

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Michael Hoag

State Commander

Sexual Harassment training

Upon my return from the National Convention, the news continued to greatly revolve around sexual harassment issues. It's important for all of us in leadership positions to ensure that it DOES NOT HAPPEN!

Sexual Harassment may come in multiple forms over multiple issues. There is no limit to the circumstances that could lead to accusations. With this so prominently in the media, it becomes even more important to be aware of our responsibilities, not only to not do it ourselves, but to discourage others from it as well.

Post with employees are required in New York State to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy. This is described in detail by the State of NY website. Google *sexual harassment training in New York*. Furthermore, Employers are required to give training which is also talked about on that page. There are templates for both. Even if your post does not have "employees" but volunteers, it would be a very good idea to do the same.

I encourage everyone to investigate what is required and or is expected at your level and situation.

As Commander, I believe there is no excuse for harassment of any employee, member, or guest by anyone affiliated with a VFW Post. All laws, rules, and common sense should always be followed.

Michael Hoag, Commander
Dept of New York



Robert Mitchell

State Adjutant

Comrades,

Congratulations to all our 2021-2022 incoming officers! The Department is off to a strong and very busy start to our new year. State Commander Hoag has been extremely involved traveling and visiting Posts and events throughout the State. If you have upcoming events and haven't already done so, please consider inviting the Commander!

Our two new Administrative Assistants at Department Headquarters have quickly settled into their new positions and they are doing a great job! Both Jody and Amanda have been quick learners and we are lucky to have found these two extremely qualified staff members.



Jody



Amanda

— STATE ADJUTANT, continued on page 2



Dan McMahon

State Quartermaster

Comrades,

This is the beginning of a new Fiscal year for the Veterans Of Foreign Wars. Every, out- going Officer has the responsibility to assist, coach, and mentor those officers who were recently elected and installed. Please, DO NOT JUST WALK AWAY. There are many items and much information which needs to be passed to the new officers for them to do a successful job. Just telling the new officer everything you need is in the office just DOESN'T CUT IT!

The Department of New York OTI is Next month. Every District is required to provide an OTI training for the Posts within their District.

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New York State Overseas Veteran

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** ARTICLES:

Articles: Any and all articles involving and/or including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, its members, member communities, awards and activities are welcome.

** SUBMISSION & FORMAT:

Please prepare all articles in Microsoft Word (version 2003 or newer) or plain text. Send JPG/PNG/PDF images with corresponding captions. E-mail articles and pictures as attachments with the sender's name, address and phone number in the base of the e-mail. Submissions from other sources must have complete credits such as publication name, address and dates published.

** EDITORIAL POLICY:

Inappropriate, demeaning, unduly critical articles and/or statements will not be published. Article length, inaccuracies, composition and other miscellaneous errors and/or mistakes may be edited.

Although every effort is made to maintain an honorable and accurate publication, the Department of New York and/or its staff, editor and other publication participants are not responsible for the content, views and/or positions of any article(s)/submissions.

**** ALL ARTICLES AND PICTURES MUST BE E-MAILED TO: CITadmin@VFWNY.com. They become the sole property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York.**

** DEADLINE:

Deadline: Articles must be submitted by the 15th of each month...July, October, January and April.

If you are using regular mail, send the items to CITadmin, P.O. Box 116, Carlisle, NY 12031.

** GRAPHIC DESIGN

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— STATE ADJUTANT, continued from page 1

As always, Department Headquarters is a support element of our organization and is here to assist our Posts and membership. Please call on us if we can assist you in any way.

It is essential that we again focus our efforts this year on "Membership". As we all know, membership is the true "lifeblood" of our organization and every single member that we can recruit or retain will greatly contribute to the success and strength of our Department and organization. Together we can strive to achieve great things including 100% in membership!

Yours in Comradeship,

Bob Mitchell
State Adjutant

— STATE QUARTERMASTER, continued from page 1

It is imperative we as officers provide as much assistance to all officers and members of the VFW. From Recruiting to How to properly complete an INSPECTION we need to complete this task.

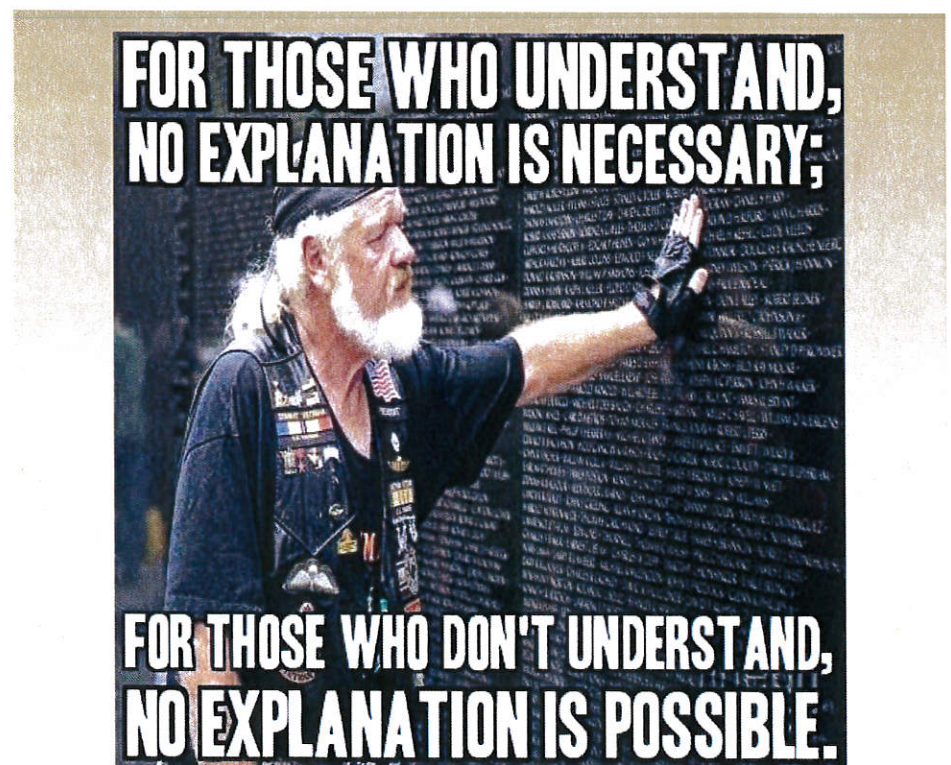
For whatever reason, we are losing too many posts each year. Rather than merge with another Post or Posts some would rather just throw in the towel. Losing members to the AT-LARGE post causes districts to lost voting strength. If a post is in some kind of trouble step in and see if there is an alternative way to resolve issues and assist them to get back on their feet.

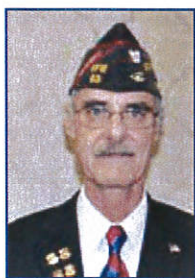
Most post issues seem to revolve around the same things: Not recruiting, Not communicating with all the members; Not asking the members why they are not coming around; Or when a Member does attend a meeting not asking them if there is something they need or want.

RETENTION STARTS WITH YOU!
RECRUITING STARTS WITH YOU!
REINSTATING STARTS WITH YOU!

Beginning today, everyone should start today to replace themselves. If we do not replace ourselves tomorrow will only be harder.

Thank you,
Daniel McMahan, Quartermaster
Department of New York
dmcmahan@vfwny.com
518-414-2605





Daniel Kell

State Jr. Vice Commander

Comrades,

I want to start by thanking the membership for electing me as your Jr. Vice Commander for this ensuing year. I would also like to thank my County and District 6 for supporting me in my campaign this year. I am looking forward to the challenges that will come before me and visiting

the Districts and Counties within Department of New York. I would also like to congratulate all the newly elected Officers in Department of New York, District and Counties within the Department. We have a great team and I am looking forward to traveling throughout the State these next few years meeting new comrades, communicating and making this year a great year.

Earlier this month the Department held their Officer Training Instruction (OTI); everyone that attended was pleased the way it turned out and the information they received. As elected officers of your District/Post there are minimum expectations required each year from all of you such as submitting all your Quarterly Audit Reports, Community Service Reports and Inspection Reports. The time is now to start working on them as this is part of the requirements for your post to be eligible for All State.

Membership is always the focus each of us should have, we need to work on reinstatements and recruiting new members. The Membership Program and tools are all out there on the Department Website. To reach our membership goals, we must continue to improve the way we communicate and use the information we have on the Department Website and National Website.

In closing let's remember the 13 U.S. Service Members who were killed and 18 service members injured by a suicide bomb attack at Kabul Airport in Afghanistan and keep their family members in your prayers.

Yours in Comradeship,

Daniel L. Kell

Department of New York Jr, Vice Commander

Service Officer Journal Chairperson

Being members of the VFW, we have all been in a combat zone and had to rely on and help one another. That part of our mission has not changed, just look at the Buddy Poppy program, the Commanders Special Project or the VFW National Home for Children. In my appointed position as Service Journal chairperson, I am asking you to also support our NYS Department Service Officers. The funds that they receive from Department does not match the amount of work that they do for all of us, no matter if we are a VFW member, or in one of the many other military service organizations or not. Our Service Officers work tirelessly for all those veterans who need help navigating the bureaucracy of the VA and all its forms and procedures. You might not have heard of all the major successes they have had fighting and obtaining benefits that we have earned by or service to this great country of ours, but they have recovered approximately \$1 billion in benefits for veterans or their families. You and your post's support enables the Department to give them the tools, training and equipment that they need to continue this work. Please consider this in your decision making and support your service officers and thank them for this work.

Raymond Thies

Service Officer Journal Chairperson, Post 8692



Gene Ratigliano

Membership Report

Comrades:

Our membership year has begun aiming for 100%. As the Department Membership Chairman for the Department this year, I ask myself, can we do this again?? Yes, we certainly can. We did it in 2018-19 and we can do it again.

For those who may not be aware, as of Mid-August based on National figures there are currently 9,370 prior VFW members who have not paid their dues who are in the Department's At-Large pool and 3,739 prior VFW members who have relocated within the state who have not paid their dues. I have provided each District Commander a spreadsheet of both the unpaid members in the Department as well as the unpaid relocated members. If your District Commander has not provided you the prospects from these lists, give him a call and ask for the zip codes in your post area so that you can contact these members.

Recruiting is truly a team effort. Post and Council Commanders, you need to step up and direct your membership teams in the right direction if we are going to make it this year. Gilded age business magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie said it best, "teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." As leaders we need to provide the guidance to those posts members and membership teams how to direct their efforts to get the best results.

If you attended the Department OTI this year I emphasized the importance of planning. Using the SMART System you should get results. You need to set your goals and those goals need to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

Recruiting doesn't happen by itself. It takes aggressive action to attain any goal you set for yourself. What you do and how you do it will determine how successful you will be in achieving the results you are aiming for.

Summer is nearing its end but we still have the fall weather to attend a number of events that bring successful recruiting results. Octoberfest events and fall harvesting events are good opportunities to set up a recruiting booth. Use the VFW tents that have been provided the district to make yourself visible at these events and in the community. Once winter rears its ugly head you will need to exert your efforts inside on the telephone, e-mails and mailing campaigns to reach your prospects.

Look to your District Commander for assistance. If there is any way the Department can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or e-mail and we will direct that assistance to you if feasible at ejr@vfwny.com or 518-885-9666. Continue to do the good work you do in your communities and spread the word on who you are and what the VFW does for its veterans and your communities.

Yours in Comradeship,

Gene Ratigliano

Membership Chairman





Gary Wasserman

Veterans & Military Support Programs

Here are some of the items that (MAP) Military Assistance Program and Veterans and Military Support have been doing:

- Unmet needs - supported by Burger King
- Operation Uplink
- Sports Clip – Help a Hero Scholarship

If these businesses are in your area and belong, please shop there to show your support. If they do not participate, try to get them to join. For more information go to the National website. You and your post can also donate to these programs. You can send the donations to N.Y.S. and mark the check for the program of your choice.

I have the new pins and hope to see you at the fall conference. If you would like to order your pins now, please email me at garywoz2@aol.com

Gary Wasserman
Chairman

National Council Member

Greetings! As we begin this new VFW year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my Post, my Council, District and everyone in the Department of New York who supported my candidacy for National Council Member. As your newly elected representative on the National Council of Administration I will do my very best to represent you and the Department of New York at the National Level. The position to which you elected me comes with some serious responsibilities. As a representative on the Council, I will be one of many other members who will be responsible for administering the affairs and business of the VFW between conventions, approve and adopt a National Budget and when necessary conduct audits of accounts of the National Officers and its employees. Of particular note is the responsibility of the Council members to adopt and amend provisions in the Manual of Procedures and Ritual. Every decision we make will affect you as a member of this great organization as well as those officers elected at all levels in the performance of their positions.

