

SECTION 5

VFW Programs

Post, County Council, District and Department Commanders should study the material in this section, then see to it that the various program chairmen at all levels are familiar with their job. You will receive additional information on these programs at the appropriate time and you are urged to see that it reaches the proper individuals for active program participation.

- **Citizenship Education**
 - **Community Service**
- **National Military Services**
 - **Voice of Democracy**
 - **Patriot's Pen**
 - **Recognition Activities**
 - **Scout of the Year**
 - **Buddy Poppy**
- **VFW Communications & Public Affairs**

Volunteers

Recruiting Volunteers for the Long Term Projects

Recruiting for a long term commitment is obviously harder than for short term projects. If present trends continue, you may be unable to recruit a long-term dedicated volunteer for the job. Take a long, hard look at the job and see if it can be divided into smaller units. You may find that it originally was designed twenty years ago and no one has ever thought of doing anything differently. The following are some suggestions for trying to design a recruitment campaign for these types of volunteer positions.

--Make the volunteer not one person, but several. You might have two persons equally share the job, or one lead volunteer who is given an assistant. The team can split up the time and work requirements. This approach is particularly useful when you are attempting to encourage a volunteer who has a particular expertise but is reluctant to volunteer because he or she doesn't have the time to do all of the work. The team's volunteer assistant can provide the time and work effort; the expert volunteer can provide the knowledge and experience.

--Advertise via Post newsletter or local newspaper. Saturate your membership and community with your volunteer recruitment message. You might consider using the job requirements as part of the selling point for the volunteer job - remember the Marines, who are looking for "a few good men"? Make the difficult a challenge.

--Practice target recruitment. Devote time to identify who would really like to do the job and track them down. Examine the motivations and backgrounds of the current volunteers to find any common factors. Do they have similar backgrounds, education or experiences or occupations? Common factors will enable you to locate others from that same group who like the volunteer job despite the time and work requirements.

--Recruit via current volunteers. Emphasize word-of-mouth communication. The individual's testimony - "I volunteered in this area and I know that it is rewarding" - will often overcome barriers to involvement. Make sure you provide them all the program materials available.

--Offer potential volunteers a 30-day trial period. Tell them to try the volunteer job and see if they like it. This is a great approach because it allows the volunteers to see if they like their jobs. Schedule a review meeting when they start their positions and stress that they are under no obligation to continue the job after the test period. While you will lose some volunteers, you will gain quite a few who have had the opportunity to examine the volunteer job without pressure, learned that they liked the work and decided that investing their time and energy was worth it.

The telephone rings.

Hello this is (Commander or Program Chairman), How may I help you?

Caller: This is _____, a member of the Post or the community. I'd like to volunteer. Do you have anything I can do on Saturday?

VFW Commander or chairman: "We'll, no ... but ..."

The short-term volunteer has begun to emerge in the last few years. The short-term volunteer is not a "believer" or a "joiner" but has a general interest in the VFW or in the task involved. This volunteer prefers a "one-day event" placement and often only interested in a particular type of activity. This volunteer might work on a bike safety rodeo, collect clothes and food for a homeless shelter, or clean up a local veterans memorial with his family. The act of cleaning up a memorial is what attracts this volunteer.

The following is an example of how to implement short-term Saturday projects in your area.

One. Ask local agencies who could use volunteers on a Saturday. The inquiry should indicate clean-up or fix-up type projects are acceptable, but agencies should also be creative. The time frame for a project should be two to three hours. This study should ask for projects for volunteers of all ages and abilities so that as many as possible can participate.

Two. Set a date for the Saturday projects. As soon as the Post has identified a project or local agencies indicate that they can utilize Saturday volunteers, set a date for a Saturday project within the next few months. Limit the first Saturday to a few projects -- three is a manageable number.

Three. Send agencies a "let's do it" letter. This letter should contain an outline of responsibilities for the participating agency. For example, the agency will:

- Sponsor a project on Saturday, October 22nd.
- Provide a project leader for the length of the project.
- Provide necessary materials.
- Provide refreshments.

The VFW will:

- Recruit and advertise (by direct mail, telephone, etc.) this event to their members and families.
- Provide a VFW representative to assist the agency in organizing the members who volunteer.

Once you have a core group of volunteers established, it will spread word of Saturday volunteer opportunities and more members will contact you or the Program Chairman for information on upcoming projects.

The key to working with short-term volunteers is to make sure their time is well-utilized and not wasted. This type of volunteer can get a good deal of work done in a limited amount of time and become a major asset to your Post.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship Education Program provides support for our democratic institutions. As American citizens, we recognize our responsibility to defend the United States in time of war. What many Americans fail to realize is that we have a further duty - we must also defend our nation in time of peace. The VFW can help in that defense by providing effective Citizenship Education Programs.

What can you as a Commander do to promote Citizenship Education? Many things, but first you need to appoint a capable Citizenship Education Chairman. Secondly, make sure you give your chairman the Citizenship Education Program Chairman's material you receive from the National Citizenship Education Department. The material is designed to help the chairman establish an effective program.



VFW and Ladies Auxiliary
VFW members conduct a
Flag Education program
in their local school.

Some of the Citizenship Education activities you and your program chairman can support are:

- Promote the VFW Citizenship Education Programs to schools and youth groups. Arrange a meeting with a school representative at the elementary, middle/junior high and high school level and provide the individual(s) with information on the following programs: **The Pledge of Allegiance Program (grades K-2), Flag Education Program (grades 3-5) and the Veterans in the Classroom Program (grades 6-12). Remember to have members participate in “Veterans in the Classroom” Program in November and the Library of Congress Veterans Oral History Project.**

- Nominate a teacher in grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 for the **National Citizenship Education Teacher Award**. One teacher in each of the grade level categories will receive an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW and Ladies Auxiliary National Conference, \$1,000 for professional development, \$1,000 for their school and a plaque. Post judging deadline, November 15. Post winning entries are sent to District judging who will forward their selection for Department judging by December 15. Recognize local teachers of the Post competition with the VFW Citizenship Education Teacher’s Award from the VFW Supply Catalog.



VFW Color Guard participating in a local parade.

- Have your POST sponsor community programs on veterans related holidays (i.e. POW/MIA Day, Veterans Day, National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, Loyalty Day, Memorial Day, etc.). Speeches can be requested from the VFW Public Affairs Office (816) 756-3390. Please request at least two weeks prior to activity date.

- Conduct a Get Out The Vote program in your community. Assist citizens in obtaining the information on registering and conduct a “Candidates Night.” Especially promote the importance of these topics in our young.

These are only some of the suggested activities that constitute a Citizenship Education Program. Remember, the activities your Post conducts are important for your community and country. **Keep details about your completed activities** so you can “tell your story” about your Post’s activities to the local media and elected officials. Your Department will be asking you to report these activities, including the volunteer hours and dollars spent to complete the Citizenship Education activities and awarding National Citizenship Education Recognition Citations based on Department criteria.

Community Service

Community Service is an important priority in our country. National Community Service Programs are being discussed at all levels of government and the VFW is prepared to support these endeavors and give advice based on our many years of experience.

VFW Posts make things happen through their involvement in the community. Community service brings positive publicity and good will to VFW units who are involved. Eligible veterans are proud to become members of a Post that is noted for its promoting community service. For ideas on how to motivate members, read the articles - **Involving New**

Members in Community Activities, and Recruiting Volunteers for the Long and Short Term Projects - found on other pages in this booklet.

The success of a Community Activities Program is dependent upon good leadership. Appoint a Community Activities Chairman who has demonstrated basic leadership qualities. Such a chairman will usually conduct a strong effective program. Make sure you give your chairman the Community Service Program Chairman's materials you will receive from the National Community Service Department.

It is a good practice to keep organized records of your completed community activities. Reporting of community service is good business and it provides your Department with information on your Post's donated volunteer hours and the dollars spent in support of the community service projects. This information is beneficial to proving your Post's not-for-profit status with state and federal agencies. FOLLOW YOUR DEPARTMENT'S PROCEDURE IN REPORTING YOUR POST'S COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS.



VFW and Auxiliary members collect clothing items for a local homeless shelter on Make A Difference Day.

VFW units can achieve national recognition by nominating unique community service projects to the **VFW Community Activities Special Projects Recognition Program**. Deadline is April 30th. Note: The Post with the most outstanding special project of the year will be recognized at the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary National Convention. Information about this program can be found in the VFW Community Activities Chairman's Manual. Your Post can also be recognized as one of the **National Outstanding Community Service Posts** at the National Convention. Check with your Department for criteria.

The members of the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary have a long time commitment to community service. Annually nearly 12 million volunteer hours are reported. Post Commanders can recognize their volunteers through the National Community Service Volunteer Recognition Program. Also individual Posts will be recognized by their Departments and awarded a National Community Service Recognition Citation based on Department criteria.

The key to involving those who have just joined your Post/Auxiliary lies in bringing them into the 'Post family' as quickly as possible. **To accomplish that, do the following:**

1. **Time Your Meetings Properly.** Make sure that it is possible for the 'new' members to come to the meetings. If much of your new membership is composed of working people change your meetings to times that will accommodate their needs (i.e. Saturday morning over coffee and donuts). Strive for "ease of participation", because people will most probably become involved with the group that makes it most convenient for them to participate.
2. **Go Out of Your Way to Personally Ask New Members to Attend.** Consider having a "First Timers" meeting occasionally, aimed at all those who have never before attended a meeting. Or divide the new members among the officers and make telephone calls extending a personal invitation to each new member. Encourage senior members to "bring a new or non-active member" to the next meeting.
3. **Establish a "Designated Host" System.** Have you ever attended a meeting in which you didn't know anyone, and you spent the evening watching this group of old friends chat away happily while you tried to blend into the wallpaper? Did you go back for a second meeting? The purpose of the Designated Host System is to make sure that anyone attending a meeting for the first time

has an enjoyable experience. The Designated Host(s) are stationed by the door to watch for new faces. When a new face (presumably attached to a member or prospective member) arrives, the Designated Host escorts them for the evening, introducing them to everyone, explaining what is going on, translating the acronyms and explaining the old war stories. And, of course, by the end of the evening, the Designated Hosts knows as much as possible about the interests and back ground of the new member so that a suitable interest can be found as quickly as possible. Past Commanders or Presidents, by the way, make excellent Designated Hosts; they know all the faces and being a Designated Host will keep them involved. (See the example of the 3" x 5" card that can be made up).

4. Create a "Mentor System". Mentor Systems work off the buddy principle, in which each new member is 'teamed' with a more experienced member. The senior member is expected to get to know the new member, act as their guide, and figure out how the new member can best be involved in the group. Contact VFW Programs at 816-756-3390, ext. 287 for copies of the VFW Mentoring brochure.

5. Have a special "New Member Project". If your new members arrive as a group (at least three), then consider creating a New Member Project, which is given as a responsibility to the new membership class. The New Members are responsible for thinking of the project, planning, and implementation. The benefit of this system to the New Members is that it quickly gives them a sense of ownership and control in the activities of the organization -- they have something which is 'theirs'. The system also benefits the organization, since it quickly identifies those among the new members who are creative and able to fulfill leadership positions. If you can't have a separate project for new members, try to have one meeting or event each year that is the responsibility of the new members.

