VFW members are #StillServing in communities around the world. They work to help others as they did while in uniform, all while exemplifying the best of the American spirit.
Matt Russell, left, Garrison Benz, center, and Kevin Keaveny prepare to take off on Sept. 25, 2020, from the Cortland Yacht Club along the Hudson River in Montrose, N.Y. The trio stopped at most towns and cities along the 315-mile stretch of the Hudson River last September to raise awareness for veteran suicides and homelessness. Photo by Carlo Albanese/ Take 13 Media Group
VFW Department of Rhode Island members and VFW Auxiliary Department President Deanna Siano, second from right, along with Student Veterans of America members, receive a briefing from Rhode Island historian Jim Ignasher on Aug. 2, 2020, before making the trek up Wolf Hill in Smithfield, R.I. Their destination was the site of an airplane crash on Aug. 5, 1943. Photo courtesy of Dora Vasquez-Hellner
VFW Continues to Touch Thousands of Lives

VFW and Auxiliary members have long been known as leaders in the community. When needs arise, there is no better group to get the job done. So it should come as no surprise that when Hurricane Ida made landfall last year, VFW Posts sprang to action. Posts served as emergency shelters and served free meals while others delivered critical supplies. Efforts stretched from Louisiana to New Jersey. Such endeavors are truly the VFW way.

Less than two years ago, VFW launched its #StillServing campaign. Using the hashtag #StillServing, veterans share their stories of continued service on social media. I’m proud to say that 1.7 million people have engaged in the #StillServing campaign. Additionally, more than 250 news articles have been written about the campaign’s significance. We encourage veterans everywhere to let us share your story of how you are #StillServing.

Through its Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition, VFW awarded $1.8 million in scholarships and awards in 2020-21. Another $1.1 was awarded to middle-school participants in the Patriot’s Pen writing competition. Furthermore, since 2014, VFW has awarded $9.2 million to 2,054 veterans and service members through VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” program.

VFW’s National Veterans Service (NVS) department has a nationwide network of service officers who continue to make a difference for veterans and their families. VFW has more than 1,900 VA-accredited VFW representatives across the country ready to fight for veterans’ benefits. We also staff service officers at 22 Pre-Discharge offices on military installations. Our service officers there offer VA benefits help to active-duty troops who are soon to be discharged.

For more than 100 years, NVS has been a beacon for veterans needing VA claims assistance. We do this free of charge, whereas others — referred to as “claims sharks” — may charge up to five times the amount of retroactive compensation a veteran receives. In 2021 alone, VFW recovered more than $10.2 billion for veterans. This is something of which we are truly proud.

We also help veterans and their families with direct financial assistance. VFW’s Unmet Needs program has distributed more than $12.2 million to almost 11,000 military and veterans’ families since 2004. The program provides up to $1,500 to veterans, service members and their families during times of financial hardship. It continues to touch so many lives every day.

This is but a mere glimpse into the efforts put forth by VFW’s outstanding workforce, not to mention our 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary volunteers around the world. We remain steadfast in our commitment to America’s veterans.
From left, VFW Post 1333 members Frank Hall, Claude Jones, Wilbur Martin and Post Commander Robert Jameson prepare to place U.S. flags on veteran gravesites at Monmouth Memorial Park in Tinton Falls, N.J., on May 25, 2020. They enlisted a local Boy Scout troop to help. Photo courtesy of The Coaster
VFW TAKES PRIDE IN ITS COMMITMENT TO VETERANS AND TODAY’S MILITARY. OUR PROGRAMS ENSURE NO ONE IS FORGOTTEN.

You’ve most likely heard of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The initials “VFW” are emblazoned on many of our 5,923 Posts worldwide. We are the nation’s oldest major veterans group, and we’ve been a part of the country’s social fabric for 122 years.

We are an organization of more than 1 million veterans who have served overseas in war zones or areas demanding arduous duty, from mountains and deserts to jungles and swamps.

What you might not know about is our continuing commitment to country and community. Our mission extends to troops serving overseas today and their families waiting back home.

VFW MEMBERS CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT SERVING THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

JUST AS WE PLEDGED DURING OUR TIME IN UNIFORM, WE AGAIN VOW TO SUSTAIN A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO THE NATION AND OUR COMMUNITIES.

A VENERABLE ORGANIZATION

VFW traces its origins to 1899 when 13 Spanish-American War veterans convened in Columbus, Ohio. By 1914, this group had merged with two other Spanish-American/Philippine War veterans organizations to become known collectively as the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

VFW’s supreme governing body is its National Convention. Each July, thousands of VFW members vote as registered delegates, determining policy by adopting resolutions and making important business decisions.

VFW’s National Headquarters is located in Kansas City, Mo., where the organization’s administration and programs-related efforts are coordinated. Issue-oriented activities are developed and implemented in VFW’s Washington Office in the nation’s capital.

Our Mission: To foster camaraderie among U.S. veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.

Our Vision: Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.

VFW-AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Joining VFW to accomplish its mission are the VFW Auxiliary, the VFW Foundation, the VFW National Home and the Military Order of the Cootie, which is composed of VFW members dedicated to assisting hospitalized veterans.

NONPROFIT STATUS

VFW is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code and contributions are deductible under section 170(c).

VFW BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN

1.5 MILLION: Number of VFW and Auxiliary members

5,923: Number of VFW Posts worldwide

Six major wars and nearly 40 military actions since 1945 represented by VFW members.
MORE THAN
$10.2 BILLION
TOTAL RECOVERED IN 2021

VFW National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Brian Coleman greets
a service member in October outside his office at Ft. Riley, Kan. In his
10th year working as a service officer, Coleman sees an average of 15-20
clients each week. Coleman, who served in the Army while earning his
VFW eligibility in Operation Desert Storm, said two of the most common
questions he receives from service members getting ready to discharge
from the military are “How do I know I have a service-connected injury
or illness?” and “How does this process work because I’m lost?” Coleman
is one of 24 representative at VFW’s Benefits Delivery at Discharge sites.
Photo by Lauren Goldman/VFW
Located on Capitol Hill, VFW’s National Veterans Service (NVS) has been serving veterans for more than a century. Advocating for veterans and their dependents to acquire their earned VA benefits is at the crux of NVS.

