



Department of Virginia School of Instruction 2026-2027

Commander – Mark Maggio

President – Kathy Voss

AGENDA

0900-0910 - Opening Remarks/ Sign in	Post Commander
0910-0920 - Foreword	TBD
0920-0940 - Leadership	TBD
0940-0950 - General Information w/ Questions & Discussions	TBD
0950-1000 - BREAK	BREAK
1000-1200 - Adjutant/QM training	TBD
Ntl. ByLaws/Manual of Procedures	TBD
1200-1230 - LUNCH BREAK (Working)	LUNCH
1230-1255 - State Legislation	TBD
1250-1320 - National Legislative Update	TBD
1325-1335 - BREAK	BREAK
1335-1350 - Programs and Awards	TBD
1350-1405 - All-State Post/District	TBD
1405-1420 - All-American	TBD
1420-1430 - Membership Plans & Awards	TBD
1430-1440 - Questions & Answers/Discussion	ALL HANDS

Foreword

Personal Accountability

District Commanders & District Quartermasters

You are the frontline leaders of your districts, the vital link between Posts and State officers. This role may feel like a tight-rope walk—balancing limited authority with the responsibility of being the “eyes and ears” for the entire department. Make it your habit to:

Monitor district reports and statistics at least once a month, preferably more often.

Proactively reach out to Posts before the Department Commander needs to follow up.

Flag early any Post that is struggling, so the Department can intervene before issues become crises.

Your vigilance keeps the chain of communication clear, prevents surprises, and strengthens the whole organization from the ground up.

Post Commanders & Post Quartermasters

The School of Instruction (SOI) is your roadmap to success. The bylaws and the All-State/All-American benchmarks are not optional checklists—they are hallmarks of excellence. By achieving them each year you:

- **Elevate your Post's stature within the VFW.**
- **Fortify the district's foundation, and in turn, reinforce the entire Department.**
- **Demonstrate that the strongest organizations start with strong, proactive bases.**

Don't delay what can be done today; every step forward fuels the momentum toward our collective goals.

Transparency in Every Action

Our work must shine with crystal-clear openness. As a nonprofit, we are custodians of records, funds, and property. By:

**Maintaining meticulous records and handling assets with integrity,
Avoiding any appearance of impropriety,**

We safeguard the VFW from audits, investigations, and disciplinary fallout. Transparency isn't just a requirement—it's the cornerstone of trust that powers our mission.

Convention Delegates: Our Voice on the National Stage

If you're registered as a delegate, remember that your presence amplifies Virginia's influence at the National Convention. Should you be unable to attend, ensure another delegate from your Post steps in. Our delegate strength on the floor has consistently made Virginia the department's strongest voice—a power that echoes onto Capitol Hill as we champion legislative priorities.

Every delegate counts; every seat we fill keeps our collective voice resonant and powerful.

In Summary:

- **Lead proactively and stay ahead of the reporting curve.**
- **Pursue excellence through the SOI's standards, every year, without delay.**
- **Operate with unwavering transparency to protect our integrity.**
- **Maintain delegate strength to ensure Virginia's leading role on the national stage.**

Let these guiding principles ignite your commitment, drive our organization forward, and inspire every member to accomplish their goals with pride, purpose, and accountability.



Leadership Presentation

Hal Roesch, VFW Foundation Executive Director,
Past CIC 2020-21

Which Leader Are You?



Leadership isn't defined by your title. Taking time to reflect on the kind of leader you are isn't just self-awareness—it's a strategic advantage. It exposes gaps, reinforces strengths, and clarifies the impact you have on your team and organization.

- ☐ **Are you leading with purpose, or just reacting to problems?**
- ☐ **Are you developing others, or simply directing them?**
- ☐ **Are you accountable to the standard, or comfortable with the status quo?**

The most effective leaders don't assume—they assess, adjust, and evolve.

Call to Action:

Take an honest look at which leader you are and identify where you stand today, decide who you need to become tomorrow, and commit to leading with intention.

The Hunk



HUNK The Gold Standard Leader

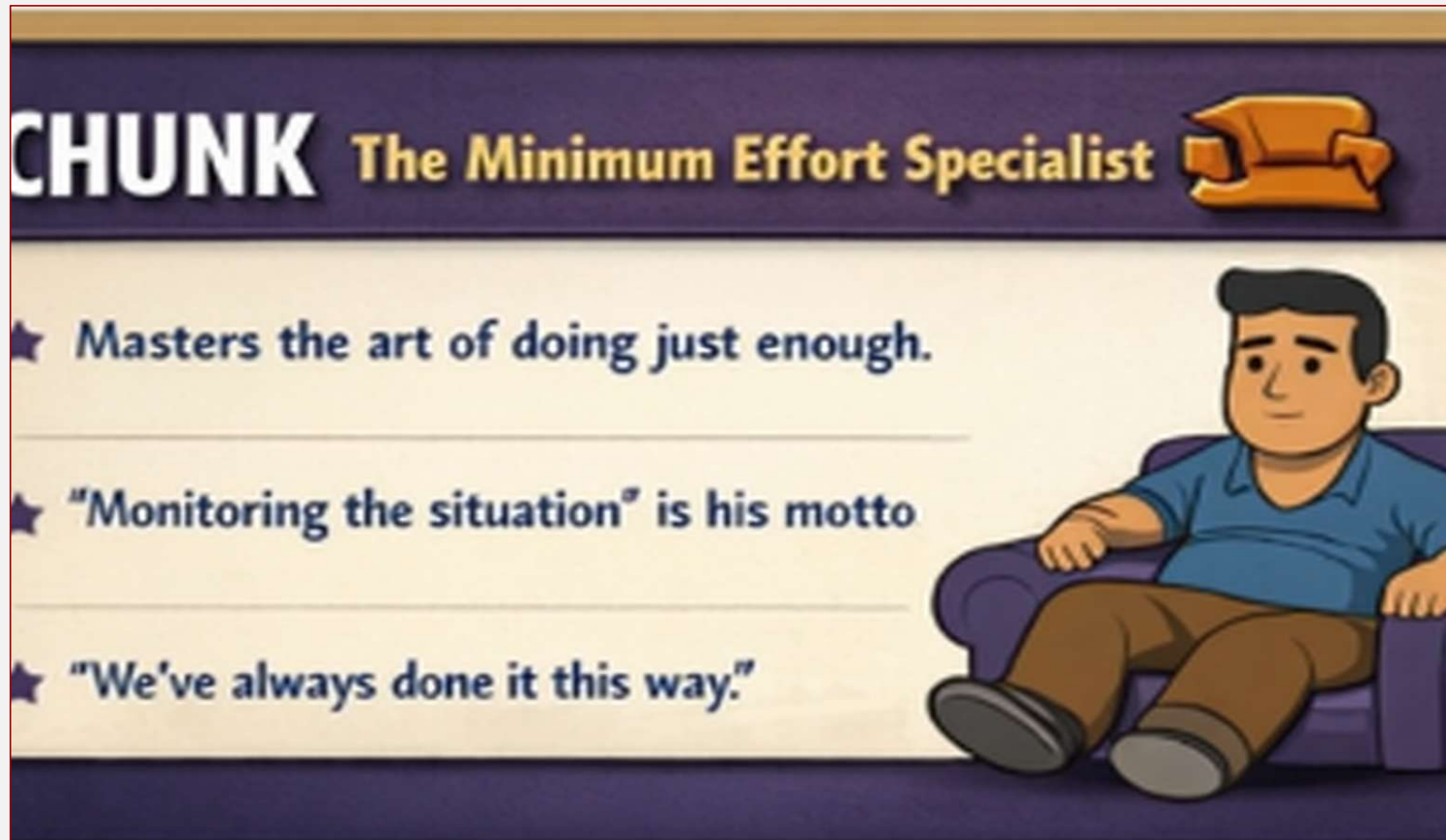
- ★ Knows the Bylaws better than their favorite drink order..
- ★ Communicates clearly and recruits actively.
- ★ Leads from the front and fixes problems fast.