Designated Host - Information Retrieval Card	
Name _____	Home Tel. No. _____
Best days/times to call _____	
Employer _____	Job Title _____
Interests/Hobbies _____	

Spouse's Name _____	
No. of children _____	Children - year(s) of birth _____

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR PROGRAM CHAIRMEN



VFW National Military Services

VFW National Military Services (NMS) information and tools can be found on our website at www.vfw.org/Assistance/National-Military-Services or in the MY VFW section of the main VFW site once you've logged in. Once logged in, look for the National Military Services link located under the "How To Get Involved" section. That link will take you to all NMS applications and tools. All applications are now in a fillable PDF format.

The following documents are available under **VFW National Military Services**:

- ★ NMS Overview
- ★ NMS PowerPoint Presentations
- ★ NMS Donor Support Cards
- ★ Vertical and Horizontal Ad Slicks-B&W and Color
- ★ Photo Release
- ★ Poster
- ★ User (Military) Brochure
- ★ NMS Certificate of Appreciation
- ★ Required monthly chairmen report
- ★ NMS Recognition Program Guidelines

We have pre-printed NMS brochures and posters available upon request for events. To request shipment, please contact Teresa Johnson at 816-756-3390 ext. 261.

Also available for **VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP)** are the following documents:

- ★ Adopt-A-Unit FAQ/Application/Report
- ★ How to Find a Unit Flyer
- ★ Postage Grant application
- ★ Memorial Commendation FAQ
- ★ Grant application: procedures, application, Event Calculator and FAQ
- ★ Grant Event Report
- ★ Reimbursement memo

VFW Operation Uplink available materials:

- ★ Operation Uplink virtual PIN FAQ
- ★ Virtual PIN Request Form
- ★ Free Call Day FAQ
- ★ Free Call Day postcard
- ★ Operation Uplink Coffee Can Art
- ★ Operation Uplink Sport Clips Ad

VFW Unmet Needs available materials:

- ★ Unmet Needs application and eligibility requirements
- ★ Unmet Needs Skill Donor application

This website is frequently updated. Please visit often for updated information and forms.

If there are other tools you would find useful, please let us know! We appreciate your input.

Email: NationalMilitaryServices@vfw.org

NMS Overview

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is in the forefront of patriotism as the organization and its members find innovative ways to show support for America and her armed forces. As our nation continues to conduct the War on Terrorism, thousands of our Active-Duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members remain deployed overseas. The VFW National Military Services (NMS) Department offers ways to show support and boost morale of our military service members.

The National Military Services (NMS) Department was established to promote positive awareness of the VFW through community involvement, communication tools and financial support available to our veterans, Service Members and their families. The programs under NMS are the Military Assistance Program, Operation Uplink, and Unmet Needs. Through these programs, the NMS Department provides assistance and guidance to our subordinate units in their efforts to support our military and their families. From hosting farewell and welcome home ceremonies and sponsoring free phone time to providing emergency financial assistance, the National Military Services department is there showing support for our troops.



VFW Military Assistance Program

The VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) is designed to encourage the link between the VFW and the Military community. MAP promotes VFW member interaction with the local military and opens avenues for National Sponsorships and local level involvement with all branches of service.

The MAP Grant program is intended as financial assistance for Posts, Districts, and Departments to sponsor events for military units of the Active-Duty, National Guard, and Reserves. These events are most successful when local Posts interact directly with the military unit, involving NMS Chairmen, National Certified Recruiters and Veterans Service Officers.

A MAP Grant Application should be submitted to VFW National Headquarters a minimum of three weeks prior to the event. The application must be filled out completely, to include a signature by the Commander or Quartermaster, an itemized event budget, description of VFW involvement with the event, Federal Tax ID number, and IRS tax-exempt status.

The Adopt-A-Unit program was developed as a means to pledge VFW Post and Auxiliary support to the service members and families of a unit from the local military community. When a Post "adopts" a unit, they make a commitment to the service members and families through moral and emotional support before,

during and after deployment. Sponsoring a military unit is a great opportunity to start other community service projects, such as coordinating with teachers or schools to co-sponsor the unit.

To Adopt-A-Unit, fill out the Application for Sponsorship and submit to VFW National Headquarters. A Certificate of Adoption will be mailed to the Post in approximately four weeks. The support you offer is limited only by your imagination.

Please remember the objective of all MAP initiatives is to increase awareness of the VFW. This does not end when the troops re-deploy home. They and their families continue to need our backing and assistance.

Applications and information are available once you've logged in at www.vfw.org under the MY VFW section of the main VFW site. Once you've logged in look for the National Military Services link located under the "How To Get Involved" section. That link will take you to all MAP applications and tools. All applications are now in a fillable PDF format.

For more information contact:

VFW Military Assistance Program, VFW National Headquarters

(816) 756-3390, ext. 211

Email: map@vfw.org

Fax: (816) 968-2779



VFW Operation Uplink

Through the generosity of VFW members and supporters, **VFW Operation Uplink** has provided millions of connections since 1996.

VFW Operation Uplink created Free Call Days to expand with changing technology and became a communication tool for even more of America's defenders by working through MWR SPAWAR internet cafes. **VFW Operation Uplink** provides free voice over IP calls for service men and women for 24-hour periods twice a month, including all major holidays. Since its beginning in 2006, Free Call Day events have connected over **4.6 million calls**. Currently, there are over 750 internet cafes in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait.

VFW Operation Uplink virtual PINs are available for VA hospitals and service members in countries without MWR cafes.

With changing technology and the expense of phone cards, Operation Uplink is concentrating on two monthly Free Call Days and the distribution of virtual PINs. To request virtual PINs, please complete the Operation Uplink request form and submit to NMS Chairman.

Applications and information are available at www.vfw.org/assistance/national-military-services.

For more information contact:

VFW Operation Uplink, VFW National Headquarters
(816) 968-1155

Email: uplink@vfw.org

Fax: (816) 968-2779



VFW Unmet Needs

VFW Unmet Needs was created in 2004 to assist military service members and their families who are experiencing a financial hardship directly related to military service. The financial assistance is in the form of up to \$2,500 in grants that do not need to be repaid. All grants are paid directly to the "creditor" companies (such as the electric company), and not to the individual. Each case is reviewed individually and acceptance determined by a committee.

Since the program began over **2,420 military families** have been assisted and over **\$3.6 million** has been disbursed in aid.

Some cases need even more immediate attention. There are procedures now in place for the Department Headquarters to assist families with urgent needs. The Department must verify eligibility, need and get pre-approval from the NMS Director to ensure reimbursement. A completed application along with copies of checks and the applicant's bills must be submitted to National with the reimbursement request.

Applications and information are available at www.vfw.org/assistance/national-military-services.

For more information contact:

VFW Unmet Needs, VFW National Headquarters

(816) 756-3390, ext. 146

Email: unmetneeds@vfw.org

Fax: (816) 968-2779



Military Assistance Program (MAP)

Grant Application Procedures



- * The VFW MAP Grant program provides financial assistance to VFW Posts/Auxiliaries who sponsor military events in their local military community.
- * Events receiving assistance from MAP are to support local military and their families and are meant to provide an opportunity for those attending to learn about the programs & services of the VFW.
- * MAP funds are based on donations; the MAP office needs to have a clear understanding of the event you're asking for funding assistance.
- * As MAP Grant requests are processed, communication is provided via email to the requestor and copied to the NMS Chairman.

Procedures

1. Before you begin please review all 4 pages of the MAP Grant application:
 - (1) Instructions/Procedures
 - (2) The application itself
 - (3) Event Calculator
 - (4) The MAP Grant FAQ
2. The application should **only** be completed and submitted by a VFW/Ladies Auxiliary member. Applications submitted by non-VFW personnel will **not** be processed.
3. The MAP application and Event Calculator must be completed entirely and signed by the Commander or Quartermaster before the approval process begins.
4. The application must be submitted at least 21 days prior to the event.
5. It is prohibited to use MAP funds for any purpose other than the stated event.
6. The after event requirements are due within **30 days** of the event and non-compliance is reported to the VFW Quartermaster General's office.
 - a. **Eligible Receipts:** Only receipts for items included and approved on your MAP Grant request can be accepted. (see MAP FAQ for more details)
 - b. **Refunds:** If the receipt total is less than the Grant amount a refund of the difference must be returned to the MAP Office.
 - c. **MAP Event Report:** Due within 30 days after the event.
7. MAP Grants may be submitted 3 ways:
 - a. Email: map@vfw.org {emailed applications must also be signed}
 - b. Fax 816-968-2779
 - c. Mail to:
VFW National Headquarters
ATTN: MAP
406 W. 34th Street, Suite 711
Kansas City, MO 64111
8. MAP works with approximately 300 events per year, so the application is designed to be concise. Please use additional sheets or provide supporting documents for information pertaining to the event.



MAP Grant Application



Payee (Dept/Post/Auxiliary):

Post #: _____ District: _____

Department: _____

TAX ID#: _____

Exemption Status, 501(c) (_____)

Valid Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

VFW POC: _____

Email: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Grant Amount Requested: \$ _____

Total Budget Amount: \$ _____

Event Name: _____

Event Date(s): _____

Expected Attendance (military & family): _____

Event Description (include activities, location, time etc):

Military Unit Information:

Unit Name (be specific): _____

Branch of Service: _____

Installation city/state: _____

MPOC Name & Rank: _____

MPOC Email: _____

MPOC phone: (_____) _____

Community Involvement (NOT VFW):

Will there be Community involvement, including other veterans' organizations? YES NO

IF YES- List the businesses/groups who are participating & what they are contributing:

IF NO- (check one of the following):

Community was asked to assist, but declined.

Community was not asked to assist.

VFW Involvement:

of VFW/Auxiliary members attending? _____

Is the Post/Dept contributing to the event with funds, goods or services? YES NO

IF YES- How much? \$ _____ what kind of goods &/or services? _____

Please check all activities VFW/Auxiliary members will

assist with: Plan Shop Set-up/clean-up

Cook Serve Assist children Recruit

Provide VFW materials/ information

Speak during event

VFW Recognition (check all that applies):

Will you have a VFW banner or flag on display?

Will the members wear items with the VFW logo?

Will the Unit's CO acknowledge the VFW's contribution during his/her remarks?

Has the Media been invited?

Will the event be posted on internet community calendars?

How does this event benefit the VFW?

***** Authorization *****

Acknowledgement 1:

To facilitate compliance with IRS regulations, the VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) will require the Post to provide a report including eligible receipts no later than 30 days after the scheduled event date. Failure to do so will result in a request from National Headquarters for a full refund of the Grant amount.

(Must be checked)

Acknowledgement 2:

This money will not be used for lobbying in any way.

(Must be checked)

Payee QM or Commander signature:

X _____ Date: _____

Print above Name & Title:



MAP Grant Application FAQ's



How can the MAP Office help?

