



COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Community Activities

- Community Service Programs
- Disaster Relief
- Participation in or sponsorship of community activities

Americanism/Honor Guard/Flag Honors

- Americanism
- Flag Etiquette
- Display of US or POW/MIA Flag
- Honor Guard
- POW-MIA

Safety

- Safety Program Activities
- Public Service Recognition
 - ♦ Firefighter
 - ♦ Law Enforcement
 - ♦ Emergency Medical Technician
 - ♦ Emergency Dispatcher
 - ♦ EOD Technician
 - ♦ Life Saving Award

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Community Activities are an important part of the Veterans of Foreign Wars way of life and has proven to be a win-win situation for the VFW and the community. Our support of community activities by volunteering, supporting community activities and organizations, or participating in events is a great benefit to the community. Your community activity raises awareness of the VFW within the community and supports our programs. Everyone develops their own perception of their community by what they see going on immediately around them. Your work within your community and with other non-for-profit organizations can help your Post accomplish our goal.

You will notice some changes in the manual this year on the community service pillar. There are only 3 sub programs under the Community Service Pillar this year. Any community activity that you do as a Post or District should fall within one of those 3 sub-programs. This year, Community Service and Americanism is consolidated under one program Chairman

Look over your Community Activity Programs and appoint an Activity Chairperson for each of the categories. Remember that all programs in the Veterans of Foreign Wars are important to Commanders at all levels. A Post that is strong in Community Activities not only earns respect in the community, but will also be strong in membership.

Commanders must report on-line or on the Community Activities Report Form by March 15, 2026 in order to qualify for a National Certificate of Recognition. Each Post must report in each of the following categories to qualify:

- a. Community Involvement
- b. Cooperation with other organizations
- c. Aid to others or Disaster Relief
- d. School and Church assistance

Community activities clearly benefits the people in the local community and involves the Post members to build a positive image for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

When taking on a project, inform your local newspaper or TV station about your plans and if possible, document your efforts by taking photos as you work at or on your Community Activities.

Membership and community involvement will increase your Post and our goal. Your community activities will show we are **Serving Our Community With Resilience**. We must continue to work within our communities because "No One Does More For Veterans". Commanders at all levels should review the Department Programs Dashboard on a weekly basis by checking out our web-site at www.vfwil.org.



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Chairman

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Post 7710-14

Here is one VERY IMPORTANT thing about reporting your Community Service Activities. If your Post is working towards becoming an All-American Post for 2025-2026, the requirements include that you submit a minimum of 1 community activity report per quarter in order to qualify - and one of those activities must be for the VFW Day of Service. My advice is to input your community service reports immediately following the event. Don't wait until May and input 10 months of activities because it will prevent you from winning a National award but it may result in you losing notes or forgetting about activities resulting in underreporting your activities.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.....

Remember to report your dollars spent, hours, and total number of volunteers for each project. Please make sure that the dollars reported **reflect only those amounts donated or expended in the performance of their community activities.**

Our goal is to be 90% reported by December 31, 2025.

Report it when it happens on-line or to the:

State of Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars
3300 Constitution Dr.
Springfield, IL 62711

Community Activities Recordbooks Award

The top Community Activities Recordbook in each Membership Category will receive a \$50.00 Cash Award at the 2026 State Convention.

Membership Category 1 - Up to 150 members
Membership Category 2 - 151 to 300 members
Membership Category 3 - 301 members and up

RULES FOR THE RECORDBOOKS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Community Service Projects completed between May 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026.
2. Book size should be no larger than 12 x 16 inches and no thicker than 3 inches. You may use as many volumes as necessary.
3. Book to be separated into 4 Sections, A- B - C & D describing each project. Show money spent, and volunteer hours for each project. Also, show total of dollars spent and hours used at the end of each Section
4. Clippings or photographs should show dates and captions from newspapers and any other information
5. Checks and Photostats should show what the money was spent for, also, total number of volunteer hours for each project.
6. Your book must be in State Headquarters by May 1, 2026 for judging on May 4, 2026.
7. The Community Activities Record Book Entry Form must be filled out and attached to the inside cover of the record book.
8. Pages must be numbered.

By reporting your out of pocket expenses, volunteers and hours for each project, we can continue

"Serving Our Community With Resilience"

Community Activities Record Book Entry Form

1. This Form must be filled out and attached to the inside cover of the Community Activities Record Book that your Post enters in the Department Community Activities Record Book Contest.
2. All Record Books submitted for Department Judging will be returned to the Post Commander following judging.
3. The Post Commander must sign this form.
4. Your book must be in State Headquarters by May 1, 2026 for judging on May 4, 2026.

