

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

Official Publication
Dept. of New York,
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States




October, November, December 2023

Volume 42 Issue 2



Daniel Kell
STATE COMMANDER



Greetings Comrades;

As we approach the end of the year the Department of New York is continuing to move forward as we strive to reach our goals set forth in all categories set forth by National.

We are continuing to do a great in Membership this year, currently Department of New York is at 88.24% as of December 8, 2023, working toward to achieving our goal of 102% by 30 June 2024. As a reminder, Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento has issued a challenge to all the Department Commanders with a Department Membership Challenge and will award the Department of New York \$2,750 for each of the following membership goals for a total of \$11,000. These funds if the goals are met will be added to the Department Membership Budget and will be available to assist the Department, District and Posts with their recruiting events:

88% Membership by November 1, 2023 - \$2750.00
(Did not make)

95% Membership by February 1, 2024 - \$2750.00

99% Membership by May 31, 2024 - \$2750.00

102% Membership by June 30, 2024 - \$2750.00

The Department of New York came close to achieving the November 1st, 2023, goal of 88% and only missed it by 460 members, New or Re-instated.

State Commander continued on page 2



Robert Mitchell
STATE ADJUTANT



Comrades,

I would like to provide some clarification with regard to the kick-off of our recent Department fundraiser. The Department of New York entered into an agreement with Publishing Concepts LP ("PCI") to conduct an "Oral History Publication Project". The project is a major fundraiser for the Department that was approved by the Department's Council

State Adjutant continued on page 4



Daniel McMahon
STATE QUARTERMASTER



Comrades,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

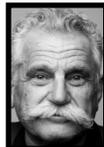
The holiday season is upon us and I would like to thank everyone for your support this past year. Please enjoy the holidays and stay safe.

Before the next issue of the Overseas Veteran come out, members, of each Post at their annual election, are responsible to elect officers and as such, should elect officers who, will protect its

Quartermaster continued on page 5



Jody Treadway
Editor



Richard Tibbetts
State Historian



Barbara Bishop
State Photographer



New York State Overseas Veteran

The official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.

**PUBLICATIONS:

Overseas Veteran is published four times annually by the Department of New York in July/August/September; October/November/December; January/February/March and April/May/June. All publications are digital format online and available on the VFWNY web site WWW.VFWNY.COM. Publications are 8.5" X 11" for individual printing capability.

** ARTICLES:

Articles: Any and all articles involving and/or including 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. Email articles and pictures as attachments with sender's name, address and phone number in the base of the emails. 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 articles/submissions.

** ALL ARTICLES AND PICTURES MUST BE E-MAILED TO:

JTreadway@VFWNY.com. They become the sole property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York.

** DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES:

Is established by the State Adjutant.

If you are using regular mail, send the items to:

Jody Treadway
Editor NYSOV
Department of New York VFW
69 Sand Creek Rd.
Albany, NY 12205

State Commander continued from page 1

With a little push and membership drives and with all the Districts participating, we can reach our next goal of 95% by February 1, 2023. I want to take this time and thank the Districts and the post for meeting and excelling in the Commander-In-Chiefs goal for the month of November, which the Department will receive \$500 from National to be put into our Membership Account. To all the Membership Chairman in the District, continue to communicate and advise our State Membership PSC Michael Burke of any membership drives their Districts are having throughout the upcoming new year, again, this will allow the Department to aid the District Membership Chairmans with the required material and assistance they will need to have a successful membership drive. The hard work those Districts and Posts are putting forward in the Membership drives they are conducting is showing in their stats to date to reach our goal of 102% and build our numbers so our voice will continue to be strong to advocate before Congress and push our legislative goals we are fighting for.

Community Service Reports, Inspections, Quarterly reports, and District All-American Dashboard reporting: Inspections are coming along and being submitted to the Department Inspector slowly but surely. Looking at the Department Memstats, some of the District are doing an outstanding job getting their inspections completed and some Districts are moving along slowing to get them completed and forwarded to Department for approval. All the District Commanders know my goal this year is to have all the Inspections of the District and Posts completed by 31 December 2023.

Let's not forget about the importance of reporting information to the Department of New York and ensure they are entering their program information on the All-American Dashboard for Community Service, Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teachers.

Our National Commander-In-Chief has added 3 more categories for the State Commanders to be eligible for All American. These categories are listed below. If any post wants to submit an applicant to receive these awards, please submit your application to the Department of New York (Attn: State Adjutant) no later than 1 March 2024. These applications do not have to go through the District. Information, criteria and applications can be found on the National Website.

VFW MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award is to recognize a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has exemplified in their actions and accomplishments, the true spirit of our organization in serving the needs of their Post and Community, and who has dedicated themselves in a professional manner in addressing the Pillars of our Organization. This award is intended to recognize a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has been a member a minimum of one full membership year. Award candidates holding any of the following elected or appointed offices during the award year are not eligible (Specifically -Commander, QM, Adjutant, Service Officer, or Chaplain). In addition, Past State Commanders and Past National Council members are ineligible from nomination. Please forward nominations for this award to Department of New York Headquarters, Attn: State Adjutant, by March 1, 2024.

VFW EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Purpose of this Award is to confer recognition on one employer for outstanding records in the hiring and retention of

State Commander continued on page 3

State Commander continued from page 2

veterans in their business. The National Winner will receive a plaque to be presented by the National Commander at the Annual National convention and will receive a trip to travel to the convention city to accept the award. Please forward all nominations for this award to Department of New York Headquarters, Attn: State Adjutant, by March 1, 2024.

VFW JROTC CADET OF THE YEAR AWARD

This VFW award is for special recognition of outstanding achievement and exceptional leadership for Junior JROTC cadets. This award seeks to recognize a remarkable cadet who will become a leader in their community and serve their country. Please forward all nominations for this award to Department of New York Headquarters, Attn: State Adjutant, by March 1, 2024.