Annually, NVS budgets hundreds of thousands of dollars for VFW Departments (state-run offices) to assist veterans in filing claims for benefits. This service is offered free of charge to all veterans, regardless of VFW membership.

“I’m proud to say that in 2020, VFW recovered more than $10 billion in earned VA benefits on behalf of more than 550,000 veterans,” NVS Director Ryan Gallucci said. “They put their trust in the VFW to handle their benefit claims.”

VA-accredited VFW Service Officers tirelessly work to ensure veterans get what is due to them because that is the VFW way.

One such Service Officer is Wendy Griffin, Department of Utah Service Officer. From her office in Salt Lake City, Griffin spends her days advocating on behalf of veterans to ensure they receive their entitled benefits.

Griffin, who earned her VFW eligibility while serving in Korea as an Air Force linguist in 1985-86, has been a Service Officer since 2016.

WWII vets who don’t realize they were ever eligible for VA benefits are a favorite for Griffin. She said Vietnam vets who were told years ago they weren't eligible since they couldn't prove Agent Orange exposure mean a lot, as well.

Griffin, who was named the 2020 John A. Biedrzycki VFW Service Officer of the Year, also finds herself helping homeless veterans from all eras. She has been able to work with them and get them set up with housing, which means an address, which helps them find employment.

“It is life changing for some of these veterans,” she said. “It doesn’t have to be a huge award either. Sometimes, it’s just the acknowledgement that this really happened and now they don’t have to worry about life.”

Griffin recalled one homeless vet in particular. He had served during the 1960s and experienced a lot of racial tension and discrimination. He was homeless for 20 years before working with Griffin, who got him $250,000 in retroactive compensation.

“He was able to buy a home,” Griffin said. “He couldn’t believe it and asked if I was sure about that amount. After everything he had been through in his life, he was getting recognized for his service.”

Griffin said even smaller claims, like getting free hearing aids through the VA, is rewarding to her because she can hear the joy in their voices. One vet who was able to get his hearing aids told her he heard his grandchildren’s laughter for the first time.

“Things like this, it makes my day for about a month,” she said.

Big awards are nice, but sometimes it’s the little ones going day to day. Griffin, who files 60-80 claims a month and sees 30-40 veterans a week, said VFW’s NVS training is the best out there. She has spoken with reps from other organizations who get trained once a year, if that.

Griffin admits that while her job is greatly rewarding, it can be depressing at times, but adds she wouldn't want to do anything else.

“It’s changed my life,” she said. “If I’m not helping veterans, I’m not doing my job.”

The critical work done by VFW’s Service Officers is free, very much unlike the current trend of “claim sharks,” which are companies making big promises to vets while charging sometimes five times the amount of the veteran’s retroactive compensation, potentially costing him or her thousands of dollars.

“VFW Service Officers act as a veteran’s power of attorney when it comes to handling VA disability claims,” Gallucci said. “This is something unaccredited consulting groups are not legally allowed to do. The reason VFW can do that is because we carry accreditation with the VA.”

Gallucci added that veterans can expect to receive full claims assistance service when working with a VFW Service Officer.

“It’s our job to help navigate the system for veterans,” Gallucci said. “The VA claims process can be daunting and that is why we are here.”

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

HOW SERVICE OFFICERS HELP:

• Providing a lifetime of advocacy from the time a veteran files an initial claim, to helping survivors understand their benefits.

• Explaining benefits and helping vets navigate the often bureaucratic maze of procedures and paperwork.

• Guiding and supporting vets through months or even years of claims processing.

• Helping vets prepare necessary documents and evidence, monitoring cases and informing claimants of recent developments.

• Assisting veterans who can’t personally get to VA regional offices.
UNITING TO COMBAT HUNGER

“Why see homelessness and need on a daily basis.”

Since the VFW teamed up with Humana and Feeding America to establish the Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) initiative in 2018, the campaign remains a staple in fighting hunger and food insecurity in America.

Responsible for raising the equivalent of more than 1.2 million meals between 2018 and August 2021, the campaign now looks to sharpen its focus to address food insecurity among military families and veterans.

“Our goal this year was to provide 1 million meals for those experiencing food insecurity, especially geared toward the military community,” said VFW Foundation Manager Richard Freiburg-Case. “To facilitate this goal, we established a UTCH grant where for every dollar raised by a VFW Post/Auxiliary, the VFW Foundation would provide a one-half match.”

Beginning on Oct. 1, 2021, however, the VFW Foundation started rewarding the efforts of VFW Posts and Auxiliaries supporting UTCH by adding more incentives to the current Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant guidelines. The revision to the Grant now states that for every dollar raised by a VFW Post/Auxiliary in support of the UTCH campaign, the VFW Foundation will match the full amount raised by said VFW Post/Auxiliary. According to the Foundation, a minimum of $500 must be raised to qualify for the unrestricted matching grant, with a hard-cap of $5,000 per Post/Auxiliary.

“We have also added a component that considers volunteer hours,” added Jason Couch, the VFW Foundation’s Grants and External Relations Coordinator. “For every hour that VFW Post/Auxiliary members volunteer to address food insecurity in their community, the Foundation will provide a dollar match in the form of an unrestricted grant.”

A minimum of 500 hours must be documented to qualify for the volunteerism grant.

Among the Posts already carrying out the campaign at the grassroots level, VFW Post 1 members in Denver began on Aug. 6 during its “First Friday Art Walk,” joining volunteers from its Auxiliary and Humana to raise more than $600 in one night.

“Being able to help a focused campaign is a great way to make sure funds we raise go further,” said VFW Post 1 Quartermaster Jesse Eastburn. “We see homelessness and need on a daily basis, being in downtown Denver. Even though our Post is currently closed for renovations, we have adapted and utilized technology to still help veterans.”

In continuing to help VFW’s UTCH campaign, Eastburn added that Post 1 has made contact and created partnerships with local organizations.

“We’ve been able to make contact with local food pantries directly helped by Feeding America to point comrades who need help to their doors,” Eastburn said. “We like partnering with local nonprofits around us because we all have the same goal, which is to help our veteran community and their families.”

Grateful for VFW Foundation’s UTCH Grant program, VFW Post 7863 in Dubois, Pa., about 198 miles east of Pittsburgh, also began its grassroots campaign to help its local veterans suffering from food insecurity this year, helping raise more than $4,500 towards the fund.

