Clark
2498 Needham – Tim Dooher	
2626 Foxboro – Warren Wright	District 11: 100.47%)
3402 Franklin – Ernest Carruthers	523 Clinton – James Barrett
5188 Walpole - Joseph Bopp	1807 Leominster – Robert Grudziecki
7238 Sharon – Paul Bergeron	3439 North Brookfield – Joseph Jablonski
7272 Bellingham – Steven Shea	7389 Westminster – Thomas Lehman
8772 Boston – Alfonzia Courtney	
District 6: (101.09%)	District 12: (97.64%)
115 Attleboro – Gerald Lynch	1822 Plymouth – Denis Russell
3264 Mansfield – Matt Marvel	8345 Marshfield – Lawrence Sweeney
6643 Freetown – Andrew Robinson	
7239 Acushnet – Deven Robitaille	District 15: (100.75%)
District 7: (105.72%)	2597 Billerica – William West
872 Southwick – Ryan Dietert	3291 Pepperell – Stu Young
3104 South Hadley – Scott Daigneault	8164 Tewksbury – Vincent Oliva
3236 Ludlow – Eric Segundo	8507 Holliston – David DeGanne
6714 West Springfield – Richard Barcomb	
9397 Hampden – Brandon Morin	District 18: (101.64%)
District 8: (100.30%)	529 Somerville – Robert Hardy
5594 Upton – Stephen Saucier	620 Stoneham – Jay Humphreys
	1105 Watertown – Derek Mayerhofer

All-American Triple Crown Recipients: PSC Eric Segundo & PSC Michael Raymond

Department of Massachusetts: All-American Department (101.63%).
105 out of 150 Posts at or over 100%. 8 Districts & 42 Posts earned All-American.

Congratulation TEAM Massachusetts on a stellar year!
Mission Accomplished ... EVERY MEMBER COUNTS!

Yours in Service,
Michael Raymond
Past State Commander, 2022-23
All-American Triple Crown



Cracking Down on Predatory
Claims Companies

Issue Contact: Kristina Keenan at kkeen@vfw.org

The VFW’s Concerns:

The VFW is concerned that bad actors have been preying on veterans by seeking to access their earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, unaccredited consulting groups that the VFW calls “Claim Sharks” viewed the chaos as an exploitation opportunity. Since the passage of the PACT Act, they have ramped up their efforts even more.

These groups aggressively advertise online and make promises to increase veterans’ disability ratings. Some charge thousands of dollars in fees for their services and even request VA login credentials to track when veterans receive future ratings increases. If a veteran receives a disability percentage increase years later, often these companies return seeking more money. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical providers, which raises ethical concerns.

Under VA regulations, accredited representatives of Veterans Service Organizations, like the VFW, cannot charge fees for claims services. We gladly provide these services for free. Attorneys and agents may also seek VA accreditation, and may charge certain fees that are capped and can apply only to retroactive benefits. Claim Sharks, however, avoid accreditation in order to impose exorbitant fees and avoid VA oversight. Several years ago, penalties regarding fees were removed to allow accredited attorneys and agents to charge certain fees, leaving a gap in the law that predators are exploiting. The VFW believes that penalties need to be reinstated.

Anyone who assists veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims should adhere to established fee caps or be subject to penalties.

The VFW urges Congress to:

Pass the *Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act*, known as the *GUARD VA Benefits Act*. This legislation would reinstate penalties for charging veterans and survivors unauthorized fees relating to claims for VA benefits.



Claim Sharks
Q&A

Q: What makes these companies predatory?

A: The law prohibits anyone who assists veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability claims to charge fees for their services. Many of these companies use contracts that include a commitment by the veteran to pay them all or a portion of their increased benefits. If a veteran receives a disability percentage increase years later, these companies often return seeking more money. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical providers, which raises ethical concerns.

Q: Some of these companies say they would seek VA accreditation but there currently is no path for them to do so. Shouldn’t our focus be on reforming accreditation?

A: This claim is untrue. Anyone can seek VA accreditation, but then would be subject to oversight by VA’s Office of General Counsel and would not be allowed to charge high fees for claims assistance. The VFW is open to discussions about how to improve the accreditation process, but that does not involve making it easier for Claim Sharks to take advantage of veterans.

Q: What does it mean when a claims representative or service officer is accredited? What is accreditation?

A: Accreditation by VA authorizes individuals or Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to represent veterans for their VA benefits claims. VA accreditation is for the sole and limited purpose of preparing, presenting, and prosecuting claims before VA. Accreditation requires passing extensive training and background checks. VSOs like the VFW have some of the most well-trained and professional claims representatives in the country.

Q: Organizations that offer claims assistance for free do not have enough people to serve all the veterans who need it. Aren’t these companies filling a gap?

A: This claim is also untrue. The VFW alone has more than two thousand accredited representatives and they helped tens of thousands of veterans receive more than ten billion dollars in VA benefits last year. No private company that charges fees even comes close to those numbers.

Q: Why are penalties necessary?

A: Consultants who refuse to adhere to VA’s well-established standards of accreditation and fee arrangements should be subject to penalties in the same manner as accredited representatives. This is a much-needed protection to deter bad actors and protect veterans’ earned benefits.

Q: Why were penalties removed in the first place?

A: Penalties were removed to allow accredited attorneys and agents to charge certain fees for their services. The unintended consequence was that this opened the door to unaccredited, predatory consultants to operate illegally without penalty. We must reinstate these penalties.