The infographic features a cartoon illustration of a muscular man with dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, brown pants, and black gloves. He is flexing his right bicep and has his left hand on his hip. The background is a light beige color with a dark blue header and footer.

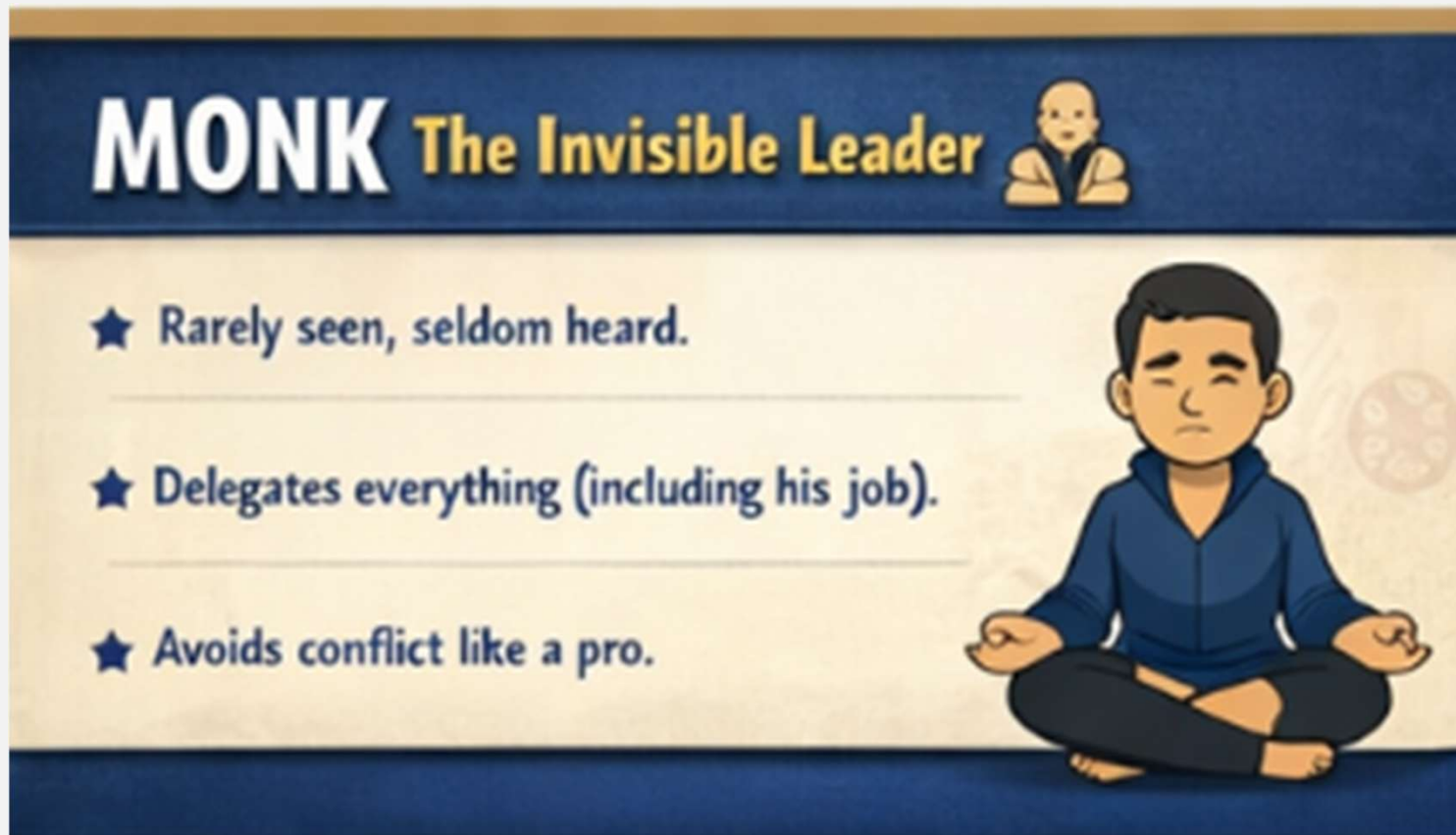
The Drunk



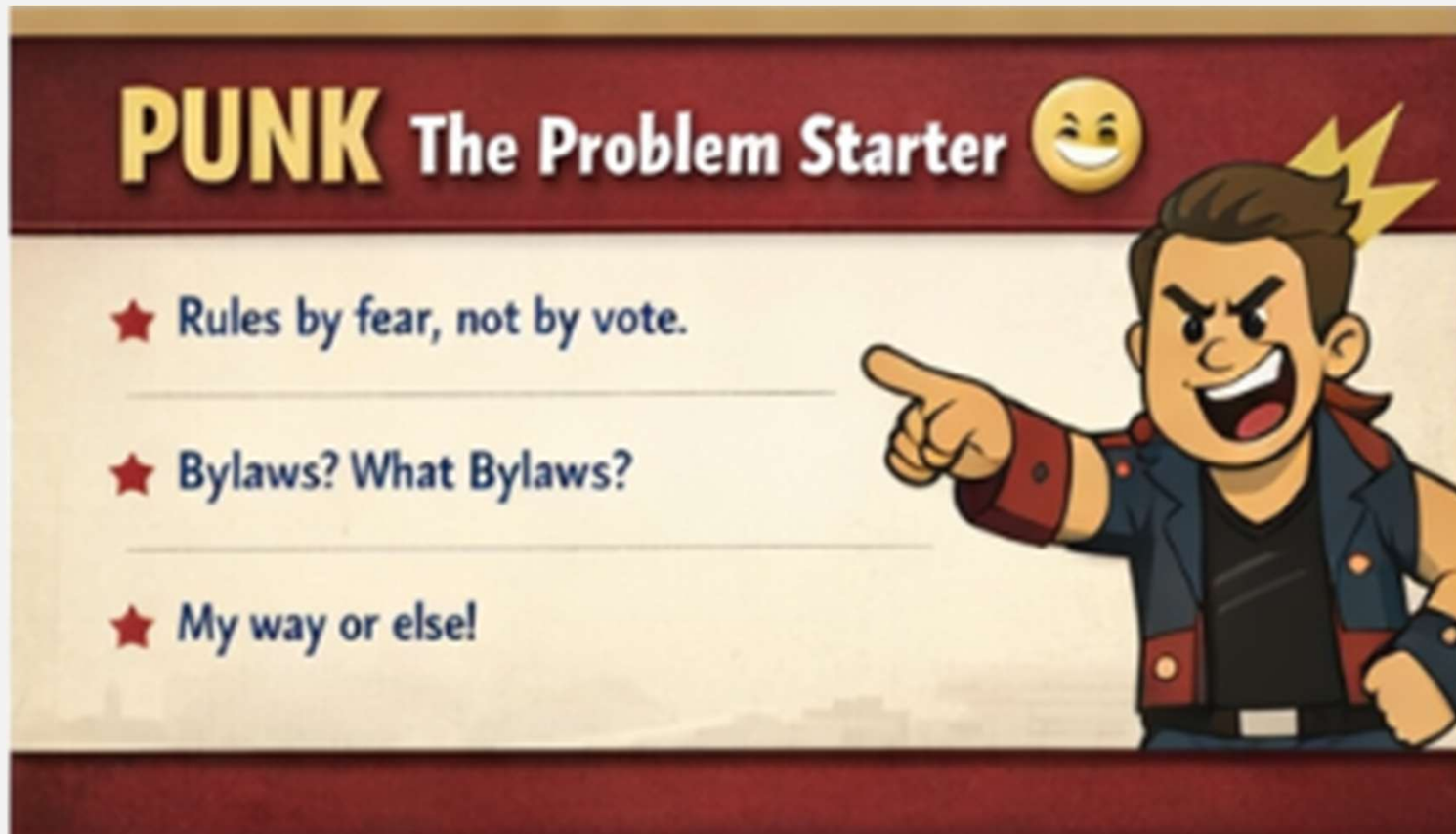
The Chunk



The Monk



The Punk

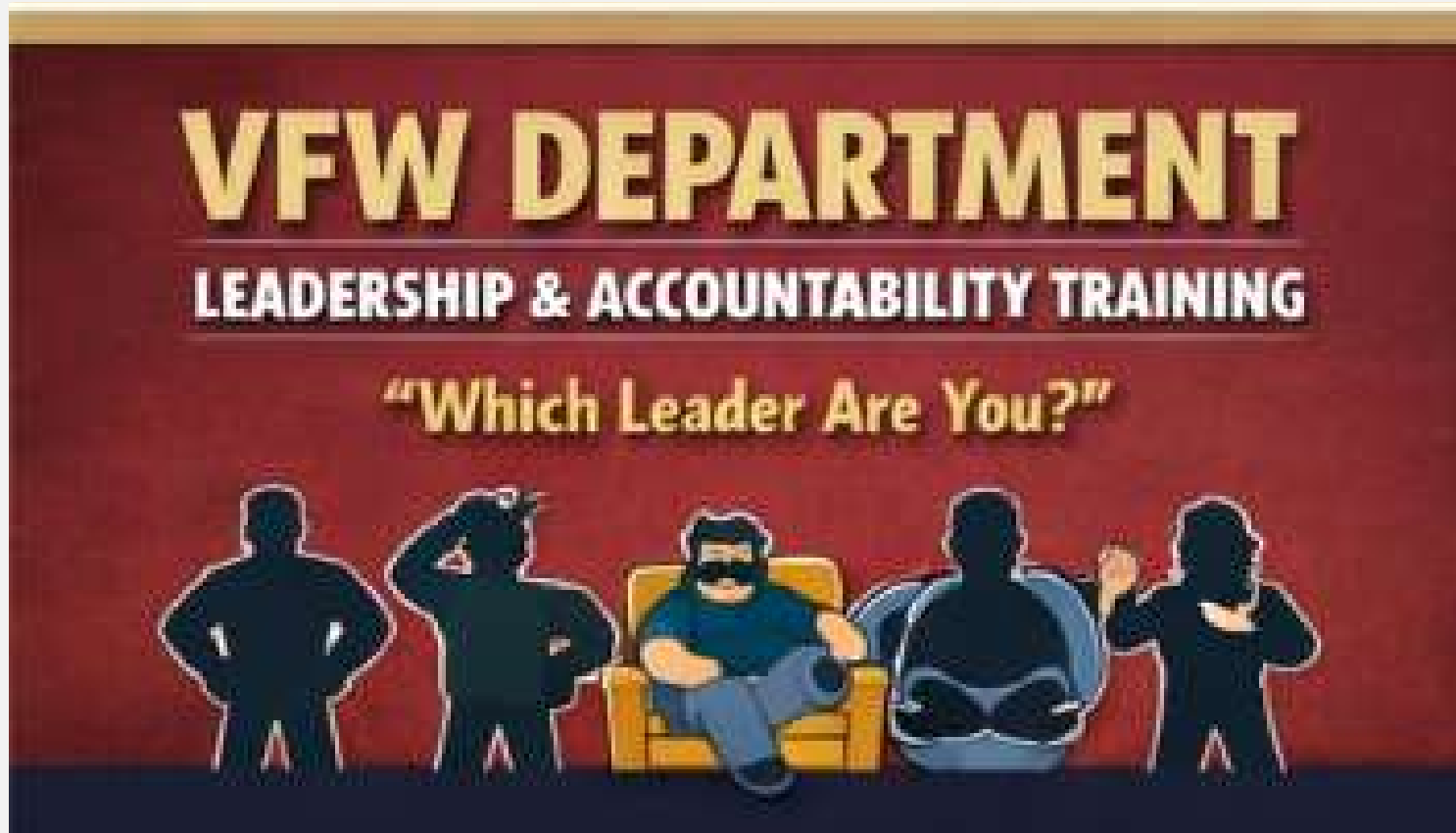


Who Do You Want to Be?



Who Do You Want to Be? 			
Type	Key Trait	Effect on Post	Takeaway
 HUNK	Leads by example	Post thrives	Be proactive & visible
 DRUNK	Social, not strategic	Rumors & chaos	Balance fun with duty
 CHUNK	Lazy	Problems grow	Do more than the minimum
 MONK	Invisible	Nothing gets done	Show up & participate
 PUNK	Intimidating	Members fear, not,	Lead with respect, not fear
Remember: Hunk wins hearts and minds. Everyone else... well, we can laugh & learn from them			

Which Leader Are You Going to Be?



Mirror Moment



Leadership Framework



- **Reality of VFW Leadership**
- **The 3 Pillars of Effective Leadership**
 - Respect Earns Influence
 - Visibility Builds Trust
 - Consistency Creates Credibility
- **The Leadership Traps**
 - Trap 1: Title $\neq$ Leadership
 - Trap 2: Trying to Please Everyone
 - Trap 3: Ignoring the Quiet Ones

True Story



- We've talked about leadership—what it looks like... what it requires.
- But I want to leave you with something more important than anything I've said so far...
- a story that captures what humility and leadership really is.

William Crawford



William J Crawford - MOH



When the cadets finally learned the truth, everything changed.

Not because he changed—
but because they did.

William J Crawford - MOH



In time, Crawford told his story and things he had learned in life to each academy class. His example also taught them many lessons. These sometimes-subtle lessons became of great importance to many of the cadets. Here was a man presumed dead, whose father had received the Medal of Honor for his son from an Army general, then who returned with honor and continued to serve his country and later served them.

