

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS PROGRAM

2023 - 2024



Department Headquarters
4002 Fenton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
Phone: (717)234-7927 Fax: (717)234-1955
www.vfwpa.org

“Encourage – Expand - Educate”

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Message from the Department Commander – David W. “Spike” Gyger

I am deeply honored to lead our VFW Department during the 2023 – 2024 year. Pennsylvania has some of the best VFW leaders in the Nation and I thank you for your dedication and energy to moving our Membership Program to even greater heights.

Over the past years, we have learned that if we pay more attention to the members whose memberships are about to expire, we can easily retain them. Likewise, if their membership has expired, we can reinstate them. The trick is to be constantly aware of your Post’s annual members expiration status. To help with this, make sure that your post has a monthly membership roster, and work that unpaid list monthly.

Contact the members on our rosters before their memberships lapse. We do a great job in recruiting new members to join our organization, and we need to do a better job of retaining those new members and getting them involved. It is very important that we contact those members. Give them a “buddy check” call.

Also, we need the right mix of ingredients to increase our membership numbers. First, we start with a plan to increase our membership, then we add knowledgeable recruiters to do the job. Secondly, we create recruiting opportunities while adding recruiting incentives. We are encouraging members at large to join/transfer into a local Post. A member at large listing is available for you if requested.

Membership is NOT just the responsibility of the officers of your post, district and/or department. It should be every member’s highest priority. I am asking that everyone recruits at least one new member this year.

This Year’s Membership Program is 101% and the Mandatory All State work sheet is required to be submitted to Department Headquarters no later than APRIL 30, 2024.

Our Department Membership team is comprised of professionally trained recruiters to help you in your post’s recruiting and retention efforts. If you need assistance, reach out to one of them.

Please remember to practice the three key R’s.....**RECRUIT, REINSTATE, RETAIN**

Respectfully,

Spike

David W. “Spike” Gyger
Department of PA
State Commander

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Message from the Department of Pennsylvania Membership Team

“Please engage and encourage your members, motivate, mentor and educate your new and younger members, and always strive to increase your membership and expand your involvement in your community.”

"Membership", that ten letter word that causes most people to cringe during a Post or District meeting. Yet, it is the lifeblood of our organization.

Here in PA, we have had a trend of a declining membership for far too long. If each of us attempted to renew, reinstate or recruit just one member, we could more than double the size of our organization in one year.

Obtaining new members and reinstating previous members shouldn't be the only objective. We need to encourage participation in meetings and events.

There is nearly a 30-year gap between the Vietnam War and the start of the Global War on Terrorism. The Desert Storm/ Kosovo/ Bosnia and Somalia generation isn't large enough to carry our organization at every level.

We should all work to train and mentor the younger veterans and encourage them as they seek responsibilities and opportunities in our post and districts.

Teamwork, mentorship, and a purpose will give our members a reason to want to participate. It is up to us to become the change that we wish to see. We all must make the effort to recruit and reinstate members, mentor them and make them feel at home in our Posts, Districts and Department.

I wish you all a successful membership and program year!

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2023 - 2024 Membership Programs Special Notices and Exceptions

- Membership Divisions for all Posts will be same as National Divisions.
- **The membership quota** for all Department contests is **101%** unless otherwise noted.
- Continuous, new, reinstated and Life Members will be verified by National Headquarters for all Department Contests.
- All Department Membership Contests end **April 30, 2024** unless otherwise stated. **National contest ends June 30, 2024**
- Individuals, Posts and Districts can only win **one** time in each **contest or category** unless otherwise stated. The Department will make the final determination of all Department awards.
- All **contest checks** will become the **property of the Post or District** unless **otherwise stated**. All checks will be made out to the Post or District Quartermaster unless otherwise stated.
- All requirements for All State Awards must be met by **April 30, 2024**.
- All membership transmittals for All State Status to **receive a cap at Convention** must be recorded at Department Headquarters **NO LATER THAN April 30, 2024**.
- All membership transmittals for All American Status must reach National Headquarters. Submissions must be received **NO LATER THAN June 30, 2024**.
- **Please note that the requirement for National membership is 102% and FOUR Community Service Reports.**
- Posts who are in arrears and receive a monetary award, the arrears will be deducted from the award.

To encourage thorough reading of this important membership program, Commander “Spike” has inserted **five** special graphics into the booklet. You can earn a special prize by locating these symbols and sending a note to State Adjutant/Quartermaster via U.S. Mail, Fax (717-234-1955) or E-mail quartermaster@vfwpahq.org noting the page and location of the symbol listed below:

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Individual Membership Rewards

Contest # 1 – Lead the Pennsylvania Team

The post in each division with the with the highest new, continuous and reinstated by August 31, 2023 will receive for a Life Membership.

Contest # 2 – Let’s keep pushing on

Any Post who obtains 97 % by 31 September 2023 will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, or an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded.

Contest # 3 – Early Bird Special

All Posts with 101% membership reported by December 31, 2023, will receive a bonus of \$. 75 cents per member. Post will receive a bonus of \$ 1.00 per member for each member properly reported over 100% as of December 31, 2023.

Contest # 4 - “All Got One – Veterans Day”

Every Member that recruits one new or re-instated VFW Member, verified by the National Membership Program, between July 1, 2023, and November 11, 2023, will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$250 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Contest # 5 - “March Membership Madness”

To be announced!

Contest No. # 6 - Life Membership PTI Attendance Award

Members that attend Pennsylvania Training Institute sessions will be eligible for a drawing for 4 life memberships or if already a Life Member, an upgrade to the next tier of Legacy Life membership. If the member is already a Legacy Life Gold member, they will receive a \$ 400.00 Certificate to the VFW Store. Drawing for these memberships will take place at the conclusion of the PTI sessions (**validated by Department of PA VFW**).

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Contest # 7 - “All Got One – State Convention”

Every Member that recruits five new or recovered VFW Member, verified by the National Membership Program, between 1 February 2024, and 30 April 2024, will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$200.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Contest No. # 8 – Continuous to Life Membership Monthly Award

A special monthly drawing for two life memberships to be awarded each month and will take place from August 2023 through 31 May 2024.