Post # _____ City: _____, State: _____ Zip: _____

Total Projects

Total Hours

Total Funds

Since 5/1/24 _____ Volunteered _____ Used/Donated \$ _____

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN:

Post Chairperson _____ Auxiliary Chairperson _____

JUDGES, NOTE THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Post Commander Signature _____

Post Commander's Name (print) _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State: _____ Zip: _____

Deadline Dates

National VFW Post Special Project Program Deadline is April 30, 2026

"VFW Member Community Service Volunteer of the Year" Award Deadline must be in Department Headquarters by April 1, 2026

NATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES CONTEST

- Department selects Posts based on their own criteria and National guidelines
- Number of Awards based on Department size:
 - Up to 200 Posts 1 selection
 - 201 to 400 Posts 2 selections
- Department selection due to National by May 1.
- Award presented to Post Commander at National Convention
- Each Post Commander receives \$599.00 to assist with Convention expenses
- National Award Plaque
- Post Recognition Street Sign

AMERICANISM PROGRAM

"AMERICANISM"...is the unfailing love of Country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, undivided allegiance to the Flag, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and for posterity". As American citizens and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we know what Americanism stands for. It was, and is still, our responsibility to defend the United States in a time of peace as it is in time of war, foreign or domestic. By practicing Americanism we show our love of Country and must do so.

As veterans we should promote and participate in Americanism every day of every year. There are many things a Post, a District and an individual can do to promote Americanism. Here are just a few ideas. I am sure you can think of many more.

- Fly the American Flag and or POW/MIA Flag every day at your Post Home.
- Present Flags to different organizations or if you see a tattered flag, donate a new one
- Hold flag etiquette sessions with various other organizations
- Encourage your membership to be informed by studying political issues and get out the vote.
- Furnish Color Guards/Honor Guards for civic programs, athletic events, veteran funerals, and Memorial Service
- Remember Memorial Day, Independence Day, Patriot's Day, POW/ MIA Recognition Day, Pearl Harbor Day, Loyalty Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day and other memorial military days from our Nation's past.
- Conduct flag retirement ceremony for tattered flags

Reporting Americanism is easy: fill out the VFW of Illinois on line Reporting Form or if you don't have a computer then you may contact State Headquarters (217-529-6688) to request the form and fill it in and mail it back to State Headquarters, 3300 Constitution Dr., Springfield, IL 62711. Remember reporting dates are July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

There are three (3) categories to report: Be sure to report all hours, money spent, and number of members participating in an event. You should report every time you have an event. The more you report the better chance you have of winning awards. One very important note about credit for flying/displaying the American Flag and/or POW/MIA Flag is that you can only get credit for 1 hour per day for each of the flags. If you fly or display both flags, maximum credit is 60 hours per month or 720 hours per year. If you only fly one of the flags, maximum credit is 30 hours per month or 360 hours per year.

DISTRICT AWARDS:

The Districts with the highest number in hours, money, and members participating in the following three Membership Categories will receive a \$30.00 Cash Award at the 2026 Department Convention.

Membership Category 1 - Up to 2,500 Members
Membership Category 2 – 2,501 to 3,600
Members Membership Category 3 – 3,601 Members and Up

POST AWARDS:

Posts with the highest number of hours, money and members participating in the following three Membership Categories will receive a \$30.00 Cash Award at the 2026 Department Convention.

Membership Category 1 - Up to 100 Members
Membership Category 2 – 101 to 300 Members
Membership Category 3 - 301 Members & Up

“Loyalty Day May 1, 2026”

Loyalty Day or May Day is always May 1.

A truly inspired Holiday, Loyalty Day was created by the VFW Organization in 1921. It was through the efforts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that in 1958 Loyalty Day was officially established by an act of Congress.

The reason we have Loyalty Day is to continually encourage loyal Americans to speak out. It is a Day upon which patriotic citizens should:

- 1) Hold parades
- 2) Conduct Flag ceremonies
- 3) Sponsor public meetings
- 4) Conduct school programs
- 5) and other American activities

Loyalty is an intangible thing, but it causes people to form a Government, to obey its laws and rules and to willingly defend their country against its enemies.

If your Post does not hold a Loyalty Day parade, maybe your District will

- 1) Invite civic leaders to participate and to speak
- 2) Encourage neighborhoods to join in
- 3) Invite the youth to march, or play in bands
- 4) Give out flags
- 5) Hold your VFW Buddy Poppy Donation Day

POW/MIA PROGRAM

We have not fulfilled our goal for a complete accounting of all our lost. What about our MIA or KIA's? We must continue to work for all the families to receive closure of their loved ones.

Now here are a few ways to get your credit on the dashboard under Americanism/Honor Guard/Flag Honors.