Our job is to help you plan the best event possible. This starts with reviewing the application so it is ready for presentation to the Director. We work with over 250 events per year, this has taught us about working with the military and planning for their events. We can quickly review your application for accuracy, missing information or quantity problems to help you enhance your request.

Who can fill out a MAP Grant Application?

MAP Grant Applications are to be completed by a VFW or Auxiliary point of contact, not by the military unit representative or Family Readiness Group Leader. The primary VFW POC needs to be the project coordinator, so the MAP office has one person to coordinate with and who is responsible for the After Event paperwork. Make sure the contact phone numbers and email addresses are accurate.

What qualifies as VFW involvement at a MAP sponsored event?

VFW and Auxiliary members are expected to be at the event, working with the military and family members. This can involve cooking and serving, organizing activities, picking up food items and cleaning up after the event. Presentation of a check to the military unit or FRG does not equal VFW involvement in the event.

Why can't we give the funds to the unit or FRG?

When funds are given directly to the military unit or support group, the VFW has no control over the receipts that must be submitted to the National Headquarters Accounting Department after the event. The Post or Auxiliary receiving the MAP Grant will be held responsible for submission of receipts totaling the entire amount of the grant or a refund to MAP.

Do I have to fill out the Event Calculator?

The MAP Grant Event Calculator must be filled out completely. The breakdown informs the MAP office of the type of expenditures being planned. If the Post or Auxiliary, or the community or other VSO's are contributing funds, goods or discounts to the event, let us know. All these factors are weighed when we evaluate if the cost per person for the event is reasonable.

What is the difference between a Post sponsored event and a "Sponsorship" agreement?

Post sponsored event involves the Post/Aux purchasing, cooking, cleaning – doing the actual work to carry out the event.

Sponsorships are large events where the VFW is one of several event sponsors. In this case, a sponsorship letter or agreement will be provided by the military detailing sponsorship levels and the benefits to the VFW. Benefit examples: Banners, VFW recognition, website links, booth space, inclusion in unit/base newspaper, etc.

Are there things MAP will not approve funding for?

MAP Grant funds will not be approved for:

- Underwriting the cost of fundraising activities for VFW Posts or other organizations
- Awards or gifts for military units, family members or presented to the Post
- Labor to clean Post after the event or to pay Post Canteen workers for the event
- Profit above food costs to the VFW Canteen
- Liquor
- Phone Cards
- Formal military events where there is no opportunity for VFW involvement with the service members
- Gasoline expense for event coordination or personal meals while coordinating the event
- Event related T-shirts, hats or other promotional items
- Ongoing or recurring projects. MAP can possibly assist in getting a project started, but cannot support the same event repeatedly

Helpful Hint:

Don't leave the "Grant Amount Requested" line blank or say "whatever MAP can contribute". Inform us of the Overall Project Budget and what the Post/Department is contributing financially to the event. Each MAP Grant application is evaluated individually on the merits of the information provided.

Regardless of how many Posts and/or Auxiliaries are participating with an event, please only submit one MAP Grant application per event.



MAP Grant Event Report



Date of Event: _____

VFW Department: _____ District: _____ Post: _____

Type of Event (i.e., Welcome Home, Deployment, Family Briefing, etc.):

Unit Name: _____

Unit City / State: _____

Unit Point of Contact: _____

Brief Description of Event: _____

Were MAP Funds Utilized for Event? How Much?: _____

Are Receipts for Expenditures Attached?: _____

Number of People Attending Event?: _____

Number of VFW/Aux Members Attending Event?: _____

Number of Members Recruited at the Event?: New: _____

Reinstate: _____

Life: _____

Was Event Publicized or Covered by Local Media?: _____

Are Copies of News Articles Attached to This Report?: _____

Names of VFW National or Department Officers or Certified Recruiters Attending:



Adopt-A-Unit

Application for Sponsorship



To Adopt-A-Unit means to pledge the support of your Post and/or Auxiliary to the military families from your local community. When you Adopt-A-Unit, your Post/Auxiliary is making a commitment to the service members and families of that unit. As VFW/Auxiliary members, you understand the challenges military families face.

This form must be filled out completely. If you have any questions, please contact the MAP office at (816) 756-3390. Form can be **faxed to MAP at (816) 968-2779**, emailed to MAP@vfw.org, or mailed to VFW National Headquarters, Attn: MAP, 406 W 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. Please allow a minimum of 4 weeks for your certificate packet to arrive.

Adoption by: Post Auxiliary Both

Post Number: _____ Contact Name: _____

Post Address/City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Unit to be Sponsored:

Army Marines Navy Air Force Coast Guard

Unit Status:

Active Duty Reserve National Guard

Unit Name: _____

Authorizing Unit Point of Contact: _____

Unit Address / APO / FPO: _____

Unit POC Phone: _____ Unit POC Email: _____

Operation Uplink Domestic Cards – Virtual Pins

Effectively immediately, we are no longer providing actual phone cards but instead we will provide you with virtual PINs and dialing directions for you to provide to the patients.

We will email you the number of PINs for cards requested. This will allow 100 minutes of talk time per PIN versus the 15 minutes of talk time provided with the domestic phone cards.

It is recommended you distribute the PINs by putting them on business cards along with the dialing directions. You should provide the PINs to your hospital contact or key volunteer so they can distribute the PINs to the patients for use. This will allow more than one patient to use each PIN.

To request the virtual PINs, complete the Operation Uplink bulk request form to include an email address and submit to the office. Please request the number of cards you will need and we will provide the equivalent PINs.

The Virtual PINs have a 24 month expiration from first use.

Below is an example of the list of PINs we will email you. They are preset to print on plain paper to cut apart or on Avery Labels # 5332 to peel off and stick on the back of a business card.

Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5553995164	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5555625524	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5559401015
Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5557625147	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5553044817	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5551951895
Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5555606387	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 555765639	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5551742848
Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5558562224	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5559328417	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5558533680
Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5553221465	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5553530460	Toll Free Access Number: 800-750-2313 PIN: 5556717588



Virtual PIN Request Form

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL FIELDS WITHIN THIS FORM. IF ALL INFORMATION IS NOT PROVIDED, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FULFILL YOUR REQUEST. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, E-MAIL UPLINK@VFW.ORG OR CALL (816) 756-3390. FAX (816) 968-2779

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU		
*Date:	Post/Aux (if applicable) †	
*Rank/Title: (Mr/Mrs/Sgt)	*First Name:	*Last Name:
*Address:	*City/State/Zip:	
*Phone Number:	*Email Address:	
*Military Branch: (Army/Navy/etc.)	Installation:	Unit:
From what country or ship will calls be made? (EX: US, Germany, Iraq, aboard USS Nemetz, etc.)		
*Who will receive the virtual PIN(s)? (Please provide name of the VA facility or military unit)		
*Will the person or unit receiving the virtual PIN(s) have access to a MWR Internet Café in Iraq/Afghanistan/Kuwait? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
*Number of virtual PINs requested: (please limit to 1 PIN per person)		
SHIP TO ADDRESS, IF DIFFERENT THAN YOUR ADDRESS		
Post/Aux (if applicable)		
*Rank/Title:	*First Name:	*Last Name:
*Address:	*City/State/Zip:	
*Phone Number:	*Email Address:	
*Military Branch: (Army/Navy/etc.)	Installation:	Unit:

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.



OPERATION UPLINK



2011 Free Call Day Schedule

MONTH	DATE	SPONSOR
January 2011	January 1st, New Years Day January 16th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	Sport Clips VFW
February 2011	February 14th, Valentine's Day February 27th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	VFW Dept. of MN Sport Clips
March 2011	March 13th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces March 27th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	Sport Clips VFW
April 2011	April 10th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces April 24th, Easter	Sport Clips Texas VFW
May 2011	May 8th, Mother's Day May 29th, Memorial Day	Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW Sport Clips
June 2011	June 5th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces June 19th, Father's Day	VFW Sport Clips
July 2011	July 4th, Independence Day July 24th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	Sport Clips VFW
August 2011	August 7th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces August 28th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	Sport Clips VFW Dept of Delaware
September 2011	September 4th, Labor Day September 29th, VFW Day	Sport Clips VFW Ohio Charities
October 2011	October 9th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces October 23rd, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces	Sport Clips VFW
November 2011	November 11th, Veterans Day November 24th, Thanksgiving Day	Sport Clips Harleysville Insurance
December 2011	December 11th, VFW Salutes the Armed Forces December 25th, Christmas Day	VFW Sport Clips

*Dates are subject to change

Revised 1/19/2011

Unmet Needs Eligibility Criteria

The Service Member or Veteran must have been Honorably Discharged from the military within the past 36 months or have been active duty within the past 36 months prior to applying.

The applicant must be the service member or eligible dependent listed under DEERS.

The hardship must be due to one of the following:

- Deployment
- Military pay issue
- Military illness or injury
- Natural disaster

The Hardship cannot be caused by:

- Civil, legal or domestic issues, misconduct, or any issues that are a result of spousal separation or divorce
- Financial mismanagement by self or others, or due to Bankruptcy

Applicants can receive funds only once every 18 months, and only twice total; all grants are paid directly to the creditor and not to the applicant. Second requests for assistance must be caused by a new situation or deployment.

Expenses Eligible for payment:

- Housing expenses – mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance
- Vehicle expenses – payments, insurance, repairs
- Utilities and primary phone
- Food and incidentals
- Children's clothing, diapers, formula, necessary school or childcare expenses
- Medical bills, prescriptions & eyeglasses – the patient's portion for necessary or emergency medical care only

Ineligible Expenses:

- Credit cards, military charge cards or retail store cards
- Personal, student and payday loans
- Negative bank accounts (over draft fees and charges etc.)
- Cable, Internet, or secondary phones
- Investigational or cosmetic medical procedures & expenses
- Taxes
- Child support, alimony, or legal expenses
- Military debt, or debt owed to a friend/family member
- Furniture, electronic equipment or vehicle rentals
- Down payments on homes or vehicles
- Reimbursements for items already paid for
- Bills obviously due to excessive use or mismanagement

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and Unmet Needs Program reserves the right to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis to the afore mentioned criteria.



Operation Uplink and Free Call Days FAQ

What are the Free Call Days?

Operation Uplink Free Call Days are a 24-hour period where all the calls made from any of the 750+ MWR (SPAWAR) Internet Cafés in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait are free for active duty service members. If the service members do not have access to the MWR (SPAWAR) Internet Cafés or are stationed outside of Iraq/Afghanistan/Kuwait, please provide the unit's contact information and we will see that they're taken care of through other available options.

When are the Free Call Days?

We provide two scheduled dates each month. You can find our most current schedule at www.vfw.org/national-military-services. The Free Call Days run midnight to midnight based on Eastern Standard Time.

Can I still get phone cards?