2023 Priority Goals



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2023 PRIORITY GOALS

Support Today's Veterans and Military

Please contact or visit your congressional representatives and stress that these are the issues we will be fighting for in the 118th Congress. These priority goals reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW and its Auxiliary. To find your congressional representatives, visit vfw.org/ActionCorps.

Play a Role in the Process

Engage and help us ensure that these priority goals are enacted. Sign up today for the VFW Action Corps Weekly and VFW Action Alerts:

- Visit vfw.org/JoinActionCorps
- Text "VFW" to 50457*
- Scan QR Code below

*Messaging and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Reply HELP and STOP to unsubscribe.



View the VFW's [privacy policy](#) and [terms of use](#).

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.





VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2023 PRIORITY GOALS

Delivering the promise to our veterans, service members, and their families.

VFW

Washington Office

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20002

Tel: 202.543.2239

VFW

National Headquarters

406 W. 34th Street

Kansas City, MO 64111

Tel: 816.756.3390

www.vfw.org



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2023 PRIORITY GOALS

Budget

To fully fund programs for veterans, service members, and their families, Congress must:

- Reform the dysfunctional federal budget process.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.

Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Properly implement comprehensive toxic exposure legislation.
- Review and assess military toxic exposures, and ensure health care and benefits are provided to all toxic-exposed veterans.
- Consider treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- Properly implement the modernized appeals process.
- Reinstate pre-decisional review authority for claims representatives prior to final rating decisions.
- Require VA to accept private medical evidence in lieu of VA examinations.
- Update regulations and laws governing claims to account for digital claims processing.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.
- Crack down on predatory claims providers.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits for survivors.
- Increase burial allowances to account for inflation.

Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD, and DOL must:

- Require oversight of transition assistance program pathways, timely attendance, and connections to community transition resources.
- Ensure equal access to pre-discharge claims assistance across the services.
- Mandate the inclusion of accredited representatives in transition assistance briefings.
- Expand transition services for spouses.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Improve education benefits through increased online student housing allowances, child care stipends, parity for Guard and Reserve members, and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Enhance outreach and counseling to veterans eligible for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program.
- Expand small business and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Expand preferences and tax incentives for hiring veterans and military spouses.
- Fund and track outcomes for career-focused training programs.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments, and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.

Health Care

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA, and DOD must:

- Reduce the number of service members and veterans who die by suicide to zero.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research and effectively treat health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- Expand geriatric extended care services, nursing home eligibility, and long-term care options.
- Improve VA's prescribing and deprescribing practices.
- Improve programs and services for women and minority veterans.

Military Quality of Life

To maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force, Congress and DOD must:

- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- Protect and improve on-base quality of life and support programs.
- Eliminate forced arbitration clauses in contracts for service members.
- Ensure that military housing is safe and free of toxic substances.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Ensure military family members are gainfully employed.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.
- Establish the Armed Forces University.
- Ensure equity of benefits for Reserve component service members.

National Security, Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA

To fully support service members, and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Preserve the all-volunteer force.
- Expand partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- Ensure DPAA is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.



Explaining one of the VFW Legislative Priority Goals is Past State Commander and current National Council Member Eric Segundo during the 2023 VFW National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in March.



In one of the offices of one of our members of Congress from Massachusetts, Past State Commander and Current National Legislative Committee Member Russell Jobe details one of the points from the VFW Legislative Priority Goals, while State Commander Michael Raymond looks on.



State Commander Michael Raymond takes a photo of some of our contingent in one of the trams that transports legislators to the U.S. Senate buildings. Pictured here, left to right, are State Auxiliary President Lisa Hakola Jackson, Senior Vice Commander James Morrissey, and Past State Commander and current Trustee District 1 Keith Jackson.

Photo Descriptions submitted by Past State Photographer Christine Tron



Pictured here, left to right, are Past Department President Betty Mae Tenney, State Surgeon Christine Tron, State Auxiliary President Lisa Hakola Jackson, and Ludlow Post President Melanie Segundo.



2023-2024 Official Entry Form Patriot's Pen Competition Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

()

Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Essay Word Count

School Name, City, State

Teacher's Name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian (Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

()

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature

Post#

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

()

Phone

Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

()

Phone

Email

The winner ☐ has been ☐ will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____

Local VFW Post Information

Contact

Phone

Best Time To Call

Alternate Contact

Phone

Best Time To Call



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

PATRIOT'S PEN

2023-2024 Theme:
"How are you inspired by America?"



What is the Patriot's Pen Program?

Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme. We invite you to join the more than 73,000 students who participated last year in this contest.

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, State and national level. Department (State) winners receive a portion of \$55,000 in national awards. National Winners will receive at least \$500. The first-place national award is currently \$5,000.

The Internal Revenue Service requires a recipient awarded more than \$599 be given Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable income. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

How Does the Contest Work?

All entries begin at the VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition.

Who Can Enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th, 7th and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Home-schooled students also are eligible. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students or former winners that placed in the National contest are ineligible.)

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing contest.
- Contact a participating VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its VFW Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of October 31, 2023. You can submit your essay and entry form electronically (by email) upon the Post's approval. Entries sent to the VFW National Headquarters directly will be returned.

How Am I Judged?

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points:
You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 35 points:
Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points:
Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

What is the theme?

VFW's Commander-in-Chief annually chooses the year's theme. The 2023-2024 theme is:
"How are you inspired by America?"

Deadline Information

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by midnight October 31, 2023.

Note:

If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions:

First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to "Find a VFW Post."

If you don't have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble contacting them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) headquarters office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/contactus to look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email.

What Are the Rules?

- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.
- In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay (including, but not limited to, your name, school, city, state, race or national origin.) Do not put your name on the essay. The entry form is your essays cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once each year if otherwise eligible (one Post competition).
- The essay must be contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veteran's of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to the use of your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.
- At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.

I Have Read and Understand the Contest Rules

Signature of Student Participant

Date

For assistance contact
the VFW National Headquarters
at 816.968.1155
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org

VFW STATE CONVENTION



State Senior Vice Commander Jody Freitas displays the Certificate of Appreciation that he received from the State Auxiliary during the State Convention in June 2023 for his quick actions, most likely saving the life of State Senior Vice President Kelly Durkee-Erwin. During the visit to the VFW National Home earlier in the year, then-State JVP Durkee-Erwin was suffering from a negative reaction from a food condiment served and then-State JVC Freitas quickly responded by following her instructions on injecting the antidote.



103rd
STATE
CONVENTION

100% Posts



Winner of Best Hula contest at the fun night of the state convention on June 8th was **Melanie Segundo**, Auxiliary Post President.



State Auxiliary Patriotic Couple Everett and Kelly Durkee-Erwin enjoying the entertainment at the fun night of the state convention.



State Commander Michael Raymond shows off his patriotic military outfit prior to the patriotic fun night of the state convention.

District 15 Commander Patrick Logue considers his choice from the ice cream truck during the fun night of June's state convention in Mansfield.



*Photo Descriptions submitted by
Past State Photographer Christine Tron*

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION



Highlights of the VFW National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona included presentation of the All-American certificates and caps to those district commanders who so rightfully earned them. On July 24th, District 5 Commander Craig DeOld was presented with his certificate and cap by Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland.



Highlights of the VFW National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona included presentation of the All-American certificates and caps to those district commanders who so rightfully earned them. On July 24th, District 7 Commander Heath Joseph was presented with his certificate and cap by Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland.



During the VFW National Home Workshop on July 26th, 2023 held during the 124th VFW National Convention, Keith Jackson, Vice President of Board of Trustees and District 1 Representative, Lisa Hakola Jackson, and National VFW Auxiliary Buddy Poppy National Home Ambassador, pose with this year's Buddy Poppy Child Layla.



As the VFW National Home Buddy Poppy Child Layla walked around the convention hall to each department during the VFW National Convention on July 25th, part of our contingent of delegates greeted her: State Commander James Morrissey, Chief-of-Staff Robert Graser, District 15 Chaplain Natalie Call, Quartermaster Ernest Carruthers, District 12 Commander Joseph Feeley, and Boston Post #1018 member Lisa Venus.



That time-honored tradition of each department parading around the convention hall in celebration of the election and installation of national officers found this contingent in motion: State Commander James Morrissey, Chief-of-Staff Robert Graser, Judge Advocate Christine Tron, Surgeon Craig DeOld, Adjutant Bill LeBeau, Service Officer Delray Dorsey, District 15 Commander Patrick Logue, Women Veterans' Liaison Dawn Slaven, District 15 Chaplain Natalie Call, and Boston Police post member Lisa Venus. This concluded the 124th VFW National Convention on July 27th, 2023.

Photo Descriptions submitted by
Past State Photographer Christine Tron

The tradition of physically passing the hat to collect donations from the delegates found Past State Commander and current National Council Member Eric Segundo holding a VFW cap along with District 18 Commander Robert Hardy, as State Service Officer Delray Dorsey looks on. This took place on July 25th, 2023 of the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

124th
VFW
NATIONAL
CONVENTION

What's Happening Around the State

National Auxiliary President Jane Reape and VFW Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland stand with their cakes during the joint banquet held in their honor on March 11th, 2023 at the Casa Lucia Function facility in Revere.



On May 22nd, State Surgeon Christine Tron was interviewed by the producer of Billerica Access TV, Charlie Smith who was interested in the importance of recognizing women veterans as Women Veterans' Recognition Day was approaching on June 12th, how the community can support veterans, and other questions regarding veterans. Comrade Tron emphasized the importance of any eligible veteran to join a veterans' organization, as well as their family member to join the Auxiliary.



Amherst-South Hadley Post 3104



Burning of the Post 8006 mortgage on August 27, 2023 in Florence. Made possible by the generosity of the Amherst-South Hadley Post 3104.

*Names: In uniform, Post 8006 QM Harry Parker
In Center, Post 8006 Commander, Tom Pease
At right, Post 8006 Corporation President, William Aherin*



VFW Boston Police Post #1018

On February 18th, 2023 at Lombardo's in Randolph, a celebration to mark the 100th year of VFW Boston Police Post #1018 took place. Holding the post's colors reflecting the mustering in on the date February 19th, 1923 are Post Commander Craig DeOld and State Commander Michael Raymond.