As was seen at this last National Convention held in Kansas City in July, many new forward-thinking changes are occurring in our organization. By-Laws passed during the Convention will alter how we carry out our responsibilities in the future. Procedural changes in Article IX which details Disciplinary Action is only one example as it has been completely revised. I urge everyone to purchase a new Congressional Charter By-Laws Manual of Procedure Ritual which will be available in the VFW store very soon.

I will be attending the first regular National C of A the week of September 14th where we will be discussing the National budget as well as a number of other important issues brought forth by members during the Convention. I will make every effort to report back to you the results of what we discuss and what changes may have been voted on that will affect you. I will have an update for all at the Department Fall Conference in October. As you are made aware of changes being proposed or brought up for discussion at the National level, do not hesitate to let me know by phone or e-mail your position along with any recommendations you may have regarding an issue.

Yours in Comradeship,
Gene Ratigliano
National Council Member

Voice of Democracy Report

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 5350

Comrades,

I am grateful to Commander Mike Hoag for appointing me to this important assignment in our department, although I must fill the big shoes of our departed Comrade Wally Zincio who always did a great job; I will do my best and Wally will always remain in my heart.

Our Youth Programs are part of the building blocks of our future and need our proactive support. This Voice of Democracy program is not a difficult program for the student or the VFW at all levels, and it begins like so many of our core programs at the Post level. The essay theme this year is "America: Where do we go from here?". The applications and instructions are on both the National website and the Department website, and can be printed or sent electronically to students or schools, and of course your follow up is essential. If a school does not wish to participate, please find a way to get the information to the students, as this a disservice to the student to withhold this competition. Like a plethora of things in life the accuracy of the application and the legibility and audio clarity of the essays are paramount to the student's success. Once the essays/CD's/drives are back to the Post level it is up to the Post chairman/committee to follow the instructions on the application. The following are the hard deadlines on this program and if you are interested in an All-State recognition this is a required element.

1. Midnight, October 31, entries to Post
2. November 15, completion of Post Judging
3. December 15, completion of District Judging (District may send scoring back to County Council level if applicable)
4. January 10, completion of Department Judging
5. January 15, District participation reports to Department Chairmen
6. January 15, Department winner to National
7. January 31, Department reports to National

Respectfully,
William Hughes
Dept. VOD Chairman



THE TIME IS NOW

This is the slogan of our National Commander Fritz Mihelcic and hence forth becomes ours.

It becomes ours because the time is now to bring the good work of the VFW Posts to the forefront of the public's attention. It is our theory that getting Posts more involved with Community Service, and getting the word out, so that current and members to be know about it, we will keep current and enlist new members.

Certainly, there are many of you already doing just that. In most of those cases, the theory has proven to be true! People join the VFW, in most cases I believe, because they want to help Veterans and their communities. So, let's give them something.

Our Department Website and Facebook page are already featuring that good work. Please share your stories and pictures so that all can see and possibly "steal" an idea or two. They can be sent to headquarters or our Media Director.

While our membership does continue to drop, it's not because new people aren't signing up, they are but unfortunately we are not keeping them as much as we would like. Posts can do a better job of reaching out to our newer members asking them to stay and listening to them. I've heard many stories from my fellow Vietnam Veterans who complain about our WW2 veterans, in some cases, not accepting us. Now I believe some of us are doing the same to our new members. We all need to be inclusive to all and promote ourselves in a manner that shows everyone what a great organization this is.

THE TIME IS NOW to keep, increase or revive pride in our great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

District 2 Briefing

Howie Goldsmith, Commander

The Federation of the Homeless under the direction of Kathy have for the past 10 years conducted a pantry twice a month exclusively for the Veterans of Sullivan County. She and her staff have also been instrumental in helping Veterans and their families navigate the oftentimes confusing paperwork when networking with other organizations. A tremendous asset for the Veterans of Sullivan County NY.

In recognition of her and her staffs care that they have shown to our Veterans over the years we awarded the Federation a check for \$2,842.00, this is from the monies that were part of the Special Project for Homeless Veterans that past State Commander Howard initiated this past year.

Respectfully and happily submitted.



Pictured on the left is Kathy Kreiter, the Director of the Sullivan County Federation for the Homeless located in Monticello, N.Y. On the right is Howie Goldsmith, Commander of District 2 Dept. of N.Y. V.F.W.



District 4 Briefing

Joseph Martel, Commander

The 22 Posts in District seem to be operating back to normal, a few of our past and present officers spent a day at the New York State Fair. They assisted at the VFW information booth under the direction of Scott Cox, 5 District Commander.

Old Forge Post 9314 honored two of their members. Honored were Ted and Bob Harwood for their World War II service at a joint birthday celebration. Ted for his 95th birthday and Bob for his 98th birthday.

Past district Commander along with member of Carthage Post 7227 participated in the Retirees appreciation day at Ft Drum.

District Officers worked with members of Yorkville Post 6001 for a very successful "Cans & Clams" night. It turned out as one on nice evenings of the summer, no rain or high temperature and a great turn out.

Plans are set for our Annual District 4 POW/MIA ceremony to be held at Boonville Post 5538 on Sept 17th and we are all set for our first District meeting of the year to be held Sept. 12th at Post 8259, Stittville, NY.

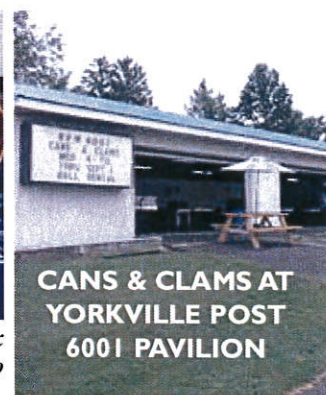
DISTRICT 4 STATE FAIR



District 4 Adj/QM John Fox (L) with Past District Commander and Det. Surgeon Les Crossett (R)



District 5 Commander Steve Cox explaining the VOD/PP program to visiting teenager.



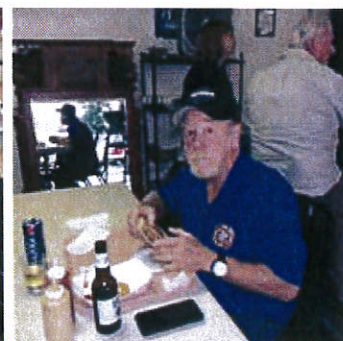
CANS & CLAMS AT YORKVILLE POST 6001 PAVILION



Pictured left to right: Peter Shannon, QM and Bill Ransom, Commander of the Old Forge VFW, Ted Harwood (95 years old), Bob Harwood (98 years old)



District 4 J/A Willie Fletcher (L) and Jim Williams Past Commander of Post 982 Remsen ®



District Commander Joe Martel on "break"

District 6 Briefing

Gary D. Counts, Commander

Summer is always a busy time with family, friends, post activities while the weather is warm. There has been a lot of activity at Posts such as Golf tournaments, anniversaries, chicken Bar-b-ques, pool tournaments, corn hole, and motorcycle rallies, KIA road March, Posts renting out their facilities or provide them free for weddings, graduations, and benefits and Chicken Bar-b-ques every where you look. Perhaps now with fall setting in we can all get into training and bettering our Posts.

This past weekend I attended Lt. Col. Matt Urban Post 7275's 75th Anniversary in Lancaster NY. They had several local dignitaries present and a rousing speech on patriotism and the value of being a veteran from a National Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia. The food was excellent, the Brass ensemble by the local high school music department was very enjoyable. I thank Post Commander James Wier for the invitation. And commend the Lt. Col. Matt Urban Post 7275 for its community involvement and their well-kept facility. The Village Mayor Lynne Ruda did the flower and table arrangements and was completely involved with and committed to the Posts 75th anniversary celebration.

District 6 is coming up on its first regularly scheduled and required meeting on September 12th. I am planning on having all our meetings hybrid, both physical attendance and Zoom conferenced. Younger members have indicated that is what they want, due to family activities. Covid variants are still on the prowl and winter weather travel sometimes difficult; I believe hybrid meetings will increase participation and make it easier for Post officers to attend.

District 6 lost one post last year and we have at least 3 other posts that need attention this year before election time.

I commend the Honor Guard from Erie County that provide Honors for our deceased Veterans being interned at the new Pembroke Veterans cemetery they are truly dedicated and provide the last service to our comrades in arms.

Thank you, Comrades, for your service

Gary D Counts

District 6 Commander

Kevin Pendergast Saugerties VFW Post 5034

Our local veterans held a walk from Kingston to Albany on August 29th. The veteran carrying the flag is our VFW Post 5034 Commander Matthew Russell.

He also spearheads and participates in the kayak trip from the upper Hudson to NYC that was in the VFW Magazine and the purpose was to bring awareness to the veterans' suicide crisis in our county. Many of those participating were VFW members.

These are some of the good things our young Commander is bringing to the table. Matt is also a Purple Heart recipient and had a very distinguishing career in USMC while serving in Iraq.

Kevin Pendergast

USAF Ret SMSgt

Saugerties VFW Post 5034 QM

845 706 8083

District 9 Briefing

David M. Pearson, Commander

On August 21, 2021, the Silas Wainwright VFW Post #6339 in Gouverneur New York celebrated their 75th anniversary. The Post, Auxiliary and community leaders joined together to help celebrate this milestone event. Post #6338 Commander John Holt and members of the Post and Auxiliary provided a delicious meal and the entertainment afterwards was top notch.

District 9 Commander David Pearson was the guest speaker, and Department Commander Michael Hoag made his remarks and presented the Post Commander with the 75 years certificate from VFW National. In addition, the Post received citations from New York State Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush and representing State Senator Patti Ritchie was former St. Lawrence County Sheriff Kevin Wells.

These types of events can help bridge the gap between periods of service that sometime separate Veterans. We need to continue working together as members of the same team and find the way forward through these difficult times we all face.

Please remember those men and women who served in Afghanistan and those who feel their service was for naught after the withdrawal. We must always remember that service is honorable even when the politicians change the rules of engagement and abruptly sever contact with our allies. Listen to these men and women, support them, and help them seek the assistance they may need to heal body or soul.

Respectfully

For the good of the VFW

David M. Pearson

Commander District 9

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

Department of New York

C (315) 528-5392

VFW Post 5350 and Rifle Award



Members of Post 5350 gathered around Commander William Hughes, after our monthly meeting, in August while he held the Henry rifle that he won through the VFW membership contest. Individually, Commander Hughes brought in more than 44 new members. Congratulations.

"Together we can make a difference"

PATRIOTIC DAYS APPROACHING

Comrades,

There are Several Patriotic Days approaching:

V-J DAY (VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC): SEPT 2ND

Victory over Japan Day (also known as V-J Day, Victory in the Pacific Day, or V-P Day) is the day on which Imperial Japan surrendered in World War II, in effect ending the war.

PATRIOT DAY SEPT 11TH

This year Marks the 20th Anniversary of 9-11. (FLAGS SHOULD BE FLOWN AT HALF-STAFF ON PATRIOT DAY)

Patriot Day, also known as the National Day of Service and Remembrance, occurs on September 11 each year in memory of those killed during the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY: THIRD FRIDAY IN SEPT

POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations.

GOLD STAR MOTHER'S/FAMILY'S DAY: LAST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

Gold Star Mother's/Family's Day honors mothers and families who have lost a service member in the line of duty or in support of military activities. The name comes from the custom of families hanging Service Flags in the window of their homes. The Service Flag has a star for each family member in the armed forces. A blue star represents a family member in active-duty service, a silver star represents a family member wounded or injured in a war zone and a gold star represents a family member killed during active-duty and stands for sacrifice made for honor and freedom. The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. was founded shortly after World War I by Grace Darling Seibold, who lost her son, George Vaughn Seibold, during the war.

VETERANS DAY: NOV 11TH

Veterans Day is an opportunity to publicly commemorate the contributions of living veterans. Originally called Armistice Day, it officially received its name in America in 1926 through a congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar congressional action.

If World War I had truly been "the war to end all wars," Nov 11 might be still called Armistice Day. Realizing that peace was equally preserved by veterans of World War II and Korea, Congress decided to make the day an occasion to honor all those who have served America. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming Nov 11 as Veterans Day. (The first Veterans Day parade took place in 1953 in Emporia, Kansas.)

A law passed in 1968 changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that Nov 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans. Therefore, in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

FLAG ETIQUETTE

While Posts start to get back out in the Community as the school year starts, here are some links to help teach students about flags.