With the advancements in technology overseas and internet access becoming more readily available, phone cards are becoming obsolete. Service members have less access to the AT&T phone banks and are relying on email, SKYPE and other instant messaging options to stay connected with home. Operation Uplink is no longer providing phone cards because our program is able to connect an average of 60,000 service members during each Free Call Day. With greater access through 750+ MWR (SPAWAR) cafes, Free Call Days and virtual PINs, Operation Uplink is providing more service members with chances to call home than ever before.

How are the Free Call Days more cost effective?

When Operation Uplink provided phone cards to deployed troops, each card cost \$6.50 and provided 15 minutes of talk time. The same \$6.50 will provide 10 service members a 15 minute call through the Free Call Days café enabling the program to be good stewards to our donors by stretching every dollar and providing 10's of thousands more calls for the military and that is what Operation Uplink is all about!

How many service members actually use the Free Call Days?

Through the Free Call Days and the distribution of virtual PINs to hospitalized veterans and service members stationed outside of Iraq/Afghanistan/Kuwait, so far in FY2011 Operation Uplink has provided over 1,000,000 connections!

Why is my NMS donation important and where does it go?

All three of the NMS programs are funded solely by donations. By donating to NMS, you are giving Operation Uplink, MAP and Unmet Needs the chance to continue our mission of providing assistance and support to our military service members and veterans in their time of need. During the year, the needs of our military change. Your donation to NMS will help our programs respond to those changes and assist our service members when and where they need it the most.

Still have questions? Contact VFW Operation Uplink at: uplink@vfw.org or (816) 968-1155



VFW UNMET NEEDS PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

All applications are individually reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Submitting an application does not guarantee payment of funds. The VFW reserves the right to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

****ALL the following Eligibility Criteria must be met for your case to be considered:***

- The service member has served Active Duty, other than training, within the **past three years** prior to applying.
- The hardship must be due to one of the following:
 - deployment, military pay issue, military illness or injury, or natural disaster.
- The applicant must be the service member or eligible dependent listed under DEERS.

Expenses Eligible for consideration of payment:

- Household expenses – mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance.
- Vehicle expenses – payments, insurance, repairs (major repairs for vehicles over ten years old will not be considered).
- Utilities.
- Food and Clothing.
- Children’s clothing, diapers, formula, school or childcare expenses.
- Medical bills, prescriptions & eyeglasses – the patient’s portion for necessary or emergency medical care only.

Expenses Ineligible for consideration for payment:

- Credit cards, Military charge cards, or retail store credit cards.
- Personal, student or payday loans.
- Cable, Internet and secondary phone.
- Cosmetic or investigational medical procedures and expenses.
- Taxes – property or otherwise.
- College Expenses.
- Furniture rentals.
- Any other expense not determined to be a basic life need.

The eligible and ineligible expense lists are not all inclusive and each expense will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Payment will be made at the discretion of the approval committee. Payments are made directly to creditors.

Please fax completed application to 816-968-2779.



VFW UNMET NEEDS PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

All applications are individually reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 Submitting an application does not guarantee payment of funds.
 The VFW reserves the right to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION

***REQUIRED FIELD**

NAME*:		BIRTHDATE*:	
ADDRESS*:			
CITY*:		STATE*:	ZIP*:
COUNTRY*:			
PHONE*:		EMAIL*:	
RELATION*:		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER*:	
Excluding Military Member, please list all dependents residing in the home*:			
NAME:	AGE:	RELATIONSHIP:	
NAME:	AGE:	RELATIONSHIP:	
NAME:	AGE:	RELATIONSHIP:	
NAME:	AGE:	RELATIONSHIP:	
NAME:	AGE:	RELATIONSHIP:	

MILITARY MEMBER'S INFORMATION

NAME*:		BIRTHDATE*:	
ADDRESS*:			
CITY*:		STATE*:	ZIP*:
HOME OF RECORD (City and State only)*:			
PHONE*:		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER*:	
Branch* (choose one)	Status* (choose one)	Pay Grade/Rank*:	
		Home station unit or last unit if not currently active*	

MILITARY SERVICE INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Military member is currently active duty*. If NO, what is the approximate discharge date of last active duty service? _____ What was this period of active duty service for? _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Military member is currently deployed is support of OEF/OIF*.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Military member is currently experiencing a service connected injury or medical emergency*.

MILITARY POINT OF CONTACT***required field**

First Name* _____

Last Name* _____

Rank/Title* _____

Relationship to the Military Member*:

Primary Phone*: _____

 Member of Chain of Command-E8 or above Family Assistance Center VA Representative VFW Representative

Alternate Phone: _____

Email*: _____

This person is aware of my situation and will provide written verification to Unmet Needs*. choose one

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Eviction/Foreclosure has occurred or is scheduled to occur.

Approximate Date:

Utilities have been disconnected or are Scheduled for disconnect.

Approximate Date:

Repossession has occurred or is scheduled to occur.

Approximate Date:

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Please describe the expenses you need assistance with (i.e. Rent, utilities, medical expenses, food)*:

Please tell us the amount of funds needed/requested*: \$ _____

Please describe why you are unable to meet this need on your own. Please explain if/how the military member's service affected this hardship*:

Please explain what action you have taken to resolve this hardship on your own, other than applying for financial assistance*:

Please list the other agencies you are working with (i.e. VA, Salvation Army, local church)*:

INCOME***required field**
 Military Member Monthly Income*:
 \$ _____

 Spouse/Fiance/Roommate Monthly Income*:
 \$ _____

Additional Monthly Income*:

Type	Amount	Type	Amount
VA Benefits	\$	Unemployment	\$
Housing-BAH	\$	Child Support (recieved)	\$
Food Subsistance-BAS	\$	SSI/SSDI	\$
Hazardous Duty/imminent Danger Pay	\$	Welfare	\$
Seperation pay	\$	Food Stamps	\$
The Household Monthly Income:	\$0.00	Other _____	\$

MONTHLY EXPENSES

Complete all fields with an approximate monthly amount. Leave inapplicable fields blank.

Rent/Mortgage	\$
Utilities	\$
Phone 1	\$
Phone 2	\$
Phone 3	\$
Cable	\$
Internet	\$
Vehicle #1	\$
Vehicle #2	\$
Insurance(s)	\$
Vehicle(s) Fuel	\$
Recreation Vehicle	\$
Food	\$
Household Items	\$
Child Care	\$
Child Support (Paid)	\$
Credit/Charge Cards	\$
Loans	\$
Student Loans	\$
Savings	\$
Other	\$
Other	\$
Other	\$
Other	\$
Other	\$

Notes/Explanation:

Without a completed budget your Application will not be considered.
Total Monthly Expenses: \$0.00

4

This form must be signed and initialed and then faxed or mailed to our office.

UNMET NEEDS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please initial all blocks below and sign the bottom. This form is essential to the review and approval process. We want to emphasize that each application will be reviewed independently and each case will stand on its own merit.

_____ I understand that proper stewardship requires I provide information to substantiate my request, including governmental records, price/income information, and medical information. This information will be kept confidential. I further indicate that if the request cannot be substantiated, it will not be possible to consider or approve it.

_____ I agree to allow the Unmet Needs Program to have access to my account information for the sole purpose of payment remittance. I will submit documentation of the expenses for verification by Unmet Needs personnel.

_____ I understand that the Unmet Needs Program elects to pay for approved merchandise or services directly. I will have thirty (30) days to redeem the merchandise, or the grant will be forfeited. I will be required to submit receipts for said merchandise or services.

_____ I understand the primary purpose of the Unmet Needs Program is to meet immediate and urgent needs of the recently Active Duty Military, Reserve and National Guard personnel, and their immediate family members.

_____ I understand that because demand is so great, I can only apply to the program once every eighteen (18) months, even if my application has been denied.

_____ I agree to obey all the policies of the program and comply with any reasonable directions with respect to questions or concerns that may arise.

_____ I understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars may require that I submit to an interview, and may request to use my name and the particulars of the gift in press and promotional efforts. I understand that there is no promise of compensation for my participation. If I choose to maintain case confidentiality, it will in no way influence my application. The VFW may use my written statements and documentation enclosed as needed for these purposes.

_____ I understand that the Unmet Needs Program is funded by public donations and success is based solely upon public support of the program. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW Foundation and the Unmet Needs Program are not government funded.

_____ I agree to hold the VFW Foundation, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, their officers, employees, agents, and sponsor harmless as a result of this request and their handling of it and waive all rights to seek damages from these parties for any loss, or perceived loss, that may occur.

Please initial your preference:

_____ I am willing to be interviewed and featured in VFW news stories. I understand that any photos I provide to VFW become the property of VFW and may be used in fundraising or other publicity materials with no promise of compensation for participation.

OR

_____ I do not wish to be featured in any VFW or other publications.

Military Member/Applicant Signature

Printed Name

Date

5

Please verify that the following documents are enclosed with the application*:

- DD214-Member Copy #4** or Military Member's most recent orders.
- A written statement from the Military Unit point of contact (**member of Chain of Command, Family Assistance Center Representative, VA Rep or VFW Rep**) that verifies the member's military status and financial hardship. This statement **must be** signed and dated by the Military Unit point of contact, and on letterhead if possible.
- Copy of the bills for which you are requesting assistance. This must include the account holder's name and the account number, as well as the creditor's name and phone number with area code. For assistance with repairs or other services, two different written estimates on company letterhead are required. (For example, if requesting assistance with rent, a copy of your lease agreement is required.)

YOUR APPLICATION CAN NOT BE REVIEWED WITHOUT ALL OF THE ABOVE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION!

Application and Supporting documentation may be mailed, faxed, or emailed to our offices.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars
Attn. Unmet Needs Program
406 West 34th Street
Kansas City, MO, 64111
Fax: 816-968-2779
E-mail: unmetneeds@vfw.org
Website: www.vfw.org/military**

Once we have received your completed application a representative may contact you to discuss the specifics of the case and/or to request additional information. This contact does not imply approval of your application.

The approval process normally takes twenty (20) business days.

We will contact you as soon as a final determination has been made in your case

Please Note: We are unable to respond to status check requests while your file is being processed. If you have not received contact from us after twenty (20) business days from submitting your application, please contact us.

Military Point of Contact Letter

This letter must be prepared by a **Member of Chain of Command (E8 or above), Family Assistance Center Coordinator, Medical Hold Case Worker, VA Representative, or VFW Service Officer.** The letter must verify the cause of the financial hardship. This statement must be signed and dated by the **Military Unit point of contact, not the applicant.** Please feel free to attach any additional information that will help the Unmet Needs committee make a decision on this request.

The Service Member is currently active duty or has served on active duty within the past three years prior to applying

Active Duty date _____ to _____

How was the hardship caused by the military or a deployment?

Explanation Required (If there is a military-related injury, documentation is required)*:

Current Pay Status

The service member is currently receiving: (check all that apply)

- Active Duty Pay
- Incapacitation Pay
- VA Benefits Disability Rating _____%

The SM has applied/waiting for:

- VA Benefits Applied on: _____
- Incapacitation Pay Applied on: _____
- VOC Rehab Applied on: _____
- ESGR Complaint Applied on: _____ File#: _____

Military Point of Contact Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

No electronic signatures accepted

Incomplete/unsigned forms will be returned.