I continue to visit many Districts and post within the District and want to thank the District Commanders for setting up numerous post visits within their District. The communication and comradeship at each post I visited in the Districts were very appreciated. While I was in District 1, I had the opportunity and honor to see and be part of the 20th Anniversary of Trees for Troops send off. It was amazing to see an outstanding program put on, this year they sent 500 live trees, lights, ornaments, and Menorahs to our Troops serving overseas. Also, in District 1, I was invited and had the honor to attend the unveiling of a Street co-naming ceremony in honor of WWII hero Joseph Schmidt, which was renamed "Joseph Schmidt Way".

Mid-Winter Council of Administration Meeting will be held on 12 January 2024 at Albany Marriott. Let's "Make it Happen" and "Meet the Challenge", work together as a team and communicate from the Department level down to the District, Post as well as our Auxiliary to have a successful year.

Yours in Comradeship;

Daniel L. Kell
Department of New York State Commander



Our new recruit, Teddy is traveling across New York with our State Commander Daniel Kell.

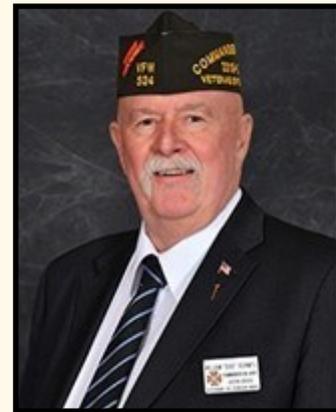
Department of New York VFW Mid-Winter C Of A Meeting National Representative

January 12 -13, 2024

Albany Marriott

189 Wolf Road

Albany, NY



William "Doc" Schmitz PCIC, PSC

Past Commander in Chief William "Doc" Schmitz will be the VFW National Representative to the Department of New York VFW's Mid-Winter Council of Administration meeting that will be held at the Albany Marriott on January 12-13, 2024.

William "Doc" Schmitz was elected Commander in Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on July 24, 2019 at the 120th VFW National Convention in Orlando, Florida. Doc served in the United States Navy from 1961 to 1970. He served in Vietnam as a corpsman attached the United States Marine Corps infantry and artillery. In recognition of his service he received the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He joined the VFW in 1971 at Post 524 in Corning, NY, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. He has served as Department Commander, Post Commander, Southern Tier County Council Commander and District 5 Commander, Department Surgeon and editor of the New York State Overseas Veteran publication. He served at the national level as Surgeon General from 2010-2011 and as the Inspector General from 2015-2016.

State Adjutant continued from page 1

of Administration in July of this year. A similar fundraiser was conducted very successfully with PCI approximately 5 year ago during the Department of New York's 100 year anniversary. This new Oral History Project is a 12-month project that commenced on October 20, 2023. PCI is sending out post cards and in some cases email messages to members requesting your participation in this project. The Postcard will bear the signature of State Commander Daniel Kell and will request that you call and complete an important verification of your membership data. When and if you call to verify/update your membership data you will be asked to participate in the "Oral History Publication Project". Calling to verify your membership data is completely voluntary on your part. If you elect to participate you can share stories of your military service and help document the history of both your service and the VFW.

When you call to verify your membership data, PCI will offer products for purchase (i.e., Digital or Hardbound Book Versions of the Oral History Project, Apparel, etc). Again, there is **NO** requirement to participate or purchase anything from PCI. If you elect to "tell your story", you can do so at no expense and with no purchase requirement.

I hope this provides clarification as our members receive the postcards and email messages. At the conclusion of the project, PCI will be providing the Department of New York with a comprehensive report and update of our membership data.

I would like to wish everyone a safe and joyous holiday season and a very happy and peaceful New Year!

Yours in Comradeship,
Bob Mitchell



**James MacArthur
JR. VICE COMMANDER**



Comrades,

As the Jr. Vice Commander of the State of New York I have been busy traveling to different Districts, meeting new comrades and attending meetings. Just this past weekend I went to Levittown Long Island to District 10 meeting, after the meeting I was invited to attend the swearing in of the new District 10 Auxiliary at Post 1384 in Long Beach along with Commander Kell, PSC Todaro and Auxiliary President Rose Cooper. The next morning, I attended the Trees for Troops ceremony at Dee's nursery in Oceanside again with Commander Kell, PSC Todaro and Auxiliary President Rose Cooper and many other comrades VFW and American Legion members. If you have never attended this ceremony, you are missing out on a wonderful program our Department is involved in thanks to PSC (Big) Ben Thompson.



If you have never donated to Trees for Troops, please consider doing so it is a great cause.

Upcoming early next year is the Department's Mid-Winter C of A meeting at the Albany Marriott at 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY on January 12th & 13th. I hope to see some of you there.

As I end there are two very important missions we need to be involved in right now. One is membership; we are doing well recruiting new members and we need to keep up the good work. The other mission which currently is very important is that each and every comrade in the Department of N.Y. has a very Happy Holiday, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Also, if you know of a comrade who may for some

Jr. Vice Commander continued on page 5



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members, it's interests and the assets of the post. The by-laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars spell out duties and responsibilities for each officer. However, most Posts elect the trustees as **an afterthought**. "There is nothing to this job!" **Does this sound familiar???** In fact, the task of post trustee, is the most important position in your Post. Trustees **are not** responsible to the Commander, and **not** to the Quartermaster, but to the **members of the Post**. Their signature on the trustees' report indicate to the membership they have done their job with the intensity and exactness necessary to protect the Posts interests and assets as they would do for their own home. There is information online for the trustees to Complete their tasks. **DO NOT RELY ON THE QUARTERMASTER TO COMPLETE TRUSTEE REPORTS.**

The IRS with everything else uses electronic methods of tracking each person and or entity who should file tax returns and or 990 reports each year. If you do not complete, file and have accepted a 990 for 3 years, the IRS automatically suspends your not-for-profit status. You must reapply for that status. If you have any questions, please, contact a tax consultant for direction.