After Crawford rejoined the military and throughout his career, he reluctantly wore his medal. For over 40 years, Crawford never had a single ceremony or recognition regarding his Medal of Honor award. The cadets at the USAF Academy decided to change this. In 1984, Crawford was a guest of the graduating class. Many past graduates, generals and VIPs attended this graduation. President Ronald Reagan arrived and presented the Medal of Honor to Crawford and formally recognized Crawford's action. In his remarks, President Reagan cited a few leadership lessons they learned from their janitor. Later these lessons were formalized by a former cadet, now COL (Ret.) James E. Moschgat:

Be careful with labels.



- We're quick to say, "just a Post member"... "just a volunteer"... "just someone in the background."
- Don't make that mistake.

Everyone deserves respect.



- Not because of position... but because they are part of your team.

Take time to know your people.



- A hero walked among them for years... and they never knew it.
- Who is walking among you right now?

Leaders should be humble.



- This role isn't about recognition.
- It's about service.

Don't chase glory—chase excellence.



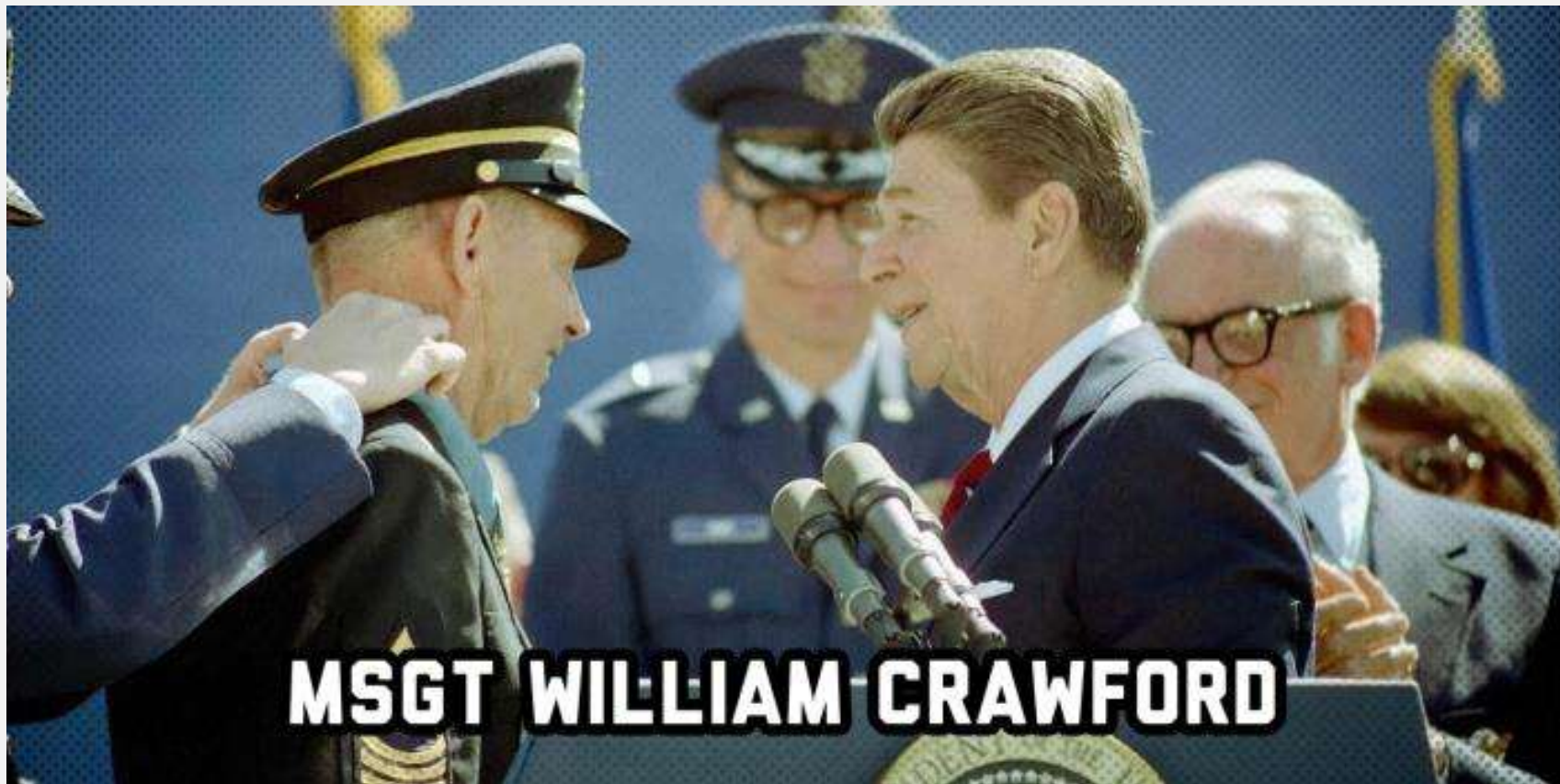
- Do the job the right way... and let the results speak for themselves.

No job is beneath a leader.



- If a Medal of Honor recipient can clean floors and toilets with pride... there is nothing in your Department that should be beneath you.

Receiving The MOH





QUESTIONS?

Hal Roesch
757-880-0487
Hal@vfw.org



Adjutant/QM National ByLaws/Manual of procedure

National Bylaws and MOP.

- Notes
- Congressional Charter
- Article I- Members
- Article II-Post
- Article IV-Districts
- Article VII – Miscellaneous Provisions
- Article VIII Uniforms, Badges ETC.
- Article IX- Discipline

National Bylaws and MOP cont.

- Article X- Rules of Order
- Article XI- Auxiliary
- Article XII- Military Order of the Cootie
- Article XIII- VFW Riders
- Article XIV- Amendments

Meeting Minutes

Purpose of Minutes

- To demonstrate that legal requirements have been met
- Provide an official record of what was done, not what was said.
- Refresh memory of those at the last meeting.
- Inform those not present at the last meeting.
- Historical purposes of acts and accomplishments.
- Used to verify actions of the body during fraternal and business meetings of the Post.

What Meeting Minutes Do.

- Assists with planning.
- Tracking of Progress
- Resolves disputes.
- Sharing of Information.
- Evidence of activity and business conducted.
- Increases transparency in the Post.

Meeting Minutes Essentials

- Do not have to contain everything that takes place at a Meeting.
- Minutes record what is done not what is said.
- Must be legible.
- Should be concise.
- Need to be accurate.

Standing Motions

- Motions made at the First Post meeting of the new term.
- Designed to standardize how the Post will conduct business throughout the current term.
- Examples are allowing the paying of routine utility bills without bringing them to the floor.

Insurance and Bonding

Bonding

- A Liquid asset is a type of asset that can be rapidly converted into cash while keeping its market value.
- Cash or currency- the cash you physically have on hand (Bank Accounts, Accounts receivable, mutual funds)

Bond vs Insurance

- Surety Bond: an agreement under which one party (Surety Company) guarantees to another party (VFW) the performance of an obligation by a third party (accountable officer such as QM)
- No deductible
- Does not require conviction in order to be paid for loss.
- Serves to protect the obliged party (VFW) against losses that result from the failure of an accountable officer to meet their obligation.
- Must exercise Due Care and diligence.

Bond vs Insurance

- Insurance: an agreement under which one party (the Insurance Company) guarantees protection to another party (VFW) due to dishonesty, forgery, computer fraud theft, etc.
- Typically, subject to a deductible.
- Usually requires a conviction before payout which may take years.