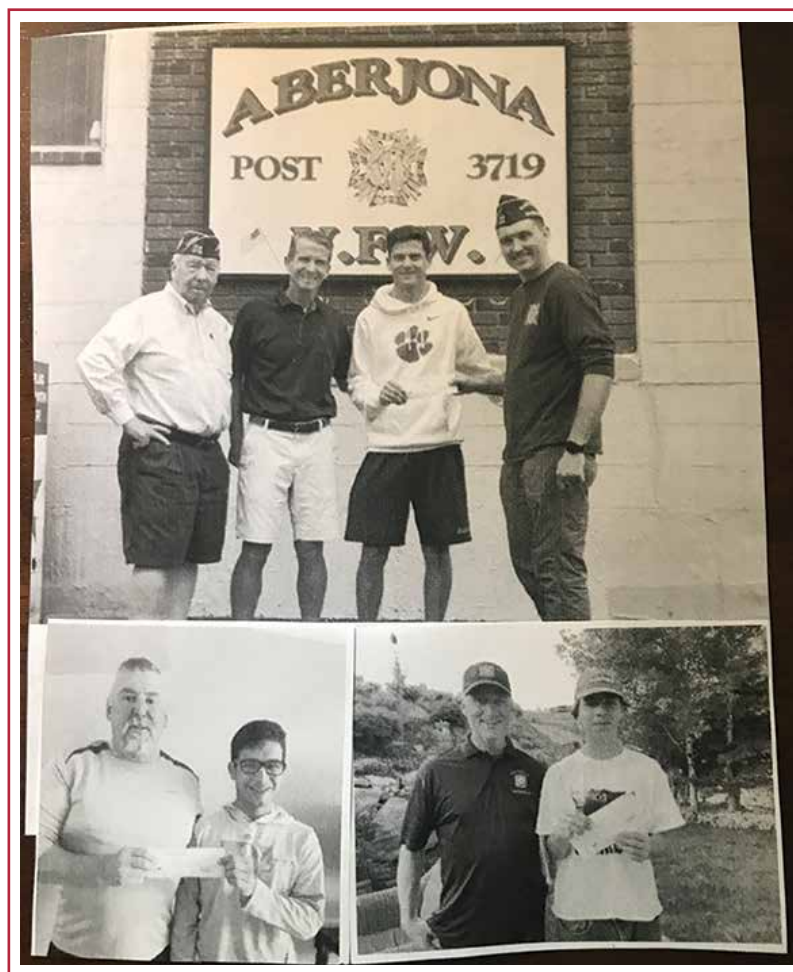
Aberjona VFW Post #3719

Winchester VFW Awards Three Scholarships for 2023

Aberjona Post #3719 awards a scholarship annually to a child or grandchild of a member of the Post. This year the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to give scholarships to all that applied. Applicants must be students who will graduate from high school in June and be accepted to a four year college. This year's scholarships are awarded to Brendan Carroll, David Quill and James O'Brien. Brendan is the grandson of Bill Carroll and the son of Shawn, David is the son of Gregory Quill, and James is the son of John O'Brien.

In reviewing the applications the board considered the involvement in VFW Post #3719 of each family member. Further the board was mindful of the values of patriotism which were so eloquently described by each of the candidate's in their application letters. It was clear that all the applicants were deserving of the 2023 scholarship.

The VFW Board wishes all of the students the best of luck as Brendan Carroll will be heading off to Clemson University, David Quill will be attending Salem State University and James O'Brien will be attending Colorado State University.



*Photo Descriptions submitted by
Past State Photographer Christine Tron*

Volunteerism

Dog Tag Memorial

Another VFW member who paid homage regarding the VAU Heroes Project was State Surgeon Christine Tron who assisted in the set up of the Dog Tag Memorial on April 28th in Leominster.



As usual, at the Monthly Produce Market at VA Bedford, VFW Tewksbury post member James Williams is sorting and bagging fresh fruits and vegetables. Here Comrade Williams is seen with turnips at the activity held on May 18th.

VFW DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Support our military men and women. They're our 1st line of defense.

VFW Post #545

During Warrior Weekend held in Beverly on May 20th and 21st, members of VFW Post #545 had the opportunity to ride on a tank provided by the American Heritage Museum: Chuck Clark and Corey Paulette. These two hard working members of the Beverly post are often transporting and distributing U.S. flags and wreaths for commemorative holidays such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Wreaths Across America Day at cemeteries in Beverly. At this event, Comrades Clark and Paulette staffed a table distributing information regarding healthcare and filing claims for veterans and the benefit of joining veterans' organizations.



VFW Post #545 Beverly



The annual fundraiser for VFW Post #545 Beverly brings out all their members who regularly attend meetings. On this day, May 24th, member William Hardy stands with a box of poppies for the public and gladly accepts their donations. Members generally fulfill multiple four-hour shifts over the several-day fundraiser.





Participant Agreement for Students Advancing to National Level

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Voice of Democracy National Finals in Washington, D.C. as a guest of the VFW National Organization. In consideration for permission to participate in the National Voice of Democracy Competition ("Competition") I do hereby, for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees, waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the Competition and/or arising out of any travel related to the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my audio file, essay, name and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Voice of Democracy Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature	Post #
VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (If applicable)	
Post Address	
City, State, Zip	
VFW Post Email	
No. of students participating _____	
No. of winners advanced to Districts _____	
Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarships awards \$ _____	
Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (Banquet, Pins, etc.) \$ _____	

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairperson Signature	Dist. #
Address	
City, State, Zip	
() _____	_____
Phone	Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Voice of Democracy Contest Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature	Dist. #
() _____	_____
Phone	Email
The winner <input type="checkbox"/> has been <input type="checkbox"/> will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____	

What is the Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 27,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, "What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C., to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$171,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$35,000.

The Rules

Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are not eligible for entry.

What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio essay on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at youthscholarships@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to your name, school, city, state, race, or national origin) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

Proudly Sponsored By



TWISTED X

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2023
Patriotic Audio Essay Competition
Grand Prize: \$35,000 Scholarship

For assistance contact:

816.968.1155

Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org

VFW STORE ORDER NO. 4420

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION

CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____

BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____

BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

Revised 01/2023

You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN, or biographical information.

Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries begin at the VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: First, visit this website vfw.org/FindaPost to "Find A VFW Post." If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link vfw.org/ContactUs and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email.