HAVE YOU REPLACED YOURSELF TODAY? PLEASE RECRUIT ONE VETERAN FOR THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Thank you,

Daniel B. McMahon
Quartermaster
Department of NY VFW
dcmcmahon@vfwny.com
518-414-2605



December 3, 2023 the District 1 Meeting at Post 3427 Flushing hosted Auxiliary President Rose Cooper, Commander Kell, District 1 Commander Neil Jordan, PSC Thomas Todaro

Jr. Vice Commander Continued from page 4

some reason may be alone this holiday season reach and give him or her a call or if you're not too busy visit someone you know will be alone, I'm sure they would love your company.

So, I thank all of my fellow comrades for your support and wish you and your families Happy Holidays Merry Christmas Happy New Year and nothing but the best for our organization in 2024!

James MacArthur
 Jr. Vice Commander
 Dept. of New York

Start Making Plans for the Spring Conference March 15-17, 2024

Doubletree Hotel by Hilton
 Binghamton, NY

The Service Officer
 Gold Chevron
 Awards Dinner

will be held

Saturday March 16,2024

Show your support
 and plan to

Attend!

Winners of the
 Service Officers' Raffle
 will be

Announced

at the dinner!



*Trees for Troops
20th Anniversary*





Thomas Todaro PSC

**DIRECTOR OF
VETERANS SERVICES**



VA Claims Insider VA Claims Academy
Telemedica VA Assist

Comrades,

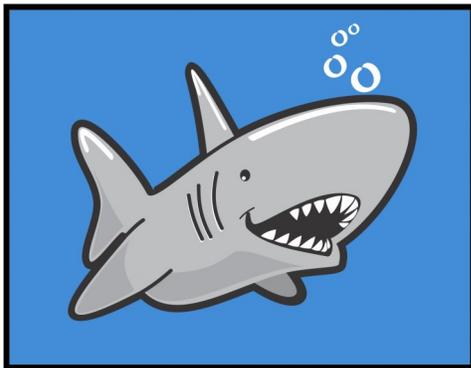
Don't be bitten by a Claim Shark!

What is a "Claim Shark"?

A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!

Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.

Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.



Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

Who are the Claim Sharks?

- Trajector Medical Patriot Angels
- Vet Benefits Guide Veteran Care Services
- Veterans Guardians VetComm

Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp LeJeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees

Update on VA Home Loans

Helping Veterans and their families stay in their homes is a top priority at VA. Over the past year, we've been able to help more than 145,000 Veterans and their families retain their homes and avoid foreclosure. Even in the dynamic housing market of the last several years, rates of foreclosures of VA-backed mortgages are among the lowest in the country. And at the same time, we know that there are still Veterans struggling to make their payments.

To ensure these Veterans can stay in their homes, we are taking two steps:

1. We are calling on mortgage servicers to pause foreclosures of VA-guaranteed loans through May 31, 2024. During this pause we will work with servicers on workable home retention solutions for Veterans; and
2. We are extending the COVID-19 Refund Modification program through May 31, 2024. This extension will allow Veterans to obtain a zero-interest, deferred-payment loan from VA to cover missed payments and modify their existing VA-guaranteed loan to achieve affordable monthly payments for the duration of this extension.

By pausing foreclosures and extending the COVID-19 Refund Modification program, we can continue assisting Veterans with their loans while we launch our newest home retention option, the VA Servicing Purchase (VASP) program. Through VASP, VA will purchase defaulted VA loans from mortgage servicers, modify the loans, and then place them in the VA-owned portfolio as direct loans. This will empower us to work with Veterans experiencing severe financial hardship to adjust their loans – and their monthly payments – so they can keep their homes.

We want every Veteran with a loan to know that VA is here to help – and we encourage any Veteran who is struggling with making their payments to visit us at www.va.gov/housing-assistance or call us at 877-827-3702. We have loan technicians working with Veterans to help them stay in their homes, including discussing available home retention options such as repayment plans, special forbearance, loan modification, and more. And we will continue to actively review our portfolio of loans and work with loan servicers to do everything in our power to keep all Veterans and survivors with a VA-guaranteed mortgage in their homes.

Yours in Comradeship,
Thomas Todaro
PSC/Director



Gene Ratigliano
PSC
NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEMBER



Greetings from your National Council Member!

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and for some, winter arrived a little earlier than expected. Although winter is before us, there are still some pleasant days where many of us can continue to work towards that 102% membership goal as well and getting on the road to complete those post inspections to reach the State Commander's goal of having inspections completed by December 31st. With the holiday season approaching, it is a great time to coordinate a recruiting event in many of the malls and larger shops where traffic will be heavy with shoppers.

With regard to inspections, one requirement of note that has been in the Manual of Procedure Ritual for some time requires all posts to have local bylaws. There is available to you on the Department of NY website at www.vfwny.org under Resources, reports and forms a template that provides a basis from which post bylaws can be prepared. Failure to have local bylaws can result in a post's inspection not being accepted as satisfactory. Also, as a reminder, when a post inspection is forwarded to the Department for review by the State Inspector there must be attached a complete copy of the latest IRS 990 or an acceptance email for those filing the 990 postcard form; a copy of the latest Trustee Report of Audit properly completed and signed by the three trustees that are listed on the Post Election Report and a copy of the post bond.

The review process should be in full swing for the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teacher Programs. That being said, now is the time to start preparing nominations for the Civil Servant Awards Program. Nominations can be made in the following categories:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (E.O.D.T.) Award

National Council Member continued on page 9



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK VFW

69 SAND CREEK RD

ALBANY, NY 12205

518-463-7427

518-454-8904 (fax)

www.vfwny.com

www.facebook.com/VFWNewYork

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Nominations should be forwarded to the Department Safety Chairman Marcello Rotunda, 2501 Busti Stillwater Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701 or e-mail mjr19542003@yahoo.com.

