

IGNITE, UNITE, & PUSH FORWARD

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM 2026 - 2027



Be part of the Solution & Positive Evolution, Not part of the Problem!
Actions speak Louder than words!!!

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Message from VFW Department of Pennsylvania Commander Jim Brown

Sisters and Brothers,

I am deeply humbled and profoundly honored to serve as YOUR Commander and to represent the dedicated Membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Pennsylvania. This honor arrived quickly, and I know it will pass just as quickly — which is why EVERY MOMENT MATTERS!.

When I first joined the VFW, I will admit I thought it was simply a bar. I soon learned how wrong I was. The VFW is a refuge — a place where Veterans can find belonging, purpose, and support. It is a community built on shared sacrifice and strengthened by those who choose to step forward rather than step away.

My own journey has been filled with challenges, setbacks, and humbling lessons. Those experiences shaped me, strengthened me, and deepened my commitment to ensuring that together, we will always strive for the betterment of the VFW as a whole. I am here because Mentors and fellow Members encouraged me to stay, to lead, and to BE PART OF THE SOLUTION — not part of the problem. This passion allowed me to **IGNITE** a fire.

As a Post and District Commander, I witnessed firsthand what may be achieved when Members **UNITE** behind a common purpose. The accolades we as a Post and District earned at the State and National levels were never the result of one person's efforts. They were the direct reflection of YOU — the Membership — stepping up, working together, and refusing to settle for anything less than **Excellence**. My six years representing Pennsylvania as the National Legislative Chair only reinforced that truth. The truth of taking on challenges is best done by Uniting.

The greatest challenges we continue to face are Retaining, Reinstating, and Recruiting Members into our VFW. That is why **Growing Our VFW Family** is the first major challenge I put forth to all of you. Let me be clear — I have zero doubt that you are up to this challenge!

There are 365 days in a year. Every single one of those days is an opportunity to reach out, reconnect, and grow our Membership. Imagine the impact if every Member, of our approximately 57,000 Pennsylvania Members, brought in just **one** New or Reinstated Member over the course of the year. The math is simple: we would **double** the size of OUR VFW PA FAMILY.

Yet too often, we rely on a small group of dedicated individuals to carry the weight. That cannot continue. Membership is our lifeblood. Membership is the responsibility of the Membership Team. **YOU ARE ALL THAT MEMBERSHIP TEAM!!!**

Every conversation, Every event, Every interaction is a chance to welcome someone home to the VFW — a place where they belong, their service is honored, and where their voice matters.

Pennsylvania has a proud history of leadership and achievement within the VFW. That legacy is not accidental — it is built by Members who show up, speak up, and lift each other up. This year, and every year we must **PUSH FORWARD**. The expectation: **Excellence in all we do**.

Whether it is supporting Veterans, strengthening our Posts, engaging our communities, or mentoring the next generation of leaders, YOU are the key to our success.

Together, we will honor our past, strengthen our present, and build a future worthy of the Warriors who came before us.

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Message from the Department Membership Chair James Rice

We are a great Department that takes the VFW and its mission seriously at every level. However, to accomplish our continued mission, “WE All” must push forward while simultaneously supporting those in our organization. The goal to bring in new, motivated members is admirable and what we are striving to achieve. However, we must not forget that we need to start by making all members feel welcome.

When we have a potential new member, we should assign somebody to mentor them about the VFW and our mission. A tour of the Post and a brief overview of what is being accomplished within the VFW and your community is enough to ignite a passion to contribute to the mission – and then they too will promote our mission. When we meet veterans in our communities, honesty and authenticity matter. A genuine story about why we serve—and how the VFW changes lives—can open the door to connection. Our mission is powerful because it is real, and because it is rooted in service to veterans and their families.

To honor that mission, we must never allow ourselves to become stagnant or complacent. Growth is not just a goal—it is a responsibility. We will continue to grow, to retain those we serve, and to re-engage those who have served with us before.

Membership is extremely important; it is our future. All our members have a voice, and that voice is much louder when more of us come together to help each other in our community. Whether it is to leverage and advocate in legislation, gather veterans for community service, or garner the monies to give back to veterans in need, we cannot forget that we need future members to lead and continue the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by taking care of all future veterans and their families. We are proud to prove that “Nobody Does More for Veterans” by recruiting and retaining our replacements to continue the mission.

