



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

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

Nearly 1.9 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 6,800 Posts comprise 53 Departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Asia/Pacific Areas, Latin America/Caribbean and Europe. Posts form the basic local chapter.

Priority Issues

- **VA Health Care:** Ensure sufficient funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, keep women's health issues at the forefront and oppose all efforts to reduce presumptive service-connected conditions.

- **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:** Urge Congress to require the Veterans Benefits Administration to reduce the claims backlog and improve quality without reducing benefits or imposing new requirements on veterans.

- **Seamless Transition:** Demand the creation of one integrated electronic medical and personnel record for every service member and improve Transition Assistance Programs to help them transition into civilian life.

- **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:** Urge Congress to address the unemployment rate among veterans, fight to sustain G.I. Bill benefits and insist on strengthening USERRA.

- **Defense & Homeland Security:** Fully support troops and their mission in the war on terrorism and secure U.S. borders against foreign nationals intent on doing us harm.

- **POW/MIA:** Achieve fullest possible accounting of American MIAs from WWII through the war on terrorism.



VFW Community Achievements

The VFW takes great pride in its history of service to its communities both stateside and abroad. Annually, VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members donate more than 11 million hours to community service projects, relief efforts and local VA facilities each year.

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- 1915 Post 2100 helps sponsor a Boy Scout troop in Everett, Wash.
- 1916 First national VFW essay contest held.
- 1922 Buddy Poppy Program begins.
- 1923 VFW enters the war on drugs by printing a resolution calling for an international conference.
- 1927 VFW donates \$10,000 to Mississippi Valley flood victims.
- 1930 First VFW scholarship award (\$300) goes to a Boy Scout.
- 1936 Boy Scout-VFW plan of cooperation is signed.
- 1938 VFW supports the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.
- 1940 VFW Junior Rifle Clubs are formed with National Rifle Association.
- 1942 VFW Aviator Cadet Program begins.
- 1950 A cooperative disaster-relief plan is developed with the Red Cross.
- 1952 The Dunn family (Kansas flood victims) wins a \$75,000 farm in Washington courtesy of the VFW.
- 1953 VFW National Teen-er Baseball: First tournament is held in Hershey Park, Pa.
- 1956 150,000 kids take part in the national VFW marble competition.
- 1958 VFW becomes full partner with Voice of Democracy (VOD).
- 1959 Minnesota VFW/Ladies Auxiliary raise \$325,000 for dedication of the VFW Cancer Research Center at the Univ. of Minn. (Minneapolis).
- 1961 VFW assumes primary sponsorship of VOD—within four years 262,000 students participate.
- 1962 Lite-a-Bike program: a \$300,000 project with 3-M Co. of St. Paul, Minn., provides “Scotchlite” reflector tape—50,000 VFW members from 4,500 Posts participate.
- 1964 VFW/Ladies Auxiliary contribute nearly \$100,000 to earthquake victims in Anchorage, Alaska.
- 1970 Drive-to-Survive program begins.
- 1973 Drug Awareness program begins.
- 1978 Women admitted to VFW.
- 1979 VFW Political Action Committee forms.
- 1980 Minnesota VFW Posts sponsor the U.S. hockey team in the Winter Olympics.
- 1983 VFW agrees to permit the Red Cross to use VFW facilities as shelters and relief centers during national disasters and emergencies.
- 1986 VFW donates \$122,000 to the Statue of Liberty Restoration Fund.
- 1990 VFW contributes \$49,000 to California earthquake victims.
- 1992 VFW disburses \$197,000 to relieve victims of Hurricane Andrew and other disasters.
- 1993 Relief funds total \$500,000
- 1995 Youth Essay Contest (7th-8th grades) begins.
- 1997 Buddy Poppy celebrates 75th anniversary.
- 1998 VFW Posts raise \$100,000 for the March of Dimes.
- 1999 VOD gives \$2.5 million in scholarship monies to high school students. VFW donates \$50,000 and 25,000 reprints of its war chronology to Vietnam Veterans Memorial’s *Young American Vietnam War Era Studies Project*.
- 2000 VFW distributes 60,000 audio books to armed forces worldwide through *Operation Yarnspinner*.
- 2002 VFW contributes \$110,000 to diabetes research. VFW equally distributes \$120,000 among families of active-duty personnel killed in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon.
- 2003 VFW partners with USA Freedom Corps homefront initiative.
- 2004 VFW establishes relationships with the National Council for Social Studies (NCCS) and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASPP).
- 2005 VFW disburses \$560,000 to Gulf Coast veterans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. VFW distributes 5,000 copies of CD entitled, “*Vietnam: A Nation Remembers*.” VFW establishes VFW Military Scholarship program. VFW expands Patriot’s Pen Essay Competition.
- 2007 VFW Radiothon raises nearly \$100,000 for Unmet Needs
- 2010 VFW donates over \$648,000 toward construction of the Vietnam Veterans Education Center. VFW increases Voice of Democracy National Scholarships to \$150,000. VFW raises over \$20,000 to assist service members with family in Haiti following the January earthquake.
- 2011 VFW pledges \$500,000 toward the construction of the Veterans Hall in the National Museum of the United States Army. VFW provides over \$145,000 in emergency financial relief to military families living in tornado-stricken areas.
- 2012 VFW provided over \$120,000 for Hurricane Sandy victims on the East Coast.
- 2013 VFW provided \$30,000 for the Moore, Okla. tornado victims and and over \$30,000 for the flood victims in Colorado.