Life Membership to Legacy Life Membership Upgrade

Contest No. # 9 – Life Membership to Legacy Life Monthly Award

Life Members will be entered into a Legacy Life drawing for 2 Legacy Life Memberships each month. Bronze and Silver Legacy members are eligible for this contest. If the member is already a Legacy Life Gold, then the winner will receive \$ 400.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate. The contest runs from 1 August 2023 through 31 May 2024.

2023-2024 Membership Achievement Awards

Post Level Contests (Post Divisions 1-6)

All Posts that properly report **101%** in membership, including 15 new/reinstated members, will receive a monetary award and VFW Store gift certificate on dates listed below:

➤ Contest # 10	December 31, 2023	\$850 plus a \$100 Gift Certificate
➤ Contest # 11	February 29, 2024	\$550 plus \$100 Gift Certificate
➤ Contest # 12	April 30, 2024	\$350 plus \$100 Gift Certificate

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Grass Roots Posts Contests (Post Divisions 7-11)

Grass Roots Posts that properly report **101%** in membership, including 10 new/reinstated members, will receive a monetary award and VFW Store gift certificate on dates listed below:

➤ Contest # 13	December 31, 2023	\$850 plus \$100 Gift Certificate
➤ Contest # 14	February 29, 2024	\$550 plus \$100 Gift Certificate
➤ Contest # 15	April 30, 2024	\$300 plus \$100 Gift Certificate

Post Membership Awards

Contest # 16 - “We did our best” Contest

Every Post who obtains at least **101%** membership, plus reports all mandatory criteria on Page 10 by April 30, 2024, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Memberships.

Every Post who obtains at least **101%** membership, plus reports all mandatory criteria on Page 10 by June 30, 2024, will be entered into a drawing for one (1) of five (5) Life Memberships.

* Note: The Post that obtain 101% by April 30, 2024 would be included in the June 30, 2024, but would only be eligible to win one (1) drawing, not both.

- The worksheet on Page 10 must be completed and sent to Department Headquarters postmarked by June 30, 2024

Contest # 17

The Post Commander and Post Quartermaster from each All-State Membership Division with the most new/reinstated members over their membership goal by February 29, 2024, will receive a special award from the State Commander.

All-State Post Commanders and Quartermasters Contest

Contest # 18

All-State Post Commanders and Quartermasters will receive a distinctive VFW Cap, All-State Commander’s Pin and special recognition at the State Convention.

All-State Post Quartermasters will receive a distinctive VFW Cap, All-State Quartermaster’s Pin and special recognition at the State Convention.

An outstanding Post Commander and Post Quartermaster will be selected Captain of the All-State Team based on the scoring of the All-State worksheet & membership over their goal by April 30, 2024 and will receive a special gift from State Commander “Gyger” at the State Convention.

All Post Commander’s and Post Quartermaster’s that meet all the requirements from 1 May 2024 to June 30, 2024 will receive special recognition at a later date.

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ALL-STATE POST DIVISIONS & QUOTA

Division	Membership	Minimum %
Division 1	951-+	101
Division 2	750-950	101
Division 3	356-749	101
Division 4	246-355	101
Division 5	185-245	101
Division 6	143-184	101
Division 7	112-142	101
Division 8	88-111	101
Division 9	68-87	101
Division 10	51-67	101
Division 11	1-50	101

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All State Post/District Commanders and Quartermasters Worksheet


**To be considered for All State Status this worksheet must be submitted to
Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue. Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
Postmarked no later than April 30, 2024 to receive Cap at Convention
ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS MANDATORY**

Name _____ Post # _____ District# _____

Commander's Hat Size: _____

Mandatory Criteria

Quartermaster Hat Size: _____

- Membership Properly Reported as attaining percentage goal of **101%**
- All Post and Home Association By-Laws (if Applicable) **must** be Current (**within 5 years**) Date: _____/_____/_____
- Post/District **must** have Articles of Incorporation on file with Department Headquarters. Date: _____/_____/_____
- Purchase Buddy Poppies (minimum 100 Poppies). Date: _____ Check # _____
- Voice of Democracy Entry. Yes [] No [] (Donation of \$250.00 may be made in lieu of entry) (Check Must be sent to Department Headquarters earmarked **Voice of Democracy no later than December 31, 2023**)
- Patriot's Pen Entry. Yes [] No [] (Donation of \$250.00 may be made in lieu of entry) (Must be sent to Department Headquarters earmarked **Patriot's Pen no later than December 31, 2023**)
- Veterans and Military Support Fund Raiser or donation to VMS Fund (**Dept. Division 1-6 \$100 –Dept. Division 7-11 \$50**) (Must be entered on National's Website Dashboard)
- National Home Donation (**\$75.00 Prior to April 30, 2024**) (Must be sent to Department Headquarters **Earmarked for National Home**) Date: _____ Check #: _____
- Donation to Commander's Special Project (**\$100.00 Prior April 30, 2024**). Must be sent to Department Headquarters **Earmarked Special Project (VFW Memorials at PA National Cemeteries)**. Date: _____ Check # _____
- VAVS Donation (**\$100.00 No Later than April 30, 2024**) Must be sent to Department Headquarters Earmarked VAVS. Date: _____ Check # _____
- All Posts must submit a total of four community service reports for 2023-2024: Two separate reports covering the dates 1 July 2023 to 31 Dec 2023; Two Separate reports covering the dates 1 Jan to 30 April 2024. Post's may submit monthly reports if they choose. The preferred method would be monthly. All monthly/quarterly reports must be on file with the department chairman and **NOT WITH THE DEPARTMENT and submitted on the Dashboard**.
- Donation to Arthritis (All Post \$50.00). Date: _____ Check #: _____
- Post/District must have submission of one EMT or 911 Dispatcher or Firefighter or Police Officer Candidate for Dept. Safety Award (**Entries must be received in Dept. Headquarters by 15 December 2023**)
- All Post Quarterly Trustee Reports Including June 2023 must be on file at Department HQ.
Dates Trustee Reports sent to Dept. June: _____ September _____ December _____ March _____
- Post/District must have QM Bonded and on record at Department HQ. Date: _____ Check # _____
- Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice Commander and/or Jr. Vice Commander and/or Quartermaster **must attend all** District Meetings (**Post/District CMDR must attend at least 50% of ALL District Meetings**).
- Post must have a **registered** Service Officer (**Current Fee Paid**).
- Post/District must not be in arrears for the current or prior year (e.g., dues, audits, Reports, etc.)
- Post/District Inspection is recorded for 2023-2024 by 31 December 2023. Date Inspected _____ By _____
- Post/District Officers attend (the minimum of 1 elected officer from each Post and 1 elected officer from each District must attend) the **Pennsylvania Training Instruction (PTI)**.
- All-State requirements must be completed July 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, to receive cap at Convention. 