“We really appreciate the VFW UTCH grant program,” Kim Rockwell of Post 7863 said. “It’s really helped us as I imagine it’s helped other local Posts/Auxiliaries with the mission to leave no veteran behind with food and nutritional health.”
Lalena Magnetta, a life member of VFW Post 2245 in Grayslake, Ill., has made it her life’s work to help others. Magnetta said that her service to and advocacy for others has only just begun.

Magnetta, who served as a Navy aviation electronics technician, earned her VFW eligibility during a deployment to the Persian Gulf in 2006-07 aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69). Before leaving the Navy in 2012, Magnetta served at Naval Station Great Lakes in northeast Illinois as a recruit division commander, a drill instructor for Navy recruits.

Magnetta said that even though she advanced to petty officer 1st class during her almost 12-year Navy career, she wanted to achieve more in her civilian life.

“It was my time to start a new chapter with my family and education,” Magnetta said.

After her honorable discharge in 2012, Magnetta went on to earn two master’s degrees. She has a business administration (MBA) degree from California’s University of Redlands and a global supply chain management degree from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

But before her military service, Magnetta grew up in Las Vegas and had a troubled childhood. Magnetta, as a minor, decided to leave home due to mistreatment caused by her parents’ drug use. She traveled to New Mexico and Colorado to find a way to support herself. She recalled having to sleep in a sleeping bag in the desert for a period.

“I remember at one point when I was 16 years old, and I ended up in Durango, Colo., where I wasn’t even old enough to be in a homeless shelter,” Magnetta said. “I was living in a tent behind the shelter because I wasn’t officially allowed to be there. I had to have people bring me food while I stayed outside.”

Magnetta eventually ended up in Denver working odd jobs and living in temporary housing. This is when she said she “had enough” of the lifestyle.

“I called my grandma and asked her if I could live with her,” Magnetta said. “I wanted to do right by her and told her that I wanted to get my life together by joining the military. I just needed a way out of my situation. I knew I was capable of more.”

Magnetta said she wants to use the “challenges and obstacles” she has overcome in her life as an example for others.

“We all make mistakes, and everything happens for a reason,” Magnetta said. “I want to use my experiences as a way to guide others who are struggling.”

Magnetta said it’s “heartbreaking” that women who served in the military and are now homeless.

“Especially those with children,” Magnetta said. “There are so many reasons for their situation, such as sexual trauma they had during their military service or other factors that play a role in causing post-traumatic stress.”

Magnetta also cited lack of support from family and ineligibility for or lack of knowledge of VA benefits for the women veterans’ homeless population.

“Now my passion for this has evolved into helping homeless veterans and nonveterans — men or women,” Magnetta said. “I just want to help everybody.”

Magnetta now resides in Grayslake, about 40 miles north of downtown Chicago. She joined VFW during her time at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes. Magnetta said joining VFW has been a great way to serve her community.

“When we all eventually leave the military, we have a place at VFW where we can affiliate ourselves with other veterans,” Magnetta said. “In other words, it’s where veterans can find their tribe. That’s why I love being a part of VFW. The VFW contains a wealth of knowledge. It can be that place we go to get help and find out where we can help others.”

Magnetta said that now more than ever, women need to join and be active in VFW.

“The highlight needs to be on women right now,” Magnetta said. “There still is a lot of work to be done.”

As an example, Magnetta noted that many people have assumed she was the wife of a veteran, rather than a veteran herself.

“The statistics are staggering when it comes to women veterans,” Magnetta said. “Many don’t use the VA health care system because they don’t feel valued. Now is the time we need to make our voice heard, and one of those ways is joining the VFW.”
Then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch II testifies during a virtual joint hearing of the House and Senate VA committees on March 18, 2021, from the VFW Washington Office in Washington, D.C. Roesch spoke to lawmakers on behalf of the 1.3 million VFW members during his testimony.

Photo by Robert Couture/VFW
For more than a century, VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans’ legislation signed into law.

VFW advocates daily on Capitol Hill to improve care and benefits for the nation’s service members, veterans, and their families. Our strength and influence are backed by the passion of VFW and its Auxiliary’s more than 1.5 million members.

The VFW’s National Legislative Service (NLS) monitors all legislation affecting active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. They regularly testify at congressional committee hearings and interact directly with Congress and the Administration to accomplish VFW’s annual priority goals and safeguard against bad proposals that would erode or eliminate earned benefits.

At the grassroots level, the VFW Action Corps enables more than 300,000 VFW members and patriotic supporters to stay informed on issues facing the veteran and military communities and stand ready to email, write, call or visit their nation’s lawmakers to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

Each year since 1949, Congress has provided an opportunity for the organization’s leaders and activists to speak with policymakers of their respective states. Seizing the opportunity, VFW has recently worked to include more diseases to the VA’s Agent Orange conditions list. Studies have linked Agent Orange exposure to bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson-like symptoms. VFW’s advocacy on the issue has led VA to add these conditions, which has given more veterans access to earned benefits.

One of VFW’s focuses last year was advocating the passage of the Comprehensive and Overdue Support for Troops of War Recognition Act of 2021. If signed into law, the COST of War Act, which VFW dubbed the “most significant” veterans’ legislation ever, would require VA to provide benefits to veterans suffering from several conditions due to exposure to burn pits and other toxins. The law also would include coverage for veterans of all generations, including veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, as well as the Global War on Terrorism.

Another key part of VFW’s legislative efforts is its VFW-Student Veterans of America (SVA) Legislative Fellowship program. VFW collaborates with SVA to provide student veterans a semester-long academic experience that involves research, action, reporting, and advocating for veterans’ policies. One of those students was Brandon Angel.

Angel enlisted in the Army in 2013 and was discharged in 2017. His VFW eligibility came from his service in South Korea as an infantryman as part of the Army’s 2nd Infantry Division.

After his enlistment, Angel started attending Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. In 2020, he earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and government. Angel currently is working on obtaining a master’s degree in public policy from Liberty University.

For his fellowship proposal, Angel, a member of VFW Post 896 in Martinsburg, W. Va., introduced a plan that would help veterans transitioning out of their military service. Angel said he has worked with several lawmakers in Congress to create a way to help transitioning service members.

