



VFW National Membership Program

2026-2027

Cory Geisler

Commander-in-Chief

“One Team, One Mission, Veterans First”

VERSION DATE: April 21st, 2026

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Commander's Introduction:

Cory Geisler was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on July 29th, 2026, at the 127th VFW National Convention in Reno, NV. Cory served in the U.S. Army from 2005 to 2012, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Korea and Iraq. In recognition of his service, he received the Army Commendation Medal (three), Army Achievement Medal(seven), Good Conduct Medal, among many others. He joined the VFW in 2008 as a member at large and then transferred to VFW Post #721 in Waukesha WI, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership.

Cory has served at various levels in the post to include his election to Post Commander in 2012. Cory has served as the Post Commander for 12 of his 18 years and is a two-time All-State Post Commander and was an All-American Post Commander in 2019. At the district level Cory was the head of various committees and was the Chief of Staff for 3 different district commanders. Cory was elected the District 2 Commander for 2017 – 2019. During the 2018 – 2019 year District 2 was recognized as an All-State and All-American district. At the department level, Cory was the Department Safety Chairman for 5 years and the Youth Activities Chairman for 3 years. Cory was elected the Department of Wisconsin State Commander for the 2021 – 2022 year. In 2023 he was elected to the National Council of Administration and in 2025 he was elected as the Senior Vice-Commander in Chief.

Commander's Statement:

“Throughout my time in the United States Army, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and at my civilian positions, I have had the honor to serve under some great leadership. I have strived to take the best of these leaders and incorporate that into my leadership style. What I have learned over those years is that leadership is like running an ultra-marathon. It’s not about a burst of brilliance, but it’s about sustained effort, strategic pacing, and emotional resilience. Leadership is ultimately a long-distance commitment. It’s about showing up day after day, leading with humility, adapting when things get tough, and never losing sight of the end goal. Even when the path is unclear.

*“We are united by a common purpose: to serve those who have served. As One Team, we bring our unique skills, perspectives, and dedication together to meet the needs of our nation’s heroes. With One Mission, we remain focused, ensuring veterans receive the care, respect, and opportunities they’ve earned. Every action, every decision, every effort is guided by one core principle: Veterans First. This is not just a motto; it’s a commitment to honor their sacrifices by delivering excellence in every interaction. Together, we stand stronger, driven by purpose, bound by respect, and devoted to those who served. **ONE TEAM, ONE MISSION, VETERANS FIRST.**”*

Membership Mission:

To strengthen the VFW by driving membership growth through comprehensive support for recruiting, retention, recruiter development, ensuring consistent dues processing, and member fulfillment. To empower our Post and Department leaders through specialized training programs that prioritize membership sustainability. To provide necessary insight and guide informed decision-making through data-driven reporting and analysis. To deliver exceptional customer support to our comrades and prospective members, fostering a culture of service and camaraderie that sustains the VFW legacy for future generations.

All-American Program:

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

All-American Post Criteria

All Posts who have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2027 will be named as All-American Posts:

- Must meet the Divisional Membership Quota as shown on the table on page 11.
- At least 80% retention of prior year Annual members. Definition of retention can be found on page 12.
- Must have a Post election report submitted and be in good standing.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot’s Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o 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)
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027 in order to be recognized.**
- National Veterans Service Programs – must donate \$125 via the Programs Dashboard NVS Donation link. Donations will be designated to support the VFW National Veteran Service operations.
- Must make a restricted donation, minimum of \$75, to National in support of DPAA (Defense Personnel POW/MIA Accounting Agency). **Donations must be processed through the Programs Dashboard.**
- Must meet the following Community Service Requirements:
 - o Participation in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May. This event may be counted for a Post’s quarterly community service activity.
 - o 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. Please see page 12 for further details.
 - o A Post must show an increase in total Community Service of at least 5% from the previous year.
- Must purchase at least 5 Buddy Poppies per member, with a minimum of 500.
- Must have been chartered for at least a full calendar year as of July 1st, 2026. Posts that were chartered between July 1st, 2025 and June 30th, 2026 will not be eligible for All-American awards, but may be recognized under the New Post Growth Grant.

All-American Post Award

All Posts that meet the listed criteria will receive: An All-American Post Streamer, a Post Home Citation, and will be recognized in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 20 Posts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American Post Commander's Citation
- All-American Post Commander's Cap
- All-American Post Commander's Badge
- All-American Post Commander's lapel pin

These awards for the top 20 Posts will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention. All All-American Post Awards will be distributed at the 128th National Convention. Department Quartermasters will be directed to collect and distribute awards for All-American Posts not in attendance.