As many of you may know, a number of changes have been made regarding Buddy Poppy ordering which became effective August 1, 2023. National has provided the following guidance regarding Poppy orders:

- 1) Orders must be sent to the Departments where orders will be placed through the On-Line Membership System (OMS).
- 2) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through the Department and Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tabs **do count** towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with the Department, please contact Amanda at Department Headquarters who will assist you in determining the status of your order. Do not call National to inquire.
- 6) If you do not report a missing order within 90 days of processing, the order will **NOT** be replaced free of charge, and you will have to resubmit your order.

There has not been a National Council of Administration Meeting (C of A) since last reporting to you following my visit to National in August; however, National has been very busy. National is moving forward with its Department Inspection initiative for the 2023-24 term and have plans to complete ten inspections this year. I just returned from inspecting the Department of Indiana myself and the program is well underway.

Administrative Operations at National is engaged in 10 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 12 administrative actions and 10 membership eligibility challenges. There are 50 Posts currently under suspension and at the present time there are 5,6664 chartered posts.

Our next National C of A will be in early March when I head out to Kansas City for the Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen Awards during the Legislative Conference scheduled for 3-7 March 2023.

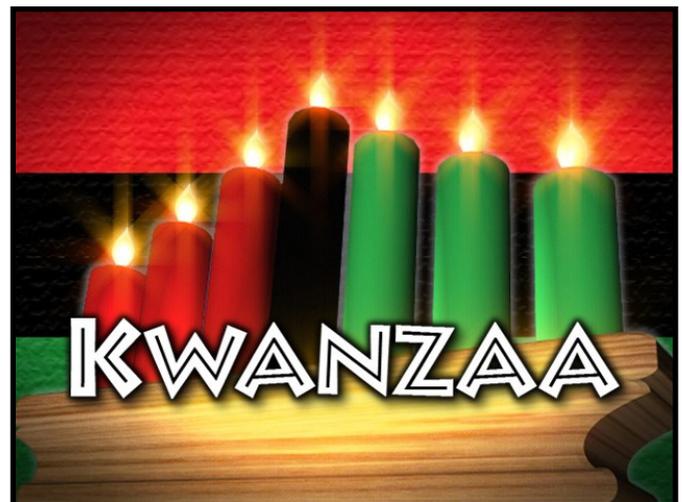
Until my next report, I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year!

Yours in Comradeship,

Gene Ratigliano

Gene Ratigliano

National Council Member



New National Awards

This year the VFW has 3 new awards - Employer of the Year; Member of the Year and JROTC Cadet of the Year. These awards are state wide awards and do not go through the District Commanders. Posts can send the applications directly to the State Adjutant, Robert Mitchell either by email at adjutantdny@vfwny.com or by mailing the application to Department of New York VFW, 69 Sand Creek Rd, Albany, NY 12205.

If you know someone who is a candidate for any of these awards please nominate them. Deadline for nominations is March 1, 2024. Please see the next six pages, pages 10 through 15, for the information on each award and it's requirements along with the application for the award.

VFW Employer of the Year Award Nomination Form



The Purpose of Award: To confer recognition on one employer for outstanding records in the hiring and retention of veterans.

Deadline: The deadline for submission of nominations of employers of veterans is **March 1, 2024 to Department Headquarters**. Nominations received after that date will not be eligible for consideration for the national award.

Procedure: Nominations from Departments must be sent to National headquarters via this form only. Nominations that arrive without supporting information will not be eligible for the national awards

- Only those nominations that include adequate documentation on the nominee's employment practices concerning veterans will be considered for the National VFW Employer of the Year Awards. The nominator should provide a copy of the company's written policy on employment of veterans if available, a description of how the employer supports veterans' activities in the community, and any other reasons why the nominee should be selected to be the Employer of the year Award winner. Governmental agencies are not eligible for an award.

Award: The National Winner will receive a plaque to be presented by the National Commander at the Annual National convention and will receive a trip to travel to the convention city to accept the award.

Judging Criteria:

1. Identify and describe the employer's programs and or benefits designed to recruit veterans, including innovative business practices used to increase veteran recruitment (10 points)
2. Describe the employer's policies that give a preference to hire veterans, referring veterans, or any other veteran policy (VA veteran sick leave hours). Provide the positive and significant impacts these policies have on the employer's business results. (10 Points)
3. Describe the employer's policies or initiatives that improve the current and future veteran employer's career opportunities. (10 points)
4. Provide the number of veterans employed, the total number of employees, and the percentage of veterans employed during a set time period: 1 January 2023 to December 31st, 2024. (20 points)
5. Describe collaborative efforts with business organizations, educational partners, and community organizations that improve veteran employment opportunities. (10 points)
6. Explain why veterans would choose this employer over other employers. (10 points)
7. Provide documented endorsements, newspaper articles, awards, or letters of support highlighting the nominee's contributions to veteran friendly employment or retention. (10 points)
8. Provide the number of veterans employed with the employer for over one year. (10 points)
9. Provide the number of veterans employed with the employer for five years. (10 points)

VFW Employer of the Year Award Nomination Form



Nominator: _____ Post # _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Employer's Business Name: _____

Address Line 1: _____

Address Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Employer Point of Contact: _____

POC Phone Number: _____

POC Email: _____

Why do you feel this employer deserves this award (use additional sheets if necessary)?

Supporting Documentation (newspaper articles, pictures etc.) attached? Yes: ____ No: ____

Application must be submitted no later than **March 1, 2024** to: Department of New York VFW,
 Attn: State Adjutant; 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 or by email to the State Adjutant at
Adjutantdny@vfwny.com.



VFW JROTC

Cadet of the Year

Award Nomination Form



VFW award for special recognition of outstanding achievement and exceptional leadership for Junior ROTC Cadets. This award seeks to recognize a remarkable cadet who will become a leader in their community and serve their country.