“Currently, the military doesn’t provide any proof of rental history while service members live on a military installation,” Angel said. “Landlords and rental companies require a rental history, but a veteran may have nothing to show for it, even if they have the job or income required to pay for the rental property.”

Angel said he knows veterans who lived in a barracks for years and have had to get co-signers to rent a home.

“They were not able to get a rental property simply because they didn’t have any proof of rental history,” Angel said. “My proposal would require that service members have their time living on a base documented and given to a transitioning service member along with their DD-214. That piece of paper would show a proof of rental history.”

Angel said his proposal could help a new generation of veterans from becoming homeless.

“Everyone in Congress that I’ve talked to about this has been very supportive,” Angel said. “They agree that a lack of proof of rental history shouldn’t hold back a veteran from obtaining housing.”

Angel said he enjoyed his time as a VFW-SVA fellow. He added that he is proud to be a VFW member.

“I like that the VFW is always helping out veterans and their communities,” Angel said.
Two Iraq War veterans and spouses, Carlos and Jennifer Gonzalez, received much-needed assistance in paying their electric bill as well as $500 in gift cards to Walmart through VFW’s Unmet Needs program after they were honorably discharged from the Army.

“Getting help … helped us get back on track,” Jennifer said.

Both Carlos and Jennifer served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006. Jennifer was with the 80th Infantry Division, while Carlos served with the 94th Infantry Division.

Jennifer said she was honorably discharged in November 2011 with injuries to her back and was diagnosed with PTSD. Later, she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and Lupus.

“It just affected me where I felt like, at first, it took my life away where I wasn’t able to function or work,” Jennifer said of her diagnoses.

She added that Carlos was honorably discharged in March 2012 due to injuries to his shoulder, knee and hand. Furthermore, he has tinnitus, PTSD and some skin issues.

Jennifer said after departing the military, she and Carlos began working. Jennifer became a licensed practical nurse (LPN) with the VA.

Carlos got a job as a VA police officer, but continued to work other jobs for some time before deciding that his physical and mental health were too greatly impaired for work.

As time went on, Jennifer noticed her PTSD grew worse and was taking a toll on her ability to do her job. In 2013, she left her job as an LPN and sought professional help for her injuries.

Carlos’s physical injuries and PTSD also took a toll on him, which eventually led to his quitting his VA job in order to maintain his health.

“We decided that it was best for both of us, both physically and mentally, for him to be home,” Jennifer said.

Jennifer noted that COVID-19 affected their situation prior to Carlos staying at home full-time. Due to her autoimmune disorders, Jennifer had to be tested frequently for the coronavirus, which forced Carlos to quarantine during those times. She said his employer was not willing to work with Carlos’ schedule so that the two could make their health appointments.

Now that the couple is able to stay home, Jennifer said they can properly take care of themselves. She noted that Carlos is now able to undergo medical procedures that probably should have been done a long time ago, but was not able to because he was working.

Carlos is a VFW member-at-large, and the couple heard about the Unmet Needs program through VFW magazine, which they receive each month. Jennifer said that the couple also heard about the program through the Sempre Fi Foundation.

Jennifer said the Unmet Needs application process was simple to do. She noted that she had some slight communication issues after she put in her application, but they were quickly resolved once she called.

“This program can really help a veteran in need, just as it did us,” Jennifer said about the Unmet Needs program.

To learn more about VFW’s Unmet Needs program, visit www.vfw.org/assistance/unmetneeds.
VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" has provided Navy veteran LaShonda Hill the opportunity to continue her post-graduate education after her military service.

Sponsored by the hair care franchise Sport Clips, the Help a Hero Scholarship is now in its seventh year. More than $1.2 million in scholarships was awarded in 2021, and individual recipients received up to $5,000 through the scholarship program.

Hill, a Georgia native, was in the Navy for almost 12 years and served aboard the USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70), the USS Pinckney (DDG-91) and the USS Higgins (DDG-76). She now is a Ph.D. candidate at Northcentral University in La Jolla, Calif.

Hill, who now resides in the San Diego area, is studying marriage and family therapy, with an emphasis on military families. She said that she believes her almost 12 years of military service and experience being on deployments gives her the critical insight needed to help military members and their families.

"Being in the military is a culture of its own," Hill said. "There aren't a whole lot of practitioners who can relate to us. I saw it while I was in the military, and it will give me the opportunity to mentor people who were like me when I was in their shoes."

Hill, a former gunner's mate 2nd class, said she can work toward her educational goals with the help of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."

"I'm no longer eligible for financial aid," Hill said. "I have to pay out of my own pocket and through scholarships. The [Help a Hero Scholarship] has helped me be able to afford my bills and daycare. It would be very difficult for me to receive my degree without the help."

Hill said that the Help A Hero Scholarship was "very easy" to apply for compared to other scholarships. She added that she is thankful for receiving VFW's assistance during her time in school.

"I have to pay for before- and after-school care, so any money I can save to pay for that has helped me a lot," Hill said. "With the help of the scholarship, I am able to pay for tuition."

As VFW's official haircutter, Sport Clips began working with VFW in 2005 to raise funds for a former program called Operation Uplink. In 2013, Sport Clips became the primary supporter of VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."

HELP A HERO BY THE NUMBERS  Nearly $9.2 million: Amount of scholarships awarded to 2,050 veterans and service members through VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program since January 2014.
After returning from World War II in the spring of 1945, John Kenny made it his mission to honor the memory of those who never came back.

The former infantry sergeant and Purple Heart recipient, who served with the Army’s 32nd Infantry Division in the Pacific, spent the next 76 years finding ways to help his fellow veterans as a result.

From operating a feed-the-homeless program for five years with his late wife to serving as the legislative chairman of the VFW Department of Washington for eight years, Kenny delved whole-heartedly into veterans affairs.

Over the past 16 years, however, the focus of his life’s work remains VFW Post 2995’s Troop Support Program in Redmond, Wash., about 15 miles east of Seattle.

Kenny, at 95 years old, vividly remembers serving as an infantryman in the Pacific, dealing with disease, a lack of showers and the unnerving anxiety of not knowing whether he would return home.