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**To be considered for All State Status the worksheet must be submitted to Department Headquarters, 4002 Fenton Avenue. Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
Postmarked no later than April 30, 2024
ALL STATE WORKSHEET IS MANDATORY**

The score will be calculated at Department Headquarters. The points will be used to determine the All-State Captains. **Records must be on file at Department Headquarters to Qualify.**

POINTED CRITERIA: _____ **POINTS:** _____

Purchase 3 Buddy Poppies per member	10	_____
Membership % goal by Dec. 31, 2023	20	_____
Or Membership % goal by Feb. 28, 2024	15	_____
Or Membership % goal by Apr. 30, 2024	10	_____
New or Reinstated Member by Dec. 31, 2023 Maximum 75 pts	5 ea.	_____
Youth Activities Participation (e.g., Scouts, JROTC, etc.)	10	_____
Participate in Smart Mather Teacher Entry Award.	10	_____
Donation to Barger Nursing Scholarship.	10	_____
Post/District Officers attend (the minimum of 1 person from each Post and each District 1 elected officers must attend) the Pennsylvania Training Instruction (PTI) .	10	_____
Post/District Inspection submitted to Department by <u>31 December 2023</u> (must be on file)	10	_____
Donation to Homeless Veterans Program.	10	_____
Voice of Democracy Student (Donations do not qualify)	50	_____
Patriot’s Pen Student (Donations do not qualify)	50	_____
Donation to State Commander’s Special Project.	20	_____
Law Enforcement Candidate, Fire Fighter Candidate, 911 Dispatcher Candidate, Emergency Medical Services/Dispatcher Candidate (any 1 of them).	30	_____
Recognizing/Hosting a Gold, Blue, White or Silver Star Event.	30	_____
Employer of the Year Nomination (must be small business that support Veterans)	30	_____
VFW Member of the Year Nomination (any VFW member that goes above)	30	_____

(🗺️ *Dept. Headquarters Validates all requirements!)

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District Awards

2023-2024 District Membership Awards

All Districts that properly report their membership goal of **101%** will receive an award for the district. Dates and awards are listed below.

➤ Contest # 19	December 31, 2023	\$1200
➤ Contest # 20	March 31, 2024	\$700
➤ Contest # 21	May 31, 2024	\$500

2023-2024 District Life Membership Achievement Award*

All Districts that properly report **20** new Life Members (including annual going life) will receive an award for the district.

➤ Contest # 22	December 31, 2023	\$900
➤ Contest # 23	March 31, 2024	\$600
➤ Contest # 24	May 31, 2024	\$300

2022-2023 District Commander Awards

Contest # 25


All District Commanders and District Quartermasters who have attained their membership goal of **101%** by April 30, 2024 will receive:

- All State District Commander’s Cap at Convention
- Jacket (Style to be determined by State Commander)
- Special Recognition at the State Convention

Contest # 26

All District Commanders and Quartermasters who have attained their membership goal of **101%** between May 1, 2024 and June 30, 2024 will receive:

- Outstanding District Commander’s Cap
- Special Recognition at the State Convention

Note: In order to Qualify for this award all, the following must be Completed and Submitted to Department: District Inspections, Post Inspections and Post and District Quarterly Audits (including June 2022, District and Post By-Laws (must be updated within the 5 years) and all posts/district Quartermaster Bonds. 

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Contest # 27 - “All American Department”

If we become an All-American Department, all District Commanders, State Membership Team, and Certified National Recruiters will receive an incredibly special reward from State Commander Gyger – **(To Be Announced)**

Contest # 28 - “District Membership Chairman” Contest

All District Membership Chairmen who attain their membership goal of **101%** by April 30, 2024 will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, an upgrade to Legacy Life Membership will be awarded. If the member is already a Gold Legacy Life Member, they can choose either a \$300 VFW Store Gift Certificate or they may donate the Life Membership to another member of their choice. Drawing will be held on the next business day after the conclusion of the contest.

Membership Plaques and Awards

The Joe Salvo Award for Individual Post Members

Contest # 28



A **Henry VFW Tribute Rifle** will be presented to the *individual member* who signs up the most new and reinstated members (over 25 members) between July 1, 2023 and April 30, 2024. This award will be presented at the 2024 Department Convention. The National Recruiter Report will be used to verify the member. Membership Team are not eligible for this award. Certified National Recruiters do not qualify for this contest.

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Certified National Recruiter

Contest # 29

Certified National recruiters with the most recruited members according to the membership report will receive a special gift from Commander Gyger and a \$ 200.00 gift certificate for the VFW Store.

Robert Musser Memorial Plaque

Contest # 30

This plaque will be awarded to the Post having attained the greatest number increase as of April 30, 2024.

Van Zandt Award

Contest # 31

To be eligible, a Post must recruit at least 20 *new/reinstated members* prior to April 30, 2024. The Post recruiting the *most new/reinstated members* as a number of existing memberships receives a plaque.