To learn more about the Federal Flag Code: <https://www.usa.gov/flag> or on the VFW Website: <https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette>

PATRIOTIC WAYS TO SUPPORT VETERANS

It's a great day to be free. Have you thanked a Veteran today for fighting for your freedom?

There are many ways to offer support to our veterans beyond telling them, "Thank you for your service." A few ideas are listed below:

- **Host patriotic holiday parties for Veterans, active-duty military and their families.** Invite the entire family to come and join in the fun at your Post. Host a BBQ or other meal and include patriotic music, games for both children and adults, and fun decorations.
- **Partner with other community organizations to reach more people.** The more, the merrier! Join forces with other organizations in your area (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, mental health agencies, food pantries, etc.) to increase the services you can provide to Veterans, active-duty military and their families.
- **Educate youth about what it means to be a patriotic American.** Partner with schools or host special events for youth. Include age-appropriate lessons and activities. You will likely not witness the impact of the teachings, but they can make such an impact; those children will remember the lessons and will be proud to walk up to a Veteran and say "thank you."
- **Distribute U.S. Flags and/or present a certificate of recognition to a local business, private citizen and/or youth group for flying the U.S. Flag.** Distribute flags to businesses, community organizations and schools that do not have a flag flying or provide a new flag to those whose flag is tattered. Present a certificate in recognition to those displaying the U.S. Flag or POW/MIA flag. They will be honored to be recognized for their American pride.
- **Participate in a local parade.** Who doesn't love a parade? Passing out flags to children, riding on a Post float and marching with the colors are some typical ways to participate.

Be sure to invite local media to attend these events! A picture or an article in your local newspaper reminds your community that the VFW continues to support our Veterans and our communities with American patriotic pride.

Need help or ideas to promote Americanism contact the State Patriotic Instructor.

Dave Rogers

State Patriotic Instructor 2021-2022

State Media Training & Events Chairman 2021-2022



VFW National Home for Children



VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN
1000 ...

VFWNY Members,

As you know, it's not always easy being part of a military family as everyone has to make sacrifices, especially the children.

When I became A Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children, I joined a group of bighearted people dedicated to making life better for our military and veteran families by offering services to families in need.

Life Members of the National Home are a special group of people. We take great pride in knowing our \$50.00 one-time membership fee and annual support helps provide.

- Our toll-free Military and Veteran Family Helpline (800) 313-4200 answers urgent calls for help from our veterans and their family members. Phones are answered by experienced problem-solvers who can provide the knowledge, contacts and connections that struggling families need. A temporary home for spouses and children of active-duty military during a deployment.

- Deployed military members' spouses and children can live at the National Home during deployment for up to four years. Just imagine what a relief it is for our active-duty soldiers to know that their children are thriving within our happy extended family. These heroes have enough to worry about!

- Veterans and their families can rebound from a time of crisis while living at the National Home and learn how to rebuild their lives. Whether that crisis is triggered by financial problems or by the lingering effects of wartime service such as PTSD, our warm and welcoming community helps the entire family to heal.

- Recognizing the effects of war can last for generations, the National Home community is also open to members of the VFW Post and Auxiliary as well as their descendants.

You can join the thousands of National Home Life Members that believe in the importance of giving back to the families of those who have served. Now it's your turn.

We have set a goal to recruit 100 New National Home Life Members. Please join me today in becoming a National Home Life Member. Your one-time membership fee of \$50.00 also includes a VFW National Home Life Membership Pin.

As a new member, you will receive a welcome packet with a wallet card and a certificate suitable for framing. But most of all, you will receive the satisfaction of knowing you are supporting an organization whose sole mission is to help military and veteran families through challenging times.

Thank you for taking time to read about the National Home. I hope you'll decide to join such a worthwhile organization by returning the attached application. If you sign up online, please include my name on the form under "Recruited By."

Sincerely,

Art Scheuneman

District 2 National Home Trustee

State National Home Chairman

Department of NY VFW

WdStock44@Yahoo.Com

585-689-5975



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

National Veterans Service Policy & Procedure

Ryan M. Gallucci, Director

National Veterans Service

As approved by the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee

July 31, 2021

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

AUTHORITY

Section 619 of the By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (hereinafter referred to as VFW) provides that the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee shall control the veterans service programs of the VFW under the supervision of the National Council of Administration and subject to the provisions of the National By-Laws and orders of the National Convention.

The policy and procedure contained herein are issued for guidance of all persons providing assistance under the auspices of the National Veterans Service. These policies in no way supersede State or Federal law.

VFW NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE

1. In accordance with the policy and instruction of the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee, the Director, National Veterans Service, shall be responsible for the administration, supervision and technical guidance of all activities, programs and personnel of the National Veterans Service, under the direct supervision of the Assistant Adjutant General and Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office.
2. In accordance with policy approved by the National Council of Administration, decisions of the Director, National Veterans Service, with respect to the appointment of employees and other personnel actions, travel authority, purchases, vouchers and other administrative matters, are subject to review and approval by the Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office.
3. The National Veterans Service shall consist of positions recommended by the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee, with the advice and consent of the VFW Adjutant General and the Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office, for approval by the VFW Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration.
4. The incumbent employee of each National Veterans Service staff position shall perform the regularly assigned duties of the position and shall assume such other responsibilities and duties as assigned by the Director, National Veterans Service.

VFW ACCREDITATION, REACCREDITATION, REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING

1. General

Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulate organizations and individuals who seek to represent veterans and other claimants before the VA. A person shall not function in any capacity as a VFW representative in a claim or other matter before the Department of Veterans Affairs until such person is officially accredited, through the VFW, by the Department of Veterans Affairs. A person will not be accredited by VA unless the VFW has certified to it that the individual meets the eligibility criteria established by VA. The Director, National Veterans Service, is VFW's certifying official.

The VFW will not certify for accreditation VFW Post, County Council and District Service Officers since they do not require accreditation in the conduct of their normal duties.

VFW may certify individuals for accreditation provided they meet the eligibility criteria established by both VA and VFW as described elsewhere in this section. The following titles are acceptable as VFW Accredited Representative:

- Department Service Officer
- Assistant Department Service Officer
- Office Supervisor*
- Claims Consultant
- Administrative Assistant**

*At a department's discretion, a VFW department may choose to have a non-VFW member oversee the duties of their department service office. In these instances, the individual cannot hold the title of Department Service Officer, but can instead be the Office Supervisor. In accordance with VFW National By-Laws Sec. 515, Department Service Officers and Assistant Department Service Officers must be VFW Members in good standing.

**Administrative Assistants working in VFW offices collocated at VA regional offices will not normally be certified since accreditation is not required to conduct their normal duties.

Note: Some support staff have been accredited in the past. These individuals are not authorized to represent or counsel veterans at personal hearings nor does their accreditation allow them to review claims files, to "sign off" on rating decisions. The accreditation only authorizes support staff access to the VA's Benefits Delivery Network and other related software systems.

NOTE: NVS Staff, State Run Agencies, and County Run Agencies may have different titles based on the discretion of their supervising authority.

Only VFW accredited individuals specifically assigned to and working at a VA regional office, consolidated work site (e.g., Pension Management Centers), and other approved locations may

have access to claim files or represent claimants in hearings, sign-off on ratings, accept or reject Powers of Attorney, prepare VA Forms or otherwise represent claimants before VA.

Accreditation by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall not be deemed by the National Veterans Service as authorization for VFW representatives to represent clients in claims or other matters, before governmental departments or agencies other than the Department of Veterans Affairs.

With the exception of certain state and county veteran service officers, multiple accreditations are not permissible. However, in special circumstances as required by state law, the Director, NVS, can grant a waiver.

2. Requirements for certification and accreditation

The Director, National Veterans Service, shall not certify a person to be an accredited representative of the VFW unless such person:

- A. Is of good character and reputation;
- B. Is not employed by a civil or military department or agency of the United States;
- C. Is a member in good standing of the VFW who functions full-time in veterans service work; if not a member of the VFW, is a full-time employee of the VFW (a part-time employee may be considered under special circumstances) or is an employee of a state or county government agency whose principle accreditation is to the state, county or to another veterans service organization, and functions full-time in veterans service work (primary accreditation for state or county employees will be considered on a case-by-case basis under compelling circumstances at the request of VFW Department leadership); and,
- D. Has successfully completed a Department of Veterans Affairs approved course of instruction on veterans benefits; or has received a passing grade on an examination recognized by the Director, National Veterans Service and approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs, State Department of Veterans Affairs or similarly-named agency; or has demonstrated an ability to satisfactorily represent benefit claims as attested by the Department Service Officer.

Decisions as to character, reputation, knowledge of veteran's benefits and other criteria in this section are solely within the discretion of the Director, NVS.

3. Procedure for accreditation

- A. Persons seeking certification by the VFW must complete the VFW *Application for Accreditation* and the current VA Form 21, *Application for Accreditation as Service Organization Representative*. Failure to complete both forms completely will delay

certification by the Director, NVS. *Any omission, misrepresentation or falsification of information on either form may be grounds for revocation of accreditation.*

- B. Both applications will be submitted through the Department Headquarters, who will review each form for completeness and accuracy. Any problems noted on the applications should be resolved prior to submission to National Veterans Service.
- C. A background investigation certification must be completed for candidates seeking accreditation prior to submission of both applications to the Director, NVS (effective August 1, 2016). See paragraph 4, below.
- D. Each application for accreditation submitted to the Director, NVS, must be accompanied by a cover letter signed by the Department Commander or Adjutant stating the reason(s) why the applicant should be accredited. **Applications without a cover letter will not be processed.** The Director, National Veterans Service cannot cross-accredit a state or county representative without the consent and knowledge of the appropriate VFW Department leadership. Applications for accreditation from state-run service programs must be signed by an appropriate state official with copies of the request for accreditation sent to the pertinent VFW Department Commander and Adjutant.
- E. The NVS Director or his designee will review each application for accreditation. Any problems will be resolved before approved by the Director, NVS.
- F. The Director, National Veterans Service, acting in the capacity as National Certifying Officer, shall certify a VA form 21, *Application For Accreditation As Service Organization Representative*, to the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the accreditation of an individual as a representative of the VFW. Once an application for accreditation is approved by the General Counsel, the Director, National Veterans Service shall forward the applicant a copy of this *Policy and Procedure*.
- G. The Director, National Veterans Service reserves the right to extend primary accreditation to certain individuals to serve a national mission without the consent of a VFW Department Commander or Adjutant. Such circumstances include the accreditation of National staff members and missions such as serving military installations or institutions of higher learning, where claimants will not necessarily reside in the VFW Department of jurisdiction.

4. Background Investigations

VFW, state, and county service officers, claims consultants, support staff, and volunteers have access to important and sensitive information concerning veterans and their families obtained directly from them or through access to VA and other data systems. That is why VFW requires that anyone connected with VFW claims taking, development or processing, whether accredited or not, be of the highest character.

- A. Effective August 1, 2016, all individuals seeking accreditation with VFW must undergo a pre-accreditation investigation. In addition, support personnel working in VA facilities and approved locations must also undergo a pre-employment background investigation. At a minimum, each background investigation must include the following:
 - Driving records
 - Credit records
 - Criminal records
 - Social Security number
 - Education records
 - Court records
 - Bankruptcy
 - Character references
 - Military records
 - Past employers
 - Personal references
 - Incarceration records
- B. Any indication of financial impropriety will disqualify an individual from accreditation. While support personnel are not accredited, it is suggested that VFW Departments should not employ anyone with a financial impropriety in their background.
- C. Legal and employment problems either self-reported or developed during a background investigation will be considered by NVS and may influence the decision to accredit an individual.
- D. Note: Following employment, the identification of any issue indicating a character problem, including but not limited to a financial impropriety or criminal activity (e.g., a conviction for DUI; impropriety involving money or finances) should be a signal to Department management to review the advisability of continued employment and/or accreditation of that individual. While Departments are solely responsible for decisions involving continued employment, they are encouraged to consult with the Director, NVS, on any issue involving the character of the individual as that may affect continued accreditation.
- E. NVS considers it sufficient to verify that a background check was completed if the candidate for accreditation can demonstrate that an OPM background check was conducted within the past year or if the candidate has a valid VA PIV badge with VA systems access.
- F. Employment Background Investigation is to be reviewed by the Department Commander and/or Adjutant prior to the application being submitted to NVS for accreditation.
- G. Application packet for accreditation must include certification letter by the Department Commander and/or Adjutant addressed to Director, NVS stating that a background

investigation has been conducted along with an explanation for any discrepancies discovered.