The Top five Post Commanders in each division will receive a \$1,000 award to recognize their leadership. Commanders must attend the 128th National Convention in order to receive this award.

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

All Districts that have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2027 will be named as All-American Districts:

- Must exceed prior year's membership, based on June 30th, 2026 totals. (100%+1)
- Must finish in the top 20 Districts in their division, based on membership percentage as of June 30th, 2027.
- Must make a restricted donation, minimum of \$100, to National in support of DPAA (Defense Personnel POW/MIA Accounting Agency). **Donations must be processed through the Programs Dashboard.**
- Must have a District election report submitted and be in good standing.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot's Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o National Citizenship Education Teachers Award – one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027 in order to be recognized.**

All-American District Awards

All Districts that meet the listed criteria will receive an All-American District Streamer, an All-American District Commander's Citation, and recognition in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 10 Districts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American District Commander's Cap
- All-American District Commander's Badge
- All-American District Commander's lapel pin

These awards for the top 10 District Commanders will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention. All All-American District Awards will be distributed at the 128th National Convention. Department Quartermasters will be directed to collect and distribute awards for All-American Districts not in attendance.

The top two District Commanders in each division will receive a \$1,000 award to recognize their leadership. Commanders must attend the 128th National Convention in order to receive this award.

All-American Department Criteria

All Departments that have met the following criteria as of June 30th, 2027 will be named as All-American Departments:

- Must exceed prior year's membership, based on June 30th, 2026 totals. (100%+1)
- Department must submit Department legislative chairman reports monthly through the Program dashboard tool.
- Must make a restricted donation, minimum of \$200, to National in support of DPAA (Defense Personnel POW/MIA Accounting Agency). **Donations must be processed through the Programs Dashboard.**
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Patriot's Pen – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Teacher of the Year – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027 in order to be recognized.**
- National Veterans Service fundraiser – must complete State/Department fundraiser with proceeds donated to the National Veterans Service fund via the Programs Dashboard.

All-American Department Awards

All Departments that meet the listed criteria will receive the following:

- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department Commander's Citation
- All-American Department Commander's Cap
- All-American Department Commander's Badge
- All-American Department Commander's lapel pin
- \$1,000 award to recognize leadership

These awards will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention.

Triple Crown:

The Triple Crown is one of the most prestigious membership awards that an individual can achieve. It requires being named as an All-American Commander at Post, District, and Department level. Leaders who attain this level of excellence will be recognized at the 128th National Convention with a special Triple Crown pin.

For Departments without Districts, any individual who achieves All-American Commander status twice as a Post Commander and once as Department Commander, or once as a Post Commander and twice as Department Commander will receive this honor as well.

Membership Programs and Awards

Individual Recruiting Awards:

5/10/15 members recruited: corresponding recruiter pin

25 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Coin

50 members recruited: 40oz Insulated Tumbler w/CIC Logo

75 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Medallion Set

100 members recruited: Century Cap and Citation. Recruiters may opt to receive a \$50 credit to the VFW Store in lieu of a Century Cap.

Individual Recruiting Awards will be sent out regularly during the membership year to the Post, to be given out at a Post meeting to recognize those members who have helped achieve the membership mission.

Early Bird Award:

The top two Posts in each division as of January 1, 2027 will receive reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for a representative of the Post to attend the 2027 VFW Washington Conference.

Legacy Life Membership Acquisition:

Each Post that achieves the cumulative benchmarks of 25, 50 and 75 Legacy Life Members will be awarded a Legacy Society Post Proclamation. Proclamations will be sent out to the Post along with recruiting awards throughout the year.

For each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100, 250, or 500 Legacy Life members by June 30th, 2027, their commander or Post representative will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for travel / lodging for the National Convention, reserved seating at the 128th VFW National Convention joint opening session and a Legacy Society Post Proclamation presented at the National Convention.

100+% Membership Streamer:

All Posts, Districts, and Departments that exceed their prior year membership total on or before June 30th, 2027 will receive a distinctive streamer.

New Post Growth Grant:

Any Post chartered in the previous membership year (between July 1, 2025 and June 30th, 2026) that exceeds their prior year membership total (100%+1) and has over 50 members as of June 30th, 2027 will receive a grant of up \$50 per new member (up to \$1,000) between July 1st, 2026 and June 30th, 2027.