Special Note

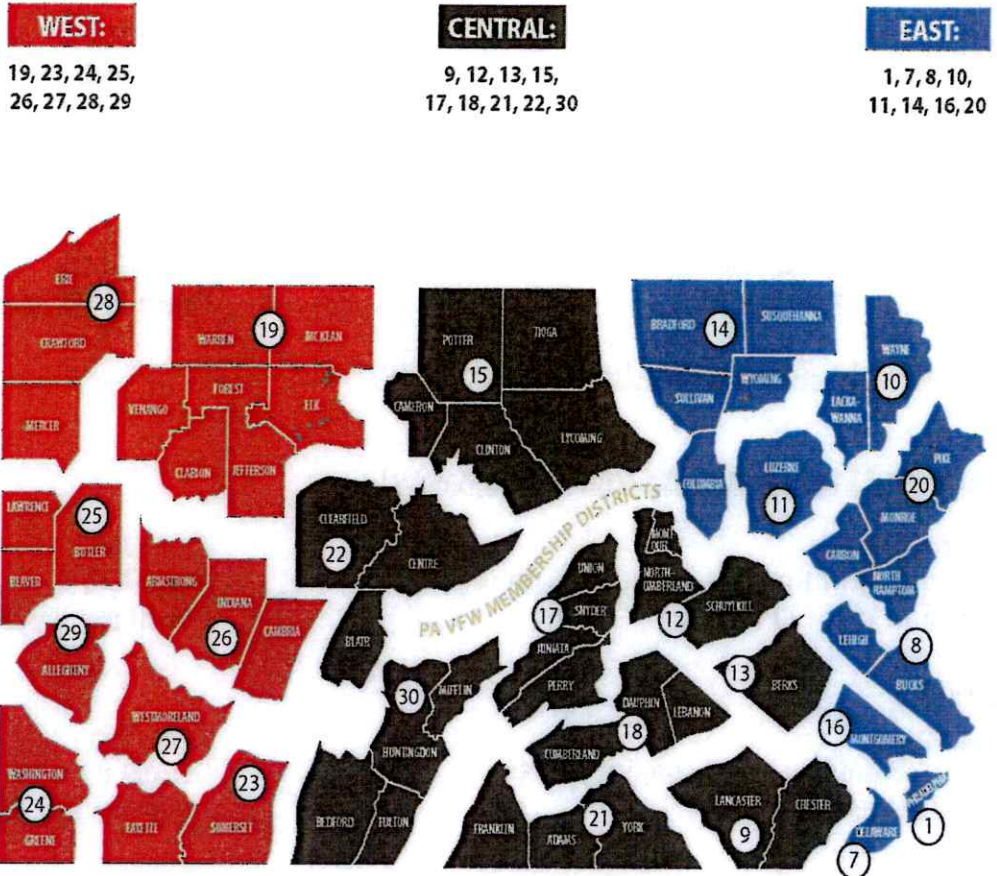
Districts and Posts must meet their membership goal, inspected, and report participation in Community Service, Patriot's Pen Essay, Voice of Democracy, Safety, Youth Activities, Buddy Poppy, Citizenship Education in the current Commander's Membership Year to qualify for plaques and award. The plaques and the Van Zandt Award will be presented at the first general session of the Convention.

Contest # 32

Chosnyk Plaque

This plaque is awarded to the District having the greatest number increase as of 30 April 2024.

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These are Membership Divisions. They do not apply to Caucus Divisions.



2023-2024 Department Membership Team

Department Membership Chairman:

Robert Hinkle
3675 Fox Chase Drive, Dover, PA 17315
Cell Phone (717) 542-6948

Post 5265
District 21
Email: bhinkle@vfw5265.org

Department Membership Co-Chairman (Northeastern)

William D. Lamond III
3360 Nashotka Road, Madison Township, PA 18444
Cell Phone: (570) 241-5875

Post 5207
District 10
Email: ta30chev@gmail.com

Department Membership Co-Chairman (Central)

Vacant

Department Membership Co-Chairman (Western)

Earl “Greg” Stump
952 Colman Mills Road, Post Allegany, PA 16743
Cell Phone: (760) 443-6811

Post 6391
District 19
Email: gstump.90@gmail.com

Recruiter

Craig Fisher
51 North Wolf Street, Manheim, PA 17545
Cell (717) 405-0980

Post 5956
District 9
Email: cofish17@windstream.net

VFW Certified National Recruiters (CNR)

David W. “Spike” Gyger	Phone: 717-991-1473
Earl “Greg” Stump	Phone: 760-443-6811
Cecil Dennis	Phone: 814-720-2692
Henry Mannella	Phone: 412-500-3501

Email: djc57@verizon.net
Email: gstump.90@gmail.com
Email: cecil_dennis@hotmail.com
Email: h.mannella72@yahoo.com

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2023-2024 Planning Calendar

2023

July 3-4	Independence Day (Department HQ Closed)
July 8	Western PTI Clarion Post #2145 - District 19 (8:00 AM) 602 Liberty Street, Clarion, PA 16214 - (814)745-2973
July 9	Northwestern PTI Reynolds Post# 7599 - District 28 (8:00 AM) 115 Edgewood Drive, Greenville, PA 16154 - (724) 646-9971
July 10	PTI Mt Pleasant Post #3368 - District 27 (6:00 PM) 416 West Main St, Mt Pleasant, PA 15666 - (724) 542-4644
July 22-27	National Convention Phoenix, AZ
August 5	Central PTI Mount Union Post #5754 - District 30 (8:00 AM) 14646 Croghan Pike, Mount Union PA 17066 - (814) 542-9909
August 6	Central PTI Clearfield Post #1785 - District 22 (8:00 AM) 1145 Industrial Park Rd, Clearfield, PA 16830 - (814) 765-2590
August 7	Central PTI Ephrata Post #3376 - District 9 (6:00 PM) 141 South State St, Ephrata, PA 17522 - (717) 733-9904
August 11	PA District 21 Golf Scramble, The Bridges Golf Club 6729 York Rd., Abbottstown, PA 17301
August 11 & 12	Department Flying Squadron, Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel 4650 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 (Invitation Only)
August 13	Northeastern PTI Dupont Post# 4909 - District 11(8:00 AM) 401-403 Main Street, Dupont, PA 18641 - (570) 654-9104
August 14	Southeastern PTI Media Post #3460 - District 7 (6:00 PM) 11 Hilltop Road, Media, PA 19063 - (610) 566-9980
September 4:	Labor Day (Department HQ Closed)
September 11:	Patriot's Day
September 15:	POW-MIA Day
September 24:	Gold Star Mother's Day