If you still need assistance, please Email us at VFW National Headquarters: youthscholarships@vfw.org

What is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?

Originality is worth 30 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content is worth 35 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

2023-2024 Theme:
 "What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"



2023-2024 Official Voice of Democracy Competition Entry Form

Must be completed by ALL contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last			
Address			
City, State, Zip			
() _____	Email		
Phone			
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)	Grade in School	Age	Jacket Size
School Name, City, State			
Teacher Name and Email (If applicable)			
To be completed by Student's Parent/Guardian (Required even if student is 18 or over)			
Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)			
Parent/Guardian Signature		Date	
() _____			
Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone			
Parent/Guardian Email			

I Have Read and Understand the Rules and Participant Agreement

(On opposite side)

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant _____ Date _____

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2023-2024 Smart/Maher VFW National
Citizenship Education Teacher Award

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Entry Deadline: October 31, 2023

What is the Teacher Award Program?
Founded in 1899, the VFW highly supports the education of America's youth. VFW and its Auxiliary have developed a slate of programs dedicated to helping America's educators. VFW Citizenship Education programs stimulate interest in America's history, traditions, Americanism, civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism.
Teachers care deeply about America and its children. They're concerned about the perpetuation of America's noblest traditions and highest ideals. Wouldn't you like to see them get the honor they deserve? Now you can.

Why Should I Enter?
VFW wants to identify and recognize America's best educators who instill a sense of national pride in students. The national awards include \$1,000 Smart/Maher award for each of the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses, \$1,000 award for each winning teacher's school, commemorative plaques and all-expense-paid trip to the VFW National Convention.

Who is Eligible?
All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national VFW winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

How are teachers nominated?
Fill out the official entry form contained on the next page, and provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo if available.
Please submit your completed entry form signed, along with the required documentation to your local VFW Post. Visit vfw.org/FindaPost for Post locations or call VFW Programs Department at 816.756.3390 ext. 6287 to find the Post nearest you.

What Is the Deadline for My Entry?
All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31, 2023. It is the responsibility of the nominator to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?
Citizenship (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what extent does the teacher encourage and/or model good citizenship and community involvement?
Innovation (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, how much innovation (new ideas, new tools, new resources, and new approaches) does this teacher utilize in the classroom? Does this teacher's effort reflect an ongoing desire to stimulate the students with new things?
Resources (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what degree has this teacher demonstrated an ability to identify and utilize new and exceptional resources to fund, facilitate and provide materials for his or her classroom? Does this teacher tap into outside agencies, organizations and individuals to acquire materials and expertise in the classroom? As an example – bringing speakers, finding in-kind and monetary donations, or utilizing local opportunities like museums, field trips and local events.
Passion (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what degree does this teacher appear to be passionate about the profession of teaching? Are they regularly seeking to upgrade their skills? Do they try and find ways to encourage their students? Do they take a personal interest in their student's individual success?

*If you have any questions, please call
Tammy Beauchamp, 816.756.3390, ext 6287
or tbeauchamp@vfw.org.*

Local VFW Post Information:
Contact
Phone Best time to call
Alternative Contact
Phone Best time to call

2023-2024 Smart/Maher VFW National
Citizenship Education Teacher Award

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Entry Deadline: October 31, 2023

**2023-2024 Official Entry Form
Teacher Award Competition**
Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

() Phone Email

Grade Level (K-5, 6-8, or 9-12)

School Name

School Address

() School Phone School Email

Person Nominating Teacher
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone:
Email:

To Be Completed by the VFW District (If Applicable)
I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Teacher Award District Competition and is our entry into the Department judging.

District Chairperson's Signature

Dist #

Address

City, State, Zip

() Phone Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson
I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Teacher Award Department Competition, is our entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson's Signature

()

Daytime Phone Email

The winner ☐ has been ☐ will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on .

Where Do I Submit My Entry?
All entries will begin at the local VFW Post level. Individual nominees may submit their entry directly to the Post. This VFW Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One Post winner can be submitted for each level, and to District by Nov. 15. If your Department does not have a District judging, then submit to your Department Headquarters by Jan. 1. Otherwise, one District winner, at each level, may advance to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions: First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to find your local VFW Post. Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in. If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/ContactUs and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at vfw.national@vfw.org.

To Be Completed by the VFW Post
I certify that this teacher has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Teacher Award Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairperson's Signature

Post #

VFW Auxiliary President's/Chairperson's Signature (If Applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email


No. of teachers participating

No. of winners advanced to District

Amt. of Post /Aux. scholarship awards \$

Amt. of Post /Aux. additional expenses \$ (banquet, pins, etc.)

TAPS




Raymond M. Patenaude, 96, of Somerset, MA passed away peacefully on August 8, 2023 with family by his side. Raymond was born in Fall River, MA to the late Aurora (Proulx) Patenaude and the late Arthur Paenaude.

Ray was a Veteran of World War II. He enlisted in the Army in July of 1945 and proudly served his country in active duty during wartime until his discharge in April 1947. While enlisted, Ray was a member of the Military Police and Military Jazz Band and he often shared stories from his time in Berlin. His love of this country did not end at his discharge, Ray became an active Veteran in his local community. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8500 and held various positions there including Post Commander and District 6 Commander. Ray was also a member of the American Legion Post 303 in Swansea, MA and the Berlin U.S. Military Veterans Association. Raymond was a dedicated and loyal employee of Stop and Shop for many years. He worked his way up the ranks from bag boy to Lead Maintenance Technician proudly overseeing eleven stores. He has been a member of the Local 537 Pipefitters Union since 1965.