Recruiting and Retention Challenge:

The top two Posts in each membership division based on new and reinstated members as well as retention according to the table below will receive a \$1,000 membership grant deposited into the Post's account. Retention calculations are defined on page 12.

Division	Size	New Member Quota	Retention Percentage
1	501+	At least 125 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
2	351-500	At least 100 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
3	246-350	At least 75 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
4	190-245	At least 60 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
5	150-189	At least 50 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
6	125-149	At least 40 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
7	105-124	At least 30 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
8	90-104	At least 20 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
9	70-89	At least 15 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
10	50-69	At least 12 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
11	Under 50	At least 10 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention

Department Above & Beyond Award:

Any Department that exceeds their prior year membership total and has at least 75% of the Posts in the Department also exceed their prior year membership total will receive a membership grant as follows:

Small Departments (10,000 and below): \$2,500

Medium Departments (10,001-20,000): \$5,000

Large Departments (20,000 and up): \$7,500

Elite Recruiter:

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new and/or reinstated members as of June 30th, 2027 will receive a \$1,000 award for their achievement, as well as a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge. Awards will be presented at the 128th National Convention.

Recruiter of the Year:

The VFW member who signs up the greatest number of new and/or reinstated members greater than 250 as of June 30th, 2027 will receive a \$1,000 award for their achievement as well as a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge and the Recruiter Of The Year trophy. Awards will be presented at the 128th National Convention.

Life Member Recruiter Award:

Any VFW member who recruits at least 50 new and/or reinstated Life members by June 30th, 2027 or before will receive a special citation from the Commander-in-Chief and a CIC logo travel bag.

New Post Startup Grant:

New Posts chartered between July 1st, 2026 and June 30th, 2027 will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. This credit will come in the form of a gift certificate sent out to the Post once a charter has been issued. The Commanders of all Posts chartered during the membership year will also receive an invitation to the 128th VFW National Convention.

Commander-in-Chief’s Challenge:

To emphasize the importance of Life Membership as the backbone of our membership strength, the Commander-in-Chief is issuing the following challenge to all VFW Posts. Each quarter (July-September, October-December, January-March, April-June), Posts will accumulate points as follows:

New Annual Member: 1 point

Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life Member: 5 points

New Life Member: 10 points

Each quarter, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the challenges will be recognized at the 128th National Convention for their achievements.

Post Division Breakdown

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	501	---
2	351	500
3	246	350
4	190	245
5	150	189
6	125	149
7	105	124
8	90	104
9	70	89
10	50	69
11	10	49

District Division Breakdown:

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	2400	---
2	1680	2399
3	1290	1679
4	880	1289
5	600	879
6	10	599

MEMBERSHIP NOTES AND RESOURCES:

- Awards given to a Post may be transferred to any member of that Post.
- Must participate in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May and registered at todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/ no later than May 15th. Participation may count as community service for All-American quarterly requirements. The event must meet certain criteria aimed at making a meaningful difference in the community. The criteria and more information can be found here: <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service-faq/>
- Community Service quarterly reports must be submitted via the All-American Dashboard or via the state's Community Service Reporting Portal and must be approved by the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster. Reports must detail individual events, roll-up or summary reports will not be accepted. Posts must be able to provide verifiable documentation of their community service activities. Reports must meet the IRS 990 standards for organizations operating under 501©(19) status.
- **RETENTION DEFINITION: (Prior Year Annual Members In Good Standing – Expired Members) / (Prior Year Annual Members In Good Standing)**
- Posts, Districts, and Departments must show growth in membership to qualify for any award. This does not apply to the Early Bird Award.
- Awards, stipends, and reimbursements 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 \$2000.00 or more. 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.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends or awards in this program unless otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General and/or Quartermaster General.

All-American Notes

- Any member of a Post that is named as an All-American Post may purchase a All-American Post Member cap from the VFW Store after the 128th National Convention. Post, District, and Department Quartermasters and Adjutants may purchase an All-American Post Member cap bearing their title. Quartermasters may also purchase an All-American Quartermaster pin from the VFW Store.
- Donations made to replace Program Participation by eligible overseas Posts, Districts, or Departments as well as fundraising donations must be made through the Programs Dashboard, not through any other means.

For information on how to use the Programs Dashboard, scan the QR code below:

Membership Contacts:

David Prohaska, Director – 816-968-1114, dprohaska@vfw.org

Matt Nute, Associate Director – 816-961-1122, mnote@vfw.org