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October 6-8	State Commander’s Retreat (Testimonial) Ramada Conference Center, State College
October 9	Columbus Day (Department HQ (Closed))
October 20-22	Eastern States Conference – Atlantic City, NJ
November 7:	Election Day
November 11	Veterans Day (Department HQ Closed November 10)
November 23 -24	Thanksgiving Holiday (Department HQ Closed)
December 25	Christmas Day (Department HQ Closed)
December 26	Christmas Holiday (Department HQ Closed)

2024

January 1:	New Year’s Day (Department HQ Closed)
January 2:	New Year’s Holiday (Department HQ Closed)
January 15:	Martin Luther King Jr (Department HQ Closed)
January 19-21	Mid-Winter Conference: Doubletree by Hilton Pittsburgh Cranberry
February 12-17	VFW Auxiliary Mid-Year Conference – Cruise
February 19	President’s Day (Department HQ Closed)
March 2-6	Voice of Democracy Celebration: Washington, DC
March 3-7	Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
March 15-16	Women Veterans Conference / Expo – Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel, Harrisburg
March 29-April 1	Good Friday & Easter Holiday Weekend (Department HQ Closed)
April 5-6	VFW Auxiliary President’s Testimonial: Eisenhower Hotel, Gettysburg
May 1:	Loyalty Day
May 27:	Memorial Day (Department HQ Closed)
June 12-16	Department Convention: Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel, Harrisburg, PA
June 19	Juneteenth (Department HQ Closed)
July 27-August 1	VFW National Convention, Louisville, KY

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Tools to Boost Membership

Recruiting Tips

1. **Know the VFW** – As a recruiter, being aware of our programs and purpose will prepare you to successfully engage prospective members.
2. **Network for Prospects** – Ask family, friends and coworkers if they know veterans who may be eligible. Follow up on leads quickly.
3. **Make Personal Contact** – Try to meet prospective members face-to-face whenever possible.
4. **Don't Be Afraid to Ask** – Many veterans have never been asked to join the VFW. If you speak up and ask them to join, you may be pleasantly surprised at their response.
5. **Be Persistent, Not Pestering** – If they decline to join at this time, respect their decision.
6. **Look for Common Experiences** – Ask questions to learn about military experiences, family, and daily life. Describe the benefits of membership in a way that relates to the prospective member.
7. **Listen Carefully** – The best sales people are active listeners. Listen for excuses and objections, and then be prepared to overcome them with facts.
8. **Share Your Story** – Consider why you are a part of the VFW and tell others why you are so committed to the organization. Your experiences with the VFW are the greatest recruiting tool available.
9. **Be Prepared** – You may meet potential members anywhere so be sure to keep an application with you at all times. If you use a smartphone, learn about the VFW app and how it can be used to recruit new members. Stay current as VFW National Membership provides updates and assistance on new processes.
10. **Enjoy Yourself** – If you are enjoying yourself, prospective members will sense your enthusiasm and be more likely to join.

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Successful Membership Booths

The following is a general outline for setting up a successful membership recruiting booth.

Start Early

- This will work best as a joint VFW and Auxiliary operation. Cooperation is key.
- Contact the manager of a shopping mall, trade show, state or county fair, or any place there is a large public gathering. Ask for permission (or pay) for space to set up a membership booth.
- Give advance news releases to your local newspaper and radio stations regarding your membership booth.
- Place recruiting posters and signs in store windows, post signs at the entrance to your city and along major thoroughfares or any place the public will notice them.
- Obtain an adequate supply of recruiting and informational materials. Some material is available from Department and National Headquarters. Other material can be obtained from the VFW Store.

The Operation

- Decorate your booth with recruiting posters. Display informational material on the table. At least one VFW member and one Auxiliary member, wearing VFW caps or ball caps with Post or VFW logo, should be in the booth at all times. Display a sign large enough to let everyone know you are there.
- If local and state laws allow a drawing, get a member or merchant to donate a gift. Prepare tickets with stubs that request name, address and phone number. Hold the drawing for the prize and save the stubs for later contact.
- As eligible veterans visit the booth, inform them of the VFW programs and pass out informational material.
- As eligible veterans visit the booth, have them fill out a form giving information on their military service and whether they are interested in joining the VFW. If they wish to join, SIGN THEM UP. If they don't wish to join at this time, don't be discouraged. Make sure you get their name, address and phone number and contact them at a later date.

The Follow Up

- Within a few days, have your membership team contact the eligible veterans and talk to them about joining the VFW. This is the time to verify their eligibility and collect their dues.
- Be sure your membership teams is prepared to answer questions about the various programs the VFW sponsors.

“Encourage – Expand - Educate”

- When a veteran joins, make them feel welcome. Ask them to take an active part in the Post and to help recruit others.

It is not the responsibility of the Post membership team to do all of the work. Every member should be involved and made to feel a part of the membership program. Post activities attract members. A strong, active Post helps promote membership. Some membership builders are:

- Activities in community service, Americanism and youth programs.
- Capable service officer to assist veterans in the community.
- Dances, dinners and other social functions for VFW members and their guests.
- Publicize all Post events.
- Maintain a clean, well-managed Post home and canteen.
- Hold interesting and informative Post meetings.
- Have active cooperation between your Post and Auxiliary.

“Encourage – Expand - Educate”

A piece of History

What does Gold, Blue, White and Silver Stars represent?

During World War I, an Army officer of the 5th Ohio Infantry, Captain Robert L. Queissner who had two sons serving on the front line, designed and patented the Blue Star Service Banner. This service flag/banner quickly became the unofficial symbol of a mother and/or father who had a child in military service.