Criteria for the award:

Possession of individual characteristics contributing to leadership including:

- A. Positive attitude toward the JROTC program
 - B. Outstanding military bearing and conduct both in and out of uniform
 - C. Personal attributes (self-confidence, initiative, flexibility, judgement).
 - D. Patriotism (commander or member of color guard, drill team with or without arms, flag protocol instruction team, and actively promote Americanism). Shows devotion to school, community, America. An individual who practices service through repeated acts of support.
 - E. Courtesy (dependability, punctuality, human relations, respect, cooperation).
 - F. Growth potential (capable of assuming high leadership responsibilities in JROTC Unit with additional training and experience).
 - G. Demonstrated leadership potential, military bearing, and scholastic achievement.
- Attainment of a grade of "B" in JROTC with an overall average of "C" in all subjects for the previous semester. Must not have a failing grade in any subject for that period of time.
 - Must be active in at least one other student co-curricular activity or club: i.e. music, athletics, student government, junior achievement, etc.
 - Must not have been a previous recipient of the award.

Eligibility: Any 10th, 11th, or 12th grade student that is currently enrolled as a JROTC Cadet actively engaged in the JROTC program, and one who meets the criteria for the award.

Procedure: Award Nomination Form Submitted to Department of New York VFW, Attn: State Adjutant, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 or email to Adjutantdny@vfwny.com by **March 1, 2024**. Entries sent to the VFW National Headquarters directly will be returned.

Award: National VFW JROTC cadet of the year will receive a trip the National VFW convention to accept the award. Recipient will receive airfare and lodging for two nights.





VFW JROTC Cadet of the Year



Cadet's Rank and Name: _____

Name of School or JROTC Program : _____

Grade: _____ Number of Years in JROTC _____

Instructor's Rank and Name: _____

Address: Street/PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Reasons for nominating this cadet: _____

Supporting Materials attached? Yes: _____ No: _____

Signature of Nominator: _____

Submit Award Nomination Form to Department of New York VFW, Attn: State Adjutant, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 or email to Adjutantdny@vfwny.com by **March 1, 2024**.

VFW Member of the Year Award Nomination Form



Purpose: The award is to recognize a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has exemplified in their actions and accomplishments, the true spirit of our Organization in serving the needs of their Post and Community, and who has dedicated themselves in a professional manner in addressing the Pillars of our Organization.

Eligibility: This award is intended to recognize a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has been a member a minimum of one full membership year. **Award candidates holding any of the following elected or appointed offices during the award year, are not eligible (Specifically -Commander, QM, Adjutant, Service Officer or Chaplain).** In addition, Past State Commanders and Past National Council members are ineligible from nomination.

Type of Recognition: If you win at the National level, the National award will consist of: a National Cap with title of Member of the Year & citation presented at National Convention by the Commander-in-Chief. The award winner will additionally receive full room and travel for the duration of the National Convention for the award presentation. Each department winner will receive a citation from the Commander In Chief.

Criteria: This award recognizes exceptional performance as a member of The VFW. Examples of service that would be considered in judging the nominee include the following:

- Nominee presents themselves in a professional and helpful manner within the Organization and within the Community.
- Nominee shows an active interest in their Department by attending meetings and showing a willingness to consider leadership roles.
- Nominee participates in activities and events within the Department to help raise awareness of the Organization in the Community.
- Nominee has shown a willingness to work together with other VFW, Auxiliary, and Riders Members in a spirit of cooperation to accomplish the same goals.
- Nominee volunteers for and participates in activities and events that address the needs of target groups and individuals in the Community.
- Nominee has demonstrated actions which contribute to improving the quality of life for those we are intended to serve, whether they are children or adults, and whether they are homeless, hospitalized, handicapped, in need of a job or education.
- Nominee encourages members of the Community to support VFW programs and continually encourages others to become members.
- Nominee must have been submitted for #StillServing campaign recognition at <https://todaysvfw.org/>

Process: Any VFW member in good standing may be nominated as a Member of the Year candidate using the Member of the Year Nomination Form. **Award candidates holding any of the following elected or appointed offices during the award year, are not eligible (Specifically -Commander, QM, Adjutant, Service Officer or Chaplain).** In addition, Past State Commanders and Past National Council members are ineligible from nomination.

Please forward nominations to Department of New York VFW Headquarters, Attn: State Adjutant, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 or by email: Adjutantdny@vfwny.com by **March 1, 2024.**

VFW Member of the Year



Name of Nominee: _____

Membership #: _____ Post #: _____ District: _____

Address: Street/PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Nominator: _____

Nominator Phone: _____ Nominator Email: _____

Supporting Documentation (Newspaper articles, pictures, etc.) attached ? : Yes _____ No _____

Why did you nominate this person? (Use additional sheets if necessary) :

Application must be submitted no later than **March 1, 2024** to: Department of New York VFW,
 Attn: State Adjutant; 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 or by email to the State Adjutant at
Adjutantdny@vfwny.com.



**Ben Thompson,
PSC
JUDGE ADVOCATE**



**Ronald Sorrentino
SERVICE OFFICER
JOURNAL AD CHAIR**



Comrades, Sisters, and Brothers,

On behalf of the Officers and Members of Proctor-Hopson Post #1896, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US and its Auxiliary, I would like to thank you for your generous donations to the Proctor-Hopson Post #1896 VFW Military Family Support Center's *Holiday Cheer/Trees for Troops* program.



The *Holiday Cheer/ Trees for Troops* program is a joint venture between the Veterans of Foreign Wars, DHL Express, Dee's Nursery and The American Citizens for Soldiers in Service. It is our goal to try to bring a little taste of home to our troops currently serving in the Middle East during the holiday season. This year, being our 20th Anniversary of the program, was a special year for us and your support enabled us to again ship over 500 live Christmas trees with lights and ornaments and Menorahs to our troops along with cards and gifts.

