

# OPERATION: ALL IN



VFW National Membership Program

2024-2025

Al Lipphardt

Commander-in-Chief

*“Believe in what you do, do what you believe in.”*

VERSION DATE: May 6, 2024



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## **I: SITUATION:**

### **Commander's Introduction:**

Alfred J. "Al" Lipphardt was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Al served in the United States Army from 1965 to 1979, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, and from 1970 to 1971. In recognition of his heroic service in combat, he received the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Bronze Star with "V" device, Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service, Purple Heart Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Silver Star and two Bronze Stars, among many others.

He joined the VFW in 2002 at Post 12002 in North Fulton, Georgia, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. Al is also a Triple Crown Commander, having been named as an All-American Post Commander in 2006, District Commander in 2010, and Department Commander in 2015.

### **Membership Mission:**

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

### **Specific Membership Numbers:**

Our requirement this year is to continue growth and achieve at least 102% in membership. In the simplest of terms, we look at the prior year's total (which is how many individual members paid membership dues last year) and want to see a 2 percent increase. If a member has been lost due to passing away or not renewing their dues, then that means we must fill that gap in addition to recruiting new members to meet the 102% goal. This should serve as an example to prove that we must maintain our focus on retaining and mentoring our existing members as well as bringing in new members to the organization. Bring in the members we need, keep the members we have.

## **II: MISSION:**

### **Membership:**

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

### **Membership Requirements:**

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

**WHO:** All VFW Members, including Post, District, Department, and National leadership.

**WHAT:** To meet the goals of increasing membership through recruiting, retention, and mentorship. To develop a spirit of camaraderie and service to all veterans. To strengthen the Veterans of Foreign Wars through a solid membership base.

**WHERE:** Across the globe with Posts in all 50 states and in overseas countries and territories.

**WHEN:** Beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and continuing through the end of the membership year on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**WHY:** To serve our comrades and their families, to remember and honor those who have come before us, and to live the words of our motto, that ***NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.***

## COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S STATEMENT

Comrades of Team Tribe 24-25,

You elected me to lead this organization in accordance with the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Ritual to which I was installed. **LEAD I SHALL.**

### D-Day

*Operation ALL IN* will commence August 1, 2024 @ 1200 Hours

**THIS IS NOT A DRILL,**

**THIS IS NOT AN EXERCISE**

The Alert Order was issued when you were Department and State Junior Vice Commanders, and the Warning Order as Senior Vice Commanders, in order to prepare for *Operation All In*, our All-American Program for Departments, Districts and Posts.

We proudly stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us; the founders from the Spanish American War followed by World War I. World War II, Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf War, along with our continuing Global War on Terrorism and those deployments to many other places under the orders of the President of the United States. We have been preparing for this moment for three years. In 2022-2023 we focused on *Commitment* under the leadership of CIC Tim Borland and "Every Veteran Counts" and we successfully achieved those goals because you came together. You realized how critical the force (membership) is to mission accomplishment. In 2023-2024 we focused on *Credibility* under the leadership of CIC Duane Sarmiento and "Meet the Challenge". Again, you supported the sitting commanders realizing how critical it is for this nation's veterans to know we speak the truth. The principles we were founded upon 125 years ago remain our foundation.

Team Tribe 24-25 Commanders at all levels will focus on *Courage*. Your courage is undeniable. The day you raised your hand and took the oath of enlistment you said four words that sealed your pledge to the people of this nation, "So help me God". When you were ordered to deploy, putting yourself in harm's way, you knew full well the dangers you would face. With changing geo-social-economic conditions and frankly, partisan politics, we have forgotten the most important asset we have. Our nation can never replace the sons and daughters lost in war. Failing to have a clear plan to achieve victory has been our strategy over these last four decades. Our warriors are deployed to be merely pieces on a game board to be used repeatedly without consideration for the toll taken on the warrior and

families at home. The material costs of war and the lifetime of grief and tragedy both physically and mentally to our warriors and their families are quickly forgotten by our nation's leaders.