Throughout WWI, American women who had family members serving their country wore a **Blue star** around their left arm. As the war progressed and the number of dead escalated, mothers wanted to express their loss as well as the pride and honor they felt for their country. Those mothers of the fallen began sewing a **Gold Star** over the blue star and they began calling themselves "**Gold Star Mothers.**"

During World War II, the Department of War issued specifications on the manufacture of the service flag and service lapel pin. The **Blue Star** Service Banner typically displayed in windows is an 8.5x14" white field with a Blue Star(s) sewn onto a red and white banner. Each Blue Star represents one family member serving in the armed forces. A banner can have up to five stars, signifying those five members of that family are currently in military uniform on active duty.

If the family member symbolized is killed in action or dies while serving in the military, the blue star representing that individual will have superimposed on it a Gold Star of smaller size so that the blue forms a border. The traditional **Gold Star Mothers and Families Day** is the fourth Sunday in September.

A **White Star** Family is one who had a close relative that served in the military and lost them to suicide. The purpose of the White Star Family program is to honor those service members and provide proper care and support to the families.

The **Silver Star** Families are those who's loved one has been wounded, contracted a serious illness or injury in a war zone. On Silver Star Service Banner Day, traditionally May 1, we recommit to caring for those who return to us wounded or ill.

Many Gold, Blue, White and Silver Star Families reside within our community. Their sacrifice has been great and may their courage and patriotism inspire us to greater service for our country. 🇺🇸

As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we ask you to remember the sacrifices of these Families as their loved ones gave their "last full measure of devotion" to preserve the ideals of a free America.

May we in grateful remembrance never forget **Freedom is Not Free** and that much has been sacrificed for our freedoms.



“Encourage – Expand - Educate”

Notes:

Lined area for notes.

VFW National Membership Program

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024

Duane T. Sarmiento
Commander-in-Chief

Updated: May 18, 2023

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Membership Mission

To recruit, retain and mentor a stable membership base including all generations of veterans.

To cultivate a membership that is well versed in institutional knowledge and actively involved at all levels of the organization and in the local community. To establish Posts with an established vision of service, leadership, and community outreach.

Introduction

Today, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is 124 years old. During those years, we have had WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and other veterans joining en masse. Today, however, we have lost many of these honorable men and women. As history has proven, the Post-9/11 veterans will join our organization like others have when they are ready, however usually not until their kids grow or their retirements are in place.

We must not stereotype any of our future members regardless of sex, color, or personal beliefs. If a member qualifies, bring them in. The only way to make this success permanent is to retain those members, recover past members, and continue to recruit new veterans into our ranks. There are still many veterans eligible to join and at all ages. However, our focus needs to be on our Post-9/11 veterans, for they will be our future.

You might ask, how do we build our organization? It's simple, leadership by example. If you are a Commander of a Post, District, Department, or the National Commander, then get out there and recruit members yourself and show your team that if you can do it, so can they. A good way to do this is to improve the way we communicate with our members at all levels of the organization. Posts, Districts, Departments, and our National Officers need to use all methods available to convey information for news and training to our membership through newsletters, emails, social media, recruiting booths and outreach teams.

We need to know who our members are and how we can address their needs and concerns. It's time to step it up and recruit Post-9/11 veterans. Each of us needs to do our part and recruit at least one new member. Think about it. If we all recruit one each, we would show substantial growth in membership in just one year.

Membership Goals

1. Build a strong organization through recruiting new members while retaining our current membership, creating a solid baseline for the future.
2. Work together to achieve VFW's goals. The VFW National Headquarters staff is available to assist in coordinating programs, developing membership initiatives, and building awareness among our membership and the entire veteran community.

Membership Objectives

- Achieve 102% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership

Membership Resources

In order to assist our Posts, Districts, and Departments in meeting the goals set out by the Commander-in-Chief in this membership program, the National Headquarters has a wealth of resources at your disposal. Many of those are available free of charge to our members.

- Membership materials ranging from applications, recruiting brochures, posters, and benefits brochures can be ordered directly from the Membership Department using the Membership Order Form (located under Membership Quick Links once you log into vfw.org)
- Resources for Post Development, Membership Campaigns, and Mentorship such as training guides, videos, and webinars are available in the Training & Support section on vfw.org
- Promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements, and media kits are all available through the Media Room on vfw.org

See the trend? Just about anything you will need is at vfw.org, check it out.

The VFW National Headquarters staff is ready and trained to answer any questions you may have concerning membership, VFW programs, or other issues. You can contact our **Member Service Center directly at 1.833.VFW.VETS**, or the **Membership Department at 1.888.JOIN.VFW**.

Triple Crown Award

Any commander who achieves All-American at the Post, District and Department level will receive a Triple Crown pin and recognition at the National Convention.

Recruiting Awards

- **1,5, 10, 15** Corresponding numbered member pin
- **25** CIC coin and Citation
- **50** National Aide-De-Camp cap and Citation
- **75** CIC Medallion Set
- **100** Century cap or \$50 VFW Store credit & Citation
- **150** CIC Custom Desk Name Plate

Department “102 Percent” Incentive

Any Department that attains 102% in membership by close of business on June 30th, 2024, will be entered into a random drawing. The commander and quartermaster that is selected will each receive:

- **\$2500 voucher through Veterans Travel Services (VTS) applied towards airfare, accommodations, and transportation for a trip of their choice.**

Early Bird Award—VFW Legislative Conference

The top three Post commanders and quartermasters in each division on Jan. 1, 2024, will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW Legislative Conference, Washington D.C.**

Post Commander and Quartermaster – New & Reinstated Member Award

The top 10 Post commanders and quartermasters in each division who report more than 50 new and/or reinstated members by Jan. 1, 2024, will each be awarded:

- **A travel charger with the official VFW Commander-in-Chief logo.**

Meeting the Challenge Award

The top two Post commanders and the top two District commanders in each division who achieve 102% membership by April 1, 2024, will each be awarded:

- **Five-night hotel accommodation at the National Convention.**

102% Post, District & Department

A distinctive streamer will be awarded to every Post, District and State/Department that achieves 102% or greater in membership before July 1, 2024.