MPOC's: Please call 1-866-789-6333 if you have any questions

Voice of Democracy

The VFW's "Voice of Democracy" Scholarship Contest is an annual nationwide audio essay competition designed to give 9th-12th grade high school students, ages 15-19, the opportunity to voice their opinion on their responsibility to our country. The student must record their essay on a cassette tape or CD (3-5 minutes in length) on an annual patriotic theme (the 2011-2012 theme is: "Is There Pride in Serving in Our Military?") This year is the sixty-fifth year of the program. Each Department (state) first place winner receives an all-expense-paid trip to the national finals held in Washington, D.C., March 3-7, 2012. Four fun-filled days of tours, visits to monuments and meeting with heads of state and often the President of the United States. The national preliminary judging takes place just prior to the students' arrival in D.C. when the judges listen to the fifty-four tapes representing the state winners (from each of our fifty states, the District of Columbia, Pacific Areas, Latin America/Caribbean and Europe.) Once all of the finalists' recorded essays have been reviewed, the finals judges make their final decisions in Washington, D.C. and we announce all of the national college scholarship winners in Washington D.C. during the "Parade of Winners," held March 4, 2012.

Under VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary sponsorship, the annual national scholarships have increased to \$151,000. The first place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship and all national finalists receive at least a \$1,000 scholarship. The total monetary value of scholarships and awards provided by VFW Posts, Auxiliaries, Districts, County Councils and Departments amount to over \$2.3 million and almost 50,000 students participate nationwide.

Begun by the National Association of Broadcasters in the late 1940's, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States became involved in the late 1950's. The VFW took over primary sponsorship in 1961 when the National Association of Broadcasters could no longer sponsor the program nationally. Then in 1964, the Ladies Auxiliary joined the VFW in sponsorship of the program. Because of the active program promotion and participation, the national scholarship funds have steadily increased from four national winners in 1962, with total scholarships of \$3,750, to our current level of sixty-two national scholarships totaling \$151,000. A student by the name of Charles Kuralt, the late television news broadcaster and author, was one of the early Voice of Democracy winners. Other notable participants have been Miss America Anita Bryant and U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. This Youth Program has truly become the premier program of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Patriot's Pen

Now in its seventeenth year, the VFW's "Patriot's Pen" Essay Competition is an annual nationwide essay competition for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students with U.S. Savings Bonds as prizes. The student must write a 300-400-word essay on an annual patriotic theme (the 2011-2012 theme is: "Are You Proud of Your Country?") Under VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary sponsorship, the annual national awards have increased to \$92,000. The first place national winner receives a \$10,000 Savings Bond and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC. The total monetary value of savings bonds and awards provided by VFW Posts, Auxiliaries, Districts, County Councils and Departments amount to just over \$1.3 million and more than 129,000 students participate nationwide.

Deadlines for both Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen

- Student Entry – Midnight, November 1, 2011
- Complete Post Judging – November 15, 2011
- Complete District Judging – December 6, 2011
- Complete Department Judging – January 7, 2012
- District Reports to Department – January 15, 2012
- Department Winner to National – January 15, 2012
- Department Report to National – January 31, 2012

All information that is needed to conduct the 2011-2012 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Programs are online now under "My VFW." Visit this website <http://www.vfw.org/Login.aspx> where you can access all of the VFW's Online Membership System (OMS) services available to our members and VFW leaders. After you log on or create an account and log in, click on **CHAIRMAN GUIDES** under the **General Members Tools and Resources** heading. There you will find the "Scholarships Programs" manual (which contains all rules of both the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs.) Below that manual, you will find the following additional materials:

- 1.) "National Scholarship Brochure" (great to hand out to teachers when you speak to them and it explains to them what they need to do to get involved.)
- 2.) "How-To Guide for Promoting Youth Programs" (contains helpful information for newer Post Voice of Democracy or Post Patriot's Pen chairmen.)
- 3.) Voice of Democracy Scoresheet
- 4.) Patriot's Pen Scoresheet

You can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen by visiting the below links and clicking on "ACCESS COMPLETE RULES AND INFORMATION."

Voice of Democracy: <http://www.vfw.org/Community/Voice-of-Democracy/>

Patriot's Pen: <http://www.vfw.org/Community/Patriot-s-Pen/>

National Scout of the Year Scholarship

VFW Scout of the Year Scholarships of \$5,000, \$3,000 & \$1,000 will be offered in 2012. Entrants must be recipients of the B.S.A. Eagle Award, Venture Scouting Silver Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award. Entries should be presented to their local VFW Post by March 1, 2012 and Posts should submit their winners to their VFW Department by April 1, 2012. Department winners should be forwarded to the VFW Programs Office at VFW National Headquarters by May 1, 2012.

Recognition Activities National Citation of Recognition

These citations are available to recognize Posts or individual Post Chairmen who have demonstrated a high level of service to their community by exhibiting an exemplary level of performance and achievement. Department Chairmen are given sole responsibility for establishing the criteria their Department will use to qualify Posts or individual chairmen seeking these National Citations. Only VFW Department Chairmen (Youth, Safety, Community Activities, Citizenship Education, Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher Award) may submit the request form to the VFW National Programs Department. Application forms, including all criteria and instructions, are sent to all Department Chairmen in February. Deadline date for requesting citations is March 1 to enable processing in time for proper presentation at the Department Convention. All citations will be mailed directly to the Department Headquarters.

National Awards for Public Servants

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency services persons, law enforcement officers and firefighters to receive VFW National Awards. Deadline for entries is February 1st at VFW National Headquarters. Eligible candidates for each award are as follows:

Emergency Medical Technician National Award

Any individual who actively gives emergency medical treatment, provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, provide rescue and civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

Law Enforcement National Award

Any individual who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individuals employed by private companies or security services.

Firefighters National Award

Any individual who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation's citizens.

Criteria for all National Awards:

Candidates must have demonstrated:

- Recognition by their colleagues or those they serve.
- Consistent excellence in the performance of their duties.
- Consistent dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibilities and skills within their profession.

Documentation required for all candidates:

- Nomination letter containing the candidate's name, title, address, telephone and identifying the award for which the individual should be considered.
- One page resume of the candidate's overall background.
- One page resume of the candidate's background in their field.
- One page listing of the candidate's accomplishment and awards in their field.
- Photograph (preferably a head shot) of the candidate.

Nomination:

The three nominations from each Department will receive the appropriate VFW national citation:

- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Law Enforcement Award

Post Safety Chairmen should submit a candidate for each of the three awards to their Department Headquarters by January 1, 2012. The Department must select a single candidate from all the Post entries for each of the three awards and submit that documentation to VFW National Headquarters by February 1, 2012. (Please allow up to three (3) weeks for processing.)

Department Commanders are expected to arrange presentation of these awards at a venue chosen by the award recipient and outside the VFW to maximize public exposure of our awards. Events such as the state meeting of the recipient's professional association, at their city council meeting or in front of their peers in their firehouse or police station are highly encouraged.

Department nominations and questions should be sent to:

VFW National Headquarters
Programs Department
406 West 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Phone: (816) 756-3390 ext. 287, Fax: (816) 968-1149
E-Mail: tbeauchamp@vfw.org

Life Saving Awards

The Life Saving Award is intended for a VFW Post to recognize individuals who have gone out of their way to save the life of another human being in their local community. Life Saving Award Citations are available free of charge from the VFW National Programs Department. Nominations must include:

1. Documentation of the event (newspaper clippings, etc.),
2. Name of the individual who will receive the award,

3. Presentation date and the date desired on the citation, and
4. Name & address of the Post Commander or Ladies President who will be sent the award for presentation.

These awards are available for presentation year-round.

Cadet Citations & Medals

There are several citations, medals and ribbons now available through our VFW Emblem and Supply Department to honor cadets serving in the following programs:

JROTC
SROTC
NAVAL SEA CADETS
CIVIL AIR PATROL (Officer and NCO)

Air Rifle & Shooting Programs

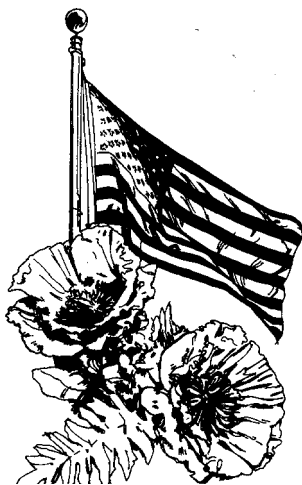
The VFW Programs Office continues to work with the National Rifle Association (NRA) and its Foundation; as well as the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), the U.S. Olympic Shooting Sports Program and several industry supporters to encourage the growth of shooting and gun safety at the Post level.

For additional information on any of these programs:

Steve Van Buskirk, Director, Programs
VFW National Headquarters
406 West 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Phone: (816) 968-1116
Fax: (816) 968-1149
E-mail: Svanbuskirk@vfw.org

The History of the Buddy Poppy

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was the first veterans organization to promote a nationally organized campaign for the annual distribution of Poppies assembled by disabled and needy veterans.



The poppy movement was inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," written by Colonel John McCrae of the Canadian forces before the United States entered World War I. Distributing replicas of the original Flanders Poppy originated in some of the Allied countries immediately after the Armistice.

No definite organized distribution of Poppies on a nationwide scale was conducted in America until 1921, when the Franco-American Children's League distributed Poppies ostensibly for the benefit of children in the devastated areas of France and Belgium.

Madam Guerin, who was recognized as "the Poppy lady from France," sought and received the cooperation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. in early 1922, after the Franco-American Children's League was dissolved. The VFW conducted a Poppy campaign prior to Memorial Day 1922, using only Poppies made in France. In the 1923 Poppy campaign, due to the difficulty and delay in getting Poppies from France, the VFW used French Poppies that were on hand and the balance was provided by a firm in New York City manufacturing artificial flowers.

During the 1923 campaign, the VFW evolved the idea which resulted in the VFW Buddy Poppy fashioned by disabled and needy veterans who were paid for their work. This plan was formally presented for adoption to the 1923 Encampment at Norfolk, Virginia. Immediately thereafter the VFW Buddy Poppy factory was established in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where all VFW Buddy Poppies for the 1924 campaign were assembled by disabled veterans. General Frank T. Hines, Director of the U.S. Veterans' Bureau, endorsed the plan and pledged the cooperation of his department. All men employed in assembling Buddy Poppies for the 1924 campaign were sent to the VFW Poppy workshop by the Veterans' Bureau regional manager in Pittsburgh. The designation "Buddy Poppy" which originated with the men themselves, was adopted at that time. **In February, 1924, the VFW registered the name "Buddy Poppy" with the United States Patent Office, and a certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of "Buddy" under the classification of artificial flowers.** The VFW has made that trademark a guarantee that all Poppies bearing that name and the VFW label are genuine products of the work of disabled and needy veterans. No other organization, firm or individual can make legal use of the name **"Buddy" Poppy.**

Following the 1924 campaign, a number of the larger VFW Departments (States) believed it would stimulate local distribution if the Poppies they used were assembled by disabled veterans in hospitals within their own jurisdiction. The 1924 VFW Encampment at Atlantic City granted this privilege, under the provision that all Poppies would be produced according to specifications set forth by the National Buddy Poppy Department, and that all Poppies would be assembled by disabled veterans in government hospitals and by needy veterans in workshops supervised by the VFW.