5. Training

The compensation program administered by VA is arguably the most complex benefit program in government today. On average it takes a new VA employee two to three years to become proficient in general claims processing and another three years of training and study to master most of the skills needed to make correct decisions involving service connection, disability evaluation and effective dates. The primary goal of the VFW training program is to help VFW service officers become as good as or better than the VA employees with whom they work. Prior to attending any of the following VFW training conferences, accredited representatives must provide proof of successful completion of VA's Training, Responsibility, Involvement, and Preparation of Claims course (T.R.I.P.).

A. The VFW training program is intended to provide substantive recurring training primarily to those service officers and claims consultants who work in VA regional offices and approved locations. The VFW provides the following in person training on a recurring basis:

- **Basic Training:** This training is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the veterans' benefits programs administered by VA and includes substantial practical exercises and drills. Target audience: all new DSOs, Assistant DSOs and Claims Consultants who began working for VFW within the previous year. *NOTE: attendance is optional, at the request of the Department, for those Assistant DSOs and Claims Consultants not stationed in the regional office. State-run agencies may register attendees on a space available basis, contingent on the state-run agency paying associated costs.*
- **Proficiency Training (PTC):** This conference provides more than 30 hours of advanced instruction on policy issues, management skills and updates pertaining to benefits administration within VA and VFW. Target audience: all DSO's and one other accredited representative from the regional office. The second accredited representative selected to attend PTC should rotate among the office staff to ensure continuity of training. Additional attendees may attend on a space available basis at the discretion of the Director, National Veterans Service. The Director, National Veterans Service may delegate this authority to a member of NVS staff not lower than an Assistant Director.
- **Skill Level Training:** Intermediate & Advanced Skill Level Training is 30-40 hours of instruction held annually. Participants may be divided into groups based on years of accreditation with VFW. This training focuses on increasing the knowledge and skill set of participants to comply with VA Office of General Counsel requirements for continuing education. Expert instructors provide comprehensive training designed to enhance a service officer's ability to understand rating and complex authorization issues. Target audience: (Intermediate Skill Level Training) DSO's, Assistant DSO's and Claims Consultants stationed in a regional office with 1-5 years' experience; (Advanced Skill Level Training) DSO's, Assistant DSO's and Claims Consultants stationed in a regional office with over 5 years' experience.

VFW provides training for VFW accredited individuals who work in VA regional offices and approved locations. However, training is required for all service officers seeking to obtain and maintain accreditation with VA. As a consequence, VFW Departments, as well as state and county offices, are responsible for providing regular quality training to its service officers.

Training is required as follows:

Position	Primary Workplace	Required VFW Training
DSOs	Regional Office	Basic, Skill Level, PTC
Assistant DSOs	Regional Office	Basic, Skill Level, PTC*
Assistant DSOs	Not at Regional Office	Basic, Skill Level**
Claims Consultant	Regional Office	Basic, Skill Level, PTC*
Claims Consultants	Not at Regional Office	Basic, Skill Level**
County VSOs	County	County/State-sponsored training
State VSOs	Not at Regional Office	County/State-sponsored training

NOTE: DSOs (to include VFW & State Paid) are required to attend all PTC and the appropriate accreditation training based on their level of experience.

** ADSOs & Claim Consultants located at Regional Offices will rotate to attend PTC*

*** Departments may select one ADSO or Claims Consultant not assigned at a regional office to attend one accreditation training per year at NVS's expense.*

Only one additional VFW accredited representative from each state run service office may attend the PTC and accreditation training. The VFW pays for required training as shown in the preceding table. However, anyone accredited by VFW can attend training for a fee on a space-available basis. The Director, NVS, should be contacted for more information on the cost and availability of training.

The Director, NVS, has the authority to substitute training conferences with alternative training methods (ex. Virtual Training), reassign accredited representatives to a training conference based on experience, and excuse attendees when deemed necessary.

All those accredited by the VFW not included in Basic Training, PTC, or Skill Level Training are responsible for obtaining initial and continuing training through their employer. Information on training resources, to include potential virtual training options from the VFW, may be obtained from the NVS Assistant Director for Training & Quality Assurance. State, County, and Department supervisors will provide verification of completion of training upon request of the Director, NVS.

Testing is conducted following Basic Training, the PTC and Skill Level Training. Results are reported to the individual and their supervisor. NVS understands that different service officers advance at different speeds. We are careful to explain to Department Commanders, or in the case of the State-Run Departments, the State Director of Veterans Affairs that a single test score is rarely sufficient to indicate overall success or failure. Test results are used to gauge the relative success of training and, over time, increases in job knowledge. These test scores may also be used to determine, in part, whether an individual should be reaccredited (see below).

B. Online Learning Portal

The VFW Online Learning Portal (OLP) is a tool designed to help NVS provide training and resources in an electronic format that is available for use by any accredited representative at their convenience. The Online Learning Portal is generally considered supplemental training and may only be used as a replacement for in-person training conferences when authorized by the Director, NVS.

- Accounts will be established by NVS once a complete VFW accreditation packet has been approved by the NVS Director.
- Accounts are to be accessed by the individual user only. Accounts are not to be shared or transferred to unauthorized individuals.
- Account profiles must be edited by the user and the following items should be included:
 - a. Biographical Info
 - i. Title / Position
 - ii. Office Location
 - iii. Department or Agency
 - b. Avatar / Profile pictures must be a recent individual photo of the accredited representative that is appropriate for a professional environment.
 - c. Any content violating the above standards or deemed inappropriate will be deleted and your supervisor may be notified.
- All courses are accessible to all users unless otherwise annotated. However, some courses may be deemed mandatory at the discretion of NVS. If a course is deemed mandatory, NVS will enroll the user as necessary.
- Unless otherwise specified in the course catalog, enrolled course are to be completed within 90 days after being assigned to the user.

Note: The training of state and county service officers is the responsibility of their employer. However, the VFW expects that all state and county service officers accredited to represent veterans be adequately trained. Adequate training means that the service officer receives sufficient initial training in order to competently represent veterans and other claimants before VA. It also means that the service officer receives continuing training throughout the year as needed to maintain and improve skills. Failure to adequately train state and county service officers may result in the revocation of accreditation of the state or county service officer.

6. Reaccreditation

VA requires the reaccreditation of service officers every 5 years. As a consequence, VFW devised a strategy to assess individual character and acceptable job proficiency. This approach includes:

- Reviewing information from various sources to determine the number and frequency of complaints about service to claimants;
- Feedback from Department leadership; and,
- Test scores

All VFW Accredited Representatives (DSOs, ADSOs, Claims Consultants, State & County Representatives) – Starting August 1, 2016, VFW requires at least one background investigation be conducted as a condition of reaccreditation. Employers of VFW-accredited service officers must certify that a background investigation has been conducted for each employee who is to be reaccredited with the VFW and that no criminal conviction or other impropriety has been identified. Further, the employer must certify that there are no known character problems with the service officer to be recertified. VA completes a new background check with the Office of Personnel Management whenever VA PIV cards are issued and when accredited representatives are granted VA systems access. As a result, NVS considers it sufficient to verify that a background check was completed if the candidate for accreditation can demonstrate that an OPM background check was conducted within the past year or if the candidate has a valid VA PIV badge with VA systems access.

Failure to submit required certifications - Certification that a background investigation has been conducted and a certification that the service officer has no known character problems must be received within 60 days of the request from NVS. Failure to submit both certifications will result in a suspension of accreditation with the VFW. Failure to submit the required certifications within an additional 60 day period will result in the revocation of accreditation with the VFW.

Those individuals of good character and reputation, who demonstrate adequate job knowledge through either consistent test scores greater than 70% or score greater than 70% on the reaccreditation test, will be reaccredited as long as their Department leadership has no objection.

Those VFW accredited service officers who attend VFW training and who are of good character and reputation who do not have a successful record on tests will be given a reaccreditation test. Those who pass with a minimum of 70% will be reaccredited. Those who do not pass will be provided learning aids and other assistance and will be retested. Failure to pass subsequent accreditation tests will result in denial of reaccreditation.

7. Revocation of accreditation

At such time as an individual is removed from duties as a VFW Accredited Representative the appropriate VFW Department, State, or County Authority must notify the Director, National Veterans Service within five duty days to revoke the individual's accreditation.

Accreditation of a VFW representative may be cancelled at any time by the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs or upon a recommendation to the General Counsel for such action by the Director, National Veterans Service, where clear and convincing evidence of one or more of the following is found:

- A. Refuses to comply with or violates laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or with regulations governing practice before the Department or other laws, regulations and/or policies applicable to accredited representatives or any facility at which accredited representatives perform services.

- B. Knowingly presents a fraudulent claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs or before any other governmental department or agency, or knowingly submits false information in connection with a claim before such department or agency.
- C. Requests, demands, or accepts compensation, in any form, for providing assistance or representation.
- D. Engages in any other unlawful, unprofessional, or unethical practice such as deceiving, misleading or threatening a client. Neglects to prosecute a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs in an expeditious manner. Fails to provide a reasonable and timely response to a request for evidence by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Intentionally discloses personally identifiable information received in relation to a claim to a third party other than the VA without a claimant's written permission. Deliberately withholds a client's application for benefits or evidence related thereto, from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- E. Fails to comply with all policy and procedure prescribed by the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee.
- F. Failure by a VFW-accredited representative to regularly attend mandatory National Veterans Service training conferences as outlined in Section 5-Training, which includes all assigned classes and meetings, unless specifically exempted by the Director, National Veterans Service.
- G. Failure to act in a professional manner towards veterans, family members, clients, co-workers, VA employees, and anyone seeking services from the VFW. All VFW offices will be free of harassment based upon race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.
1. Those accredited by the VFW are expected to act courteously and professionally towards others at all times. Rude, discourteous, obnoxious or intimidating behavior reflects poorly both on the VFW and the individual. This is not acceptable.
 2. The VFW will not tolerate sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to
 - Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
 - Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
 - Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters.
 - Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs or jokes.
 - Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations.
 - Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting or impeding or blocking movements.
 3. The NVS will investigate complaints of unprofessional conduct & harassment, report to the appropriate employer, and depending on the findings, take appropriate action to include revocation of accreditation, if necessary.

8. National Guard and Reserves

VFW Accredited Representatives who are members of the National Guard or Reserves that are called to active duty orders are prohibited from providing claims assistance in accordance 38 CFR 14.629(a)(3).

VFW POWERS OF ATTORNEY

1. A properly executed Power of Attorney through a VA form 21-22, *Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative* which appoints the VFW as representative, must be officially acknowledged by the Department of Veterans Affairs before the VFW may provide representation of any nature to such client.
 2. A Power of Attorney shall name the "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S." as representative without specifying the echelon or address of the VFW representation.
 3. Information concerning a claimant will not be released any non-VFW accredited representative without a VA Form 21-0845 Authorization to Disclose Personal Information to a Third Party.
4. A Power of Attorney or other required designation shall not be refused or revoked by the VFW except for a compelling reason(s), and then only by the appropriate DSO or the Director, National Veterans Service. The Director, National Veterans Service may delegate this authority to a member of the NVS staff not lower than an Associate Director. Compelling reasons for refusing or revoking a Power of Attorney or other designation may include but are not limited to, the following:
 - A. Abusive verbal or physical behavior toward a VFW representative or other VFW staff member, by a client or prospective client.
 - B. Repeated and persistent failure by a client to cooperate with a VFW representative, placing the VFW in such a compromised position as to be unable to effectively represent the client's interest. A client submitting claim actions against the recommendations of their representative to include pursuing claims or appeals which, if granted, would not result in any additional benefits.
 - C. Demonstrated pattern of repeated changes of powers of attorney or other required designations, where the claim or other matter for which the person seeks VFW representation is without apparent merit based on a reasonable evaluation of the circumstances.
 - D. Interests, objectives, or actions of a client or prospective client that are fundamentally opposed to those of the VFW (to include but not limited to conviction of capital crimes, Tier III sex offenders, discrimination against others based upon race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law).
 - E. Convincing evidence of subversive affiliations or activities by a client or prospective client, which demonstrates disloyalty to the United States.
 - F. Fraud or attempted fraud by a client or prospective client in a claim or other matter before the same governmental department or agency before which he or she seeks VFW representation.
 - G. Individuals with a dishonorable discharge from the military.
 5. Upon VFW submission of revocation of Power of Attorney to VA, the DSO or Office Supervisor must notify the client in writing that VFW is revoking Power of Attorney.
 6. The VFW will not accept a Power of Attorney when the prospective client is represented by an attorney or agent, notwithstanding Department of Veterans Affairs' regulations permitting such dual representation.
 7. The VFW will not accept a Power of Attorney when access to any records is restricted by the claimant.
 8. The VFW may accept a Power of Attorney if a prospective client provides a written statement attesting that representation by an attorney or agent has been revoked.
 9. Notwithstanding Department of Veterans Affairs' regulations permitting dual representation, the VFW will revoke a Power of Attorney once a client has retained an attorney to represent them before the VA on any claim for benefits.
 10. Once an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) has been submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a Power of Attorney may not be accepted by the VFW in a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs unless compelling circumstances exist and advance approval is obtained from the Director, National Veterans Service or his designee. This does not preclude the VFW from accepting the Power of Attorney in subsequent claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 11. A Power of Attorney may not be revoked after a client's appeal to the BVA has been submitted without coordination and permission granted by the Director, NVS or their designee (not lower than an Associate Director).