IRS Form 990

Form 990	Form 990-EZ or Complete Form 990	Form 990-N
Gross receipts > \$200,000 OR	Gross receipts > \$50,000 and <\$200,000 AND	Gross receipts normally < \$50,000
Total assets >\$500,000	Total assets <\$500,000	Must be filed electronically

Tax Exemptions

- If an organization does not file a 990 for 3 consecutive years, tax-exempt status will be revoked by the IRS.
 - Must individually apply for exemption, even if they were previously covered under a group exemption. (IRS Form 1024 and pay any applicable fees.
 - No other alternative to regain exemption.
- IRS Publication 3386 – Tax Guide for Veterans' Organizations.
- Consult legal and/or tax and accounting professionals to assist you with challenging issues.

Control of Units

- Sec. 709 of the National Bylaws and MOP.
- Any Post, District or Department owning or operating directly or by reason of a holding company or entity controlled by such a canteen, clubroom or other facility available to members or guest must maintain general liability insurance including if, necessary liquor liability.
- The Department and National must be listed as co-insured.
- Many other broad provisions.

District OMS Permissions Quartermaster

- Reporting: Legacy Life Members
- Unpaid and expiring officers
- Election Report filing: Post election report (view only)
- District Election report filing.

District OMS Permissions Adjutant

- Reporting: Legacy Life Members
- Unpaid and expiring officers
- Election Report Filing: Post Election report (view only)
- District Election Report Filing.

District OMS Permissions Commander

- Reporting: District Query
- Legacy Life Members
- Unpaid and expiring officers.
- Election Report Filing: Post election report (view only)
- District Election Report (view only)

Post OMS Permissions Quartermaster

- Exclusive Permissions: IT Info request.
- Post QM Services.
- Reporting: MMJ Online.
- Life member Payout. Legacy Life Member Payout.
- Recruiter Report.
- Legacy Life Members and Post Query.
- Accounting Report.
- Post Election Filing.

Post OMS Permissions Adjutant

- Reports: Legacy Life Members.
- Post Query.
- Can file a Post Election report.

Post OMS Permissions Commander

- Post Commander Services: New Member Prospects.
- Reports: Legacy Life Members
- Post Query
- Find Unpaid Members.



Form NP-1

Virginia Department of Taxation
Sales and Use Tax Exemption Application for Nonprofit Organizations

- Please read instructions carefully before completing this form. For assistance call (804) 371-4023
- For Faster Service register online @ www.tax.virginia.gov/npo
- Please allow 30 days for processing
- Virginia law provides a retail sales and use tax exemption to organizations exempt under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), (c)(4), or (c)(19)

Completed form can be faxed to (804) 786-2645 or mailed to:

Virginia Department of Taxation
Nonprofit Exemption Unit
Post Office Box 715
Richmond, VA 23218-0715

Section I: Reason for Submitting FormPlease select the appropriate box that applies to your request. *See instructions.*

☐ New Exemption Application ☐ Renewal Application

Section II: Business Information

Legal Name of Organization		Federal employer identification number (FEIN)	
Physical address (number and street)		City	State ZIP code
Address where financial records are available for public inspection (If different from physical address)		City	State ZIP code
Contact Person's Name		Contact Person's Title	
Mailing address		City	State ZIP code
Email address of person to be contacted		Contact Person's Telephone Number	
Organization's Website		Contact Person's Fax Number	

Select the box that **best** describes the primary purpose of the organization (choose only one)*See instructions.*

- ☐ Civic and Community Service ☐ Church ☐ Cultural Organization
☐ Educational Organization ☐ Medical Organization

Links to NP-1 Application and Instructions

- <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/taxforms/exemption-certificates/any/np-1-application-any.pdf>
- <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/vatax-pdf/form-np-1-instructions-any.pdf>



State Legislation



Department of Virginia Commonwealth Legislative Chair



Ron Riffle
vfwvaleg@gmail.com
757-309-0409

Legislative Teams

- **National**
 - **Tom Levitt (1503)**
 - **Mike Jeffery (12218)**
- **Department of Virginia (Commonwealth)**
 - **Chair Ron Riffe (4809)**
- **JLC**
 - **Rick Raskin (7589) & Joanne Smith (9808)**

Department of Virginia VFW

- **2026 Virginia Legislative Results**
 - **Claim Sharks**

Claim Sharks

2026 HB 398 & SB 315: The Veterans Services Protection Act

- Department of Virginia VFW led the fight against Claim Sharks
- PDC Doug Hoffman was feature on Channel 3 news in Norfolk
- <https://www.wtkr.com/news/in-the-community/hampton/veterans-concerned-about-legislation-to-regulate-claim-shark-companies>

Claim Sharks

2026 HB 398 & SB 315: The Veterans Services Protection Act

- 30 VFW Members were in Richmond for the Day on the Hill
- Other Members Testified
- We spoke with over 35 Legislators
- We need you to come to Richmond



Claim Sharks Passed the Virginia House

2026 HB 398 & SB 315: The Veterans Services Protection Act

Feb 5: House Subcommittee voted on HB 398 as follows:

YEAS--Lopez, Convirs-Fowler, Helmer, LeVere Bolling, Runion, Ballard, Ward--7

NAYS--0

ABSTENTIONS--0

NOT VOTING--Feggans--1

Claim Sharks Pass the Virginia Senate

2026 HB 398 & SB 315: The Veterans Services Protection Act (House Vote on Feb 17)

YEAS--Anderson, Anthony, Askew, Austin, Ballard, Bloxom, Bulova, Callsen, Carnegie, Carr, Carroll, Cherry, Cohen, Cole, J.G., Cole, N.T., Convirs-Fowler, Cornett, Cousins, Davis, Delaney, Dougherty, Feggans, Fowler, Franklin, L.V., Franklin, M.A., Gardner, Garrett, Griffin, Hamilton, Hayes, Helmer, Henson, Hernandez, Herring, Hodges, Hope, Kent, Keys-Gamarra, Kilgore, Krizek, Leftwich, LeVere Bolling, Lopez, Maldonado, Martinez, McClure, McGuire, McLaughlin, McNamara, McQuinn, Mehta, Morefield, Nivar, Oates, O'Quinn, Pence, Phillips, Pope Adams, Price, Reaser, Reid, Runion, Schmidt, Seibold, Simon, Simonds, Singh, Sullivan, Tata, Thomas, Thornton, Torian, Tran, Wachsmann, Walker, Ward, Ware, Watts, Webert, Whittle, Wiley, Willett, Williams, Wilt, Wright, Wyatt, Zehr, Mr. Speaker--88

NAYS--Glass, Guzman, Laufer, Rasoul, Sewell--5

ABSTENTIONS--0

NOT VOTING--Clark, Downey, Knight, McAuliff, Scott, P.A., Shin--6

Price: Delegate Price was recorded as yea. Intended to vote nay.

Clark: Delegate Clark was recorded as not voting. Intended to vote nay.

McAuliff: Delegate McAuliff was recorded as not voting. Intended to vote yea.

State Legislative Priorities (2026-27)

- **Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)**
- **Charitable Gaming vs Skill Gaming**
- **Tax Policy**
- **VDVS Funding and Advertising**
- **Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**

Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)

Education Program funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia provides a waiver to Tuition and Fees at a Virginia State Universities. (Maximum of 8 semesters)

Minimum 90% VA Disability Rating Required

- **Tier 1** Tuition and Fees Waiver Only
- **Tier 2** Eligible students may receive a stipend one time during the semester to off-set educational expenses such as room, board, books, and supplies. SCHEV works with DVS and the public colleges and universities in disbursing funds.