VFW has steadfastly adhered to the policy of veteran assembled Poppies. The VFW organized the first nationwide distribution of Poppies by a veterans organization in May 1922. The Poppy was adopted by the National Encampment held in Seattle during August of that year as the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

In September 1920, the national convention of the American Legion held at Cleveland passed a resolution

adopting the Poppy as the official flower of that organization. However, at the third national convention of the American Legion held in Kansas City in October 1921, the American Legion repudiated the Poppy and adopted the daisy as its official flower.

In October 1922, following the first nationwide distribution of Poppies by the VFW during May of that year, the fourth national convention of the American Legion held at New Orleans in October, adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, that the Poppy is hereby declared to be the official American Legion flower, instead of the daisy, which was adopted by the 1921 convention of the American Legion".

Following the successful Poppy campaign conducted by the VFW in May 1922, the American Legion realized the financial possibilities of the Poppy movement. In the spring of 1923, following the New Orleans encampment and one year after the first VFW Poppy campaign on a nationwide scale, the American Legion conducted its first Poppy distribution using Poppies supplied by a French manufacturer.

The records are clear, however, on the subject of the first nationwide distribution of Poppies by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. in May 1922.

From the very beginning, the Buddy Poppy project of the VFW has received the endorsement and cooperation of the director of the Veterans Administration, and the support of administrators and medical officers of government hospitals. All Presidents since Warren G. Harding (1921-1923) have conveyed to the nation at large, endorsement and recognition of this VFW effort.

Today, VFW Buddy Poppies are assembled by disabled, needy, and aging veterans in VA rehabilitation centers. The majority of proceeds derived from each campaign conducted by VFW Posts and Ladies Auxiliaries is retained locally to provide for veteran services and welfare. The minimal assessment (cost of Buddy Poppies) to VFW units provides compensation to the veterans who assembled the Poppies, provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans' rehabilitation and service programs, and partially supports the VFW National Home for children, a community of children and families of veterans and active-duty military.

Buddy Poppy proceeds represent no profit to any VFW unit. All money contributed by the public for Buddy Poppies is used for members of the Armed Forces, veterans' welfare, or for the well-being of their needy dependents, widows and the orphans of veterans.

How To Organize a Buddy Poppy Campaign

It is the duty of each Post chartered in the Veterans of Foreign Wars to conduct a distribution of Buddy Poppies every year ... "to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans ..." As Post Commander, your job will not be complete if your term ends without a Buddy Poppy distribution being conducted on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, or both days and ... you will have done a good job if the distribution is larger than last year.

Every Post and Auxiliary can conduct a successful Buddy Poppy distribution the **very first year** if the proper preparation is made. The following "tried and proven" procedures are listed for your information and guidance.

Appoint a chairman. The first thing you must do is appoint a chairman -- a dependable person -- to handle the distribution. He/she must be conscientious, enthusiastic, and able to work with others. For your first year distributing Poppies, there is no reason why you should not appoint a person who already has other duties in your Post if he/she will do the best job for you. You may even serve as your own chairman.

Contact your auxiliary. If you have an Auxiliary, work very closely with them in this important program. You have equal responsibility in the Poppy campaign and it should be conducted jointly. Ask the President to appoint a chairman to work with your chairman.

Set a date. Determine the date on which you want to conduct your distribution. If you are in a metropolitan area, there may already be an official date set for the distribution of Buddy Poppies. Even if there isn't, you must coordinate your distribution with the other Posts in the community.

The official dates for the distribution of Buddy Poppies include the two week period preceding Memorial Day. In some states, Veterans Day campaigns are more popular. Generally speaking, most promotional material is aimed at Memorial Day because the Poppy is the Memorial Flower and because the nation has set this day aside for remembrance of the dead of all wars.

Obtain a permit. Most cities, and even small villages, require a permit for street solicitation. This is generally obtained through the Mayor or the Chief of Police. There is usually no charge.

Order your Poppies and supplies. All Buddy Poppies are ordered through your Department Quartermaster (or Department Poppy Chairman). He can tell you the price and also furnish a list of campaign aids which may be purchased at a nominal cost. It is suggested you order your supplies 8-12 weeks in advance of your distribution date.

You will need coin canisters, identification cards for workers, arm bands, and other material to help with your campaign. All this is available.

Don't worry about the cost. You may pay for all material after the distribution from the profits you have made.

Obtain workers. The success of your campaign will depend upon how many people you recruit to distribute the Poppies.

The active members of your Post and Auxiliary are your first and best source of workers. These people are interested in the programs supported by the Poppy program and are aware of the need for the distribution. Obtain a promise from them at least a month in advance of the distribution.

Don't overlook your inactive members. Many of them have not attended meetings regularly or taken an active part in your programs simply because they have not been convinced their help is needed. Have your chairman call each, individually, asking for their help. You will hear a lot of excuses, but you will also get some workers. And once they have helped with the Poppy distribution, they will help in other programs later.

If your Auxiliary sponsors a Junior Girls Unit, or if your Post sponsors a Sons of the VFW Unit; a Boy Scout Troop; or other youth organizations, ask the kids to help with the Poppy distribution.

You will get help in planning and organizing your campaign. After the month of May, you and your Auxiliary will each receive promotional material prepared at National Headquarters.

When you receive this, read it immediately and turn it over to your chairman for his guidance. Order the promotional material you need immediately.

If you have taken the previous steps, you are well on the way to a ... successful "Buddy" Poppy campaign!

More help (if needed or desired) is available from people in your own Department. Ask for assistance from:

- Your Department Quartermaster**
- Your Department Buddy Poppy Chairman**
- Your District Commander**
- Your District or County Council Poppy Chairman**
- Other Posts and Auxiliaries**

What the Buddy Poppy distribution Means to the VFW

The purchase price paid for Poppies by your Post includes many items in addition to the cost of the Poppy itself. Since the handling of the distribution varies in different Departments, no exact figures can be given; but a minimum amount per thousand poppies is given below:

\$15 to the disabled veterans making the Poppy
\$10 to the VFW National Rehabilitation Service
\$10 to the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, MI
\$15 to your own Department Rehabilitation Service

All funds realized from the distribution (above the cost) of the Poppy stays with your Post and Auxiliary for aid to local needy and disabled veterans and their families.

A needed program ... worthy of support and participation ... by **all members**.

Suggestions for Successful Campaigns

1. **Create Enthusiasm.** Establish interest in the Poppy program - particularly among Posts and Auxiliaries who have been lax in the past. Speak at District meetings, attend Post meetings, send letters, and talk to individual officers and members. Contact the Auxiliaries and ask to speak at their meetings, discuss the program with their officers, help organize their campaign. If you can get one person interested in a Post or Auxiliary which has not previously distributed Poppies, you may get them going.
2. **Maintain Liaison,** between the Department and the Post and Auxiliaries. The Department Quartermaster (or Buddy Poppy Chairman) will receive the orders and he can keep you informed of requisitions from your jurisdiction. Where an order is slow coming in, or if the amount is small, contact the Post or Auxiliary. Obtain a supply of order blanks to take with you and pick up the order personally.
3. **Obtain New Territories.** In many cases, areas without a VFW Post will permit the distribution of Poppies by a neighboring Post; if approached correctly.
4. **Coordinate Campaigns.** If you have a dozen Posts in one city, set up territorial boundaries and invite them to distribute at the same time. Piecemeal campaigns irritate the public, produce poor results, and limit your TV, radio and newspaper publicity.
5. **Encourage Competition.** Set up Poppy Display contests, Poppy Queen contests, and challenges between neighboring Posts. Offer awards for the largest distribution, the best promotion, or the best use of Poppies. Give earned recognition at District and County Council meetings.
6. **Cooperate with your Partner in the VFW or Auxiliary.** The distribution of Buddy Poppies is a joint effort. An order from an Auxiliary is just as good as an order from the Post. If your District is large, possibly the VFW Chairman can visit Posts and Auxiliaries in his area and the Auxiliary Chairman visit those in her community, to assure complete coverage.
7. **Keep Informed.** Don't distribute misinformation. Your Posts and Auxiliaries look to you for guidance and leadership. Tell them how to organize and help them with their plans.
8. Be assured of our cooperation in assisting you to make this a "banner year" in your "Buddy" Poppy campaign.

District & County Council Responsibility in the Buddy Poppy Program

Numerous Departments provide additional material for the use of their Posts and Auxiliaries and make every effort to promote this important program.

Unfortunately, all the contact from your Department and the National level must be by letter. If the mail is not opened, read, and acted upon, their efforts are of no assistance.

The **district** and/or **county council** must provide the direct personal contact which brings the importance of the program home to each Post and Auxiliary member.

The District or County Council Commander must take the first step in assuring a successful Buddy Poppy campaign by every Post in the District or County Council. That step consists of appointing an active, interested, capable and dedicated chairman, and notifying Department Headquarters and the National Buddy Poppy Department of his name and address.

It is important that each District and County Council submit the name and address of their designated Poppy Chairman on the report of installation.

You have one personal goal - an increased distribution by every Post in your District this year.

If additional information about the VFW Buddy Poppy Program is needed, you may check with your Department Headquarters or contact the Buddy Poppy Department at National Headquarters.

VFW Communications & Public Affairs—Looking Ahead

The basic rule of Public Affairs is this: you have only one chance to make a first impression.

Two challenges face us every day in the VFW: one, keeping all Americans aware of what our veterans have done to preserve freedom and democracy for our nation and the world; and two, keeping all Americans, especially veterans, informed of what we do for veterans and their families and for our nation.

The last century produced many veterans, ensuring veterans' needs and interests were given special attention. It's not that way anymore. Daily, the veteran population decreases. Fewer and fewer veterans serve in Congress. Consequently, the fight for veterans care and other entitlements becomes more difficult with each passing year.

As a part of the VFW Communications & Public Affairs team, you can do something about this. Here's how you do it:

First, learn all you can about the VFW, its history, achievements, programs, projects, goals and objectives. Call VFW National Headquarters anytime you have a question, or if you need to know the VFW's position on a current issue or want to know if we have a resolution on a particular subject. The most important tool of the trade in the public affairs business is knowledge.

Next choose a Public Relations Officer (PRO) who shares your knowledge, interest and enthusiasm, and can tell the VFW story in a meaningful and interesting way. Choosing a PRO who has these qualities is the most important thing you can do as a commander in promoting the VFW. Make a good choice and then support your PRO. Be sure the PRO has the tools necessary to do the job well.

Keep your PRO informed on events, programs and projects. The sooner they know about a project or event, the sooner they can begin the publicity program.