**Department of New York
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States**

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NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- 12. A Power of Attorney or other required designation, shall not be refused or revoked by the VFW on the grounds of a client or prospective client's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, and shall not be refused or revoked on the grounds of length and type (including character) of service in the Armed Forces of the United States, except under conditions stipulated in 4(E) and 4(G) of this section.
- 13. A Power of Attorney shall not be refused or revoked by the VFW on the grounds that a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs is contested. However, it shall not be incumbent upon the VFW to represent a person whose interests are opposed to those of a veteran, a widow or orphan, except when the opposing party has an apparent legal right to the benefit sought. In such exceptions and in the event the VFW receives a Power of Attorney from more than one party, it will accept (honor) the first Power of Attorney received.
- 14. A Power of Attorney or other required designation shall not be refused or revoked by the VFW on the grounds that the client or prospective client is not a member of the VFW, irrespective of whether he or she is eligible for such membership. VFW representatives, when appropriate, should inform clients of benefits accruing from membership in the VFW.

VFW REPRESENTATION - GENERAL

- 1. VFW Department Service Offices shall be located within the appropriate VA regional office or other approved location and staffed by not less than one full-time VFW accredited representative appointed by their respective VFW Department Commanders or other Department officials or committees which, have such jurisdiction and authority. In keeping with National VFW policy, a person who is not a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will not be employed as a State/Department Service Officer or an Assistant State/Department Service Officer. Exceptions to the location of the Department Service Office will be forwarded to the Chairman of the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee, through the Director, National Veterans Service, for approval.
- 2. Any individual accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs as a VFW representative shall be fully responsible for compliance with all laws and regulations of each governmental department or agency governing confidentiality of information and release of information from official records. Information should only be released if authorized by the client, and only to the extent authorized. Client interactions, which discuss confidential information, will only occur in a confidential setting. *A subpoena is not sufficient authority for disclosure of VA records without the consent of the claimant (38 CFR 1.511(b)(2)). Subpoenas are to be sent to the NVS Director as soon as possible, so that they may be forwarded to VA Office of General Counsel for appropriate processing (38 CFR 14.807(b)).
- 3. VFW accredited representatives shall, under no circumstances, serve as guardians, committees or fiduciaries by any other designation, of veterans or other persons receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- 4. Representation or other assistance by the National Veterans Service staff, DSOs, Assistant DSOs, District Service Officers, County Council Service Officer, Post Service Officers and by all other VFW representatives, is gratuitous and under no circumstances shall such representatives demand, request or receive remuneration in cash or in any other form, from persons to whom representation or other assistance is provided.
- 5. The nature and extent of VFW representation in claims or other matters before the Department of Veterans Affairs shall, under no circumstances, be influenced or otherwise dependent upon a client's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, length and type of service in the Armed Forces of the United States (including character except as stipulated in section 4(G) of "VFW Powers of Attorney") and VFW membership status.
- 6. VFW representatives shall:
 - A. Comply with all laws and regulations of Department of Veteran Affairs.
 - B. Not knowingly represent a fraudulent claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs or before any other governmental department or agency, or not knowingly submit false information in connection with a claim before such department or agency.
 - C. Not commit any other unlawful, unprofessional or unethical practices such as deceiving, misleading, or threatening a client or prospective client; not neglect to prosecute a claim before the Department of Veteran Affairs in an expeditious manner; not fail to provide a reasonable and timely response to a request for evidence by the Department of Veterans Affairs; nor deliberately withhold a client's application for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or from any other governmental department or agency.

7. **Post/District Service Officers**

The primary task of a Post Service Officer (PSO) or District Service Officer is to provide information concerning Federal, state and local benefits for veterans, their families and survivors. In this capacity, Post/District Service Officers may provide applications or other forms to claimants; when requested, may help a claimant complete a form by acting as a recorder. The Post/District Service Officer:

- A. Must have access to a current edition of the VFW *Guide for Post Service Officers* and shall perform duties in accordance with instructions contained therein.
- B. Be under the general supervision of the DSO and shall comply with the direction of the DSO to include participating in scheduled Post/District Service Officer training facilitated by the DSO.

- C. Will not establish or solicit to establish office hours at VA facilities (not limited, but to include, Regional Benefits Offices, hospitals, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, & Vet Centers).
- D. Must not make direct contact concerning a claim or other matter, with the Department of Veterans Affairs or with any other governmental department or agency without a VA Form 21-0845 Third Party Consent from the claimant to do so. All status updates and other inquiries must be routed through the DSO. Should a Post/District Service Officer inquire on the status of a claim or other benefits on behalf of a claimant, the DSO must only provide their response to the inquiring claimant, as disclosing information about specific claims is a violation of the law.
- E. When acting as a recorder, the Post/District Service Officer is simply transcribing information provided by the claimant. At no time should the Post/District Service Officer make suggestions on how to frame information to make it appear more favorable or less harmful to the claimant. Under no circumstances will the Post/District Service Officer take possession of any form, record, or evidence furnished by a claimant for the purposes of filing a benefits claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. **Under no circumstances will the Post/District Service Officer retain any personally identifiable information (PII) concerning the claimant or the claimants' family. Any forms, records, or evidence furnished by the claimant must be immediately returned to the claimant with instructions on how to submit their benefits claim with the DSO or to the appropriate federal authority.**
- F. Under no circumstances should a Post/District Service Officer counsel a claimant on their individual claim. While a Post/District Service Officer provides information concerning various government benefit programs, he/she should not offer any guidance or opinion as to the individual claim itself. General statements about the types of evidence necessary to support a claim can be described; however, a Post/District Service Officer must **never** discuss the nature or merits of any particular claim.
- G. The Order of Business for VFW Posts prescribed in the VFW Ritual requires that the PSO submit a report at each Post business meeting. The report should summarize the activities of the PSO since the last report but should never include any personally identifiable information concerning any veteran, family member of a veteran, a survivor nor any other person living or dead.
- H. The VFW Manual of Procedure requires that District Service Officers assist their Post Service Officers. This includes ensuring Post Service Officers located within their District attend District and/or Department Service Officer training.
 - 8. Representation at the VFW Department level in a claim or other matter involving an insurance policy issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs, generally shall be limited to advising and assisting the client in preparing the appropriate form(s) and in procuring supporting evidence.
 - A. Claims involving National Service Life Insurance (NSLI), United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI), Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI), and claims which involve any other insurance policy issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs and inquiries concerning insurance matters shall generally be referred to VA's Insurance Center toll-free number 1-800-669-8477 between 8:30 am and 6 pm Eastern Time. Veterans with questions about VA's various life insurance plans, should go to VA's Internet site at www.insurance.va.gov/.
 - B. VFW representatives shall not represent a person in a legal suit concerning any government or other life insurance policy before a United States District Court or any other court.
- 9. **Overseas Representation & Claims**
 - A. A claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (other than insurance) where the client resides outside the 50 states which comprise the United States, generally shall be referred to the VFW Department Service Office at the Pittsburgh, PA VA Regional Office for processing and representation. In accordance with VA M21-1 iii.i.1.c.4.a:

Claim Type	And the claimant resides in ...	Refer to DSO at...
Disability compensation, pension, survivor benefits, or related appeals	the Philippines	Manila RO.
Disability compensation or related appeal(s), work items, or non-rating issues	a foreign country other than the Philippines	Pittsburgh RO.
Pension or survivor claims or related appeal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico • Central and South America, or • the Caribbean 	St. Paul Pension Management Center (PMC)
Pension or survivor claims or related appeal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a foreign country other than the Philippines • Mexico • Central and South America, or • the Caribbean 	Philadelphia PMC

- B. System Access: DSOs, ADSOs, & Claim Consultants will establish VA remote systems access through the Department of Veterans Affairs so that they may still perform the key functions of a VFW Accredited Representative.
- C. Due to the vast geographical areas covered by the foreign departments (i.e., Europe & Pacific Areas), foreign departments are encouraged to have multiple accredited

representatives spread out through the department to ensure VFW representation is available to clients living overseas in dense veteran & military populations (Japan, Korea, etc.)

10. A claim under the VA Restored Entitlement Program for Survivors (REPS) concerning basic eligibility shall be represented by the VFW Department Service Office at the respective VA regional office. Once basic eligibility is established, the case is forwarded to the St. Louis VA Regional Office, for a determination on REPS entitlement. Inquiries and other matters related to the claim shall be transmitted to the VFW Department Service Office at the St. Louis VA Regional Office.
11. Veterans with pending claims under any VA education program, including the Post 9/11 GI Bill, should call 1-888-GI-BILL (1-888-442-4551). Veterans with questions about VA's various education programs should go to VA's Internet site at www.gibill.va.gov.
12. Basic and minimum standards of professionalism for VFW Service Officers and representatives are outlined in the Code of Conduct for VFW Representatives.

VFW REPRESENTATION - ADMINISTRATIVE

1. At the discretion of the DSO, VFW accredited representatives, particularly those not stationed at VA regional offices, have the authority to submit correspondence, applications, evidence, etc., pertaining to individual claims for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs directly to the Department of Veterans Affairs either through the consolidated mail facilities or through electronic submission. The appropriate VFW Department Service Officer should also be apprised of this claim action through appropriate channels.
 - a. In the event that an accredited representative does not submit a claim to VA in a timely manner, it shall be incumbent on the accredited representative's employer to make reparation through appropriate channels for any monetary damages that occurred as a result of the untimely submission.
 - b. In the event that a claim is submitted timely to the DSO but is not subsequently submitted timely to the VA, it shall be incumbent on the DSO's employer to make reparation through appropriate channels for any monetary damages that occurred as a result of the untimely submission.
2. DSOs, Assistant DSOs, claims consultants and claims representatives are subject to the professional and technical supervision of the Director, National Veterans Service and/or their designee.
3. DSOs and Assistant DSOs shall transmit all inquiries, etc., requiring consideration by the central office of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Director, National Veterans Service. The Director may delegate the authority to review these requests.
 - A. DSOs shall transmit, in writing, all formal requests for Administrative Review of VA regional office claims decisions to the Director, National Veterans Service. Such requests are to contain the specific reason(s) for Administrative Review along with technical supporting rationale. The foregoing is not intended to prohibit the DSO (or a designated Assistant DSO) from discussing the advisability of Administrative Review by telephone or other means, with National Veterans Service staff, prior to the formal written request by the DSO.
 - B. DSOs shall transmit, in writing, all formal requests for reconsideration of Board of Veterans' Appeals decisions to the VFW Manager, Board of Veteran Appeals. Such requests are to contain the specific reason(s) for reconsideration along with technical supporting rationale. If a personal hearing in reference to reconsideration is desired, this shall be so stated on the request. The foregoing is not intended to prohibit the DSO or a designated Assistant DSO from discussing the advisability of reconsideration by telephone or other means, with the National Veterans Service staff prior to the formal written request by the DSO.
 - C. In the case of a formal request for either Administrative Review or reconsideration of a Department of Veterans Affairs' decision, where the Director, National Veterans Service or staff designee determines that the requirements for submission of the request to the Department of Veterans Affairs are not met, the Director, or designee, will so notify the appropriate DSO in writing, setting forth the reason(s) why such request is not appropriate.
4. If, after exhausting professional channels at a VA regional office or medical facility a DSO is unable to resolve an administrative conflict or issue, he or she may contact the Director, National Veterans Service for appropriate action.
5. Each VFW Department Service Office and each National Veterans Service staff office shall maintain a library of current reference material. This library may consist of printed material, electronic files or both. The National Veterans Service shall keep each office informed, as far as practical, of the most current needed resource material.
6. DSOs, Assistant DSOs, claims consultants, and claims representatives who are stationed at VA regional offices and approved locations, shall, if feasible, attend all Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored training at their respective stations.
7. Each VFW Department Service Office should develop, and actively conduct, a veterans' outreach program. DSOs are encouraged to collaborate with local chapters of veteran's groups that are partnered with the VFW such as other VSOs, student veteran groups (SVA), community stakeholders, Department of Veteran Affairs & other government agencies in order to maximize outreach efforts and to participate in local events (stand downs, claim's clinics, yellow ribbon ceremonies, etc.).
8. VFW Department Service Office files shall not be co-mingled with files of other veteran service organizations. The exceptions to this are those offices operated by state or county government agencies, in which case those agencies must ensure the security and confidentiality of such VFW records, by prohibiting their access to other than staff members who are accredited to the VFW.