VFW Post 1177 Background Briefing

- ORIGINATED:** 1899 – VFW founded by merger - is the oldest major U.S. veterans organization
1936 – VFW’s Non-Profit Charter is approved by Congress
1937 – Post 1177 Mustered at Leesburg, VA
1960 – Post Home constructed on Old Waterford Road
- VFW STATS:** 325 members in Post, 1177, 165 Posts & 36,000 members In Virginia, 1.9 M members total
- ELIGIBILITY:** Any citizen of the United States who has served honorably in the United States armed forces in any foreign war or expedition recognized by a Campaign medal authorized by the United States government or honorable service in Korea after June 30, 1949.
- VFW PROGRAMS:** The Post participates in troop support initiatives, youth activities and contests, scholarship programs, Buddy Poppy campaigns, citizenship education, community service, charity drives, homeless veteran donations, scouting awards, public safety awards, and service offices that connect veterans with government benefits. VA VFW Posts donate \$3 million annually and provide volunteer hours that are worth more than \$10 million each year. VFW State Service Officers connected veterans of all ages with more than \$30 million in federal benefits last year. Nationally, the VFW has given military families more than \$4 million in emergency grants.
- POST HQ:** 401 Old Waterford Road, Leesburg, VA 20176.
Facebook: Access Facebook and search “VFW 1177 Leesburg”
Website – www.vfw1177.org (see website for contact info)
- MEDIA CONTACT:** Ray Delpesche, Commander (718) 552-6522 or cdr@vfw1177.org
- OUR MISSION:** To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts.
To serve our veterans, the military, and our communities.
To advocate on behalf of all veterans.
- OUR VISION:** Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.
- OUR CORE VALUES:**
- Always put the interests of our members first
 - Treat donors as partners in our cause
 - Promote patriotism
 - Honor military service
 - Ensure the care of veterans and their families
 - Serve our communities
 - Promote a positive image of the VFW
 - Respect the diversity of veteran opinions



VFW Programs & Projects

Since its founding, VFW has been a staple in the community. Troop support, youth activities, volunteering and scholarship programs are a few of the ways VFW shines in the many communities and cities where Posts are located.

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Scholarship Programs

• *Voice of Democracy*

This audio-essay competition annually awards more than \$1.9 million in scholarships to students in grades 9-12. First-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship.

• *Patriot's Pen*

More than \$1.1 million is awarded annually to students in grades 6-8 in this essay contest. First-place winner receives \$5,000.

• *Scout of the Year*

Three scholarships are awarded annually to outstanding scouts. First place receives \$5,000, second place receives \$3,000 and third place receives \$1,000.

Educational Outreach

• *Echoes From the Wall*

VFW partnered with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to distribute a curriculum, Echoes From the Wall, to 25,000 public and private high schools and donated \$50,000 to the project.

• *Educational Brochures*

VFW produces and distributes a flag brochure and poster.

• *Veterans in the Classroom*

November is officially known as VFW Veterans in the Classroom Month. Members demonstrate flag etiquette and share their wartime experiences with America's youth.

Youth Activities

Locally, VFW Posts sponsor various youth sporting programs such as baseball and ice hockey. In addition many VFW Posts sponsor Boy and Girl Scout troops, Junior Olympics, bike safety, JROTC units, drill teams, color guards and a variety of other programs to build good citizenship and exemplary character in America's youth.

Community Volunteerism

Each year, VFW members volunteer more than 11 million hours of service to various community endeavors.

• *Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service*

VFW was a charter member in 1946. VFW volunteers donate millions of hours of service annually at VA medical facilities.

• *March of Dimes*

VFW Posts raise an average of \$100,000 annually for March of Dimes (MOD).

Troop Support

• *Military Assistance Program (MAP)*

The link between the VFW and the military community has provided over 2,200 grants to VFW Departments and Posts for morale-boosting events since 2005, hosting more than 2 million military members and their families at these events.

• *Adopt-a-Unit*

More than 2,500 units and ships have been adopted through VFW Posts since 2007. VFW National Headquarters adopted the USS Cole in 2002.

• *Care Packages*

Posts across the country show their support of America's military by collecting and distributing much-needed personal items for troops.

• *VFW Operation Uplink™*

Introduced in 1996, this program connects active-duty personnel and hospitalized veterans with family members through free phone time and VFW "Free Call Days." Operation Uplink has provided over 7.5 million free connections through FCDs since 2006.

• *VFW Unmet Needs*

This program administers emergency financial grants to military families to help cover basic expenses like mortgage payments, childcare, food and more. Since 2004, more than 3,600 grants have been issued totaling more than \$5 million.

• *VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"*

Introduced in 2013, this program awards scholarships of up to \$5,000 to qualifying veterans and service members. The program provided 137 scholarships totaling more than \$580,000.00 for the 2014 school year.