With his personal experiences of war serving as the ethos, he created his Post’s program to help boost morale by shipping care packages twice a month to troops on the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“You get a special feeling when the postman picks up those boxes and you know the next stop is Afghanistan.”

Since its creation in 2005, Post 2995’s Troop Support Program has been responsible for sending more than 23,000 care packages consisting of 35 items each to soldiers in the Middle East. The packages, prepared through a network of more than 50 volunteers in Redmond and Kirkland, Wash., contain assorted toiletries, snacks and “thank you” letters from Kenny and children from the local schools.

“Many of our volunteers come from the local high schools,” said Sharon Phillips, the program’s volunteer coordinator and wife of P.G. Phillips, a Post 2995 life member and Vietnam veteran. “They need community service, so they’ll come and help us pack boxes, while elementary kids write letters for the soldiers. It isn’t just 50 people doing this. It’s the whole community supporting our troops.”

Each month, volunteers gather at Post 2995 to prepare and send between 100 and 150 comfort boxes to troops overseas (25 boxes a month since COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings began in March 2020). But they’re only part of the equation.

“We’ve been fortunate to have several community partners and businesses who have offered to help in some way over the years,” Phillips said. “They’ve all contacted us, hearing about it through a volunteer. Most of them want to be supportive. It makes them feel good to show their support for the troops.”

Between 2005 and 2011, the program shipped 10,000 care packages with approximately $500,000 worth of merchandise. The effort included $105,000 in donated funds for postage, according to the Redmond Reporter, a weekly newspaper. Although no records have been kept over the last 10 years, those numbers have approximately doubled as a result of the program’s efforts, which has produced more than 13,000 care packages since 2011.
VFW’s newest communication platform, #StillServing: The VFW Podcast highlights critical issues, challenges and legislation affecting veterans, service members and military families worldwide.

#StillServing: The VFW Podcast is hosted by VFW Washington Office Communications and Public Affairs Director Robert Couture. He said listeners of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast can expect to hear about current information on important veterans’ legislation, education benefits and financial assistance programs. Couture also said listeners of the podcast can learn about national veterans’ services and VFW’s critical initiatives.

“When it comes to what I think my audience would like to hear, I always draw from my life experiences — as a surviving military dependent, as a 24-year Army veteran and as a VFW life member,” Couture said. “The topics my guests talk about on #StillServing: The VFW Podcast almost always apply to me as a veteran, so I know the podcast is a resource that will serve podcast listeners.”

Couture said he encourages everyone to listen to #StillServing: The VFW Podcast while he chats with congressional leadership, Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs senior officials and, of course, everyday veterans. Couture said he and his guests will address tough issues affecting the military and veterans’ community.

“As the show continues to develop, those tuning in will hear guests from everyone from government agencies to nonprofit organizations focused on veterans,” Couture said. “We also feature leaders and members alike making things happen within the VFW.”

Episodes of the podcast will be available at www.vfw.org/Podcast. #StillServing: The VFW Podcast also can be found on the following platforms:

- Deezer
- Google Play
- Apple Podcasts
- Pandora
- Spotify
- Stitcher

“The bottom line is that people tuning in to #StillServing: The VFW Podcast can expect a show for veterans, hosted by veterans.”

VFW Washington Office Communications and Public Affairs Director Robert Couture is the host of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast. Couture said listeners of the show will hear representatives from government agencies to nonprofit organizations that are focused on veterans. Congressional leaders, Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs senior officials and everyday veterans will be a part of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast, as well, according to Couture.
Since the VFW’s inception more than a century ago, its veterans’ pursuance to help communities ravaged by natural disasters remains undeterred.

Under the VFW mantle, veterans from across the country annually carry out missions to combat the harsh aftermath of floods, wildfires, typhoons or hurricanes ravaging a community.

When Hurricane Ida struck the Louisiana coastline this year, causing the most widespread damage to the state since the infamous Hurricane Katrina in 2005, several VFW Posts from across the state provided a local lifeline for many.

VFW Post 8973 Commander Chris Cox, a New Orleans’ transplant who fell in love with the city’s rich culture and history more than a decade ago, prepared for the worst, anticipating his Post would serve as an anchor of hope for fellow Louisianans once the hurricane passed.

“Down here in Louisiana, we take care of our neighbors,” said Cox, a retired Marine Corps master sergeant with more than 20 years in the service. “It’s not about being the hero of the neighborhood. It’s a matter of caring for each other.”

Cox, who currently works as a strategic communications specialist in the VA’s Office of Community Care in New Orleans, and his fellow Post members quickly turned the Post into a hub for locals in need of food and water.

Through word of mouth and Cox’s connections within the community, the Post secured ample donations from residents and a few restaurants. Among the donations were freezers, refrigerators, food and supplies.

“We were taking whatever we got and turning it into meals,” Cox said. “For anyone passing by, work crews, tired residents cleaning up their damaged homes, we were there. For many, this was the first hot meal they had in days.”

From Sept. 1-6, Post members served lunch and dinner, distributing more than 1,800 meals to those in need. The Post also secured more than $25,000 worth of food, fuel, dry goods, baby food and sanitary supplies, which they distributed throughout the areas outside of New Orleans hardest hit by Hurricane Ida.

“Disasters like this are a very familiar environment to veterans,” Cox added. “Lots of us have provided humanitarian relief in the Middle East, Haiti and other places, so we know how to do this.”

About 41 miles north across the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, Cox’s statement rippled amongst members of VFW Post 7286 in Covington, La.

Like the efforts in New Orleans, Post 7286 opened its doors to locals in need of food, water, electricity and shelter for those needing a place to rest.

“Our doors were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Post 7286 Commander Michael Henry. “We wanted to let our community know that they were not in this fight alone. We got your back.”

The Post’s efforts received backing from local vendors that included Yum Yum Gimme Sum, providing a food truck to cater meals for those in need. Post 7286 also received help from the non-profit Project Blessings All Year Round, which supplied toiletries for members to distribute.

It’s through word of mouth and a reputation for serving their community that VFW Post 2290
in Manville, N.J., was called upon in the wake of severe flooding and fires. Although Hurricane Ida made landfall near the Gulf of Mexico, the remnants of the hurricane reached Manville, about 39 miles southwest of Newark, where floodwaters left gas-fed fires unreachable to local firefighters.