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2026 - 2027 Membership Program

Special Notices and Expectations

- Membership Divisions for Posts will correspond with National.
- Membership 100% +3 Members for All-State.
 - To be considered for “Captain of the All-State Team” the requirement is **100% +15** Members.
- Membership numbers will be verified by National Headquarters Data.
- Department Membership Contests end April 30, 2027. This means ALL requirements must be met prior to April 30, 2027!
- Individuals, Posts, and Districts are limited to one win in each contest category, unless otherwise stated. All checks will be written out to the Post or District Quartermaster.
- All Membership transmittals for All-State Status to receive a cap at the Department Convention must meet the previously stated guidelines and recorded at Department Headquarters prior to April 30, 2027. This includes the completion of all requirements on the All-State Worksheet, and it being submitted prior to April 30, 2027.
- All Membership transmittals for All-American Status must reach National Headquarters prior to June 30, 2027.
 - Please note: The requirements for All-American may differ from that of All-State.

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TRIPLE “R”

In my days as an Air Force Combat Engineer in Red Horse, **Triple “R”** meant “**R**apid **R**unway **R**epair”. For our VFW Membership Program, It means “**R**etain, **R**einstate, **R**ecruit”.

1. **RETAIN:** We must find ways to keep our Members involved, NOT just wait 11 months and ask them for their Membership Dues!
2. **REINSTATE:** Reach out to Expired Members and ask what we may do for THEM! Find out why they left the VFW, and invite them back into the VFW Family.
3. **RECRUIT:** Many would say Recruiting should come first. Recruiting new Members is the Lifeblood for longevity of the VFW. We actually do a decent job Recruiting, and continue to adapt to different methods of Recruitment. Where we fall short, is Retaining those Members that we spent the time/effort/monies Recruiting.

Quartermasters at every Post have the access to obtain lists of expiring Members and Members that have already expired. Have your Post Quartermaster generate these lists and utilize the lists to RETAIN and REINSTATE Members. If your Posts Quartermaster is unable, have them seek assistance on how to obtain the lists. If the Post Quartermaster is unwilling to do this, please let the Department Membership Chair know and the Department Commander will be informed.

These Expiring and Expired lists are tremendous tools for your toolbox when it comes to increasing your Membership. These individuals were already Members. Contact them and get them reengaged!

A Member At Large listing is available upon request from Department Headquarters. This is a great way to reach out to individuals and get them into your Post(s).

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Individual & Post Membership Awards

PTI ATTENDANCE AWARD:

All VFW PA Members that physically attend a July 2026 PTI, will be eligible for a drawing (at that training attended) for 1 of 9 Life Memberships. If already a Life Member, the winner may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member. If all individuals at the Post of the winner are Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

Contest #1: Drafting the Blueprint

Every VFW PA Member that obtains a minimum of **3** New and/or Reinstated Members between July 1 and July 31, 2026 will be put in a drawing for 1 Life Membership. If already a Life Member, the winner may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member.

Contest #2: Surveying the Project

The Post in each Division with the highest combination of Reinstated and/or New Members (minimum of **3**) by August 31, 2026 will receive a Life Membership. If all Post Members are currently Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

Contest #3: Breaking Ground

In observation of POW/MIA Day: Every VFW PA Member that obtains a minimum of **5** New and/or Reinstated Members by September 18, 2026 will be put in a drawing for 1 of 2 Life Memberships. If already a Life Member, the winner(s) may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member.

Contest #4: Create the Base

All Posts that reach 92% Membership by September 30, 2026 will be put in a drawing for 1 Life Membership. If all Post Members are currently Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

Contest #5: Build the Foundation

Every Day is Veterans Day: Any Post reaching 95% +5 New and/or Reinstated Members by November 11, 2026 will be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 3 Life Memberships. If all Post Members are currently Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

Contest #6: Construct the Project

All Post who reach 100% +3 in Membership by December 31, 2026 will receive \$1.00 per current roster Membership.

Contest #7: Finish the Project

Every VFW PA Member that recruits 5 New and/or Reinstated Members between January 1, 2027 and April 30, 2027 will be entered in a drawing for 1 of 4 Life Memberships. If already a Life Member, the winner may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member.

Contest #8: CUT THE RIBBON

Any Post that recruits 5 New and/or Reinstated Members between January 1, 2027 and April 30, 2027 will be entered in a drawing for 1 of 4 Life Memberships. If all Post Members are currently Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

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Post Level Contest (Post Divisions 1-6)

All Posts that properly report 100% +3 Membership, including 15 New and/or Reinstated Members by the designated contest (9, 10, 11, 12) date will receive the listed award(s).

Contest #9:	November 30, 2026	1 Legacy Upgrade 2 Life Memberships
Contest #10:	December 31, 2026	2 Life Memberships
Contest #11:	February 28, 2027	1 Life Membership
Contest #12:	April 30, 2027	\$250 VFW Store Gift Cert. <u>**IF ALL POST MEMBERS ALREADY LIFE, LEGACY UPGRADES WILL BE AWARDED**</u>

Post Level Contest (Post Divisions 7-11)

All Posts that properly report 100% +3 Membership, including 10 New and/or Reinstated Members by the designated contest (13, 14, 15, 16) date will receive the listed award(s).