Again thank you for your support and for showing our nations servicemen and women, along with their families, **you care.**

Yours truly,
Ben Thompson,
Past State Commander
Chairman
Post #1896 Military Assistance Program

Comrades,



Once again, I am writing to all my comrades and Auxiliaries, about our Servicers Officers Raffle and Journal. We all know the importance of this program, as I have said many times before, and will repeat it on and on, our Servicers Officer does so much for all our veterans. It is a tireless and never-ending job, they not only prepare the paperwork, file the paperwork and as we know they follow through to make sure our veterans receive their benefits. As you all know last year was a great success, we are behind this year in the raffle donation, I am not worried, because I know our comrades and Auxiliaries will rally at the last minute to support this great program. I put on my Santa suit and hat and ask you to please donate to the raffle, we always have time to take in donations.

I know I sent this information out before but is always good to jog your memory and to keep the information fresh, This is only one of the program our Servicers Officers are working on. Please read this and say this is why I want to donate to our service officers

"We all know the good work that our Servicers Officers perform for our veterans; one of the programs is the PACT Act. The Pact Act Veterans and their survivors have filed more than one million claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the

Service Officer Chair continued on page 18



William Moore

VOD CHAIR



2023-2024 Voice of Democracy Competition

Let me begin by thanking everyone who encouraged, collaborated, and successfully worked with teachers, schools and the students in this year's Voice of Democracy program. It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with you. Your hard work paid off with increased participation and outstanding essays sent for judging. Thank you to our district commanders and ladies' auxiliaries that helped their posts enormously to promote and sponsor the students. It is a huge task and great teamwork.

The theme selected this year the is: "WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ATTRIBUTES OF OUR DEMOCRACY". Competition is open to grades 9-12 with an application, attached printed version of the essay, flash drive with audio essay. Points are awarded for originality, content development, and voice quality.

This year's submissions to National will be, through a student app, checked for generated AI essays. AI is being used increasingly by schools. AI plagiarism - 100% AI generated essays will be eliminated, going to next in ranking by the judges.

To the District VOD chairmen, you need to send a photo of the student along with their application, essay, and flash drive. You must send me the following completed forms: Voice of Democracy Report Form and the Voice of Democracy summary report indicating the number of participants, number of winners, scholarships awarded, additional expenses from the various posts that participated in the district you represent.

Please be aware that the submitting post must fill in their appropriate sections such as numbers participating, number of winners, scholarships awarded and additional expenses recorded. Please see that the information submitted by the students are correct and completed and signed. Districts MUST submit their numbers to me. They can be mailed to me at 10 Rokeby Rd, Red Hook, NY 12571.

On a district level, many were submitted without being judged on the local level. There was an overall increase in the number of students participating. Worked with many students to locate posts that could sponsor their entry. It was a pleasure to work with various post commanders to make it successful. The students/parents were most appreciative to have this opportunity. The quality of the

submitted essays was outstanding making for a lively conversation in judging in my District 2 competition.

Forms need to be to me by Dec. 20th deadline with submissions. NYS State competition is Dec. 30, 2023, in Red Hook, NY. at 1pm. All entries following the competition will be sent to Bob Mitchell, State Adjutant, for preparation for the VFW National Championship.

We look forward to the NYS competition on December 30, 2023. Judging will be held at the Red Hook VFW Post #7765, 30 Elizabeth Street, Red Hook, NY at 1PM.

William C. Moore, PDC
NYS Voice of Democracy
Chairman



James Brooks

State Inspector



Comrades

As per the information on all inspections being completed by 12/31/2023 that was given at the June 2023 Dept Convention and at the 3 Dept OTI's held a couple months ago, I am worried we aren't going to complete our State Commanders directive. I need all District Commanders to push your inspection teams to get the Post Inspections completed.

We have already allowed the Posts without Post bylaws to have them completed and signed prior to inspection next year.

The following are important to having your inspections accepted: trustee report of audit must be filled out correctly. The total funds must match the reconciliation of cash and investments, thus the reconciliation of cash and investment section must be filled in. All 3 trustee signatures must be filled in by the 3 elected trustees, not printed in by the Post Commander or Quartermaster. Copy of the Post Bond must be attached, and the Bond MUST be greater than the total funds available on the trustee report and has to be a SURETY Bond. Bonds are available through the Department and the form and rates can be found at <https://vfwny.com/uploads/documents/2023-2024/23-24OfficerBond.pdf>. Posts can NOT self-inspect and then submit the inspection report to the

State Inspector continued on page 20



Pat Iulucci

POW/MIA CHAIR



Comrades,

As of December 1, 2023, there are still more than 81,000 American service members whose remains have not been recovered: WW II – 72,135; Korea – 7,485; Vietnam – 1,578; Cold War – 126; the Gulf War -5; El Dorado Canyon – 1. As long as there is one service member still unaccounted for the mission of DPPA will be to continue to search and recover the remains of our missing and be returned home for a proper military burial. Every day of the year we must continue to promote and bring awareness to the importance of the POW/MIA issues in our communities and with our Legislators by setting up the Missing Man Table, not only at our post but with the permission of our local businesses to set one up at their establishment.

DPAA recently accounted for: Sgt. Richard Hammond, New Hampshire, WWII, Army, 601 Tank Destroyer, date accounted for - September 5, 2023; 2nd Lt. Kenyan Brindley, Arkansas, WWII, Army, 703 Bombardment Squad, Germany, date accounted for – September 21, 2023; SSgt. Robert Ferris, New York, WWII, Army Air Corp, 401 Bombardment Squad, France, date accounted for – September 22, 2023; PHM2 Merle Hillman, California, Navy, Hawaii, date accounted for – October 20, 2023; Army Pfc. Clinton Smith Jr., WW II was accounted for November 9, 2023; Army Air Corp Pfc. Henry McConnell, WWII, accounted for – November 8, 2023; Army Cpl. William Herrington, Korean War accounted for November 9, 2023.