In desperate need of help, the Manville Office of Emergency Management and the Red Cross called on Post 2290 to serve as a distribution center and later an emergency shelter for those in need of a place to rest.

“Because of the location of the Post, which is above the area that normally floods and the large size of our building, it makes us an ideal distribution center,” said Post 2290 Commander Andy Henkel. “More importantly, we follow the motto ‘No One Does More’.”

Between Sept. 1 and Sept. 5, the Post received an overwhelming amount of donations ranging from clothing, food, and water to infant supplies and cleaning materials. With distribution help from its members, Auxiliary and other local volunteers, the Post provided two meals daily and at one point harbored more than 340 people in need of a place to sleep.

“In the almost 90 years of our existence, we have been fortunate to be in a position to assist those who have suffered major disasters,” Henkel added. “In our most recent past, I can remember Hurricane Floyd, Irene and Sandy. We were open for various numbers of days and housed and fed comparable numbers of residents. So for us, this is normal though unfortunate.”

The unfortunate reality, however, exemplifies time and again how veterans rally against danger to protect, care and lend a hand to those in need. As recorded in an American Report by the Corporation for National and Community Service, veterans are 25 percent more likely to volunteer, 17 percent more likely to make a monetary donation and 30 percent more likely to participate in local organizations than civilians without military experience.

Their efforts also carry a lasting effect in and around their communities, as demonstrated by Post 7286 in New Orleans. In the weeks following the aftermath, the Post continued to raise funds to help those hit hardest by Hurricane Ida.

As of late September, the Post had raised more than $75,000 in materials, monetary donations and manpower, while also providing boats, trucks and fuel to distribute those supplies. The Post also donated $925 towards the Louisiana VFW Disaster Relief Fund, which on Sept. 20 received $50,000 from VFW’s National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., for statewide distribution.

“You can never do enough, so we keep providing any help we can to those in need,” Cox added. “This is a community where mutual support, respect and service to others is part of everyday life.”
“America is a land born of ideas. It traces its lineage not to one bloodline, one land, one language or faith, but to the ideas that forged it.”
VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
Each year, VFW provides high school students in the United States and certain areas overseas with an opportunity to voice their ideas through a democratic-themed essay.

Although 2020 imposed a burden laden with a global pandemic, more than 30,000 students entered the Voice of Democracy (VOD) contest last year, leading to the top winners being announced for the first time ever during a virtual ceremony in April.

The contest received backing by partners Twisted X, which donated $130,000, and Dell, which donated 52 laptop computers, mouses and headsets to reward each of the VOD Department winners.

Erin Stoeckig, a high school junior, won the 2020-2021 VOD contest. Sponsored by VFW Post 1215 in Rochester, Minn., Stoeckig won the T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, a top prize of $30,000.

In her winning essay "Is This The Country The Founders Envisioned?" Stoeckig wrote: “America is a land born of ideas. It traces its lineage not to one bloodline, one land, one language or faith, but to the ideas that forged it.”

Stoeckig then asks the reader to answer one question, writing: “From these and the hopes of immigrants who crossed the sea seeking opportunity and freedom, our founding fathers constructed the government that serves us to this day. But is it truly the same?”

PATRIOT’S PEN
More than 84,000 students in grades six through eight competed in the 2020-2021 Patriot’s Pen youth essay contest.

With the competition spanning across the United States as well as the Pacific areas and Europe, the Patriot’s Pen winners shared a $54,000 purse that was distributed accordingly to each recipient based on placement.

This year’s top prize of $5,000 went to Wyatt Perkins, who represented the VFW Department of North Dakota. The Maryville, N.D., native received the North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award, as well as a new Dell laptop, mouse and headset.

EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

$1.8 Million: Amount of awards presented at all levels of VFW during the 2020-21 Voice of Democracy competition.

$1.1 Million: Amount of awards presented at all levels of VFW during the 2020-21 Patriot’s Pen competition.


$30,351: Awards distributed at the Post, District and Department levels for the Smart/Maher award.

84,673: Number of Patriot’s Pen student participants in 2020-21.

1,348: Number of teachers who participated in the 2021 Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year Contest.
In quieting the ripples of war that echoed in his mind, Lucas Goddard delved into the cool, fluid waters running through his hometown of Sitka, Alaska.

The Army veteran, who deployed with the 327th Inf. Regt., of the 101st Airborne Division to Mosul, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, returned home following his discharge in 2004, quickly taking to the water as a kayak tour guide.

“I found peace in being out on the water,” Goddard said. “Going from kicking in doors to showing people the beauty that southeast Alaska offers was a big transition.”

Alaska, which means “the object towards which the action of the sea is directed,” helped soothe Goddard’s transition by supplanting Iraq, where he participated in more than 300 missions over the course of a year, with a calm, scenic wilderness.

With approximately 200,000 veterans transitioning out of the military each year, according to the VA, not many veterans find such resolve in cushioning their transition into the civilian world.

Goddard was made aware of this in 2016, when he hosted a reunion with several of his comrades from Iraq. Through conversations with several of them on the positive effects the outdoors had on their transition, Goddard came away with a realization.

“Having personally experienced the effects of war, emergency situations and the impact that it can have on individuals and their families,” Goddard said, “I made it a personal mission of mine to help others who have similar experiences.”

In 2019, Goddard founded Waypoint for Veterans, a nonprofit focused on reconnecting veterans, first responders and their families to the positive and healing effects of nature through all-expenses-paid, guided excursions through Alaska’s wilderness.

“Our goal is to provide an environment where veterans and first responders can reconnect to nature, thus promoting personal growth, healing and relaxation,” Goddard said. “We believe that providing this type of support for veterans and first responders will lessen their likelihood of suicide, substance abuse and broken families.”

Through these excursions, mostly located near Sitka’s temperate rainforest in southeast Alaska, those involved get to bask in a canvas of mountains, open seas and the calm, simple pleasures of the great frontier.

Like Goddard, who permanently returned home to Sitka after five years traveling the country following his year as a kayak guide, many of the veterans and first responders who have participated in Waypoint for Veterans since its inception, find the therapeutic experience invaluable.

For Goddard in particular, his nonprofit also has allowed him to continue to serve his fellow veterans with a unique alternative to cushion the transition from military to civilian life, a choppy sea of doubt for most.