VMSDEP can be used with Chapter 35 VA Education Benefits

Additional VMSDEP Details: Virginia Department of Veteran Services Page Regarding

<https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/benefits-services/education/virginia-military-survivors-dependents-education-program-vmsdep>

Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)

Department of Virginia VFW Position:

- Maintain Full Funding for VMSDEP
- We may need to establish some guardrails, but these will need to be recommended prior to heading to Richmond in early 2027

Charitable Gaming and Skill Games

Department of Virginia VFW Position:

- Protect Charitable Gaming in Virginia
- Skill Games should be regulated the same
- Reduce the requirement on use of proceeds
- Post Must Understand Gaming Regulation

Tax Policy Alignment

Department of Virginia VFW Position:

- Protect Charitable Gaming in Virginia
- Skill Games should be regulated the same
- Reduce the requirement on use of proceeds
- Post Must Understand Gaming Requirements

Virginia Department of Veteran Services (VDVS)

Department of Virginia VFW Position:

- Increase Funding for VDVS
- VSO's Advertise the VDVS Services
 - o VA Claims Processing
 - o VMDSEP
 - o Women's Health
 - o Homeless Veterans
- Post Must Connect with Local VDVS offices

Joint Leadership Council

VFW Department of Virginia Representatives

- Rick Raskin, Department of Virginia, All-American Past Commander
- (Alt.) Joanne Smith, Department of Virginia

Upcoming JLC Meetings

- September 16 @ 1000, Virginia War Memorial (Richmond)
- December 15 @ 1000, Virginia War Memorial (Richmond)
- JLC/VFW Day on the Hill January 2027 (Richmond)



Send Ron an Email to be included on Dept of VA Legislative Alerts



Ron Riffle
Dept of VA VFW Legislative Chair
vfwvaleg@gmail.com
757-309-0409



National Legislative Committee Virginia

**Virginia NLC Team
Tom Levitt and Mike Jeffery**

Who we are – what we do



Who we are

- Tom Levitt, VFW Post 1503, email: nlctlevitt@vfwva.org
- Mike Jeffery, VFW Post 12218, email: nlcjeffery@vfwva.org

What we do

- Represent Virginia VFW members through the VFW National Legislative Service
- Advocate for veterans benefits, health care, and quality of life
- Meet with Virginia Congressional delegation during Spring and Fall legislative visits
- Serve as the link between Virginia members and Congress

Legislative WINS



- **The PACT Act:** Delivered the largest expansion of veteran health care and benefits in decades for toxic-exposed veterans.
- **VA MISSION Act:** Strengthened and modernized community care access so veterans can get care outside VA facilities when needed.
- **The Forever GI Bill / Post-9/11 GI Bill:** Removed time limits on GI Bill usage and expanded college education benefits for service members.

Current Legislative Priorities



- Continue engagement on TCAVA concerns
- Support passage of a clean Major Richard Star Act
- Community Care & Health Reform
- Concurrent Receipt Reform to End Earned Benefits Offset
- Written Informed Consent for Suicide Prevention
- Modernizing VA Brain Health Care

Sept. 14-16 Legislative Visit



- Virginia NLC representatives meet with the Congressional delegation
- Advocate for VFW legislative priorities
- Any VFW or Auxiliary member may attend
- Share legislative information across Posts and Auxiliaries

How Members Can Help



- Contact Congressional offices
- Attend town halls and public events
- Request district office meetings
- Respond to Action Alerts
- Encourage other veterans to participate

Take Action – How Members Help



Use VFW Resources - <https://www.vfw.org/advocacy>

Action Corps Sign Up - <https://votervoice.net/VFW/register>

Monitor Action Alerts - <https://votervoice.net/VFW/Campaigns>

Review Current Legislation - <https://votervoice.net/VFW/bills>

EVERY VOICE MATTERS!

Questions?



Programs and Awards

2026-2027 Program Dates Roadmap

Pats Pen

Post: Friday, 31 October 2026
District: Friday, 13 November 2026
State: Friday, 4 December 2026

VOD

Post: Friday, 31 October 2026
District: Friday, 13 November 2026
State: Friday, 4 December 2026

TOY

Post: Friday, 31 October 2026
District: Friday, 13 November 2026
State: Friday, 4 December 2026

Cadet of the Year

Post/District: Friday, 12 February 2027
State: Friday, 5 March 2027

Scout of the Year

Post: Monday, 1 March 2027
District: Monday, 15 March 2027
State: Thursday, 1 April 2027

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

State: Friday, 8 January 2027

Firefighter of the Year

State: Friday, 8 January 2027

Emergency Medical Technician of the Year

State: Friday, 8 January 2027

911 Dispatcher of the Year

State: Friday, 8 January 2027

2026-2027 Program Dates Roadmap cont.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician of the Year

State: Friday, 8 January 2027

McCracken Honor/Color Guard Award

State: Friday, 6 May 2027

Wooddell Post QM Award

State: Friday, 6 May 2027

Mulholland Community Service Book Award

State: Friday, 6 May 2027

Inspections

Post/District: Friday, 11 December 2026
(discrepancies corrected by Thursday, 6 May 2027)

All-State Honors (Post/District)

All complete: Thursday, 6 May 2027 (awarded at 2027 State Con)

All complete but still needing 100%+1 Membership:
Wednesday, 30 June 2027 (awarded at first District meeting in 2027-2028)

Post Commander 100% Membership Award

100%: Thursday, 31 December 2026

Membership

Post/District 100%+1: Thursday, 6 May 2027

Recruiter Awards

Based on National Recruiter Report dated Thursday, 6 May 2027

VFW Day of Service – 1 May 2027

Activities must be completed in the month of May 2027 and registered in the National website here: <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/>

Patriot's Pen (Pats Pen)

- Entries due to Post: 31 October 2026
- Theme for 2026-2027: What a Veteran taught me about America
- Who is eligible to participate in this program: Patriot's Pen is open to 6th, 7th and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions: or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools.
- Helpful highlights from the rules of the program:
 - All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.
 - To ensure fairness and impartiality in judging, essays must be anonymous. Entrants should not include their name, address, school name, or any other personal identifiers in the body of your essay.
 - Entrants should not put their name on the essay. The entry form is their essay's cover sheet and is where that information should be listed.
- Department Points of Contact: Glenda Indyck (cdrdist3@vfwva.org), Ben Guinan (bguinan@vfwva.org)

Voice of Democracy (VOD)

- Entries due to Post: 31 October 2026
- Theme for 2026-2027: What a Veteran taught me about America
- Who is eligible to participate in this program: The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions: or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools.
- Helpful highlights from the rules of the program:
 - Entrants will record an original 3-5 minute (+ or – 5 second max.) audio in MP3 format (**no videos**) on to a flash drive, or other electronic digital media. They will submit the recording, a typed essay and a completed entry form to their local post. Audio files may be submitted physically on a flash drive, emailed to the Post (with permission) or submitted through our online platform using Scholars App. To submit through Scholars App, you must first receive a QR code or link from your local post.
 - To ensure fairness and impartiality in judging, audio files and essays must be anonymous. Entrants should not include their name, address, school name, or any other personal identifiers in the body of your essay.
 - Entrants should not state their names in the audio recording or put their name on their essay. The entry form is their packet's cover sheet where that information should be listed.
- Department Points of Contact: Ashley Gurley (ashley.gurley2020@yahoo.com), Ben Guinan (bguinan@vfwva.org)