9. DSOs and designated members of the National Veterans Service staff shall provide monthly activity reports to both their Department Headquarters and the Director, National Veterans Service by the 5th business day of the month. Such reports shall be of the nature and in the format prescribed by the Director. The DSO's Department Headquarters may require additional reporting requirements in addition to the report prescribed by the Director, National Veterans Service.
10. DSOs shall conduct at least one VFW Post Service Officers School for all Post, County and District Service Officers in the Department, during each Department fiscal year. Such individuals will be encouraged to attend this training.
11. VFW Department Service Office personnel and members of the National Veterans Service staff, shall dress and otherwise conduct themselves in a professional and businesslike manner, during the course of business activities.
12. No Department Service Office personnel nor members of the VFW National Veterans Service staff shall engage in commercial or political activity in such a manner as likely to falsely convey or imply that such activity is approved or endorsed by the VFW to include solicitation on behalf of non-approved commercial enterprises, displaying of political paraphernalia, or wearing of political attire in service offices or during the performance of their official duties as a VFW accredited representative.
13. All official correspondence by DSOs, Assistant DSOs and members of the National Veterans Service staff shall be on VFW letterhead. The exceptions are those DSOs and Assistant DSOs employed by state or county government agencies, who are expected to use appropriate agency letterhead.

VFW REPRESENTATION - TECHNICAL

1. VFW accredited representatives are charged with accepting claims from and advocating for veterans who claim benefits and services under Federal law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. VFW representatives will not refuse to take any claim for benefits if the claim may result from additional benefits being granted under Federal law.
2. VFW representatives at all echelons, shall apprise each client of all benefits to which he or she may be entitled.
3. DSOs, Assistant DSOs, National Veterans Service staff members and all other VFW accredited representatives, shall not withhold the submission of a claim for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, except for the most compelling reason(s), if such withholding in a claim subsequently resolved in favor of the client, would deprive the client of an earlier effective date of the benefit.
4. DSOs have the authority to certify the authenticity of copies of certain official documents to VA regional offices in individual benefit claims upon completion of VA formal instruction and training.
5. Where a client has filed, or wishes to file, a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs for a greater compensable rating for a service connected disability, it shall be incumbent upon the DSO or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative, to advise the client that the Department of Veterans Affairs may decide not only to deny the increased rating, but can also result in the existing rating being reduced.
6. It shall be incumbent upon the DSO, Assistant DSO or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative, to assist a client in all aspects of a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs; and to prosecute such claim to the fullest extent and in a timely manner before such department or agency.
7. In the event that a DSO, Assistant DSO, or an Accredited Representative is contacted by a client who resides in another geographical location covered by a different VFW Department, State Agency, or has been receiving assistance from another VFW accredited representative, the office contacted should email the representative who had been assisting the client in a timely fashion (within one business day).
 - i. The DSO or office supervisor and the office's corporate mailbox should be copied on the email.
 - ii. If the representative making the referral does not receive a response from the representative or DSO at the claimant's local station within three business days, the representative originally contacted by the claimant should notify NVS via the DSO helpdesk (dsohelpdesk@vfw.org) that a reply has not yet been received along with performing a courtesy submission of any forms or evidence received by the claimant (if applicable).
8. It shall be incumbent upon the DSO, Assistant DSO or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars representative, to ensure that each client is afforded all rights to due process under all Department of Veterans Affairs statutes and regulations.
9. In counseling a client concerning a claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs, the DSO, Assistant DSO, or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative, will ascertain all areas where evidence is needed, and assist the client in every reasonable way, to obtain such evidence. Once a claim for VA entitlements has been formally filed, all evidence pertinent to that claim should be submitted.
10. In the event that a client is not ready to submit a claim due to the need to collect evidence, the DSO, Assistant DSO, or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative will submit an Intent to File (ITF) on VA Form 21-0966 prior to the conclusion of the month in order to retain the earliest possible effective date.
11. In the event that a claim action is not filed timely by a VFW accredited representative, the accredited representative will take the following actions:
 - i. Immediately notify the office supervisor and department adjutant.
 - ii. The office supervisor and/or department adjutant will in turn notify the NVS Director, Deputy Director, or Assistant Director Compensation & Pension Policy.
 - iii. NVS will annotate the occurrence, should the need for documentation arise in the future.

12. In the event an accredited representative is contacted by a claimant seeking damages from a VFW entity (Department or National) alleging that the VFW did not submit a claim in a timely fashion:
- Immediately notify the Office Supervisor, Department Commander, Department Adjutant, and Department Quartermaster
 - The Office Supervisor and/or Department leadership will in turn notify the NVS Director, NVS Deputy Director, or NVS Assistant Director Compensation & Pension Policy for informational purposes only.
 - Responsibility to review potentially misfiled claims resides with the employer (VFW Department or National) of the representative responsible for the allegation.
 - Responsibility for potential financial damages resides solely with the employer of the responsible party as outlined in "VFW Representation – Administrative, parts 1.a and 1.b.
 - NVS may provide technical assistance to VFW Departments in an attempt to determine responsibility.

**If at any point during this process the Department Commander determines the Department will assume responsibility for benefits lost due to the untimely actions of their employee, the Department may negotiate a settlement between the claimant and the Department. Should a Department elect to take responsibility and negotiate a settlement, the Department shall furnish a copy of the settlement agreement to the Director, National Veterans Service.*

13. On each occasion that the DSO, Assistant DSO or appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative submits evidence in support of a benefit claim to the appropriate VA regional office, such submission shall include the standard Vetraspec Submittal Letter (or where applicable, state or county government agency) coversheet with agency letterhead, identifying the evidence attached and stating in specific and technical terms, the value of such evidence as it pertains to the claim.
14. Upon being contacted by the client, the DSOs and Assistant DSOs shall counsel each client whose claim is denied, in whole or in part by the VA regional office, on the right to initially appeal such denial by filing a Decision Review Request. If such appeal is initiated, the DSO or Assistant DSO shall again counsel the client on whether or not to further perfect the appeal (filing VA form 10182, *Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)*). A client should not necessarily be encouraged to appeal an adverse decision by the VA regional office, if in the best professional judgment of the DSO or Assistant DSO, there exists a statutory or regulatory bar to the benefit sought by the client. This does not preclude responsibility to continue to provide representation, if the client still intends to initiate such appeal.
15. Although, as part of due process, it is the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs to inform a client of the right to a personal hearing(s) in connection with a benefit claim. Upon being contacted by the client, the DSO or Assistant DSO will also apprise each client, whose claim is denied, of the right to this personal hearing with a VFW representative before Department of Veterans Affairs personnel at the VA regional office of jurisdiction and/or before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.
16. If a DSO formally requests Administrative Review of a VA regional office decision, all appropriate measures to protect the client's appellate rights must also be accomplished. The National Veterans Service staff will also verify, upon receipt of request for Administrative Review, that the client's appellate rights, are protected.
17. Where an internal administrative appeal, or correction of a Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) of a benefit claim decision is initiated by an official of a VA regional office, the DSO at that station shall not join in the administrative appeal and shall so advise the client not to join in such appeal. Should compelling circumstances exist that might suggest otherwise in a particular case, permission for the DSO to join in the appeal shall be obtained from the Director, National Veterans Service.
18. A DSO is to use the utmost discretion in requesting, through the respective VA regional office, an independent medical expert (IME) opinion in support of a benefit claim and must seek the advice of the Assistant Director for Compensation and Pension Policy, National Veterans Service, as to whether such request is appropriate.
19. A DSO, Assistant DSO, or any VFW Accredited Representative may sign a VA Form 20-0995 Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim, VA Form 20-0996 Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review, or VA Form 10182 Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement) in a benefit claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs, but the utmost discretion is to be exercised. Written approval should be solicited from the client, if at all possible.
20. In completing VA Form 10182, *Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)* in a benefit claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs, the DSO, Assistant DSO, or VFW Accredited Representative from the Veteran's Local Station shall:
- Identify the issue(s) on appeal meaning the issue(s) which were covered in the Rating Decision or Statement of the Case or any subsequent Supplemental Statement of the Case, provided by the regional office in response to a Notice of Disagreement;
 - Summarize the pertinent evidence, stating in specific and technical terms, the value of such evidence as it pertains to the issue(s), to include where practicable procuring a statement from the veteran or eligible beneficiary summarizing the contentions and desired outcome;
 - Cite the applicable governing criteria (law, regulation, court decisions, etc.) which the representative believes are applicable by the evidence contained in the claims file;
 - Identify any discrepancy, error, omission, etc., contained in the Rating Decision or Statement of the Case or in any Supplemental Statement of the Case;
 - Where applicable, state or reiterate the client's desire for a personal hearing before the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Virtual hearings are considered another means of hosting a personal hearing;
 - Where applicable, request again that the Department of Veterans Affairs conduct an examination if prior requests to the VA regional office were unsuccessful or inadequate and in the opinion of the DSO, Assistant DSO, or VFW Accredited Representative an

examination is essential to the issue(s) on appeal (supporting rationale for such request must be provided); and,

- Request where applicable, additional development but only if the DSO or Assistant DSO has previously officially requested, without success, to have such development done by the VA regional office.
21. Where evidence is received in a VFW Department Service Office in support of a claim on appeal and after the claims file has been transferred to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, such evidence shall be submitted in accordance with the provisions of Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations §§ 20.800 and 20.1304 and in coordination with the VFW Manager, Board of Veteran Appeals.
22. At no time should any VFW accredited individual withdraw a client's claim or appeal, or withdraw a specific issue on a claim or appeal without written consent from the client. If a client wishes to withdraw a claim or a specific issue in a claim currently being processed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the client must submit a signed request to the appropriate Veterans of Foreign Wars accredited representative expressing their intention to withdraw.
23. In the rare occurrence that the VFW accredited representative feels there is the possibility of a conflict of interest in representing a client at any point within the claims process, it shall be incumbent upon he/she to notify the Director, NVS or their designee of such situation and to seek guidance as to how to proceed. (ex., VFW Accredited Representative is a former VA decision maker such as a(n) RVSR, DRO, VLI, etc. and previously adjudicated any of the issues/contentions currently before the VA.)

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

- Section 516 of the Manual of Procedure requires each Department to have a Department Service Officer (DSO). Department Service Officers are appointed by the Department Commander. The DSO and ADSO may be removed by the Commander at any time; however, removal of salaried DSO's and ADSO must be approved by a majority of the Department Council of Administration.
- Appointment and removal of other Department service office staff, including the Assistant DSO, Claims Consultants and support staff, is governed by Department policies.
- Department service office staff are to follow their Department's respective policies to include attendance, leave, and reporting policies.
- All other disputes involving employment actions of the Department are not within the jurisdiction of the National Veterans Service.
- The Director, NVS, is available to Department officers to discuss service office policies, procedures and practices. The Director may respond to questions on other matters including personnel issues posed by Department officers; however, decisions on hiring, disciplining and terminating service office staff remain solely within the province of the Department.
- Decisions by the Director, NVS, to accredit or remove accreditation of Department service office staff are governed by VA regulations and other sections of this Policy and Procedure.

DUTIES OF A DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

In most service offices a Department Service Officer is the office supervisor. Unless superseded by written Department policies, supervisory duties are the responsibility of the DSO.