He is one of many veterans answering the call that in February 2020 became VFW’s #StillServing campaign. As recorded in an America Report by the Corporation for National and Community Service, veterans like Goddard volunteer 25 percent more often, are 17 percent more likely to make a monetary donation and are 30 percent more likely to participate in local organizations than civilians without military experience.

“It is not enough to just survive war or emergencies,” Goddard said. “It is necessary to reconnect to ourselves so that we can each experience the very best life has to offer.”
Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project continues to transform the way America honors and empowers injured veterans in our communities. For the past eight years, WWP has proudly provided nearly $2.9 million in grants to support VFW’s on-base service officer program.

Since 2007, participating Burger King franchisees have held an annual fundraiser in July or November to benefit the VFW’s Unmet Needs program. Encouraging their patrons to donate $1 or more with their meal purchase has resulted in more than $6.6 million raised to support nearly 11,000 veterans and military families.

Humana has had a long-standing relationship with the military community and is committed to the well-being of veterans and military families. Humana sponsors several large events across the country to support veterans. In 2018, Humana and VFW launched a Uniting to Combat Hunger initiative to help the 1 out of 4 veteran families that are food insecure. In 2020, the campaign raised the equivalent of more than 1 million meals for veterans and military families.

Beginning in 2013, Sport Clips has been the primary supporter of the VFW’s Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship program, which provides scholarships for service members and veterans for use at post-secondary and trade schools. To date, the program has awarded more than 2,000 scholarships totaling $9.2 million. Despite the 2020 pandemic, through the generous donations from Sport Clips’ clients and partners, the VFW received more than $1 million for the program and launched a Virtual Walk.

Since July 2015, Twisted X has supported the VFW National Convention by selling their comfortable handcrafted footwear on the VFW online store. Prasad Reddy, president and CEO, has a deep, longstanding connection to VFW. “When I became a citizen in 1980,” says Reddy, “after I took the oath as a citizen with the judge, I stepped out of the court hall and was greeted by VFW members who welcomed me to America as a citizen and gave me an American flag and the Constitution booklet.” It’s with this passion for patriotism that Twisted X increased its pledge of support by sponsoring the 2021 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen program and committed as the premier sponsor until 2024, including an additional $10,000 to support the Unmet Needs program.

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Visionary corporate partners and foundations help ignite the VFW’s mission by creating awareness and providing funds to support our life-changing programs and services, available at no cost to veterans and military families.

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

BURGER KING

TOP FRANCHISEE DONORS FOR UNMET NEEDS

Bravokilo Inc.                             Laird Management LLC
BravoTampa LLC                             Miller Management LLC
MidAmerica                                 Delsher Inc.
    Hotels Corporation                      Valley King of Wisconsin LLC
Bravoflorida LLC                           TOMS King
Delton Restaurants Inc.                   Quality Dining Inc.

SPORT CLIPS
HELP A HERO TOP DONORS

TMAC Investments Inc.                     Sawyer Business Group Inc.
Kleg6 Inc.                                 Keyser Enterprises Inc.
SCI Inc.                                   Devine Clips LLC
Lee Hill Investments LLC                   Providence CC LLC
Amjaco Inc.                                NC Sport Cuts LLC

2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION SPONSORS

2021 CORPORATE SPONSORS

Tony Anton from Post 131 receives a Humana Uniting to Combat Hunger volunteer t-shirt at the 2021 National Convention in Kansas City, Mo. Photo by Brooke Brown

Post 12124 Quartermaster Danny Smith, (in red shirt) along with Post representatives gather last year at their local Burger King restaurant in Meridian, Miss., during #ThankBK Appreciation Week, June 14-19. Held annually during the week of Flag Day, VFW Posts visit their local Burger King stores to “thank” BK team members for their participation in raising much needed funding for VFW’s Unmet Needs program. Photo courtesy of Danny Smith
UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS

Jesse James Dupree and his multiple businesses have been partnering with the VFW Foundation to raise financial support and awareness for the VFW Unmet Needs program since 2019. Dupree donated merchandise to VFW Posts across the country for fundraisers while his bands Jackyl and Dixie Inc. were touring. He also has developed a relationship between the VFW Posts and local Harley-Davidson dealers to raise money and recruit members at events. As he travels around the country, Dupree hosts veterans served by the Unmet Needs program as well as VFW members. In 2020, during the pandemic lockdown — Dupree still managed to raise over $45,000 in one quarter. To date, Dupree has raised over $150,000 to support the Unmet Needs program.

Golf Tournament Benefits Help a Hero Scholarship

Then-Department of North Carolina Commander Victor Letourneau; Brooke Brown, assistant manager of VFW Foundation, Corporate Relations; and Army veteran Darin Bailey, Sport Clips franchisee owner gather in November 2020 at Bailey’s annual Veterans Charity Golf Classic fundraiser. The golf event raised more than $38,000 for the VFW “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” program. Photo by Melinda Hicks

Jesse James Dupree receives donation checks for the Unmet Needs program from the owners of Vehicle City Harley-Davidson and representatives from VFW Post 9914.

Pictured left to right are Jesse James Dupree; Terry and Georgia Gregorica, owners of Vehicle City Harley-Davidson, Georgia Gregorica, marketing director; Vehicle City Harley-Davidson and VFW representatives Vincent Oltesvig and Gary Gamble. Photo by Kevin Jamison

INSET: Jesse James Dupree and his band Jackyl with then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch II, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief Fritz Milholic, Adjutant General Kevin Jones and VFW Director of Programs Lynn Rolf at a Jackyl concert in Kansas City, Mo. A total of $27,000 was raised during this show in Kansas City for the VFW Unmet Needs program. Photo by Sam Tingle

2020 VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Virtual Walk

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Abdurahim Jamal Sharif
Help A Hero recipient

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The VFW Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to some of its most magnanimous donors. Such generosity helped fund numerous VFW programs and initiatives from Sept. 1, 2020 through Aug. 31, 2021.
We extend a special “thank you” to the following donors whose generosity and commitment to veterans deserves special recognition. Their lifetime contributions have been instrumental in ensuring that our life-changing programs are able to assist those who have served and sacrificed.