More dangerous to this nation is the failure by its leaders to keep the promises made to those who have borne the battle. Slowness to grant healthcare and service-connected disabilities is only one part of this failure. We depend on a volunteer military. Recruiting is an issue across all branches of service. Veterans who have deployed to combat have very long memories. The memories I am referring to are those of 1975 and the evacuation of Saigon and when we saw the debacle in Afghanistan at Bagram Air Base as our equipment was left behind but more tragically was witnessing our troops, that is our families (who serve knowing we will never be left behind) and allies abandoned on the ground. Our Warrior Ethos says I will never leave a comrade behind. Our nation's leaders failed to keep that promise.

One of my uncles who served in WWII was with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne landing in Anzio on D-Day. He went on to battles in Bastogne and Market Garden. He was highly decorated. Unfortunately, I was not close to him as he seemed to always be deployed overseas. I remember a conversation that confused me at the time. The talk was about what was I going to do with my life. At age 11, in 1957 America, I didn't know what I was going to do the next 15 minutes much less had I considered my life. But, I did not remember what he said until I heard it again from a Vietnam Veteran and fellow Rotarian. My Uncle Eddie's words were "the talent you have is your gift from God, the use of that talent is your gift to God". As I remembered I thought, did I really hear those words from that rock hard chiseled old soldier. But then I also remember he said, I chose to be a soldier. I chose to be a peacemaker, a Warrior of God. Evil exists and it cannot be appeased, reasoned with, or condoned. Evil is, and there is only one way to eliminate it and that is to destroy it wherever it appears. Like many of you we have seen the face of evil. In closing I am asking you to take up the vision of courage, never, ever, compromise your integrity. Your word is your bond. If you want to know where I am, look to the front, that's where I'll be. Follow Me.

I am proud to serve together with you. Put that vision into action. Embrace the suck, stand rigid for righteousness' sake, never compromise your principles, use the beliefs you held when you lowered your hand as you took the oath, and always be the best you can be as you **"Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In"**

### **III: EXECUTION:**

#### **Commander's Intent:**

*“Efforts are to be appreciated. Achievements are to be celebrated.”*

To incentivize the necessary tasks of recruiting and retention, which are essential to the continued growth and strength of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a series of award programs will be established and overseen by the Membership Department under the direction of the Adjutant General. These programs will be directly related to membership growth and program participation, and awards will be assigned to those individuals as well as Posts, Districts, and Departments that show excellence above and beyond the standard.

#### **How To Achieve Tasks:**

Focus on the three pillars of membership: *Recruiting, Mentorship, and Retention*

1. Recruiting: We need to bring in new members and recover lapsed members. To do this, we must not only reach out to veterans in our community but also build our VFW Posts into places where veterans can feel at home, find the support and camaraderie they deserve, and be provided with the best service for their family and community.
2. Mentorship: We must engage our membership and keep them active. We must be training the leaders of the future, but also communicating and serving every member of our Posts
3. Retention: We must retain the members currently on our rolls. This means putting an end to cliquishness, welcoming eligible veterans of all generations, backgrounds, and walks of life.



## **IV: SERVICE AND SUPPORT:**

### *Membership Resources:*

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

Membership materials ranging from applications, recruiting brochures, posters, and benefits brochures can be ordered directly from the Membership Department using the Membership Order Form (located under Membership Quick Links once you log into vfw.org )

Resources for Post Development, Membership Campaigns, and Mentorship such as training guides, videos, and webinars are available in the Training & Support section on vfw.org

Promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements, and media kits are all available through the Media Room on vfw.org See the trend? Just about anything you will need is at vfw.org, check it out.

*Department Leadership:* Department officers will provide resources, support, and training where available including Schools of Instruction, Unpaid/Relocated lists, and other tools and incentives to enable membership growth and the mission of recruiting, retention, and mentorship.

*National Headquarters:* The VFW National Headquarters staff is ready and trained to answer any questions you may have concerning membership, VFW programs, or other issues. National Headquarters staff will be available for remote training when necessary, feel free to contact the Membership Department to schedule.