Ray was an avid woodworker sharing many of his projects with family and friends. He loved to travel, especially to Florida, and often frequented Kennedy Space Center launching his love of the history of Space Missions. In his travels Ray was able to go back to Berlin and share his military memories with his late wife Lorraine.

Raymond was predeceased by his siblings, spouse, and children. He was a loving grandfather and is survived by his grandson Chris (Tami) Grant and his granddaughter Amy Deslauriers along with several great grandchildren and friends who became family over the years.





VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

STATE COMMANDER & DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL
PROJECT

RAFFLE



FIRST PLACE: \$500
SECOND PLACE: \$300
THIRD PLACE: \$200
\$25 per entry



Winners to be drawn December 20, 2023

Make Checks Payable to:
VFW Dept. of MA. Foundation

Write "Special Project Raffle" on the Memo Line

OR

Venmo: @twhenke82

Mail checks to: Troy W. Henke
56 Bacon Ave.
West Springfield, MA. 01089

OTI Training
Agenda



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.
Massachusetts

September 30th, 2023

Main Classroom	
0900-0915	Welcome – Jimmy Morrissey, State Commander
0915-1020	Membership State and National Membership Program Craig DeOld, State Surgeon Recruiting and Retention – Craig DeOld, State Surgeon
1020-1030	Break
1030-1050	Communications – Eric Segundo, National Council Member
1050-1115	Community Service – Mike Raymond, Past State Commander
1115 -1145	Inspections – Bruce Wilbur, State Inspector
1145-1245	Lunch
1300-1320	Sexual Harassment / Harassment – Dawn Slaven
1320-1345	Parliamentary – Christine Tron, State Judge Advocate
1345-1415	Post Grants - Ernest Carruthers, State Quartermaster
1415-1430	Break
1430-1500	Programs-Jody Freitas, State Senior Vice Commander
1500-1530	Special Project-Troy Hanke, State Junior Vice Commander
1530-1600	Round Table
1615 – UTC	Council of Administration
Break Out Room #1	
0930-1030	Quartermaster - Ernest Carruthers, State Quartermaster
1030-1130	Adjutant – Bill LeBeau, State Adjutant
1300- UTC	Service Officer – Delray Dorsey, State Service Officer
Break Out Room #2	
0900-1145	Claims – Delray Dorsey, State Service Officer

OTI will be at the Doubletree Hotel on Computer Drive in Westborough from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

A lunch break will be from 11:45PM to 12:45PM.

PSC Mike Raymond will be handing out All State and All-American Awards throughout the day.

A council meeting will follow at 4:15 PM on Saturday. (This has been reflected in the updated calendar.

VFW PROGRAMS DEADLINE DATES

Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award
*October 31, Entries to the Post
November 15, Completion of Post judging
December 15, Completion of District judging
*February 1, Department winners and reports due to National (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation)

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen
*October 31, Student entries to the Post
November 15, Completion of Post judging
December 15, Completion of District judging
January 10, Completion of Department judging
January 15, District participation reports due to Department Chairmen
*January 15, Department winners due to National
*January 31, Department reports due to National

Scout of the Year
*March 1, Scout entries to the Post
*April 1, Post entries to Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs
*May 1, Department entry to National from Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs

Community Service
*June 30, Community Service Reports Deadline

Public Servant National Award (Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Emergency Services)
January 1, Nominations due (from Post to Department)
*February 1, (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), Nominations due from Department to National

National Certificate of Recognition
April 1 (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), List due to National from Department

**Required deadline (by VFW National Headquarters.) All other deadlines are suggested, and can be internally set at the discretion of the VFW Department leadership. Post Chairmen, be sure to communicate with your District Chairmen to find out their official deadlines, and District Chairmen need to communicate with their Department Chairmen to find out their deadlines.*

Membership Minute

Are you ready to meet THE challenge?? Our Commander in Chief and State Commander have thrown down their gauntlets and issued the 102% Challenge!! The challenge to all of us is to increase our membership 102% this year! We were soooooo close last year. Sounds like a daunting task?? Not for Team Massachusetts!!

The Department finished last year with 15,559 members. To accomplish the challenge, Massachusetts needs to finish this year with 15,871 members. That's only 312 brand new members, plus retaining our existing membership base and replacing our deceased Comrades. Massachusetts can do that and then some!!

One great way to work on this is to take advantage of the Department's Life Membership Incentive! The Department will pay half, yes HALF, the Life Membership costs for Annual Members (age 69 and younger) in good standing for at least 1 year; an eligible Veteran age 70 or older; Current Law Enforcement, Fire Fighter, EMS, Corrections, or Public Safety Dispatcher; Currently on Active Duty in the US Armed Forces; or Current member of the US Armed Forces Reserve of National Guard. This will remain open as long as funds remain!! ACT NOW!!!

Maybe one of the BEST ways to recruit new members and retain our current members is to get out in to the community and represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars and your Post! As an active part of our communities, the VFW will continue to be the Veterans Service Organization of choice for combat veterans to be a part of! Sponsoring a youth sports team, taking part of annual fairs and festivals, getting in front of other civic or professional organizations will remind our communities that the VFW is still here and supporting our community!

Another way is to be an active participant in the VFW's programs! Working with your communities to solicit entries for Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy, Teachers Awards, Public Safety Officers of the Year, and Employer of the Year will again get our Posts actively out in the community. This involvement will make our Posts more attractive to be a part of.

Get out of the Posts and canteens and in to our communities! Remember that the Department is ready to assist you in these endeavors! Please reach out!