Mr. Jeffrey Adamek
Mr. Larry E. Adams
Mr. Ken Adams
Donald Adams
Mr. Betty L. Alberson
Ms. Susan Allen
Carole Alice
Mr. John Ames
Stephen A. Anderson
Martin Anderson
Max Anderson
Lynne Anderson
Linda Anderson
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Ms. Patrizia Barone
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Beth Bader
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Mr. Robert A. Beer
Mark D. Beech
William Bauer
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Mr. Donald Barber
James & Dianne Bandler
Mr. Marjorie Badger
Ms. Audrey Baldis
Dorothy Baldini
Mr. John Ballantine
Mr. George F. Bancroft
James & Dianne Bandler
Mr. Bradford E. Banks
Edward G. Balsam
Mr. Donald Barber
Mr. Jeff Barnes
Mr. Mary Barnett
Ms. Patricia Barone
John & Sue Basler
William Bauer
Mr. David Baurat
Mark D. Beech
Mr. Robert A. Beer
Mr. Chuck Bell
James Bell
Mr. Yvonne Bellinger
Mr. John Bechtel
Robert B. Beatty
Mr. Robert Zupan
Mr. Ron Zicovich
Mr. Mattias Zhabinskiy
Ms. Patricia Wright
Mr. Susan R. Wright
Charlotte Yates
Ms. Sonja Zeringue
Ms. Matthias Zbierecky
Mr. Ron Zicovich
Mr. Robert Zupan
Richard Zorek
27
## Financial Statements

### Statement of Financial Position
August 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$11,414,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>249,742,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investments made with cash collateral received from securities on loan</td>
<td>32,456,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>2,935,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>1,938,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
<td>8,477,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postretirement asset</td>
<td>1,197,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>2,828,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$310,989,938</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$10,889,701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payable for collateral received for securities on loan</td>
<td>32,456,778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension liability</td>
<td>550,409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life member dues for future distribution — state and posts</td>
<td>88,381,091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>33,582,944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>165,860,923</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$310,989,938</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended August 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and gifts</td>
<td>$77,693,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment return, net</td>
<td>27,773,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership dues</td>
<td>7,530,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply, Buddy Poppy and other sales</td>
<td>4,854,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising revenue</td>
<td>3,147,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other revenue</td>
<td>3,956,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total support and revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$124,955,703</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Services:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans service activities</td>
<td>26,290,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternal activities and member services</td>
<td>15,566,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service and public awareness</td>
<td>14,148,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total program services</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,005,733</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Services:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising activities</td>
<td>35,830,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>4,312,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership maintenance and promotion</td>
<td>1,814,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total support services</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,957,003</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>97,962,736</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Change in net assets before pension-related changes other than net periodic pension cost | 26,992,967 |
| Pension-related changes other than pension service costs | 6,908,971 |
| Change in net assets | 33,901,938 |
| **NET ASSETS, Beginning of period** | **$111,227,077** |

| **NET ASSETS, END OF PERIOD** | **$145,129,015** |
Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position
August 31, 2021

ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents $1,629,820
Investments 16,729,535
Receivables 1,418,369
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment, net 46,525
Prepaid expenses 179,641
TOTAL ASSETS $20,003,890

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities $377,582
Total liabilities 377,582
Net assets
Without donor restrictions 14,122,029
With donor restrictions 5,504,279
Total net assets 19,626,308
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS $20,003,890

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended August 31, 2020

SUPPORT AND REVENUE
Cash contributions and gifts $5,261,361
Investment return, net 2,731,442
Total support and revenue 7,992,803

EXPENSES
Program Services:
Veterans service activities 2,572,693
Community service and public awareness 1,273,138
Supporting Services:
Fundraising activities 477,578
Management and general 481,649
Total expenses 4,805,058

Change in net assets 3,187,745
NET ASSETS, Beginning of period 16,438,563
NET ASSETS, END OF PERIOD $19,626,308
VFW has long felt it a privilege to preserve the memory of America’s war dead. That’s why the organization supports initiatives that pay tribute to Americans who have lost their lives in war. Over 40 years, VFW members have contributed more than $7.2 million to major memorial efforts in Washington, D.C.

Most recently, VFW pledged $300,000 for the National World War I Memorial located in Pershing Park in Washington, D.C. VFW Quartermaster General Debra Anderson has been a member of the WW1 Centennial Commission since 2016.

On April 16, the First Colors Ceremony was held, raising the U.S. flag over the newly constructed memorial. It opened to the public the following day. Dedication of the memorial is on track for 2024.

For Joseph Weishaar, the architect whose memorial design was chosen in 2016 from hundreds of others from around the world, the flag ceremony brought on a mix of emotions because it marked the end of his primary involvement in the project.

“It was six years of my life spent designing this,” he said. “It was an amazing moment, and I was excited to be there for it.”

Hailing from Arkansas, Weishaar said when he originally saw the announcement for the design contest in 2015, he was shocked that there wasn’t already a memorial to the Great War in the nation’s capital.

Beginning his research, Weishaar realized that most involved in the war were 19-25 years old. He was 25 at the time and this resonated with him.

“There were 70,000 men and women from Arkansas who served in WWI,” he said. “Most had never left their hometowns, let alone the state.”

His design research took him through many time periods. He studied Roman and Ancient Greek architecture. Buildings in Washington, D.C., served as inspiration as did Crown Fountain at Chicago’s Millennium Park.

Weishaar brought on board sculptor Sabin Howard, who is working to create 38 figures in a 58-foot-long, 10-foot-high relief.

Knowing very little about the war, Weishaar spent months researching it. What little he learned in high school and college was the extent of his WWI knowledge, he said.

“I hope that people will have that same moment of not knowing and be inspired to go look something up and want to know more,” he said. “For me, it was a forgotten war, and I feel a lot of people are the same. There are so many details in the memorial that people will relate to.”

Visit www.worldwar1centennial.org for more information and to view the live cam of the memorial’s progress.
VFW’s National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., contains its administrative hub. Some 136 employees work here, including the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General staff, and VFW Foundation. It also leases space to the VFW Auxiliary and to area businesses.

VFW’s office in the nation’s capital oversees 72 employees at more than two dozen locations within the District of Columbia and major military installations around the country. National Veterans Service and National Legislative Service are located here.