You can contact our Member Service Center directly at [1.833.VFW.VETS](tel:1833VFWVETS) or [msc@vfw.org](mailto:msc@vfw.org), or the Membership Department at [1.888.JOIN.VFW](tel:1888JOINVFW) or [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## **V: COMMAND AND CONTROL:**

*In order to incentivize growth and provide motivation and recognition for those individuals, Posts, Districts, and Departments that go the extra mile to strengthen and grow the organization, the Membership Department will issue membership awards designated by the Commander-in-Chief.*

### **Awards Program Notes:**

- Awards and stipends given to a Post will be transferrable to another member of that Post.
- No more than one stipend will be awarded to an individual for a given event.
- Post/District/Department: Membership must be a minimum of 102% in order to receive any award or stipend. This does not apply to the Early Bird award.
- NOTE: Reimbursement for travel expenses paid by the VFW will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099 if the total of payments made to you during any calendar year equals \$600.00 or more. Travel expenses paid for a guest or spouse for the award will also be reported to the IRS. The reimbursement you receive from the VFW will be deemed by the IRS to be taxable income. Since the circumstances of each individual are different, it is recommended that you consult your tax advisor to determine the effect these payments may have on your personal tax situation. It is your responsibility to keep receipts and other records as you and your accountant and/or tax advisor deem necessary in order to document your expenditures.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends unless otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General.
- Individuals receiving a 5-night hotel stay for either the VFW National Convention or the Legislative Conference must confirm attendance with the VFW Membership Department. Individuals confirmed who do not attend will be invoiced for half the cost of the reserved room.

## **All-American Program:**

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

### *All-American Post Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%
- Post-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Meet all the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Donate to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services, minimum of \$125
- 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. One of these community service activities must be for the VFW Day of Service. Learn more at <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/>
- Must purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies

### *All-American Post Award*

All Posts that meet the qualifying percentage of 102% and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American Banner, Post Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

The Top 15 Posts in each Division will receive:

- Acknowledgment in VFW Magazine
- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention
- All-American Post citation
- All-American Post streamer
- All-American citation - commander
- All-American name badge – commander
- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster, adjutant, and Post members may purchase cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)

The top five Post commanders in each division will also receive five nights paid hotel stay\* at the VFW National Convention and reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.

*Division Captains and Co-Captains:* The commander of the top Post in each membership division will be designated as the Team Captain, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> place commanders designated as Co-Captains. The All-American caps for these Captains and Co-Captains will bear a special designation.

#### *All-American District Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%
- District-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters.
- Meet all the following Program Participation criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)

#### *All-American District Award*

All Districts that meet the qualifying percentage of 102% and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American District Commander Citation, All-American Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

The Top 10 Districts in each Division will receive:

- All-American District streamer
- All-American District citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster may purchase cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)
- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention

The top two District commanders in each division will also receive five nights paid hotel stay\* at the VFW National Convention and reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.

*Division Captains and Co-Captain:* The commander of the top District in each membership division will be designated as the Team Captain, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> place commander designated as Co-Captain. The All-American caps for these Captains and Co-Captains will bear a special designation.

#### *All-American Department Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%.
- Department must submit Department legislative chairman reports monthly through the Program dashboard tool.
- Meet all the following Program Participation criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - An entry advanced to National judging
  - Patriot's Pen - An entry advanced to National judging
  - Veterans & Military Support Programs – Must complete State/Department fundraiser and proceeds donated to Veterans & Military Support Programs, Kansas City, Mo.

#### *All-American Department Award*

- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention
- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap - commander – quartermaster, and adjutant may purchase cap.
- All-American lapel pin - commander - quartermaster may purchase pin.
- Five nights paid hotel stay\* for the 2024-2025 Commander attending the VFW National Convention.
- Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention Joint Opening Session

## **All-American Notes:**

- Any member in a Post that achieves All-American status can purchase a “Post Member” cap. Those members must be in the Post during the membership year. Adjutants may purchase a cap. Quartermasters may purchase a cap and/or Quartermaster Pin. Commanders who were not in the top 15 in their Division may purchase a cap, Commander’s Pin, and/or Post Commander Citation.
- Donations made to replace Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen by eligible overseas Posts, Districts, or Departments must be made through the All-American Dashboard, not through any other means.
- Veterans & Military Support Programs Services Donations for Post/District/Department as listed above will only be accepted only through the All-American Dashboard.