102% Commander Drawing

Each Post and District commander that exceeds 102% in membership by June 1, 2024, will receive an entry in this drawing. Twenty Post commanders and Twelve District commanders will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**

Post Commander and Quartermaster Division Challenge

For every 10 new/reinstated members recruited between July 1, 2023, and April 1, 2024, Posts will earn one entry for both Post commander and quartermaster entered into a drawing. One Post per division will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend each for commander and quartermaster to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**

Legacy Life Membership Acquisition

Each Post that achieves the designated benchmarks of 25, 50 and 75 Legacy Life Members will be awarded:

- **A Legacy Society Post Proclamation.**

Each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100 Legacy Life members by July 1, 2024, commander or Post representative will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**
- **Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.**
- **Legacy Society Post Proclamation.**

Top Department Recruiter

The top Recruiter in every Department on July 1, 2024, will receive:

- **Engraved Navy Cutlass**

Note: Minimum of 25 new/reinstated members required to win this award.

Elite Recruiter

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new and/or reinstated members by July 1, 2024, will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**
- **Distinctive cap, citation, and name badge.**

Recruiter of the Year

The VFW member who signs up the greatest number of new and/or reinstated members greater than 250 by July 1, 2024, will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**
- **Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.**
- **Distinctive cap, citation, and name badge.**
- **Commander-in-Chief's Crystal Eagle.**

New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award

- For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:
 - **A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.**

All-American Criteria

The All-American program exists to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork, authentic accomplishment in membership growth and VFW core programs.

All-American Post Criteria

- Membership must be at least 102%
- Must conduct two Membership recruiting events, submit reports through All-American Dashboard
- Post-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Meet all the following Program Participation Criteria:
 - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - Hold a fundraiser with the proceeds going to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services, minimum of \$100.
 - National Citizenship Education Teachers Award –Post must advance a teacher to District; if no District judging applies then advance to Department for judging (Overseas Post donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-March, and April-June.
 - Buddy Poppy- Purchase Three per member in the Post

All-American Post Award

- All Posts that meet the Qualifying Percentage and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American Post Citation, Post Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

- The Top **25** Posts in each Division will receive:

- Acknowledgment in VFW Magazine
- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention
- All-American Post citation
- All-American Post streamer
- All-American citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander

- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster and Post members may purchase “Post Member” cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)
- All-American Team Post Member lapel pin (25 pack)
- The top *five* commanders in each division will also receive:
 - **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**
 - **Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.**

All-American District Criteria

- Membership must be at least 102%
- Conduct two Membership recruiting events, submit report through the dashboard.
- District-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters.
- Meet all the following Program Participation criteria:
 - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry*see last page)
 - National Citizenship Education Teachers Award – one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)

All-American District Award

- All Districts that meet the Qualifying Percentage and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American District Commander Citation, All-American Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

- The Top **15** Districts in each Division will receive:

- All-American District streamer
- All-American District citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster may purchase cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)
- The top *two* District commanders in each division will also receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**
- **Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.**

All-American Department Criteria

- Membership must be at least 102%.
- Must conduct two Membership recruiting events, report of these events must be submitted through the All-American dashboard.
- Conduct a Department Commander's "Official Visit or Round Up" prior to Jan 1, 2024, with a report submitted through the All-American dashboard.

National Legislative Service

- Monthly National Legislative Service committee member reports submitted to National Legislative Service in Washington, D.C.

National Veterans Services

- Must have a State/Department service officer and submit his or her name and contact information to National Veterans Services in Washington, D.C. by July 31, 2023.
- Department Service Officer successfully completes NVS training requirements with a passing grade.
- Department Service Officer or appropriate designee reports hosting Post Service Officer training to NVS. Reports due by 30 June 2024.

Programs

- Voice of Democracy - An entry advanced to National judging
- Patriot's Pen - An entry advanced to National judging
- Veterans & Military Support Programs – Must complete State/Department fundraiser and proceeds donated to Veterans & Military Support Programs, Kansas City, Mo. (see last page)
- Must have at least One teacher submitted for the Teacher of the Year competition. (One entry from one of the three categories).
- Must enter one Employer of the Year Nomination (see last page)
- Must enter one JROTC Cadet of the Year Nomination (see last page)
- Must enter one VFW Member of the Year Nomination (see last Page)

All-American Department Award

- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap - commander - *quartermaster may purchase cap.*
- All-American lapel pin - commander - *quartermaster may purchase pin.*
- \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention
- Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention Joint Opening Session

Conference Membership Award

The Conference with the highest membership percentage of the four Conferences will receive a \$1500 award and have their name and year engraved on a traveling trophy presented by the Commander-in-Chief to the Conference Chairman at the National Convention. The 2023-2024 Conference Chairman will return the trophy to the membership booth at National Convention in Louisville, KY no later than COB on Saturday to ensure placement of the new nameplate. This trophy will be presented to the 2023-2024 Conference Chairman on stage during the Joint Opening Session**.

Post Membership Divisions and Minimum Qualifying Percentages

Division	Total Membership		Qualifying Percentage
1	951+		102%
2	750	950	102%
3	356	749	102%
4	246	355	102%
5	185	245	102%
6	143	184	102%
7	112	142	102%
8	88	111	102%
9	68	87	102%
10	51	67	102%
11	10	50	102%