Contest #13:	November 30, 2026	1 Legacy Upgrade 2 Life Memberships
Contest #14:	December 31, 2026	2 Life Memberships
Contest #15:	February 28, 2027	1 Life Membership
Contest #16:	April 30, 2027	\$250 VFW Store Gift Cert. <u>**IF ALL POST MEMBERS ALREADY LIFE, LEGACY UPGRADES WILL BE AWARDED**</u>

Contest #17:

March Madness (Will be announced at or around Mid-Winter 2027)

Contest #18

Every Post obtaining 100% +3 Membership, in addition meets all mandatory criteria on the ALL-STATE Worksheet by April 30, 2027 will be entered into a drawing for 1 of 5 Life Memberships. If all Members of the Post are already Life, a Legacy Life will be awarded.

ALL-STATE POST COMMANDER AND POST QUARTERMASTER

Contest #19:

All-State Post Commanders and Post Quartermasters that obtain 100% +3 Membership, in addition meets all mandatory criteria on the ALL-STATE Worksheet by April 30, 2027, will receive the distinctive VFW Cover, Pin, and Special Recognition at the June 2027 State Convention.

An Outstanding Post Commander and Post Quartermaster will hold the distinct Honor of being the 2026-2027 "Captain of the All-State Team". The criteria is based on the following: Obtain a minimum of **100% +15** Membership and the points scoring of the All-State Worksheet that must be done prior to April 30, 2027. At the State Convention, they will receive a distinctive All-State Captain Cover, Special Recognition, and a Special gift from State Commander Jim Brown.

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District Awards

All Districts that properly report 100% +3 Membership, including 20 New and/or Reinstated Members by the designated contest (20, 21, 22, 23) date will receive the listed award(s).

Contest #20:	November 30, 2026	1 Legacy Upgrade 2 Life Memberships
Contest #21:	December 31, 2026	2 Life Memberships
Contest #22:	February 28, 2027	1 Life Membership
Contest #23:	April 30, 2027	\$250 VFW Store Gift Cert.

Contest #24:

All District Commanders that attend AT LEAST 3 Recruiting Events, and Recruit AT LEAST 3 New Members between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will be put into a drawing for 1 of 3 Life Memberships. If already a Life Member, the winner may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member.

Contest #25:

District Membership Chairs that attend AT LEAST 3 Recruiting Events, and Recruit AT LEAST 6 New Members between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will be put into a drawing for 1 of 3 Life Memberships. If already a Life Member, the winner may choose to upgrade to Legacy Life or gift the Life Membership to another Member.

Contest #26:

District Membership Chairs that obtain 100% +3 in their respective District by January 27, 2027 will be entered in a drawing for 1 of 5 prizes of \$300. Names will be drawn at the 2027 Mid-Winter Joint Opening Session.

ALL-STATE DISTRICT COMMANDER AND DISTRICT QUARTERMASTER

Contest #27:

All-State District Commanders and District Quartermasters that obtain 100% +3 Membership including 20 New and/or Reinstated Members, completed District and all Posts Inspections, completed all District Audits (including June 2026), bonds for District and all Posts Quartermasters, and District By-Laws updated within the last 5 years by April 30, 2027 will receive a distinguished All-State District Cover, Recognition at the State Convention in June 2027, and a Special Gift from State Commander Jim Brown.

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Membership Plaques and Awards

Contest #28: Cut Above Award

The Individual Member that Recruits and/or Reinstates the MOST Members (minimum 25) between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will receive \$250. The Department Membership Team and Certified National Recruiters are not eligible for this award.

Contest #29: 100 MEMBER CLUB!

The Member with the **MOST** Recruited and/or Reinstated Members (minimum 100) will receive a special gift from State Commander Brown and a \$250 VFW Store gift certificate.

- The Members with the **SECOND AND THIRD MOST** Recruited and/or Reinstated Members (minimum 100) will receive a special gift from State Commander Jim Brown.

Contest #30: Past Department Commander Memorial Plaque

Awarded to the Post that attains the Greatest Membership Percentage increase (minimum 1% increase) between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027. Post must be at or above 101% Membership to be eligible.

Contest #31: Fallen Warriors Memorial Plaque

Awarded to the Post that attains the Greatest Membership HEADCOUNT increase of New and/or Reinstated (minimum 20) between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027. Post must be at or above 100% +3 Members to be eligible.

Contest #32: We All Bleed RED Plaque

A Life Membership will be awarded to the District having the Greatest Membership HEADCOUNT increase of New and/or Reinstated (minimum 40) between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027. District must be at or above 100% +3 Members to be eligible.