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!! CHALLENGE MET AND EXCEEDED!!

Yours in comradeship,

Craig DeOld
State Membership Chairman
cdeold@vfwma.org



Life Membership Special!

Convert your annual membership to life today and we will cover half (1/2) the fee

Must meet at least one of the following below:

☒ Member in "Good Standings" at least 1 year (69 and under)

☒ Currently on Active Duty in the Armed Forces of the US

☒ Veteran at least 70 and over

☒ Currently member of the National Guard or Reserves

☒ Current Law Enforcement, Fire, EMT, Corrections, Sheriff, Public Safety Dispatcher

More Info: www.vfwma.org

Questions: Contact Membership Chairman Craig DeOld at cdeold@vfwma.org

Limited life conversion grant funds available, so act now!



DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM
2023-2024

PREPARED BY: James MORRISSEY, STATE COMMANDER
Craig DeOld, MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

This membership program has been designed to recognize and award you for promoting membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Note: To receive credit, please remember to put your name and VFW ID/ member number on all Membership Application Forms for all new members you recruit.

To be eligible for any award:

- ✓ You must meet the award criteria on or before the Department deadline date (as indicated in this guide).
- ✓ Membership numbers must appear on National’s website (memstats) on or before the Department’s contest deadline date.
- Post must have at least 50 members to receive any membership award
- Unless otherwise stated, awards will be presented at the State Convention

Respectfully,
James R. Morrissey III
State Commander

Craig DeOld
Membership Chairman

July 2023	\$50.00 & (1) Commanders’ Shirt
August	\$50.00 Prize
September	\$50.00 Prize
October	\$50.00 Prize
November	\$50.00 Prize
December	\$100.00 Prize & (2) Tickets to VOD/PP Banquet
January	\$50.00 Prize & (2) Tickets to Commander-in-Chief Banquet
February	\$50.00 Prize
March	\$50.00 Prize
April	\$50.00 Prize
May	\$50.00 Prize (2) Tickets to Awards Banquet (State Convention)
June 2024	\$100.00 Prize

Recruiter: New Members Monthly Contest:

July 2023	\$50.00 & (1) Commanders’ Shirt
August	\$50.00 Prize
September	\$50.00 Prize
October	\$50.00 Prize
November	\$50.00 Prize
December	\$50.00 & (2) Tickets to VOD/PP BANQUET
March	\$50.00 Prize April
	\$50.00 Prize
May	\$50.00 Prize (2) Tickets to Awards Banquet (State Convention)
June 2024	\$100.00 Prize

Monthly Contest: Each month posts & recruiters leading with the most new members on the last day of the month will received a monthly prize (listed above)

In the event of a tie a raffle drawing will be held to determine the winner. (Must have a minimum (3) for posts, (3) for recruiters. Awards will be based on the current month totals and not accumulative total. Every month posts and recruiters will have the opportunity to compete as the contest re-starts over at the beginning of each month.

Early Bird - Continuous Membership Award Deadline: December 31, 2023

Continuous members who renew their dues at least one month earlier than when they are due will be entered to win a Life Membership if renewed by 12/31/2023 (1 winner).

100% Membership Award Deadline: December 31, 2023

Posts with 50 or more members achieving 100% membership by 12/31/2023 will be entered to win a \$500.00 and \$ 250 cash prize (2 winners). Posts with 49 or less will be entered to win a \$200.00 cash prize (1 winner).

Post Commanders Contest Deadline: May 31, 2024

Post Commanders LEADING in their DIVISION as of May 31, 2024, at 8am and reaching or exceeding 102% will be the guest of the State Commander to attend the State Convention in June 2023. They will receive a full room and tax (2 nights) and two (2) tickets to the Awards Banquet.

All-State Post Award

- ✓ Must have 102% or greater in Membership by **June 30th 2024 at 8am** ✓ Must have all four (4) Quarterly Audits submitted.
- ✓ Post Quartermaster **MUST** be Bonded on or before aug.31,2023 for the full year.
- ✓ Must have submitted a Community Service Report.
- ✓ Must have participated/purchase Buddy Poppy.
- ✓ Must have participated in the Voice of Democracy Program (Entry).
- ✓ Must have participated in the Patriot Pen Program (Entry).
- ✓ Must have Submitted a Candidate to **ONE** of the following:
 - Teacher Award, Police or Firefighters Award,Scout of Year
- ✓ Must have attended Field Training/OTI
- ✓ Post must have participated in a Special Project event or donation of \$50.
- ✓
- ✓ Post must have participated in a National Home donation of \$50.
- ✓ Post must have participated in a Unmet Needs donation of \$50.

All State Post Commander

Post Commander achieving All-State will receive the following:

- All State Post Commander’s Cap and Commanders Jacket
 - All State Post Commander’s Lapel pin.
 - Two (2) ticket to the State Convention’s Awards Banquet.
- Post who achieve All-State after State Convention will be presented their items at the 1st Council of Administration meeting. (Cap & lapel pin only).

Post Quartermaster’s Award

The Post Quartermaster of a Post that achieves ALL STATE POST status will receive the Following:

- All State Quartermaster Lapel Pin.
- All State Quartermaster Cap or Jacket

Post Quartermasters who achieve All-State after State Convention will be presented their items at the 1st Council of Administration meeting.