In addition to the duties of a service officer outlined in other sections of this Policy and Procedure, a Department Service Officer is responsible for the following:

- The Department Service Officer is responsible for everything that happens in his/her office.
 - Supervision of personnel: This includes the supervision of Assistant DSO's, Claims Consultants, support staff and any other Department employee, volunteer or intern working in that office. Supervision is a broad term intended to encompass all of the routine duties and responsibilities of a first line supervisor. Supervision includes any administrative duties assigned by Department leadership.
 - Office procedures: The DSO is responsible for establishing and maintaining office procedures. At a minimum,
 - Every telephone call received or made should be logged by the recipient.
 - Every visitor should either be signed in or logged in.
 - Office hours should be posted.
 - All claims, including Intent to File forms, received by the VFW must be filed with VA prior to midnight on the last day of the month in which they were received. This includes claims taken by out based service officers. If the VA mail room is closed, claims should be submitted to VA by fax, or through the appropriate electronic method such as SEP.
 - Every VFW Department-run Service Office shall have a VA corporate mailbox with encryption capabilities. State-run VFW Department Service Offices may also seek to establish VA corporate email boxes for similar purposes.
 - Training
 - The DSO is responsible for ensuring that service office personnel are properly trained. This encompasses both initial and continuing education.
 - The DSO is encouraged to utilize all opportunities and modalities to provide training to staff. Formal classroom instruction, OJT, video, computer and other training methods are all viable options. VFW provided training is outlined elsewhere in this Policy and Procedure. Service officers should take advantage of VA provided training whenever it is offered.
 - All VFW staff must be trained on the use of necessary VA & VFW electronic programs.
 - NVS provides mentorship to new DSO's. For more information, contact the Assistant Director, Compensation & Pension Policy, the Assistant Director or Associate Director NVS Training & Quality Assurance

D. Workload management

- i. Managing the work that comes into a VFW service office is critical to ensuring that claims are properly developed, filed with VA and monitored throughout the claims process.
- ii. The DSO shall have Sensitive 7 Access to VA Files. The primary ADSO shall have Sensitive 6 Access to VA Files.
- iii. DSO's shall use a case management system to assist in documenting service officer actions and track active claims. NVS currently provides Vetraspec software for use in VFW offices situated in regional offices and other approved locations. For information concerning that software, its acquisition and use, DSO's should contact the Assistant Director, Compensation & Pension Policy, the Assistant Director or Associate Director, Training & Quality Assurance.
- iv. All electronic POA requests through the Stakeholders Enterprise Portal (SEP) shall be acted upon within 5 business days.

E. Standardized Messaging.

The DSO will ensure that there is continuity between the office's voicemail greetings, email auto replies, and door signage which will include the following information:

- i. Accurate office hours
- ii. Estimated communication response times
- iii. Instructions on scheduling VFW appointments, consultations, and/or walk-in information
- iv. Instructions on submitting documents directly to VA, should the claimant be approaching a VA filing deadline
- v. Instruct claimants never to leave PII (such as social security numbers) in voicemails or emails

Email autoreply example: *Thank you for emailing the VFW Office located at the XXXXX VA Regional Benefits Office. Our Office Hours are Monday thru Friday 0800-1600 hrs. If you are attempting to schedule an appointment, please do so by emailing our corporate mailbox at XXXX.XXXX@va.gov with your name, best contact information, and a brief explanation of the assistance you are seeking. We strive to respond to all communications within 48 business hours. As we cannot guarantee the security of outside emails, please DO NOT LEAVE any personally identifiable information such as social security numbers. If you are approaching a VA filing deadline (such as an Intent to File expiration date or disagreeing with a VA decision), please submit the appropriate form referenced in your VA letter directly to VA. When doing so, please retain proof of submission (ex. Fax confirmation page).*

F. Quality assurance

- i. Quality assurance includes the routine review of a sample of work accomplished by each subordinate in the service office. Problems identified during quality reviews can be used to focus specific training.
- ii. Quality assurance includes the routine review of office procedure compliance. Failure to follow established office procedures should be remediated.
- iii. Data collected during quality assurance can be used to support annual or more periodic employee reviews as required by Department policies.

VFW REPRESENTATION (GENERAL)
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

The Veterans of Foreign Wars does not represent individuals at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC).

Individuals who are dissatisfied with a Board of Veterans Appeals decision in their case should strongly consider legal representation. While individuals may represent themselves in an appeal to the CAVC, service officers should discourage this practice as unrepresented individuals routinely experience unfavorable outcomes at a higher rate than do those represented by legal counsel. Two places where representation information may be found are the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program (<http://www.vetsprobono.org/>) and the Public List of Practitioners found on the CAVC website (https://www.uscourts.cavc.gov/public_list.php).

However, nothing in this section prohibits NVS from entering into an agreement with a law firm to offer representational activities at the CAVC and other appellate courts for individuals represented by the VFW at the Board of Veterans Appeals. Select VFW accredited attorneys may be authorized to review recent BVA decisions and determine if any issue may have appellate merit. If so, VFW will notify selected claimants and offer them the opportunity to be represented on appeal free. Once the CAVC issues a decision, VFW will resume their representation at VA.

VFW NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE GRANTS

The criteria for dispersing restricted grants for veterans service activities are no longer included in this Policy and Procedure. Any questions regarding service grant disbursement should be referred to the office of the Quartermaster General.

The following is meant to be a guideline for Departments to follow in the expenditure of grant monies related to their service office operation.

1. All grant monies paid to Departments are for the current VFW year.

2. Funds granted to Departments for veterans service activities are subject to the following restriction:

Monies paid to the Department must be dedicated toward accredited representation of eligible service members, veterans, and dependents seeking benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, assisting veterans in navigating other federal, state, or municipal benefit programs, and for the training, outreach, and facilitation of these benefit-assistance activities.

3. Examples of ways the funds can be utilized to support these activities include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Purchasing or upgrading office furnishings for the Department Service Office or field offices for VFW-accredited individuals.
 - B. Purchasing additional computers, printers, or other office equipment and supplies related to the preparation or submission of claims by VFW-accredited individuals. Such supplies may include ink, toner, bulk paper, postage, etc.
 - C. Travel, lodging, mileage and/or other expenses associated with outreach activities of the DSO/ADSO or other VFW-accredited representatives.
 - D. Costs associated with attending annual NVS training
 - E. Purchasing media and other reference materials such as 38 Code of Federal Regulation or Lexus Nexus legal reference service, development and printing of service office promotional materials, outreach materials, NVS collateral materials, etc.
 - F. Costs associated with hosting or attending annual Post Service Officer training, Schools of Instruction, or other professional development.
4. If the Department is in doubt as to the proper application of funds, they are encouraged to contact the Director, NVS or the office of the Quartermaster General.
5. Departments are reminded that NVS grant monies are strictly related to veterans service activities and shall not be deposited into the Department General Fund. It would be optimal if the Department Quartermaster maintained a separate line item to account for these restricted grants.
6. Departments are required to provide an explanation of the usage of all funds received for veterans service activities at the end of the current VFW year. Departments that fail to comply with this instruction will be unable to receive grant money for the ensuing year until such time as a full accounting is provided to the Director, NVS and office of the Quartermaster General.
7. Any and all grant monies paid to a Department for veterans service activities that remain unexpended at the end of the VFW year must be returned to VFW National Headquarters. Failure to return unexpended funds may result in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in future veterans service grant funding.

VFW COMPUTER SECURITY

1. VA has extended its IT security measures to all Service Organization computers attached to its system (including laptop computers) which we must take advantage of. The VFW has a responsibility to veterans and their families to protect the personal information which we acquire in the everyday course of business.
2. Offices in government provided spaces
 - A. All VFW offices in government provided spaces must be closed and locked whenever the office is not occupied by a VFW employee. It only takes a minute for someone to slip into an office and grab a claims file or other information off a desk, table, or shelf.
 - B. Each VFW office must have at least one locking file cabinet. All records whether VA or VFW, which identify a veteran/claimant in some manner, must be securely stored and locked at the close of business each day or whenever the office is being left alone. Offices shall store new documents electronically in the appropriate secured claims database.
 - C. Those who work in government provided space which cannot be locked (e.g., cubical) must ensure that all computer equipment and information containing veteran identifiable data is secured whenever the VFW employee is away from their space.
3. Encryption and security devices
 - A. VA has selected the encryption software it intends to use on VA computers and has agreed to install it on Service Organization desk and laptop computers. VFW will conform to the requirements of VA for any computers connected to the VA network.
 - B. Individuals and their staffs accredited by the VFW will utilize encryption software when it is offered by VA.
 - C. Departments should ensure that laptops purchased for use by Department Service Office employees, or any other individual who expects to work with the personal information of veterans, dependents and survivors, conform to VA computer purchasing requirements at the time the purchase is made.
 - D. Prior to purchasing a new computer, Departments should contact the VA facility where the equipment is to be used in order to obtain the latest specifications on equipment VA is purchasing for itself. Departments should purchase computers that conform to the type and specifications shown by VA to ensure compatibility with VA computer systems.
 - E. All computers used by VFW personnel at a minimum must be password protected. Laptops must have II Tier Protection. Departments should ensure that laptops purchased for use by Department Service Officers and other personnel that contain personally identifiable information of veterans and other claimants must be encrypted.

4. Desktop Computers

- A. Desktop computers in Regional Offices and connected to the VA intranet must be set up in accordance with VA policies. VFW Service Office personnel will cooperate with VA IT personnel in ensuring that all anti-virus and firewall software is current and enabled.
- B. External hard drives, USB Flash Drives and other portable electronic data storage devices must be stored in a locked drawer when not in use regardless of memory content. Each will be routinely purged of data that is either saved to a more secure hard drive or is no longer needed.
- C. All electronic documents containing identifying information of veterans and other claimants must be saved to the appropriate secure claims database.
- D. VA IT policy will dictate whether a user will log off at the end of the workday or turn off the computer. Logging off, rather than turning off, a computer allows the System Operator (VA) to update anti-virus protection software overnight. VFW personnel should follow the directions of VA IT personnel in determining whether to log off or turn off their PC.

5. Laptop computers/tablets used as a desktop computer

- A. VFW personnel should follow the same procedures outlined above for desktop computers whenever a laptop computer is used in lieu of a desktop.
- B. Cable locks – if required, cable locks can be used to secure a laptop to a desk or other immobile object. These locks should be used to secure any laptop that is not locked in a drawer or filing cabinet when an office is closed.

6. Data gathered during outreach

VFW expects Service Officers to perform outreach activities using laptop computers or tablets. It is not unusual for the this type of equipment to remain out of the office for an evening or weekend. The guidance below should be followed:

- A. Laptops/Tablets should be secured in the trunk of a car while traveling and must be brought into the Service Officer's home and secured overnight. Under no circumstances should a computer be left unsecured. Service Officers may be held responsible for the theft of an unsecured computer. Under no circumstances will a laptop or tablet with veteran or claimant data be connected to an unsecured wireless network (e.g., Starbucks). Laptops/tablets should never be left unattended. They must be secured in a locked drawer, cabinet or room overnight.
 - B. If properly using the office's secured claims database, under no circumstances should veteran or claimant data be retained on a laptop, tablet, external hard drive, flash drive or other data storage device.
7. Security of paper records, CD's, DVD's, external hard drives, flash (USB) drives and other media storage
- A. Paper records, CD's, DVD's, external hard drives, flash (USB) drives and other portable media storage which contain veteran data must be secured in a locked drawer or file cabinet whenever they are not in use.
 - B. Transmission of veteran specific data by e-mail should be avoided unless encrypted or if the client has a signed [Consent to Non-Secure Email](#) form on file.
 - C. No documents or photocopies of documents received from the VA or a claimant should be removed from the Regional Office.
 - D. Since most e-mail is open and unsecured communication, a Service Officer should never click on unsolicited links or respond to unsolicited messages as this can expose computer systems to malicious software that can compromise networks and clients' data. A Service Officer should also never transmit client-specific information over non-encrypted email channels without the written consent of the client to communicate via non-encrypted or unsecured email channels.
 - E. The faxed transmission of veteran specific data should be done extremely carefully. The appropriate VA provided fax cover sheet should always accompany any faxed document which clearly identifies the transmitting and receiving individuals.
 - F. Paper records should be hand carried to the VA whenever possible. Should it be necessary to mail paper records between Medical Centers and Regional Offices, CD's, DVD's or other records, VA's internal mail system should be used if possible. When shipping records through VA's internal mail system is not possible, FedEx or similar shipping service should be utilized. This is because packages can be tracked through a shipping service while most forms of US mail cannot be tracked.
 - G. Shredding – If your VA Regional Office does not provide shredding services, every VFW office should have a shredder; a confetti shredder is preferred. Any veteran/claimant specific information which is no longer necessary should be shredded. Some Service Officers occasionally work away from the office. All documents with veteran or claimant specific information that is no longer needed should always be shredded.

8. Loss of data: In the event of a loss of data

- A. Immediately notify your immediate supervisor of the loss. Your report should include the approximate time or date of the loss, what was taken (e.g., flash drive; laptop), and how many veterans or claimants records were compromised.
- B. Send an e-mail to the Director, National Veterans Service with the same information you reported to your supervisor.
- C. If this loss occurred in a VA Regional Office or VA Medical Center, notify the VA Regional Office Security Officer or other designated individual. If the loss occurred outside a VA facility (e.g., laptop stolen from a home or car; flash drive lost), notify the police, your superior, and the Director, National Veterans Service.
- D. Cooperate. It is the national policy of the VFW that we will cooperate with law enforcement and data security officials at VA when veteran data is compromised.

