

Newly Chartered VFW Post Opens at Fort Hood

Texas VFW members opened a new Post's doors in January at one of the largest military installations in the world

Jul 06, 2022

A brand new VFW Post in Texas at Fort Hood was chartered in January with its members having a goal in mind: to help military members and their families.

VFW Post 12209 members held the installation ceremony on Jan. 7 at Fort Hood's Phantom Warrior Center.

Post Commander Willie Keller said that Post members wanted the Post to be on the grounds of Fort Hood to help with the "perception" of VFW.

"A lot of people think the VFW is a place to get a drink," said Keller, who has been a VFW member since 1995. "We want to show troops at Fort Hood that VFW is here to help them, and we have many VFW services they can use."

Keller, an Army veteran of more than 16 years — said he and other Post 12209 members wanted to introduce VFW services to potential members. He named the Military Assistance Program, which provides grants to Posts to help active-duty troops, and Unmet Needs, which helps military families with financial difficulties, as well as programs offered by the VFW Department of Texas. Keller added that being on base is "more effective" than being located outside of the installation.

"We are on Fort Hood four times a week," said Keller, who medically retired from the military in 2009. "We at the VFW are out here with the troops. We talk to them — we assist them with what they need. We want to guide them in the right direction through the military."

The Post was named in honor of the late A.C. Cotton, a retired command sergeant major

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who died at the age of 86 on Sept. 7, 2021. Cotton, a Vietnam War veteran, joined the Army in 1955 and served 33 years. Cotton also was the first black command sergeant major of the Army's "First Team," the 1st Cavalry Division, according to Keller.

Keller — who served in Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq — said he and the other Post members took the chance to name a Post after a soldier who made history in the military.

"We named the Post in honor of Cotton because we all personally knew him," added Keller, who medically retired from the military in 2009. "When he passed last year, it affected all of us. He was well-known in the armored cavalry community."

For those interested, VFW Post 12209 is located at Fort Hood Building 18000. The Post also can be followed on Facebook by searching CSM A.C. Cotton VFW Post 12209.

This article is featured in the 2022 May issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Dave Spiva](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.