All State District Commanders Award

- District Commander must be 102% by 8am on JUNE 30, 2024
- All Posts in District **MUST** be Inspected by March 31, 2024.
 - Must have a Voice of Democracy District entry submitted to Department.
 - Must have a Patriots Pen entry submitted to Department.
 - Must have at least one Post in District submit a Candidate to the Department for **ONE** of the following: Teachers Award, Police and/or Firefighter Awards,Scout of Year
 - District must have participated in a special project event or donation of \$100.
 - District must have participated in a donation to the National Home of \$100.
 - District must have participated in a donation to the Unmet needs program of \$100..

All-State District Commander Will be awarded the following:

- An All State Commander's Cap.
- A Distinctive Jacket
- Two (2) tickets to the State Convention Awards Luncheon. ➤ \$250.00 Prize

District Commanders who achieve All-State after State Convention will be presente items at the 1st Council of Administration meeting. (Cap & lapel pin only)

- A Distinctive Jacket
- Two (2) tickets to the State Convention Awards Luncheon. ➤ \$250.00 Prize.

District Commanders who achieve All-State after State Convention will be presented their items at the 1st Council of Administration meeting. (Cap & lapel pin only)

District Quartermaster’s Award

The District Quartermaster that achieves ALL STATE District status will receive the Following:

- All State Quartermaster Lapel Pin
- Choice of an All State Quartermaster Cap or Jacket

District Quartermaster who achieve All-State after State Convention will be presented their items at the 1st Council of Administration meeting.

District Commanders Contest

District Commanders LEADING their DIVISIONS and reaching or exceeding 102% by May 31, 2024, at 8am will receive \$250.00 Prize.

Reinstate Members Award

Post with the most reinstated members by June 1, 2024 will receive \$250.00 cash prize. (Minimum of 20)

State Commander Special Membership Awards

Awards are in addition to the monthly membership contest.

3 Members Recruited: State Commanders Challenge Coin

5 Members Recruited: Top Three Challenge Coins

10 Members Recruited: (1) Commander’s Shirt

15 Members Recruited: (2) Tickets to the Commander-in-Chief’s Reception

20 Members Recruited: (2) Tickets to the Awards Banquet (State Convention)

30 Members Recruited: (2) nights Hotel Stay (State Convention)



NEWSPAPER DEADLINE DATES

January 15th, 2024

- Please submit all entries as a Word document.
- Ensure all photos are accompanied by a brief explanation of the subject to include identifying all persons and their titles, the event, date, and the importance.
- Ensure submissions are timely (a past event that is not older than three months or an upcoming one that is not within one month past deadline.)
- Entries are accepted on a continuous basis and not just as a deadline approaches.
- Submissions, questions, and comments should be sent to the Massachusetts VFW State Newspaper Editor: PSC Eric Segundo at communications@vfwma.org
- Your input is important and encouraged!



JOIN THE VFW

We understand the unique bond you share with other veterans of overseas conflicts because we, too, have been there. Since 1899, the VFW has been the nation's leading veterans service organization in the fight to better the lives of all those who've worn the uniform of the United States military. No matter which conflict called you to service, we invite you to join us. Stand strong with the nearly 1.7 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary as together, we continue to fight for all that's good FOR VETERANS.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

As the largest combat Veterans organization around, VFW membership spans the globe. We're an elite group of combat warriors who have each other's backs long after the fight is over.

Camaraderie. Empowerment. Access to a vast network of resources. Assistance securing the benefits you've earned. Numerous discounts on a number of products and services. With a VFW membership, you'll find all this and more! Further, your VFW membership establishes your place in the VFW legacy that dates back to our founding in 1899.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

By becoming a VFW Life member, you make a lifetime commitment to serving your fellow service members and veterans. That's something to take great pride in.

You'll also enjoy many great benefits of being a Life member! You will:

- Avoid annual dues and renewals.
- Maintain your membership in any Post you choose, worldwide!
- Never pay an increase in dues—Guaranteed!
- Receive a 10% discount on exclusive VFW Store merchandise for the first year.

You can become a VFW Life member by making a one-time payment, or you can pay for your Life membership through our installment plan with an initial \$45 payment and the Life membership amount billed over an 11-month period.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Legacy Life membership enables VFW Life members to leave a lasting impression on our great organization. Three prestigious levels of Legacy Life membership are available: Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Each level offers generous benefits reserved exclusively for Legacy Life members. Once your Legacy Life membership begins, an annual endowment in your name will be made to your Post, Department and the national organization. You will feel confident knowing your contributions to our organization are not only helping today's veterans but the veterans of tomorrow.

You may also purchase a Memorial Legacy in the name of a deceased VFW Life member to help future generations know and remember their sacrifice and contributions.

It's easy to join our mailing list!

Just send your email address by text message:

Text

VFWSTRONG

to **22828** to get started.



**BRING OUR
TROOPS
HOME
SAFE**



Education Benefits

Tuition Waiver for All Massachusetts Veterans To All State Colleges And Universities.

M.G.L. Ch. 15A, s.19 Veterans of Massachusetts, as defined by M.G.L. Ch. 4, s.7, clause 43, may be eligible for any state-supported course in an undergraduate degree program or certificate program offered by a public college or university. To be eligible, a veteran must also be a legal resident of Massachusetts and must not be in default of any federal student loans.

Veterans will be eligible on a space-available basis for a waiver of full or partial tuition based on proper documentation of the eligibility of the veteran. Space availability shall be determined in accordance with normal practices and procedures as published by each institution, i.e., the individual college or university. Contact the Veterans Representative at the college or university for details.

National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver

Acts of 2005 Ch. 130 Members of the National Guard are eligible for a waiver of both fees and tuition at all state colleges and universities. Please contact the college or university Veterans' Representative for details about this program.

