



## 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.*

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### 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

1.5 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.
- **Military Quality of Life:** Increase military base pay to restore full comparability with private-sector wages; upgrade housing, recreation, work and child care facilities.
- **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 expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, also 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 7,900 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.*