Contest #33: April NOT Fools Day

The Post Commander and District Commander that leads the Department in Membership Percentage, the Department Membership Chair, and the Top Certified National Recruiter will each have one meal Friday and one meal Saturday nights at the VFW PA Auxiliary President's Testimonial paid (reimbursed after the event), if the Department of PA attains 100% +3 on/before April 1, 2027. In order to be awarded, you must attend the President's Testimonial.

Service Officer/Consultant (DSO Not Eligible)

Contest #34: VSO/VSC Top Recruiter Award

The VSO/VSC that Recruits the MOST New VFW Members (minimum 5) between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will receive \$250.

Contest #35: VSO/VSC Recruiter

Every VSO/VSC that Recruits a minimum of 3 New VFW Members between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will be put in a drawing for 1 of 3 prizes of \$100.

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ALL-STATE POST/DISTRICT COMMANDERS AND QUARTERMASTER WORKSHEET

To be considered All-State, this MANDATORY All-State Worksheet MUST be completed and submitted to Department Headquarters NO LATER THAN APRIL 30, 2027!!!

Name: _____ Post: _____ District: _____

Commander's Hat Size: _____ Quartermaster's Hat Size: _____

MANDATORY CRITERIA

- Membership Properly Reported as attaining goal of 100% +3
- Post/District/Home Association By-Laws (if applicable) MUST be current (within 5 years)
Date: _____
- Post/Home Association MUST have Articles of Incorporation on file with Department.
Date: _____
- All Posts MUST submit a minimum of 10 Community Service Entries for 2026-2027 between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027
- Purchase Buddy Poppies. **Same as National** (at least 5 per Member with a MINIMUM of 500). Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- VOD Entry: YES { } NO { } (\$500 Donation may be made in lieu of entry. Check MUST be sent to Department, Earmarked VOD, NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15, 2026).
- PP Entry: YES { } NO { } (\$500 Donation may be made in lieu of entry. Check MUST be sent to Department, Earmarked PP, NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15, 2026).
- State Commander's Special Project (Department Veterans' Relief Fund). A Minimum donation of \$250 must be sent to Department Earmarked Special Project.
Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- Donation to VMS (minimum \$100) Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- Donation to Arthritis (minimum \$100) Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- Donation to Diabetes (minimum \$100) Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- Donation to Barger Nurse Scholarship (minimum \$100) Date: _____ Ck#: _____
- Post/District must have a submission of one EMT **OR** Firefighter **OR** Police **OR** 911 Dispatcher.
- All Post Quarterly Trustee Reports (including June 2026) must be filed with Department.
Date sent to Dept. June: _____ Sept: _____ Dec: _____ March: _____
- Post Quartermaster Bonded and recorded at Department before November 30, 2026.
- Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice and/or Jr. Vice and/or Quartermaster MUST attend ALL District Meetings. **(Post/District Commander MUST attend at a minimum two (2) District Meetings)**
- Post/District not in arrears for current or prior year (e.g. dues, audits, reports, etc)
- Post Inspection for 2026-2027 recorded with Department by January 31, 2027.
Date Inspected: _____ Inspected By: _____
- ALL-STATE Requirements must be completed between July 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027.

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To be considered Captain of the All-State, this Worksheet MUST be completed and submitted to Department Headquarters NO LATER THAN APRIL 30, 2027!!!

Point Criteria	Points Available	Points Earned
100% +15 Membership by December 31, 2026	30	
OR 100% +15 Membership by February 28, 2027	20	
OR 100% +15 Membership by April 30, 2027	15	
New Member by December 31, 2026 (Max 100pts)	1 point each	
Reinstated Member by December 31, 2026 (Max 100pts)	1 point each	
Participate in a Membership Drive (Max 100)	10 points each	
Donation to the Commander's Project (Min \$250)	20	
Donation to Teener League Baseball (Min \$100)	5 points per \$100	
Donation to Women's Veterans Conference (Min \$100)	5 points per \$100	
Donation to National Home (Min \$100)	5 points per \$100	
Post/District Inspection submitted by DEC. 31, 2026	10	
VOD Student (Donations do NOT Qualify)	10	
PP Student (Donations do NOT Qualify)	10	
Participate in a POW/MIA Ceremony	20	
Participate in a Veterans Day Ceremony	20	
Increase Community Service Donations 5%	10	
Attend PTI	10	
Attend District Meeting (Max 20pts)	5 points each	
Healthcare Award Entry	10	
Membership Retention a least 85%	20	
Safety Award Entry	10	
Entry in State Coloring Contest	10	
Property in the Name of the POST	20	
ALL-AMERICAN ACHIEVED BEFORE APRIL 30, 2027	20	

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