Teacher of the Year (TOY)

- Entries due to Post: 31 October 2026
- Who is eligible to participate in this program: All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national VFW winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.
- Helpful highlights from the rules of the program:
 - Make sure that a nominee's packet is complete when submitted. The packet should include:
 - Completed official entry form
 - Documentation of experience and activities
 - This should include their resume and other documentation such as recommendations, references, news articles, etc.
 - Maximum of 5 pages
 - "Head shot" photo
- Department Points of Contact: Jeff Dombroff (fod21000@aol.com), Ben Guinan (bguinan@vfwva.org)

Cadet of the Year (COTY)

- Entries due to Post: **12 February 2027**
- Who is eligible to participate in this program: Any 10th,11th, or 12th grade student that is currently enrolled as a Cadet actively engaged in a JROTC, Sea Cadet, or Air Patrol program, and one who meets the criteria for the award.
- Helpful highlights from the rules of the program:
 - Make sure that a nominee's packet is complete when submitted. The packet should include:
 - The nomination/application is posted on our State website and presents the specific information that is needed for the packet:
 - Photograph of cadet
 - School participation record
 - Cadet record
 - Letters of recommendation (Max of 3)
 - Completed Entry Form
 - Nominee must not have been a previous recipient of the award.
- Department Points of Contact: Deadra Miller (dlmwmavfw@gmail.com), Ben Guinan (bguinan@vfwva.org)

Scout of the Year (SCOTY)

- Entries due to Post: 1 March 2027
- Who is eligible to participate in this program: Scouts who are registered, active members of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew, or a Sea Scout Ship who have received the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award.
- Helpful highlights from the rules of the program:
 - Make sure that a nominee's packet is complete when submitted. The packet should include:
 - The nomination/application can be found via a link on our State website and presents the specific information that is needed for the packet:
 - Photograph of scout
 - School participation record
 - Scouting record
 - Community Service record
 - Letters of recommendation (Max of 3)
 - Completed Entry Form
 - **Note:** dates on the entry form are slightly different from our State mandated dates. Use the State dates and all will be well!
- Department Points of Contact: Bob Fenlason (elangomat3@gmail.com), Ben Guinan (bguinan@vfwva.org)

Service Awards

Each year the VFW Department of Virginia seeks out those who go above and beyond in their service to our communities. It is our honor to bear witness and acknowledge these outstanding individuals' efforts and accomplishments in service to our fellow citizens. Make sure that you are out there actively looking for candidates for these awards in your communities.

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Firefighter of the Year

Emergency Medical Technician of the Year

911 Dispatcher of the Year

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician of the Year

Posts that have nominations for any of these service award categories must submit them to State HQ by COB on **8 January 2027**.

Post Awards

Each year the VFW Department of Virginia looks to honor outstanding work, commitment, and service to veterans and communities at the Post level.

The George E. McCracken Honor Guard/Color Guard Award

The W.I. Wooddell Memorial Post Quartermaster Award

Posts that have nominations for these award categories must submit them to State HQ by COB on **6 May 2027** for adjudication.

The Chris Mulholland Community Service Record Book (CSB) Award

Posts that want to submit their CSB for the current year must have them to State HQ by COB on **6 May 2027** for adjudication. Both hardcopy/printed and electronic submissions are welcome.

The Larry Mattera Memorial Patriots Pen Award

The Clarence E. Kelley Memorial Voice of Democracy Award

These awards are presented to the Posts that sponsor the 1st place Patriots Pen and VOD winners for the current year.

Programs Notes

Pats Pen and VOD

Posts are not required, but are strongly encouraged, to use Scholars App for their Pats Pen and VOD programs to aid in the management and adjudication of their programs. District and State levels are required to use the system. Posts **are required** to enter their post winner(s) into the Scholars App system for the Pats Pen and VOD programs to be promoted to the District level.

Scholars App

Scholarship Chairmen: your Scholars App Chairman account **must** be created by a higher-level chairman (i.e. District or State Chairs). Make sure that you contact them to get your account set up correctly. **DO NOT** try to create your own account!

TOY

Note from the Programs Town Hall at the National Convention: Teacher of the Year will be added to the Scholars App system in the future (possibly by next year). This will allow Scholars App to be used to help manage and adjudicate this program as well.

General

Watch for Programs Update emails throughout the year from Ben Guinan, Department Programs Chair. Successful programs start with clear communications, but you need to RTFE/GOs/etc....



All State (POST)

Membership & Recruitment

- Posts must meet their 100% + 1 membership quota by **May 6, 2027**, to receive their awards at the 2027 State Convention. (NO EXCEPTIONS)
- Recruit at least 1 new or reinstated life or life installment member. Otherwise, the Post may have one annual member upgrade to life
- Post must retain 80% of Annual Membership Reported July 1, 2026

Bonding & Inspection

- Members with access to assets must be bonded (Section 703 Bylaws)
- Inspection report due to State HQs by Dec 11, 2026, 4pm
- Correct discrepancies by May 6, 2027

Communication & Reporting

- Post Commanders to email cdr@vfwva.org or mmaggio@vfwva.org by Sept 18, 2026
- Reports visible in District Reports section on www.vfwva.org

Meetings & Training

- Attend District meetings (Commander, Vice Commanders, Quartermaster, Adjutant)
- Attend School of Instruction (SOI) – Dates posted in General Orders
- Complete online Recruiting School of Instruction (RSOI) (Any Post Member)

Audits & Buddy Poppies

- Submit and accept audit reports per Section 218 (max 1 late out of 4)
- Purchase 500 Buddy Poppies per 100 members (or fraction)

Donations to Virginia Veterans Foundation

- Donations based on membership size (made by Credit Card at WWW.VFWVA.ORG):
 - ≤ 99 members: \$100 + 5 points for 2X above
 - 100-399 members: \$200 + 5 points for 2X above
 - ≥ 400 members: \$300 + 5 points for 2X above

Activity Reporting

- Submit quarterly reports via online portal:
 - Sept 30, 2026
 - Dec 31, 2026
 - Mar 31, 2027
 - June 30, 2027
- Reports include: Americanism, Community Activities, Safety, Youth, Hospital

Program Participation

- Participate in at least 3 of 4 categories:
 - Patriot's Pen (Theme & deadlines)
 - Voice of Democracy (Theme & deadlines)
 - Teacher of the Year (Submission deadlines)
 - JROTC or Sea Cadets or Civil Air Patrol (Entry deadlines)

Special Department Requirements & Notes

- Use Scholar App for Patriot's Pen & Voice of Democracy
- For awards at State Convention Posts and Districts must complete all requirements by May 6, 2027.
- Posts and Districts can complete **MEMBERSHIP** by June 30, 2027, for awards at first District meeting of 2027-2028. All other Programs must be completed on their assigned dates.

