

VFW at a Glance

The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization composed of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. The VFW and its Auxiliary are dedicated to veterans service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs.



Origins

In 1899, the American Veterans of Foreign Service (Columbus, Ohio) and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines (Denver, Colo.) were organized to secure rights and benefits for veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippines War (1899-1902). These two organizations merged in 1914, creating the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. VFW was chartered by Congress in 1936.

Membership Eligibility

Those serving honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces in a foreign war or overseas operation recognized by a campaign medal, in Korea after June 30, 1949, and recipients of hostile-fire or imminent danger pay. Veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and other smaller expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, qualify.

Partner Organization

A national volunteer service organization, the Auxiliary of the VFW was founded in 1914 and is the backbone of many local VFW volunteer efforts.

Membership Size

Nearly 1.7 million VFW and Auxiliary members in all 50 states, and many foreign countries.

Organizational Structure

Thousands convene each year at VFW's national convention to elect officers, adopt resolutions and discuss business affairs. Leading the organization are the elected commander-in-chief, senior vice commander-in-chief and junior vice commander-in-chief. The National Council of Administration serves as the VFW's board of directors.

Nearly 6,400 Posts worldwide comprise 52 Departments in the 50 states, the Asia/Pacific Areas and Europe. Posts form the basic local chapter.

Priority Issues

- **Budget:** Secure full funding for programs and services for veterans, service members and their families by ending sequestration.
- **Health Care:** Ensure veterans have timely access to high quality, comprehensive and veteran-centric health care, and secure sufficient funding for the VA Health Care System.
- **Women Veterans:** Expand women's health care services to all VA medical centers to ensure the growing number of women veterans have access to gender-specific services.
- **Suicide Prevention & Homelessness:** Work with VA, DOD and Congress to reduce the rate of suicide and homelessness among veterans.
- **VA Benefits & Compensation:** Ensure veterans and their dependents have timely access to earned benefits.
- **Seamless Transition:** Improve education, employment and transition programs so veterans have an opportunity to obtain meaningful employment after leaving military service.
- **Military Quality of Life:** Fight to maintain a quality and comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all volunteer force.
- **Education & Employment:** Fight to sustain G.I. Bill benefits and insist on strengthening USERRA. Continue to improve licensing and credentialing for military skills.
- **Defense & Homeland Security:** Fully support the troops and their mission in the war on terrorism, and to secure U.S. borders against all enemies, both foreign and domestic, who are intent on doing us harm.
- **POW/MIA:** Achieve the fullest possible accounting of America's 83,000 MIAs from World War II forward.

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