- The third Friday of September is National POW-MIA Recognition Day. Plan and carry out a POW-MIA service and invite your Post & Auxiliary members and the general public to attend.
- Display the POW-MIA missing man table & chair cover & recite the POW- MIA prayer at your meetings. (The prayer can be found in the manual procedure & ritual book)
- Carry the POW-MIA flag in a parade or fly or display it at your Post home or donate flags to local schools, village buildings or even nursing homes. If you fly the POW/MIA flag at your Post, you can get credit for 1 hour per day.
- Make a presentation at a local school and explain the importance of the POW-MIA Program to the students

REPORT REPORT REPORT !!!!



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MEANING OF THE POW/MIA TABLE

The table is set for five, representing the five branches of our Armed Forces, the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. The military is filled with symbolism and this table is a way of symbolizing those that are missing from our midst, who are commonly called POW/MIA'S.

The table set for five symbolizes the frailty of the prisoners alone against their oppressors.

The tablecloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

The single rose displayed in the vase is symbolic of the families and loved ones who keep the faith waiting for their return.

The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn upon the lapel and breast of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of our missing and the return of all live POW'S and all those left on foreign soil.

The slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is salt on the bread plate which is symbolic of the families tears as they wait.

The chairs are empty, they are not here.....

POW / MIA PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, At such time and place as we know not, there are Comrades being held against their will in hostile circumstances. Prisoners of war and those missing in action who did not return. We plead for assistance in our efforts to bring them home. Our hearts bleed for the families of these veterans, may we not forget their sacrifice and be reminded by this vacant chair of our duty toward them. (Amen)

AWARD

The **Dennis Nelson Memorial POW-MIA Award** will be awarded to the VFW Post that demonstrates the most outstanding POW/MIA Recognition Program within their community.

Flying the POW/MIA flag or displaying the Missing Man Table at your Post does not count towards the POW-MIA award. The award is intended to recognize a Post that has an outstanding POW-MIA program within their community. What has the Post done to promote the POW-MIA issue within their community?

Let's make sure this year we put our renewed commitment into action as we continue
"Serving Our Community With Resilience"

SAFETY PROGRAM

The Safety Programs of the Veteran of Foreign Wars continues to provide and promote programs designed to safeguard our communities. This long-standing commitment to safety has grown through the years to include every possible program or event associated with safeguarding people. Be creative and develop a safety activity and REPORT all accomplishments on the Department of Illinois Program Reporting Form. The six basic categories in the National Program are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Highway Safety | 2. Pedestrian Safety |
| 3. Recreational Safety | 4. Home/Fire Safety |
| 5. Drug Awareness | 6. Recognition/Other |

1. **HIGHWAY SAFETY:** Any activity intended to improve individual driving skills and awareness or activities associated with improving safety in our vehicles and on our roadways.

2. **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY:** Any worthwhile activity intended to improve individual awareness and visibility or non-motorized vehicle riding skills, awareness and responsibility

3. **RECREATIONAL SAFETY:** Any organized activity associated with improving the skills and responsibilities of those individuals engaged in recreational activities with children and adults.

4. **HOME/FIRE SAFETY:** Activities designed to promote and inform individuals within the community about protecting their homes, possessions and lives are reportable.

5. **DRUG AWARENESS:** Any program designed to inform and protect your community from the influence of substance abuse including prescription drugs.

6. **RECOGNITION/OTHER:** A program to bring public recognition to the people of the community who spend their work day protecting the lives and property. Recognizing the heroism/or safety achievements of individuals in the community. This category may be used to report an activity that does not fit any of the above categories including cooperation with other groups and organizations besides the V.F.W.



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Post 4495-11

POST AWARDS

A Special Plaque will be awarded to the top Post in the following Membership Categories who reports the largest amount of hours, dollars, and members. These Awards will be presented during our State Convention.

Membership Category 1 - Up to 150 Members
Membership Category 2 - 151-300 Members
Membership Category 3 - 301 Members and up

Report all completed work to the Department on the Department Program Report form. Good luck to all participating Posts.

PUBLIC SERVANT RECOGNITION

Each year, the Department of Illinois recognizes the great efforts of public servants throughout Illinois. Unless otherwise noted, the deadline to State Headquarters is April 30 for award nominations in the following categories:

- ☐ Outstanding Legislator of the Year
- ☐ Law Enforcement Officer of the Year (Jan. 1 for national consideration)
- ☐ Firefighter of the Year (Jan. 1 for national consideration)
- ☐ Paramedic/EMT of the year (Jan. 1 for national consideration)
- ☐ Emergency Medical Dispatcher of the year (Jan. 1 for national consideration)
- ☐ EOD Technician (Jan. 1)
- ☐ Outstanding Patriotism of the Year
- ☐ Outstanding Governmental Service of the Year
- ☐ Clergy of the Year
- ☐ News Media Professional of the Year (Public Relations program)
- ☐ Outstanding Citizen of the Year

For most of these awards, there is no special form to fill out to nominate an individual. Just submit a short nomination letter as why the individual deserves to be recognized. Include the name and address of the individual submitted in the appropriate category and the sponsoring Post and/or Auxiliary and the Post/Auxiliary contact person.

