



VFW Mobilizing, Combating Effects of Invisible Enemy

The VFW remains an organization of veterans #StillServing

Mar 19, 2020

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars, America’s largest organization of combat veterans, knows all too well the experience of fighting a sometimes invisible enemy. This unique understanding, and the situational readiness and dedication to country forged through military service is perpetuating the VFW and its members’ commitment to service through the COVID-19 pandemic that is sweeping the country. The VFW remains an organization of veterans #StillServing.

VFW members across the nation have mobilized to provide much-needed support to coronavirus-stricken communities. Among them:

VFW Post 170 in Poughkeepsie, New York, is working to ensure children impacted by area school closures don’t go hungry, organizing as a community drop off point for food and donations to be delivered to affected children.

VFW Post 8452 in Gainesville, Georgia, is operating as a drop off point and drive-through distribution center, providing meals, bottled water, children’s books and other goods donated by area businesses to local residents.

Members of VFW Post 3762 have set out to help the elderly and disabled in Washington Court House, Ohio, who have difficulty getting to the store and are especially impacted by

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those bulk buying. As good stewards, the group is purchasing food and supplies from various stores and delivering them to those in need.

“This is what we do,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “For over 120 years our Posts have been the pillars of support in America’s communities and this proves we’re not slowing up despite the adversity presented by this unique situation,” he continued. “Kudos to all of our members and Posts out there who are safely meeting the needs of their communities. And for those not yet active in this fight, mobilize! Let the community know you’re there for them and make accommodations to join in the effort.”

Despite implementing relatively drastic measures to help slow the coronavirus spread to include the elimination of travel and expanding telework opportunities to its 212 employees, the VFW — which serves hundreds of thousands of veterans each year — remains committed to providing all those who utilize its programs and services with top-notch customer service and care.

The organization continues to accept and process applications to all of its support programs and is working to maintain continuity in serving veterans in filing for and obtaining VA claims benefits and entitlements.

“The VFW has a job to do and a solemn promise to keep to those veterans, service members, and their families for which we work. Now more than ever we must find solutions in the face of adversity and strive to meet the needs of those who rely on the vital services we provide,” said Schmitz.

The organization is also adapting to ensure its fraternal operations remain strong. The pandemic comes at the start of the fraternal election season where VFW Posts, Districts and Departments worldwide are mandated by the organization’s bylaws to gather to elect new leaders.

A recent Executive Order issued by the VFW National Commander states that while VFW

entities are asked to proceed with the election of local and state officers within the limitations of recently imposed state and local mandates, they will not be sanctioned by the inability to operate in this capacity as a direct result of the pandemic.

Of concern to the VFW is the impact social isolation may have on the mental well-being of America's veterans.

"I'm asking all VFW members to check on your battle buddies, check on your friends and family who may be isolated during this time," said Schmitz. "As many of us know, a simple phone call and show of support could make all the difference."

He also asks that any veteran experiencing mental stress contact the Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, [online chat](#), or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1.800.273.8255 and press 1, [chat online](#), or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Veterans who use services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs are encouraged to contact their local facility directly with any questions regarding access and care.