District Membership Divisions and Minimum Qualifying Percentages

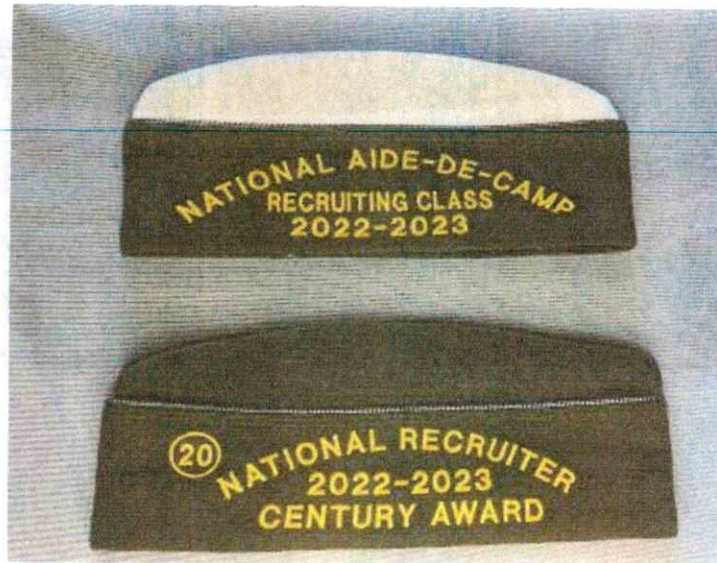
Division	Total Membership		Qualifying Percentage
1	5,000	14,000	102%
2	3,282	4,999	102%
3	2,172	3,281	102%
4	1,447	2,171	102%
5	906	1,446	102%
6	1	905	102%

Important Notes

- Awards are transferable inside the Post, Districts or Department.
- **Post/District/Department:** Membership must be at least 102 percent.
- **Post member cap,** any member in a Post that achieves All-American status can purchase a "Post Member" cap. Those members must be in the Post during the membership year.
- The *Department Commander's "Official Visit or Round Up"* is for Department commanders to visit Posts in their Department to get face-to-face time with their Post and District leadership and assist with membership and Programs.
- Donations made to replace Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen (By eligible overseas Post). **Do not donate through your Department or by any other means.** Use the dashboard for your donation.
- Veterans & Military Support Programs Services Donations for Post/District/Department as listed above will only be accepted only through the following link: Use the dashboard for online donation.
- ****For the Conference Membership Award traveling trophy,** the Conference Chairman will be responsible for the return of the trophy to the Membership Department booth at the National Convention each year.
- Employer of the Year nomination link:
https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vfw_employer_of_the_year_award
- JROTC Cadet of the Year nomination link:
https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vfw_jrotc_cadet_of_the_year_award
- VFW Member of the Year nomination link:
https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vfw_member_of_the_year_award
- Department "102 Percent" Incentive, NOTE: Reimbursement for travel expenses paid by the VFW will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099 if the total of payments made to you during any calendar year equals \$600.00 or more. Travel expenses paid for a guest or spouse for the award will also be reported to the IRS. The reimbursement you receive from the VFW will be deemed by the IRS to be taxable income. Since the circumstances of each individual are different, it is recommended that you consult your tax advisor to determine the effect these payments may have on your personal tax situation. It is your responsibility to keep receipts and other records as you and your accountant and/or tax advisor deem necessary in order to document your expenditures.

Recruiter Awards

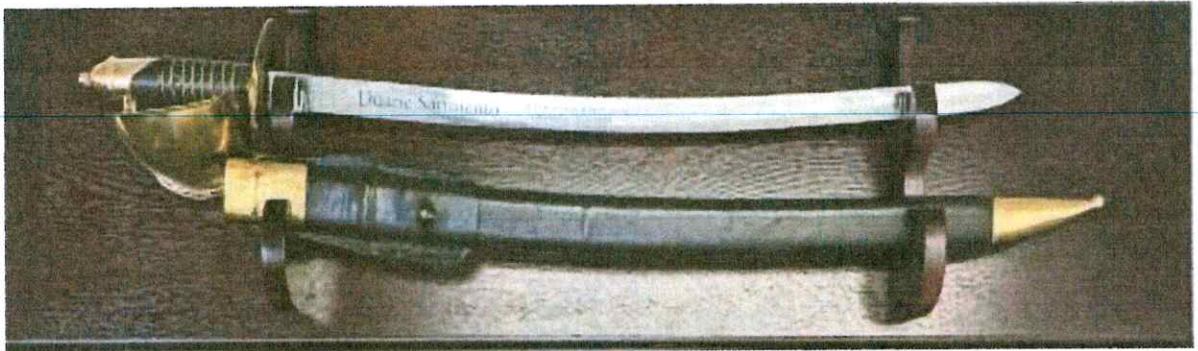
CIC Membership Awards



Aide-de-Camp Cap and Century Recruiter Cap



1-, 5-, 10-, and 15-member Recruiting Pins
Commander-in-Chief's Pin and Coin



Engraved Navy Cutlass



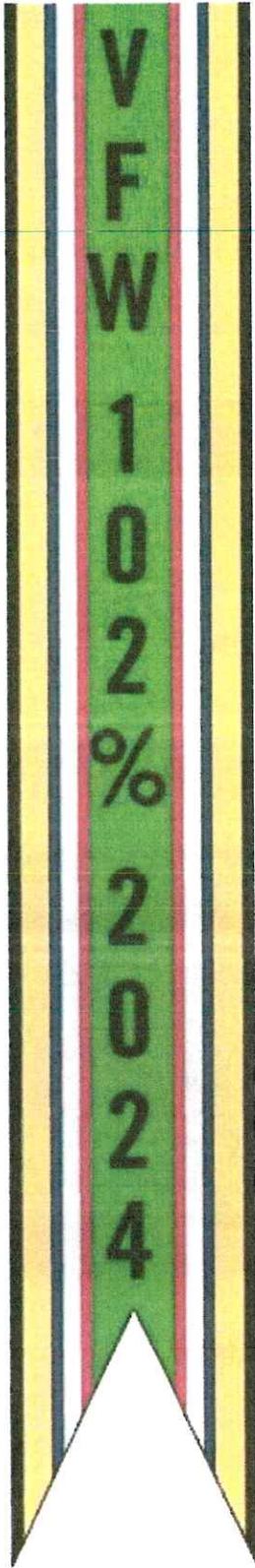
CIC logo power bank



Recruiter Of The Year – Crystal Eagle trophy



CIC Desk Name Plate (Award winners name with CIC logo and slogan)



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CIC Medallion Set with SVC and JVC Coins



All-American Awards

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