VFW Elects Matthew M. “Fritz” Mihelcic as New National Commander

‘The time is now!’ for the organization to move forward

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Matthew M. “Fritz” Mihelcic, of Sparta, Illinois, was elected today as the new national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, a congressionally-chartered veterans service organization comprised of 1.5 million eligible veterans and military service members from all six branches of the armed forces.

“Comrades, Auxiliary members, family and friends, thank you for letting me share a few moments with you as I begin this great journey as your VFW Commander-in-Chief as we shake off the past and rise again to the challenge of this next year,” said Mihelcic.

Mihelcic’s election as the VFW’s 113th Commander-in-Chief occurred at the conclusion of the organization’s 122nd national convention in Kansas City, Missouri. The gathering was a much-welcomed event following a year without a national convention due to the pandemic restrictions. During his acceptance speech, Mihelcic commended the remarkable community service of VFW members during the COVID crisis.

“If there are those that can do it in the Dark Ages, during the plague of the modern era, think of what we can all do, working together, in the coming Renaissance,” said Mihelcic. “When it comes to taking action in spite of our circumstance, I say “The Time Is Now!”

VFW membership eligibility requires honorable service in a war or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters. Mihelcic served in the U.S. Air Force Air National Guard from 1989 to 1999 with the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing. He earned his VFW eligibility when he was activated for federal service in Desert Shield and Desert Storm as a security policeman. In recognition of his service and contributions during deployment, he received many awards and decorations, to include the Air Force Achievement Medal and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with “V” device.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

Online Version: https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2021/8/vfw-elects-matthew-m-fritz-mihelcic-as-new-national-commander

He joined the VFW at Post 2698 in Sparta, Illinois, in 1991 and maintains a Gold Legacy Life membership. Over the years, Mihelcic has held many vital leadership positions at the local, state and national levels. He served as judge advocate for the Department of Illinois from 1999 to 2011, the Department of Illinois commander from 2013 to 2014, in which he achieved All-American status, multiple terms as the national parliamentarian, and served four separate terms as national judge advocate general.

"It matters not what war or conflict you were in, what branch, or where you were deployed. If you served and are eligible we want you to be part of us. Everyone wants to be part of something bigger than themselves. The VFW offers you that," said Mihelcic.

Watch or read Mihelcic's acceptance speech.