



# Convention Highlights

Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021  
Business Session

## 2021-2022 National Officers Installed

At the close of today's business session, the VFW's newly elected national officers were installed. Before relinquishing the gavel to 2021-22 VFW Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic, immediate past VFW Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch II honored multiple individuals before having many honors bestowed on him by others.

Bob Wallace received the *VFW Distinguished Service Medal*, for his 23 years of dedicated service to the VFW as executive director of VFW's Washington Office and later as Adjutant General, retiring from that position in 2019. Wallace also served as VFW Commander-in-Chief in 1991-92.

B.J. Lawrence accepted the *VFW Distinguished Service Medal* for his more than 20 years of service to VFW, including his term in 2018-19 as VFW Commander-in-Chief.

The Department of Arizona received accolades for 53 and 54 consecutive years of growth.

Roesch expressed his appreciation for VFW's Sergeants-at-Arms. "Thank you for what you do for us," Roesch said. "You all do a superlative job and represent the organization well." Roesch called for a moment of silence for former VFW National Sergeant-at-Arms Bryan O'Brien, who passed away on May 15, 2021.

Past VFW national Chaplain Peter Hook presented Roesch with the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Humanitarian Award on behalf of the four chaplains who died Feb. 3, 1943, aboard the *USAT Dorchester*.

The 2020-21 Department commanders presented Roesch with multiple gifts including a custom fire pit. "I'm truly blessed by this group of individuals," Roesch said. "In the middle of the darkest times, they all raised their hands and said 'we will lead this organization.' They didn't falter and they didn't complain."

President and CEO of Twisted X Boots Prasad Reddy virtually thanked VFW for the opportunity to be title sponsor of the Voice of Democracy youth scholarship program. "It's an honor and privilege to be associated in a small way with VFW," Reddy said.

Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie Darin Combs presented a \$43,000 check to Roesch for a new snow plow at the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Mich. Combs said Cootie membership increased by 105 percent this year, the largest increase since the organization began keeping records.

Kelly McKeague, director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, appeared via a pre-taped video and provided an update on DPAA's efforts to recover remains of U.S. troops from WWII and the Korean and Vietnam wars. McKeague thanked VFW members for continuing to fly the POW/MIA flag.

**-The End-**