These remains were sent to the DPAA Laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska for examination and identification. I will keep you posted on burial information as it becomes available. You may also call the Army Casualty Office for inquiries at (800) 892-2490

You can always reach me on my cell (516) 668-7383 or by email pi4usamck@yahoo.com

Pat Iulucci

POW/MIA

Chairman

Service Officer Chair continued from page 16

PACT Act since the law was signed on Aug. 10, 2022. VA has processed more than 551,000 of these claims, granting 77.9% of them and awarding more than \$2.2 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and survivors. The Service Officer is the one supporting Veterans and their families to address military related toxic exposure."

So, this now brings me to the Raffle Tickets and Journal Ad

There is no better way to continue to show your support for our Service Officers than by taking out an Ad in the journal and buying raffle tickets.

The Ads are:

The full page is \$ 90.00. Half Page is \$ 65.00. Quarter Page is \$ 45.00



Now let's talk Raffle Tickets

We also want to remind you that the Raffle Tickets are included with this package.

Last year we had a great Raffle, I think we could do the same this year Lets show our Servicemen Officers how much we appreciate the work they do for all our Veterans. There are 2 sheets of tickets with 12 tickets on each sheet. The tickets are \$5.00 a piece or 6 for \$25.00 or 12 tickets \$50.00. You can always ask you more (HINT). The drawing will be held at the Spring Conference in Binghamton March 15-16, 2024.

thank you!



Santa says, don't forget to purchase the Service Office Journal Ad and Raffle tickets!

**REMEMBERING THE FALLEN,
HONORING THOSE THAT SERVED
WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
DISTRICT 2
NEW PALTZ VETERANS CEMETERY
DECEMBER 16, 2023**



State Inspector continued from page 17

Department (already has happened a couple times). Post 990's, a copy of the post card or the complete 990 must be submitted and be current. Contact me with any questions or problems.

Jim Brooks
Inspector
Dept of NY VFW
315-264-8970



Harold Patchen
COMMANDER
DISTRICT 3



Ron Sorrentino
COMMUNITY
SERVICE CHAIR



Comrades,

Now I will put on my other hat, The Community Service Chairperson

This is my first year as the community service chairperson, as of this report the Department of New York has the following totals:

Volunteer Hr.	20,899
Dollars Donated	\$ 359,245
Total	\$1,023,838

This is only for the first two quarters; we are moving in the right direction. I know we could do much better. On the reporting of community service, you must remember that the VFW year goes from 1 July - 30 June, **to have your reports count it must show that the activity happened within the 1 July - 30 June time frame.** Also, the description on the reports must have more than one word explanation, one word is not a description. The best way to ensure your reports are in the correct time frame is to do the report in the same month you did the activity.

So, with that said, let's continue getting in our community service reports.

Ronald Sorrentino
Community Service
Chair

Comrades,

I had the pleasure in November (11-13) to spend a couple of days with our Department Commander Kell, visiting a number of Posts within the 3rd District. We started out on Saturday evening 11/11 at Queensbury Post 6196 by attending a Veterans dinner followed by live music with the band Polsun. We were honored to meet a WWII veteran who is just a few months short of 100 years old and did not look his age. He had a few stories to tell. Commander Kell



and I bought raffle tickets, with Commander Kell hoping to win a USMC Teddy Bear and me a very delicious looking chocolate cream pie. Well, we both won. He and Post 6196 Commander

Tom Varmette arm wrestled over it the following evening after dinner at the Texas Roadhouse, where we were treated like royalty.

On Sunday 11/13 we visited Greenwich Post 7291, Post Commander Don Ward and members. While there they



showed us a recently finished monument (see the photo below). I believe that some bricks are still available for

purchase. You can call the post for more information. On Sunday 11/12 Commander Kell was able to visit the Baseball Halls of Fame.

District 3 Commander continued from page 20

District 3 is working hard to achieve Commander in Chief Duane Sarmiento's goal of 102%. At this writing our district needs **442 members to reach the 100% mark**, then on to the 102%. I have four personal membership challenges out to every post in District 3. I hope that all four challenges are met. As you can see from the photo below Post 4660 Glenville has taken me up on my challenge. One Post in the district has already exceeded 105% **but** needs their NEW MEMBER count to reach five. If any post in District 3 would like help with a membership drive, **just give me a call** and we'll get you the help you need. As a youngster I remember growing up in the VFW and hoping that some day I might become a member. I still remember the Loyalty Day Parades, held the first Sunday in May. The post would have a "clean up day" the Saturday prior unless it fell on April 30th starting with a big breakfast, put on by the post. The WWI members of the Ladies Auxiliary would make salads for the lunch. The girls would work with the Ladies Auxiliary (what it was called back then) inside the post cleaning and doing what needed to be done. The boys, we worked outside with the men. We were one big happy family. Every summer, usually in August, the post would hold a Family Picnic. In December there was always a well-attended Christmas party. Everyone looked forward to these events and others. As time went on many of my generation either went to college, enlisted or were drafted. I can't think of one those sons, mentioned above, who served in the military that hasn't joined the VFW, if eligible. The bottom line here is that I believe every VFW needs to become more "Family Friendly". If we do this, I'm sure that more younger veterans will join our ranks and quite possibly become active members. Let's all give it a try, it can't hurt.

Our district will hold two informational meetings in January 2024. The first on January 7th at Queensbury Post 6196 and the second on January 28th at Oneonta Post 1206. Our Gold Chevron Awards Dinner will be held on March 8-9, 2024 in Clifton Park at the Hilton Garden Inn.



For more information you can contact District 3 Jr. Vice Commander Mike Andreadakis, our chairman. All are welcome to attend this event.

In closing I'd like to wish everyone reading this article a Happy

Hannukah, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In Comradeship,

Harold Patchen
District 3 Commander



**Marcello
Rotunda
COMMANDER
DISTRICT 6**



Comrades,

Happy Holidays and New Year to all!

On November 11, 2023 I attended a Veteran's ceremony that was attended by 50 veterans from around the country.

My focus this year is on membership and trying to help the Department achieve the Commander In Chief's challenge for the Department. As of this point in the year my membership is at 87 % percent. It is my mission to get District 6 to at least 100% and hopefully more.

Yours In Comradeship,
Marcello J. Rotunda
6th District Commander





Don't forget to Like and Follow the
Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars



@VFWNEWYORK



Jeffery Molitor Commander District 11



Happy Holidays from District 11!

The Posts and members have been busy with Veterans Day, Beirut and Pearl Harbor memorials, Thanksgiving and getting ready for the busy Holiday Season.



Our mission to 'honor the dead by helping the living' has never been stronger. Our District has been distributing Poppies and holding recruitment tables throughout our Communities. We support the SAR (Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day) that went before Congress in



December. December is a busy month for our Posts with families getting ready to participate in the Holiday festivities.



All American Rocky Point Post (6249) opened up a museum that has artifacts from the Revolutionary War through Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

All American Post in West Hampton (5350) pulled off another successful Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day.

Our Riders support the monthly NOA Ceremony at Calverton Cemetery, including bringing home US Army Sergeant Bernard Sweeney jr who was killed in action during WW 2 and ride in December supporting various Toy Runs. Many of our Posts are supported through the work of ABATE here on Long Island. ABATE gave out more than \$55,000 to Charitable organizations and the VFW benefitted from their kindness and generosity.



Our Cooties Pup Tent 65 visited the LI Veterans home and delivered blankets and sundry items.



VFW Day of Service around the corner, We are looking forward to a continued, successful year.

To say that I am proud to be the District 11 Commander is truly an understatement.

Yours in Comradeship,

Jeffery T. Molitor
District 11 Commander 2022-2024



PICTURES FROM OUR POSTS





Celebrating the Season!

Standing: Gene Ratigliano, PSC ; Bob Mitchell, Madison Fletcher, Jody Treadway, Commander Dan Kell, Harold Patchen, Dan McMahon, Pete Pennelle, PSC Front row: Amanda Comstock, Destiny Ramos



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

VFW Membership Mail-In Application

Yes! I want to join the VFW as a member-at-large and continue serving my country, my community and my fellow man.

PLEASE ENTER YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Birthdate: _____ Social Security #: _____

SERVICE INFORMATION Army Marine Corps Navy Air Force Coast Guard Space Force

Eligibility (choose all that apply)

- WWII Afghanistan Combat Action Ribbon SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia
- Korean War Iraq Expeditionary Medal Imminent Danger/
- Vietnam Korean Service (7/1/49 to present) Occupation Medal Hostile Fire Pay
- Persian Gulf War Kosovo Inherent Resolve Other: _____

Dates of Service: _____ to _____ Service Location: _____

Name of Campaign Ribbon or Medal: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (please select one)

- ANNUAL (\$45.00)
 - Please bill me annually for my membership.
 - I would like to enroll in the Automatic Payment Plan.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (one-time)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (installment plan)

Automatic Payment Plan and Installment options require credit/debit card for processing. By signing this application you acknowledge and agree to the terms and conditions of the Automatic Payment Plan and Installment options, if selected.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE SCHEDULE

AGE as of Dec. 31st	ONE-TIME PAYMENT	LIFE MEMBERSHIP INSTALLMENT PLAN initial payment	11 payments of
THROUGH AGE 30	\$425.00	\$45.00	\$38.64
31-40	\$410.00	\$45.00	\$37.27
41-50	\$375.00	\$45.00	\$34.09
51-60	\$335.00	\$45.00	\$30.45
61-70	\$290.00	\$45.00	\$26.36
71-80	\$225.00	\$45.00	\$20.45
81 AND OVER	\$170.00	\$45.00	\$15.45

Automatic Payment Plan Terms and Conditions: You authorize the VFW to initiate electronic debit entries or affect a charge by any other commercially accepted practice to your account set forth above for the payment of dues reflected on this application. You understand such charges may be made within 2-3 business days of payment due date. For installment payments, charges will be made on or around the 1st or the 15th day of the month. This authorization will remain in full force until VFW has received notification from you of its termination or upon completion of the installment payments. Annual dues are subject to change. By completing this authorization, you acknowledge that you will only receive notice when the payment would differ by more than \$10.00 from the most recent payment. Contact VFW Member Services at 1.833.VFWYETS (1.833.838.8387) or write VFW Member Services, 406 W. 34th St., Suite 316, Kansas City, MO 64111 to inquire about or cancel a payment, or to report problems such as bank closures, lost or stolen account numbers, closed accounts, or unauthorized transactions. Cancellation requests must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time ten business days prior to the scheduled payment date. If you are unaware of the charge date for your account, please contact VFW. If a payment is returned by your financial institution (e.g., due to insufficient funds, incorrect account information, closed account, etc.) the VFW will contact you at the address we have on file, explain why the payment could not be processed, and provide alternate payment options. The privilege of making payments under this agreement may be revoked by VFW if any item is not paid upon presentation. You may have additional rights and responsibilities under the Electronic Funds Transfer Act.

The VFW life membership installment plan allows any VFW member/applicant to purchase a life membership by making an initial payment of \$45.00 and (11) monthly payments. The member will be issued an annual membership card at the time of enrollment. A permanent life membership card will be issued upon the completion of payments. The life membership fee is determined from the schedule using the applicant's age on December 31 of the year in which the application is submitted. Delinquencies of 31-120 days can be corrected through make up payment(s) or plan end date pushed forward. Member will be dropped from the installment plan after 120 days delinquent and all monthly payments made to date will be applied to future years annual dues.

PAYMENT INFORMATION Check/Money Order Mastercard VISA Discover AMEX

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____ Amount to be charged: \$ _____
(if using Life Membership installment plan, amount is \$45.00)

VERIFICATION & SIGNATURE

I attest that by forwarding this application that I have confirmed my eligibility for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I further give authority to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to verify my eligibility for membership.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Mail form to: Membership Department, VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111
Questions? Call (888) JOIN-VFW (888-564-6839) or email us at membership@vfw.org