Take advantage of each event planned in your community. Community service projects often attract media coverage. VFW programs that spotlight individuals in the community also provide a means to get the VFW message out and support your member recruiting efforts. Visits from National or Department officers can generate media interest if approached from a current issue viewpoint. Use every event that comes your way to increase public awareness of what veterans have done and to inform veterans of what we are doing for them. If you accomplish those two objectives, you will have a very successful public affairs program.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Media Fact Sheet

Originated:	1899 – Oldest major U.S. combat veterans organization 1936 – Congressional Charter
Posts:	Approximately 7,700 worldwide
Membership:	1.6 million
Eligibility:	An applicant must be a U.S. citizen, have served honorably overseas in the armed forces of the United States and earned a recognized campaign/service medal or badge, (including the Combat Action Ribbon or Badge); served in Korea after June 30, 1949, until present; or earned Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay.
Programs:	Veterans Service National Security & Foreign Affairs Legislative Service VFW Action Corps National Military Services Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition Buddy Poppy Citizenship Education & Community Services
Headquarters:	406 W. 34 th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111 Phone 816-756-3390, Fax 816-968-1199 Website www.vfw.org – E-mail: info@vfw.org
Media Contact:	Jerry Newberry Director, Communications and Public Affairs, National Headquarters Joe Davis Director, Public Affairs, Washington Office

The purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is to preserve and support the patriotic and historical interests of our country, our communities and our veterans; to strengthen the common bonds of the men and women who have served and who are currently serving in our military; to assist them and their families; to enhance their quality of life; and to maintain true allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and defend her from all enemies, whomsoever.

We will accomplish our mission by:

- Perpetuating the memory and history of our dead through public and private acts of remembrance;
- Preserving and defending the honor, integrity and rights of all veterans and those currently serving in the military;
- Fostering patriotism through education and volunteerism within the community; and
- Advocating for a strong national defense.



VFW at a Glance

VFW honors veterans through memorial fundraising efforts, sponsorship of special events for disabled vets and by symbolically recognizing volunteer service. Donations also help victims of natural disasters and less-fortunate children.

Media Contacts:

Jerry Newberry, VFW communications director, 816-968-1168, jnewberry@vfw.org

Joe Davis, Washington Office public affairs director, 202-608-8357, jdavis@vfw.org

Partner Organization

A national volunteer service organization, the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW was founded in 1914 and is the backbone of many local VFW volunteer efforts.

Membership Size

1.6 million members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and 19 foreign countries

Priority issues

- **VA Budget:** Ensure funding is authorized and appropriated for the continuing operation and enhancement of the Veterans Health Administration.
- **Education:** Secure funding increases to establish a GI bill for the 21st century that provides full tuition and living-expense stipends at any institution to which a veteran is accepted.
- **Military Quality of Life:** Increase active-duty armed forces pay to equal its private-sector counterparts.
- **War on Terrorism:** Support strong and decisive action against countries that sponsor and protect terrorist groups.
- **Defense/Armed Forces:** Increase defense budget and provide resources necessary to execute U.S. military strategy.
- **POW/MIA:** Achieve fullest possible accounting of American MIAs from WWII through the war on terrorism.

Membership Eligibility

Those serving honorably in the U.S. armed forces in a foreign war or overseas operation recognized

by a campaign medal, in Korea after June 30, 1949, and recipients of hostile-fire or imminent danger pay. Veterans of World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Persian Gulf and Iraq wars, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Afghanistan and other smaller expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, qualify.

Organizational Structure

Thousands convene each August at VFW's national convention to elect officers, adopt resolutions and discuss business affairs. Leading the organization are the elected commander-in-chief, senior vice commander-in-chief and junior vice commander-in-chief. The National Council of Administration serves as the VFW's board of directors.

More than 7,700 Posts comprise 54 Departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Latin America, the Pacific Areas and Europe. Posts form the basic local chapter.

Origins

In 1899, the American Veterans of Foreign Service (Columbus, Ohio) and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines (Denver, Colo.) were organized to secure rights and benefits for veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippines War (1899-1902). These two organizations merged in 1914, creating the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. VFW was chartered by Congress in 1936.



VFW Programs & Projects

Since its founding, VFW has been a staple in the community. Troop support, youth activities, volunteering and scholarship programs are a few of the ways VFW shines in the many communities and cities where Posts are located.

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Scholarship Programs

• *Voice of Democracy (VOD)*

This audio-essay competition annually awards more than \$2.1 million in scholarships to students in grades 9-12. First-place winner receives \$30,000 scholarship.

• *Patriot's Pen*

More than \$1.2 million is awarded annually to students in grades 7-8 in this essay contest. First-place winner receives \$10,000 U.S. Savings Bond.

• *Scout of the Year*

Three scholarships are awarded annually to outstanding scouts. First place receives \$5,000, second place receives \$3,000 and third place receives \$1,000.

Educational Outreach

• *Echoes From the Wall*

VFW partnered with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to distribute a curriculum, Echoes From the Wall, to 25,000 public and private high schools and donated \$50,000 to the project.

• *Educational Brochures*

VFW produces and distributes a flag brochure and poster as well as background material for Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

• *Veterans in the Classroom*

November is officially known as VFW Veterans in the Classroom Month. Members demonstrate flag etiquette and share their wartime experiences with America's youth.

Youth Activities

Locally, VFW Posts sponsor various youth sporting programs such as baseball and ice hockey. In addition VFW Posts sponsor Boy Scout troops, Junior Olympics and Bike Safety.

Community Volunteerism

Each year, VFW members volunteer more than 11.3 million hours of service to various community endeavors.

• *Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service*

VFW was a charter member in 1946. On average, more than 5,000 VFW volunteers donate 1 million hours of service annually at VA medical facilities.

• *March of Dimes*

VFW Posts raise an average of \$100,000 annually for March of Dimes (MOD).

Troop Support

• *Military Assistance Program (MAP)* Emergency Financial Assistance Fund has distributed thousands of dollars to troops in need since August 2000.

• *Adopt-a-Unit*

More than 1,000 units and ships have been adopted through VFW Posts. VFW National Headquarters adopted the USS Cole in 2002.

• *Care Packages*

Posts across the country show their support of America's military by collecting and distributing much-needed personal items for troops.

• *VFW Operation Uplink™*

Introduced in 1996, this program connects active-duty personnel and hospitalized veterans with family members through free phone cards and VFW "Free Call Days." Since its inception, *Operation Uplink* has provided over 11.5 million free connections.

• *VFW Unmet Needs*

This program administers emergency financial grants to military families to help cover basic expenses like mortgage payments, childcare, food and more. Since 2004, more than 2,400 grants have been issued totaling more than \$3.6 million.

VFW National Headquarters
406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111
(816) 756-3390, fax: 816-968-1199
Web site: www.vfw.org



VFW Community Achievements

Almost from its inception, VFW has engaged in service to communities. Assistance to fellow Americans is a cornerstone of VFW's foundation.

Mission: *VFW is an organization of war veterans committed to ensuring rights, remembering sacrifices, promoting patriotism, performing community services and advocating for a strong national defense.*

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|------|---|------|---|
| 1915 | Post 2100 helps sponsor a Boy Scout troop in Everett, Wash. | 1986 | VFW donates \$122,000 to the Statue of Liberty Restoration Fund. |
| 1916 | First national VFW essay contest held. | 1990 | VFW contributes \$49,000 to California earthquake victims. |
| 1922 | Buddy Poppy Program begins. | 1992 | VFW disburses \$197,000 to relieve victims of <i>Hurricane Andrew</i> and other disasters. |
| 1923 | VFW enters the war on drugs by printing a resolution calling for an international conference. | 1993 | Relief funds total \$500,000 |
| 1927 | VFW donates \$10,000 to Mississippi Valley flood victims. | 1995 | Youth Essay Contest (7 th -8 th grades) begins. |
| 1930 | First VFW scholarship award (\$300) goes to a Boy Scout. | 1997 | Buddy Poppy celebrates 75 th anniversary. |
| 1936 | Boy Scout-VFW plan of cooperation is signed. | 1998 | VFW Posts raise \$100,000 for the March of Dimes. |
| 1938 | VFW supports the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. | 1999 | VOD gives \$2.5 million in scholarship monies to high school students. |
| 1940 | VFW Junior Rifle Clubs are formed with National Rifle Association. | | VFW donates \$50,000 and 25,000 reprints of its war chronology to Vietnam Veterans Memorial's <i>Young American Vietnam War Era Studies Project</i> . |
| 1942 | VFW Aviator Cadet Program begins. | 2000 | VFW distributes 60,000 audio books to armed forces worldwide through <i>Operation Yarnspinner</i> . |
| 1950 | A cooperative disaster-relief plan is developed with the Red Cross. | 2002 | VFW contributes \$110,000 to diabetes research. |
| 1952 | The Dunn family (Kansas flood victims) wins a \$75,000 farm in Washington courtesy of the VFW. | | VFW equally distributes \$120,000 among families of active-duty personnel killed in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon. |
| 1953 | VFW National Teen-er Baseball: First tournament is held in Hershey Park, Pa. | 2003 | VFW partners with USA Freedom Corps homefront initiative. |
| 1956 | 150,000 kids take part in the national VFW marble competition. | 2004 | VFW establishes relationships with the National Council for Social Studies (NCCS) and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). |
| 1958 | VFW becomes full partner with Voice of Democracy (VOD). | 2005 | VFW disburses \$560,000 to Gulf Coast veterans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. |
| 1959 | Minnesota VFW/Ladies Auxiliary raise \$325,000 for dedication of the VFW Cancer Research Center at the Univ. of Minn. (Minneapolis). | | VFW distributes 5,000 copies of CD entitled, " <i>Vietnam: A Nation Remembers</i> ." |
| 1961 | VFW assumes primary sponsorship of VOD—within four years 262,000 students participate. | | VFW establishes VFW Military Scholarship program. |
| 1962 | Lite-a-Bike program: a \$300,000 project with 3-M Co. of St. Paul, Minn., provides "Scotchlite" reflector tape—50,000 VFW members from 4,500 Posts participate. | | VFW expands Patriot's Pen Essay Competition. |
| 1964 | VFW/Ladies Auxiliary contribute nearly \$100,000 to earthquake victims in Anchorage, Alaska. | 2007 | VFW Radiothon raises nearly \$100,000 for Unmet Needs. |
| 1970 | Drive-to-Survive program begins. | 2008 | VFW pledges \$1 million to construction of the Vietnam Veterans Education Center. |
| 1973 | Drug Awareness program begins. | 2010 | VFW increases Voice of Democracy National Scholarships to \$150,000. |
| 1978 | Women admitted to VFW. | | VFW raises over \$20,000 to assist service members with family in Haiti following the January earthquake. |
| 1979 | VFW Political Action Committee forms. | | |
| 1980 | Minnesota VFW Posts sponsor the U.S. hockey team in the Winter Olympics. | | |
| 1983 | VFW agrees to permit the Red Cross to use VFW facilities as shelters and relief centers during national disasters and emergencies. | | |

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Honoring Disabled Vets

• *Special Events*

VFW sponsors special trips for Purple Heart recipients. Past events include “Return to Vietnam” and other events.

• *Disabled Veterans Hunt*

VFW annually pays travel expenses for four Vietnam War veteran amputees, who sustained their wounds in combat, to go to a hunting lodge in Montana for an antelope hunt. In addition, VFW picks up the tab for three of the vets’ lodging, meals and the accompanying hunting-guide services.

Memorials

In fulfilling its pledge to remember the nation’s war dead, VFW promotes national memorials for veterans of all wars. Additionally, thousands of memorials have been constructed across the nation through local VFW Posts.

• *National WWI Memorial*

VFW gave the memorial a \$250,000 grant to help expand the Liberty Memorial Museum, which houses the nation’s most comprehensive collection of World War I historical materials.

• *National WWII Memorial*

VFW reached its five-year fundraising goal of \$6 million for the memorial’s construction in only two years. The donation ranks as the largest from a veterans group.

• *Korean War Memorial*

Members donated \$600,000 toward the construction of the Korean War Memorial. The donation ranks among the highest.

• *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*

VFW contributed over \$300,000 toward building “The Wall”— all 58,000 Americans who died as a

result of the Vietnam War are listed. VFW was the first major organization to contribute.

• *Women in Military Service to America Memorial*

VFW contributed \$70,000 toward construction costs.

• *Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial*

VFW contributed \$100,000 toward construction costs.

• *Vietnam Veterans Education Center*

VFW has contributed over \$586,000 so far toward construction of the Education Center.

Awards

Outstanding police officers, firefighters, EMTs and other first responders are recognized annually by VFW for their work in the community.

National Home for Children

Children, youth and family members of VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members who have nowhere to turn find a safe haven on this 629-acre VFW campus in Eaton Rapids, Mich. The privately funded facility is a living memorial to VFW and to all veterans.

Disaster Relief

VFW has been responding to natural disasters since 1927. Since 1964, VFW National Headquarters has donated nearly \$2 million in matching grants to state VFW relief efforts, including \$250,000 for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and \$100,000 aid to VFW Department of California following the 2007 California wildfires. VFW also raised over \$20,000 to assist service members with family in Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake and in December 2010, donated \$57,000 in financial relief to Ft. Leonard Wood soldiers affected by an EF-3 tornado .

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VFW Service to Veterans

From lobbying Congress and monitoring the Department of Veterans Affairs to assisting veterans filing claims, VFW remains a dedicated advocate for America's veterans.

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National Veterans Service (NVS)

Located in Washington, D.C., VFW's NVS office assists veterans and their dependents in acquiring their entitled VA services. Annually, NVS budgets hundreds of thousands of dollars for VFW Departments (states) to assist veterans in filing claims.

• **Department Service Officers (DSOs)**

A VFW DSO is located in every VA Regional Office. Each acts as a liaison between VA and individual veterans to help them get government entitlements.

• **Tactical Assessment Center (TAC)**

VFW's TAC operates a 24-hour, toll-free hotline for veterans with questions or concerns about VA health care. Since its 1997 inception, TAC has fielded more than 90,000 inquiries.

• **Health Screenings**

VFW hosts health screenings at its national convention and other conferences. Eye exams, hearing tests, cholesterol checks, hepatitis C tests, prostate checks and breast exams are just some of the screenings offered. Many lives have been saved thanks to these screenings.

• **Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)**

Introduced in 2001, VFW's BDD provides claims assistance to separating armed forces personnel at designated military installations throughout the country. Education and relocation services also are available.

National Legislative Service

This office represents VFW on various issues before Congress, including testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members.

• **Action Corps**

This grassroots lobbying effort has more than 15,000 volunteers who write, call and visit lawmakers to discuss issues related to veterans. Also, Action Corps publishes *Washington Weekly*, an online newsletter relating to current legislation.

National Security and Foreign Affairs

The welfare of active-duty personnel is of prime concern to VFW, which is why troop deployments are monitored.

• **POW/MIA**

VFW national officers visit Pacific, Asian and European countries to meet with host-country officials to stress the importance of conducting MIA investigation and recovery operations, as well as gaining access to documents and archival research facilities.

Employment Services

VFW is a strong supporter of veterans' preference in government positions. The Washington Office monitors veteran-specific employment legislation.

• **VetJobs.com**

VFW is the major sponsor of this online service, which allows veterans and their spouses to post resumes and search available jobs.

VFW National Headquarters
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VFW Legislative Victories

VFW played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans legislation passed in the 20th century, as well as bills developed in the 21st century.

Note: In each case, this is the year an act was passed or an institution established.

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|------|--|---|---|
| 1917 | War Risk Insurance Act Amendments | VA home loan increase | |
| 1918 | Vocational Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 178) | Veterans & Survivors Pension Improvement Act | |
| 1919 | Census Act Rider on Veterans Preference Discharge Allowance | Veterans Day returned to Nov. 11 | |
| 1920 | Widows & Orphans Pension Act (Spanish-American War) | 1979 | First joint meeting of House/Senate Veterans Affairs committees |
| 1921 | Veterans Bureau Act | Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program (P.L. 96-22) (creates Vet Centers for PTSD counseling) | |
| 1923 | Veterans Preference Point System | Vietnam Era Veterans Week | |
| 1924 | House Veterans Affairs Committee | 1980 | VFW calls for Agent Orange study |
| | World War Veterans Act | VA home loan increase | |
| | World War Adjusted Compensation Act | Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments | |
| 1925 | Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs | 1981 | Former POW Benefits Act |
| 1926 | Spanish-American War benefits | Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act | |
| | New Johnson Act (WWI benefits) | 1982 | Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) |
| 1930 | Veterans Administration (VA) | Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated | |
| | World War Service Disability Pension Act (P.L. 522) | 1983 | Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act |
| 1931 | Bacharach Amendment (P.L. 743) allows borrowing on WWI bonus certificates | 1984 | Montgomery GI Bill |
| 1933 | Wagner-Peyser Act: Veterans Employment Service | Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act (P.L. 98-542): Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure | |
| 1934 | Pension for widows of WWI vets | 1987 | New GI Bill Continuation Act |
| 1936 | Bonus bonds (\$2.4 billion) to WWI vets redeemable | 1988 | Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act |
| 1938 | Armistice Day (Nov. 11) legal holiday | Department of Veterans Affairs Act | |
| 1940 | Philippine Travel Pay Bill | Veterans Judicial Review Act | |
| | National Service Life Insurance | Veterans Benefits & Improvement Act | |
| | Selective Service & Training Act | 1989 | VA becomes a Cabinet department |
| 1943 | Benefits to WWII veterans (P.L. 10) | Court of Veterans Appeals | |
| | Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act | 1990 | Agent Orange service-connection |
| 1944 | GI Bill of Rights (P.L. 346) | 1991 | Agent Orange Act (P.L. 102-4) |
| | Veterans Preference Act | Persian Gulf War Veterans Assistance Act (P.L. 102-25) | |
| | Mustering-Out Pay Act | Veterans Benefits Improvement Act (P.L. 102-86) | |
| | Extra pay for combat infantrymen | 1992 | Veterans Health-Care Act |
| 1946 | Veteran Emergency Housing Act | 1996 | Veterans Health-Care Eligibility Reform Act |
| 1947 | Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights (BVRP) | 1999 | Veterans Millennium Health-Care and Benefits Act |
| 1948 | Cash subsistence for GI Bill increased | 2003 | Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more (P.L. 108-136) |
| 1950 | Vocational Rehabilitation Act | 2004 | Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled (P.L. 108-375) |
| 1951 | Servicemen's Indemnity & Insurance | 2005 | Traumatic Injury Insurance supplemental created (S. 806) |
| 1952 | Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill) | 2006 | Protestors banned from military funerals (H.R. 5037) |
| 1954 | Veterans Compensation Act | VFW Passes Resolution to Support War in Iraq | |
| | Nov. 11 as Veterans Day (P.L. 380) | 2007 | VFW calls for VA/military healthcare system review after Walter Reed outpatient debacle |
| 1962 | Veterans Benefits Act (Cold War GI Bill) | 2008 | Record VA discretionary budget approved |
| 1966 | Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act (P.L. 89-358) (Vietnam War GI Bill) | GI Bill for the 21 st Century signed into law | |
| 1970 | Senate Veterans Affairs Committee | 2009 | Advanced Appropriations for VA becomes law |
| 1972 | Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (raised GI Bill stipend to \$220 per month) | 2010 | Family Caregiver Legislation signed into law |
| 1973 | Federal court agrees veterans preference applies to state jobs | Ensured all VA and DOD healthcare programs were recognized as meeting minimum coverage standards under new national health care law | |
| 1974 | Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (vocational rehabilitation) | | |
| 1976 | Veterans Education & Employment Assistance Act | | |
| 1977 | Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act | | |
| 1978 | Veterans preference preserved | | |

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Veterans Days

In an effort to debunk common myths about Veterans, Memorial and Armed Forces days, here's is a brief history of each one.

Veterans of Foreign Wars

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Mission:
VFW is an organization of war veterans committed to ensuring rights, remembering sacrifices, promoting patriotism, performing community services and advocating for a strong national defense.

MEMORIAL DAY

The traditional practice on Memorial Day is to place flowers and/or wreaths on the graves of veterans. Until 1882, this was known as Decoration Day. At no time, however, was Memorial Day a day to decorate graves of any one other than veterans.

Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance. America's collective consciousness demands that all citizens be aware of and recall on special occasions the deaths of their fellow countrymen during wartime. This is why we commemorate Memorial Day.

Many people do not realize that Memorial Day was always observed on May 30 until the changed it to the fourth Monday of May to, once again, appease those seeking three-day weekends.

The change itself undermines the sacrifices Americans have made. This day of remembrance is all-inclusive, spanning generations and some 60 military actions that claimed 1.4 million lives.

It is a day to remember the loss of defenders, a sense of loss that takes group form. In essence, America is commemorating those who made the greatest sacrifice possible — giving one's own life selflessly.

Means of paying tribute vary. Pausing for a few moments of personal silence is an option for everyone.

VETERANS DAY

Though Congress dubbed November 11 Armistice Day in 1926 (commemorating the end of WWI on Nov. 11, 1918), it wasn't until 1938 that it became a legal national holiday. It would retain that designation until 1954 when Congress changed the name to Veterans Day.

During the Vietnam War, unfortunately, the holiday's meaning was minimized when President Lyndon Johnson signed a law making the observance of Veterans Day the fourth Monday in October to placate those who merely wanted a long weekend. It wasn't until 1978 that Congress restored the day to its rightful place on America's historic calendar.

Veterans Day is not a day to memorialize those

lost to war, but an opportunity to publicly commemorate the contributions of living veterans.

ARMED FORCES DAY

In 1950, Armed Forces Day was created to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the armed forces under the Department of Defense.

Annually, this day is celebrated the third Saturday of May. It honors the dedicated individuals who wear America's uniform.

This now lesser-known holiday once was celebrated with much jubilation. There were parades, open houses and receptions.

Today, it is primarily celebrated on military installations where open houses take place.

In recent years, with the renewed public pride in the armed forces, it has taken on more meaning.