Additional Team Points & Recognition

- +5 points for submitting entries in all 6 program categories
- Additional points for membership above 100% + 1



All State (District)

All-State District Requirements:

- Districts must meet their 100% + 1 membership quota by **May 6, 2027**, to receive their awards at the 2027 State Convention. **(NO EXCEPTIONS)**.
- All Posts in the District and the District must be inspected. State HQs must receive the inspection reports for the District and all Posts in the District **no later than Friday, December 11, 2026**. All documented discrepancies must be corrected by **Thursday, May 6, 2027**, to complete this requirement.
- The District Quartermaster and anyone with access to assets must be properly bonded.
- The District must hold at least one District Level Recruiting Event and have a Post Cmdr, Post SVC, or Post QM from 3 Posts helping.

- The District Commander must sign into their state email account and send one (1) email to either cdr@vfwva.org or mmaggio@vwfva.org no later than Sept 18, 2026. It will be visible in the District Reports section of the online reporting page on the State HQs website, www.vfwva.org.
- All audit reports for the District must be turned into the State HQs as required by Section 418 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.
- **The District shall ensure all Posts** submit reports of their activities in the online reporting portal of the State HQs. The reports must be submitted at least once a quarter by Sept 30, 2026, Dec 31, 2026, Mar 31, 2027, and June 30, 2027, respectively and the reports shall be as follows:
 - **Americanism Report**
 - **Community Activities Report**
 - **Safety Report**
 - **Youth Activities Report**
 - **Hospital Report**
- The District must donate at least 150.00 to the Virginia Veterans Foundation (VVF). This is the official foundation for State HQs. You can contact State HQs to make this donation.



All American



All-American Program Overview

- Recognizes leadership, teamwork, membership growth, participation in core programs
- Aims to honor Posts, Districts, Departments meeting specific criteria
- **A sign of excellence in the VFW**



All-American Post Criteria (by June 30, 2027)

- Post election report submitted & in good standing
- Program participation by Jan 31, 2027:
 - Voice of Democracy (≥ 1 entry to District)
 - Patriot's Pen (≥ 1 entry to District)
 - National Citizenship Education Teachers Award (≥ 1 entry to District)
- Make \$75 Donation to National for DPAA
- Make \$125 Donation to National Veterans Service Programs (AA Dashboard)
- Participate in May Day of Service (register by May 15)
- Submit quarterly community service reports and achieve 5% growth
- Purchase ≥ 500 Buddy Poppies
- 80% Retention of prior year Annual Members
- Membership Percentage (adjusted prior year) – Based on following Chart



DIVISION	MINIMUM MEMBERSHIP	MAXIMUM MEMBERSHIP	MEMBERSHIP QUOTA
1	501	---	103%
2	351	500	104%
3	246	350	105%
4	190	245	106%
5	150	189	107%
6	125	149	108%
7	105	124	109%
8	90	104	110%
9	70	89	111%
10	50	69	112%
11	10	49	113%



All-American District Criteria & Awards

- Submit District election report & participate in programs
- $\geq 100\%$ + 1 membership (by June 30, 2027)
- Make \$100 Donation to National for DPAA
- 1 VOD entry, 1 Patriot Pen entry and 1 National Citizenship Education Teacher entry forwarded to Department (AA Dashboard)



Membership Plan and Awards

This membership awards program has been designed with incentives to increase life membership, promote VFW programs, and increase both meeting attendance and the submission of reports. Post and District membership 100% + 1 requirements will be based on the membership report dated Monday, May 6, 2027, as adjusted by National HQs. Except where noted, the quota will not be reduced because of members who die or transfer to another Post. A new Post will be assigned a membership quota of 30 members. Be aware that this membership year, membership goals are different between All-State and All-American.

Virginia's membership goal percentages and goal dates 2026-2027

- Tuesday, September 30, 2026, state membership of **75%**
- Tuesday, December 30, 2026, state membership of **88%**
- Friday, March 27, 2027, state membership of **93%**
- Thursday, April 30, 2027, state membership of **100% + 1**

LIFE MEMBERSHIP INCREASE AWARD AND PLAQUES

A Life Membership Increase Award plaque and \$200.00 will be awarded at the State Convention to the Post with the greatest increase in life members (must be at least 3 new life members not including those on payment plans) in each category. The judging will be based on life membership as of Thursday, May 6, 2027.

- **Category A** – Posts with membership of 10 thru 75
- **Category B** – Posts with membership of 76 thru 150
- **Category C** – Posts with membership of 151 thru 250
- **Category D** – Posts with membership of 251 thru 500
- **Category E** – Posts with membership of 501 or more

LIFE MEMBERSHIP DRAWINGS

There will be **four (4) Life Membership Drawings**. One (1) Post will be selected for each drawing. **Posts must meet their membership quota by the day prior to a drawing to be eligible.** Posts with 10 thru 75 members will have one (1) chance, Posts with 76 thru 150 members will have two (2) chances, Posts with 151 thru 250 will have (3) chances, Posts with 251 through 500 members will have four (4) chances, and Post with 501 or more members will have five (5) chances.

- **The first drawing** will be held on Wednesday, **September 30, 2026**, and the Post must have 75% of their 2027 membership quota to participate.
- **The second drawing** will be held on Wednesday, **December 30, 2026**, and the Post must have 88% of their 2027 membership quota to participate.
- **The third drawing** will be held on Tuesday, **March 30, 2027**, and the Post must have 93% of their 2027 membership quota to participate.
- **The fourth drawing** will be held on Friday, **May 7, 2027**, and the Post must have 100% of their 2027 membership quota to participate.

POST COMMANDER MEMBERSHIP AWARD

Post Commanders who have their Post at 100% in membership by Thursday, December 31, 2026, will receive a State Commander's "100 Club" polo shirt. Winners will be announced at the Winter Council of Administration meeting, and shirts will be presented at a District meeting.

INDIVIDUAL RECRUITER AWARDS FOR LIFE MEMBERS AND LIFE MEMBER INSTALLMENT PLANS

All individual recruiting awards will be awarded by using the National Recruiter Report dated Thursday, May 6, 2027. These awards will be presented at the State Convention. Individual recruiters will receive for:

- **3 New or Reinstated Life/Life Install Members** – Commander's Challenge Coin
- **15 New or Reinstated Life/Life Install Members** – State Aide-de-Camp Recruiting cap & citation
- **30 New or Reinstated Life/Life Install Members** – \$250.00 and State Commander Medallion

THE SAMUEL B. DeVAUGHAN MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

First Place: The Samuel B. DeVaughan Membership Award is presented to the member who receives the most points for each type of new member recruited for the 2026-2027 membership year by using the National Recruiter Report dated Thursday, April 30, 2027. The following points are awarded for each new or Reinstated member: 1 point for each annual member recruited, 3 points for each life member installment plan recruited, and 5 points for each life member recruited. They will receive the following:

- **A check in the amount of \$300.00 to help defray expenses of the Convention.**
- **A citation.**
- **A distinctive cap and name badge**
- **State Commanders Medallion**
- **Commander's "Top Recruiter" Polo Shirt**

There will be **2nd and 3rd place** winners awarded in this competition. The recruiters who finish in second and third place in new member competition of the 2026-2027 Membership Year will receive the following:

- **A citation**
- **State Commanders Medallion**

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS