



VFW at a Glance

The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization composed of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. The VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs.

Media Contacts:

Randi Law, VFW communications manager, 816-968-1104, rlaw@vfw.org

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

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.

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, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and other smaller expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, qualify.

Partner Organization

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

Membership Size

Nearly 1.7 million VFW and Auxiliary members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and many foreign countries.

Organizational Structure

Thousands convene each year 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 6,500 Posts worldwide comprise 53 Departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Asia/Pacific Areas and Europe. Posts form the basic local chapter.

Priority Issues

- **VA Health Care:** Ensure veterans have timely access to high quality, comprehensive and veteran-centric health care, and secure sufficient funding for the VA Health Care System.
- **Women Veterans:** Expand women's health care services to all VA medical centers to ensure the growing number of women veterans have access to gender-specific services.
- **Suicide Prevention & Homelessness:** Ensure Congress funds support programs, including providing education and career training opportunities, substance abuse and mental health services and permanent housing solutions for all homeless veterans.
- **VA Benefits & Compensation:** Pass Appeals Modernization Act, and increase staff to ensure timely and accurate claims decisions.
- **Seamless Transition:** Demand the creation of one integrated medical and personnel record for every service member and continue to improve the quality and access to Transition Assistance Programs, both during and after service.
- **Military Quality of Life:** Oppose all proposals that will damage morale, call on Congress to improve the quality of life for all service members and support efforts to lower the Reserve Component retirement pay age to 55.
- **Education & Employment:** Fight to sustain G.I. Bill benefits and insist on strengthening USERRA. Continue to improve licensing and credentialing for military skills.
- **Defense & Homeland Security:** Fully support the troops and their mission in the war on terrorism, and to secure U.S. borders against all enemies, both foreign and domestic, who are intent on doing us harm.
- **POW/MIA:** Achieve the fullest possible accounting of America's 83,000 MIAs from World War II forward.