NOTE: ANY MATTER NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED IN THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE SHALL BE REFERRED TO THE NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE THROUGH THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE, FOR RESOLUTION.



Check this link out, it's relevant to all posts.

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-businesses-charities-others-with-employer-identification-numbers-must-update-responsible-party-information-within-60-days-of-any-change>

FIRE System Update Coming September 2021

Any filer, including corporations, partnerships, employers, estates or trusts who files 250 or more Forms 1097, 1042-S, 1098, 1099, 3921, 3922, 5498, 8027, 8955-SSA or W-2G for any calendar year must file their information returns electronically using Filing Information Returns Electronically (**FIRE**). FIRE is the online tool used to transmit information returns and automatic extension requests to the IRS. Before filers can use FIRE, they must complete an online application to obtain a 5-digit alphanumeric code known as a Transmitter Control Code (TCC). Currently, Form 4419 is used to request a TCC.

A new online application, Information Returns (IR) Application for Transmitter Control Code, is scheduled to deploy on September 26, 2021, and will replace Form 4419. The new application will be available on the FIRE page. For more information on FIRE changes, see [FIRE System Update: Improving the Process and Security for Information Return \(IR\) Application for Transmitter Control Code \(TCC\)](#).

Updated Video: Exploring the Charities and Nonprofit Webpage

View [Exploring the Charities and Nonprofit Webpage](#) video for a walk through of our recently updated webpage on [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

EIN Holders Must Update Any Change to Responsible Party

The IRS is urging those entities with Employer Identification Numbers (EINs) to update their applications if there has been a change in the responsible party or contact information. IRS regulations require EIN holders to update responsible party information within 60 days of any change by filing [Form 8822-B, Change of Address or Responsible Party - Business](#). It is critical that the IRS have accurate information in cases of identity theft or other fraud issues related to EINs or business accounts.

For more information see [IR-2021-161, July 30, 2021](#).

New Issue Snapshot

[Private Foundations: Amount Involved - Self-Dealing Lending of Money to Disqualified Persons IRC Section 4941\(e\)\(2\)](#).

Visit [Issue Snapshots](#) on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for a complete listing of available snapshots.

Deducting Charitable Contributions: Understanding Your Responsibilities

Charitable donors may ask about contribution deductibility. The [Can I Deduct My Charitable Contributions course](#) explains what donations are deductible, which records to keep and how to report them. Organizational leadership and volunteers should complete the [Tax-Exempt Organization Workshop](#) for important information on the benefits, limitations and expectations of tax-exempt organizations.

For the latest exempt organization news, connect via IRS Social Media and subscribe to this and other IRS Newsletters.

If you have a technical or procedural question about Exempt Organizations, visit the Charities and Nonprofits homepage on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

If you have a specific question about exempt organizations, please [contact us](#).



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Honoring Those Who Teach

The VFW launched the Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award in 1999 to recognize certified teachers for promoting citizenship education. One K-12 teacher is selected as a department winner. The department winner and their school will receive a National Citation. Visit this link for more information and for an entry form: vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year.

Eligibility

Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates for this award. For example, do you know a teacher who plans field trips to city hall or organizes community volunteer projects? Maybe you know an instructor who invites veterans into the classroom to discuss their military experiences. Perhaps you are familiar with a teacher who fosters the development of democratic values and beliefs through special projects. If you know of such a teacher, honor him or her today.

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

Deadlines

Post judging should be completed and their winning entry sent to the District, if applicable, or Department by January 1. Department judging should be completed and their winner's entry be submitted to VFW National Headquarters by February 1 by completing a VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form located on the VFW website. Post chairmen must be sure to send the original entry form of the winner along with a one-page resume as a minimum, or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, such as references, news articles, etc. Also good quality head and shoulders photograph from the winning teachers, if available.

Judging

Select competent and unbiased judges. A panel of at least three to five judges is recommended. The VFW chairman should be present at the judging to provide assistance but should not be one of the judges. Prior to the judging, the chairman should review all entry forms to ensure they adhere to the rules.

Judges should grant points based on four criteria with the potential of 100 points as follows:

1-25 points - Does the teacher teach and/or model good citizenship and community involvement?

1-25 points - An innovative approach to teaching citizenship.

1-25 points - Development of resources to teach citizenship education.

1-25 points - Passion for teaching citizenship education.

NOTE: Judging sheets are available on later pages.

Running the Program

Here are some important points to remember when conducting the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award Program.

- Know the program procedures and judging guidelines thoroughly.
- Develop a good working relationship with your Post's Auxiliary chairman.
- Contact schools early and make a point of explaining the importance of the program to the principal.
- Send a news release to your local media with the names of your winning teachers (see website for sample).
- Recognize your participants (both winners and judges) with official VFW awards - see the official VFW Store catalog (or visit vfwstore.org for ideas.)
- Forward your winning Post's entries to the Department as soon as the competition is finished.

Winning Entry Checklist

Here's what your Post needs to have to your District, if applicable, or Department:

- Winning teacher's entry form
- Teacher's one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, such as references, news articles, etc.
- Good quality head and shoulders photograph of the teacher, if available.

If you have any questions, please contact your Department Headquarters or Tammy Beauchamp in VFW Programs: phone: 816.756.3390, ext 6287
email: tbeauchamp@vfw.org.

VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 Veterans Benefits Administration

Presumptive Disability Benefits

What is “Presumptive” Service Connection?

VA presumes that certain disabilities were caused by military service. This is because of the unique circumstances of a specific Veteran’s military service. If a presumed condition is diagnosed in a Veteran within a certain group, they can be awarded disability compensation.

What are “Presumptive” Conditions?

If you are diagnosed with a chronic disease within one year of active duty release, you should apply for disability compensation. Examples of chronic disease include: arthritis, diabetes or hypertension.

Or, if you served continuously for at least 90 days and are diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) after discharge, you can establish service connection for the disease.

Veterans in the following groups may qualify for “presumptive” disability benefits:

- Former prisoners of war who:
 - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling
- Vietnam Veterans who were:
 - Exposed to Agent Orange
 - Served in the Republic of Vietnam or on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975
- Atomic Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation and who experienced one of the following:
 - Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing
 - Occupied or were prisoners of war in Hiroshima or Nagasaki
 - Served before Feb. 1, 1992, at a diffusion plant in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio or Oak Ridge, Tennessee
 - Served before Jan. 1, 1974, at Amchitka Island, Alaska
- Gulf War Veterans who:
 - Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations
 - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling by Dec. 31, 2021
- Gulf War Deployed Veterans who:
 - Served in the Southwest Theater of Operations during the Persian Gulf War
 - Served in Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti or Uzbekistan on or after September 19, 2001

Presumptive Disability Benefits, continued on page 20

Presumptive Disability Benefits, continued from page 19

Former Prisoners of War	Vietnam Veterans	Atomic Veterans	Gulf War Veterans	Gulf War Deployed Veterans
Imprisoned for any length of time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosis • Any anxiety state • Dysthymic disorder • Organic residuals of frostbite • Post- traumatic osteoarthritis • Heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease • Stroke and the residual effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL amyloidosis • B-cell leukemia • Chronic lymphocytic leukemia • Type 2 diabetes • Hodgkin’s disease • Ischemic heart disease • Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma • Parkinson’s disease • Parkinsonism • Prostate cancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms of leukemia, except chronic lymphocytic leukemia • Cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract, brain, bone, lung, colon or ovary 	Medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses that exist for six months or more, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic fatigue syndrome • Fibromyalgia • Irritable bowel syndrome • Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that warrants a presumption of service connection, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs 	Served any length of time in the qualifying area and a condition below becomes manifest to any degree within 10 years from the date of separation from military service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma • Rhinitis • Sinusitis, to include rhinosinusitis
Imprisoned for at least 30 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beriberi • Chronic dysentery • Helminthiasis • Malnutrition (including optic atrophy) • Pellagra • Other nutritional deficiencies • Irritable bowel syndrome • Peptic ulcer disease • Peripheral neuropathy • Cirrhosis of the liver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respiratory cancers • Soft-tissue sarcoma (not including osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma or mesothelioma) • Bladder cancer • Hypothyroidism The following conditions, if they become greater than 10 percent debilitating within a year of exposure to an herbicide agent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy • Chloracne or other similar acneform disease • Porphyria cutanea tarda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma • Multiple myeloma • Lymphomas, other than Hodgkin’s disease • Primary liver cancer, except if there are indications of cirrhosis or hepatitis B 	Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Skin symptoms • Headaches • Muscle pain • Joint pain • Neurological symptoms • Sleep disturbance • GI symptoms • Cardiovascular symptoms • Weight loss • Menstrual disorders 	



COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic has issued a challenge to all VFW Posts for the month of September 2021!

We're a few months into the new membership year, and it's time to really put our focus on membership growth. We want this year to be a benchmark year when it comes to membership, and passing 100% in membership should be the goal that each and every Post, District, and Department strives for.

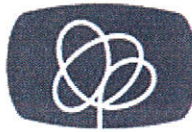
To encourage this, for the month of September 2021, \$500 will be awarded to the top Post in each membership division based on recruiting, renewing, and reinstating the most Annual members. This will count New members, Annual members who renew their dues, and lapsed members who pay their Annual dues to the Post. We want our Posts out there recruiting, retaining, and recovering members!

We know that a strong membership base is how we will move forward as an organization, because

THE TIME IS NOW!



Membership totals will be based on close-of-business totals on August 31st to September 30th.



VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN

LIFE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBER INFORMATION

Title: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss	Name:	
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Date of birth:	Email:	Phone:

Membership Type:
 Associate (not a member of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary)
 Life Member (must be a member in good standing of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary or a unit of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary. Complete affiliation information below. If no Post or Auxiliary number is provided, an Associate Membership will be issued.)

VFW & VFW AUXILIARY INFORMATION
 (Required if a VFW or VFW Auxiliary member)

I am a member of VFW Post _____ in the Department of _____ VFW
 I am a member of VFW Auxiliary _____ in the Department of _____ VFW Auxiliary

RECRUITER (Not required)

Recruiter name: Art Scheuneman
 Recruiter name: NY State National Home Chairman Recruiter Post or Auxiliary number: 4823

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please allow 3-4 weeks for your membership certificate, card and other information to be sent. You can also apply online at: www.vfwnationalhome.org/membership	One time membership fee and Life Member pin \$50	\$ 50.00

Check enclosed and made payable to **VFW National Home for Children**
 Charge my Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Name on card: _____ Card number: _____

Signature: _____ Expiration date: _____

WHY SHOULD YOU BECOME A LIFE MEMBER

BEING A LIFE MEMBER or an Associate Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children is one way you can create a bond between yourself and the mission of the National Home. Your support and encouragement honors our veterans and today's military by helping their children and families in times of need. Life Members in good standing with the VFW or VFW Auxiliary may vote for trustees representing their National Home District and proposed Bylaw or Articles of Incorporation changes.



August 26, 2021

I have been asked by our State Commander Mike Hoag to Chair the Annual Department of New York VFW Service Officer's Raffle to support our Department of NY Veteran Service Officers. As we once again prepare for the annual raffle, we are asking those who have generously donated prizes in past years to once again step up and support this essential project.

Would you consider donating one of the \$100 prizes this year? As you know, our Veteran Service Officers are funded by the Department of New York and supplemented by the proceeds from our raffle and ad book sales. Without the support of patrons like yourself, we would be unable to raise the additional funds needed to continue the services provided by our Veteran Service Officers who are essential in continuing the veteran counseling services so desperately needed by our veterans. *The Department of NY Service Officers procure tens of millions of dollars for our disabled members and Veterans across New York State.*

Please send your \$100.00 prize donation to Department Headquarters, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205. *Raffle prizes must be received at Department Headquarters by November 30, 2021* to ensure we have sufficient time to prepare and mail out the raffle tickets to our Posts and Auxiliaries.

Along with your check, please let us know how you would like your raffle prize donation announced. Some examples are:

\$100 in Memory of Name – Your Name and Your Wife's name
\$100 in Memory of John Doe, USN – Jim and Susan Doe
\$100 in Memory of Albert Doe, USAF – James Samuels

The Raffle drawing will be held at the Department Convention in June 2022.

I thank you for your present and past support and hope you will continue your financial support for this indispensable program.

Yours in Comradeship,

Sean Dion

Sean Dion, Service Officer Raffle Chairman
Department of New York, Veterans of Foreign Wars
69 Sand Creek Rd
Albany, NY 12205

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

69 Sand Creek Road
Albany, New York 12205-1823