PUBLIC SERVANT RECOGNITION

(NATIONAL)

PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATIONS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS, LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL, EOD TECHNICIANS, EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHERS, AND FIREFIGHTERS

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency medical technicians, law enforcement, 911 dispatchers and firefighter personnel to receive VFW Public Servant Awards. Post Safety Chairmen are encouraged to submit a candidate for these awards to their Department Headquarters by Jan. 1. The Department must select a single candidate for each of the four awards and submit those to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the "VFW Department Public Servant Award Citation Request Form" which is now available on the VFW website. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation:

Any individual, who actively gives emergency medical treatment, provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, provide rescue and civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

VFW National Law Enforcement Public Servant Citation:

Any individual who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individual employed by private companies or security services.

VFW National Emergency Medical Dispatcher Citation

Any individual who is employed by a 911 Dispatch Center

VFW National Firefighters Public Servant Citation: Any individual who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation's citizens.

EOD Technician

Criteria for these awards – Candidates must have demonstrated:

- 1) Recognition by their colleagues or those they serve.
- 2) Consistent excellence in the performance of their duties.
- 3) Consistent dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibilities and skills within their profession.

Documentation required for all Candidates:

- 1) Nomination letter containing the candidate's name, title, address, telephone and identifying the award for which the individual should be considered.
 - a. Include justification outlining background in field, accomplishments and awards.

Note NEW (not required) One (1) page VFW Public Servant Award Citation Post Entry Form is now available on the VFW website. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

If you have any questions contact Tammy Beauchamp at 816.756.3390 Ext. 6287, e-mail tbeauchamp@vfw.org.



VFW Public Servant Award Citation Post Entry Form

NOTE: VFW Point of Contact should fill out their section below prior to distributing this form.
This will provide individuals from outside of the VFW with the needed information to submit their packets successfully.

To be filled out by VFW representative

Sponsoring VFW Post #: Sponsoring District #:

Date of Presentation: MM/DD/YY (if available)

VFW Post POC

Full Name:

Phone: Email:

Address: (where to mail entry)

City: State: Zip:

Individual Submitting Nomination

Full Name:

Phone: Email:

Nominee Information

Choose appropriate citation: (EMT, Firefighter or Law Enforcement)

Full Name: (please list as you wish it stated on the citation)

Occupation Title: (if any) (please list as you wish it stated on the citation)

Employer Name: (please list as you wish it stated on the citation)

Address of Employer:

City: State: Zip:

Employer Phone: Employer Email: (if available)

Please complete this form and submit to your local VFW Post using the information provided above. Ensure to include all required documentation that is outlined on the instructions sheet provided with this form. All post entries must be received by their **Department Headquarters no later than January 1st**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Beauchamp at 816-756-3390 x 6287, e-mail tbeauchamp@vfw.org



VFW Life Saving Award Citation Entry Form

NOTE: Please attach and send with this form all documentation of the event (newspaper clippings, articles, etc.).

To be filled out by VFW Representative

Sponsoring VFW Post #:	<input type="text"/>	VFW Department:	<input type="text"/>
Date of Presentation: MM/DD/YY (if available)	<input type="text"/>		
VFW POC			
Full Name:	<input type="text"/>		
Phone:	<input type="text"/>	Email:	<input type="text"/>
Address: (for mailing citation)	<input type="text"/>		
City:	<input type="text"/>	State:	<input type="text"/>
		Zip:	<input type="text"/>

Nominee Information

Choose appropriate citation: (Regular, Line of Duty or Valor)	<input type="text"/>
Full Name: (please list as you wish it stated on the citation)	<input type="text"/>
Gender:	<input type="text"/>
Occupation Title: (please list as you wish it stated on the citation or N/A)	<input type="text"/>
Employer Name: (If available)	<input type="text"/>
Address of Employer: (If available)	<input type="text"/>
City:	<input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text"/>
Zip:	<input type="text"/>
Employer Phone:	<input type="text"/>
Employer Email: (if available)	<input type="text"/>

Please complete this form and submit to VFW National Headquarters, Attn: Tammy Beauchamp at Fax# 816-968-1149 or E-mail to tbeauchamp@vfw.org or Lynn Rolf at lrolf@vfw.org. Ensure to include all required documentation that is outlined above in reference to the event. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

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