## **MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS AND AWARDS:**

### **Individual Recruiting Awards:**

1/5/10/15 members recruited: recruiting pin

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

50 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief backpack

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

100 members recruited: Century Cap or \$50 VFW Store credit & citation

Recruiting Awards will be sent out five times during the year to the Post, to be given out at a Post meeting to those members who have recruited new members. Mailings will take place near the end of October, January, March, May, and then after the end of the membership year.

### **Early Bird Award:**

The top two Posts in each division on Jan. 1, 2025, will each be awarded a 5-night hotel stay for the VFW Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. One room will be booked per award/Post.

### **New Member Award:**

Each Post that brings in a total of 15 New members will each be awarded a travel charger with the official VFW Commander-in-Chief logo. A Post may receive this award up to *five times* during the year!

### **“Operation: All In” Award:**

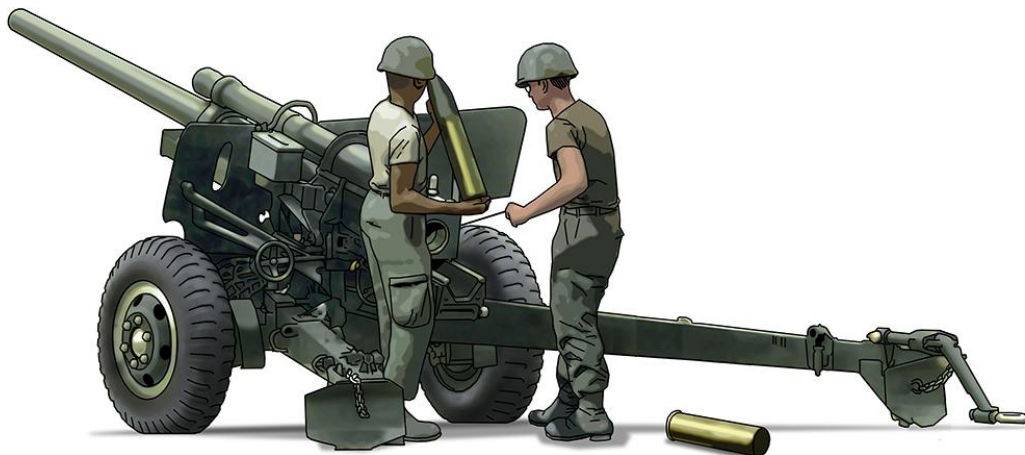
The top two Post commanders and the top two District commanders in each division who achieve 102% membership by June 30th, 2025, will each be awarded a five-night hotel accommodation at the National Convention.

### **102% Post, District & Department:**

A distinctive streamer will be awarded to every Post, District and State/Department that achieves 102% or greater in membership by June 30th, 2025.

### **105% “Above And Beyond” Drawing:**

Each Post and District commander that meets or exceeds 105% in membership by June 30, 2025, will receive an entry in this drawing. Twenty Post commanders and Twelve District commanders will receive a \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.



### **Post Division Recruiting Challenge:**

For every 10 new members recruited between July 1, 2024, and June 30th, 2025, Posts will earn one entry to be entered into a drawing. One Post per division will receive a \$1,000 membership grant deposited into the Post account.

### **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.

Each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100, 250, or 500 Legacy Life members by June 30th, 2025, commander or Post representative will receive a 5-night hotel accommodation at the VFW National Convention, reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session and a Legacy Society Post Proclamation.

### **Top Department Recruiter:**

The top Recruiter in every Department by June 30th, 2025, will receive an engraved Cavalry Saber. Note: Minimum of 25 new members required to win this award.

### **Elite Recruiter:**

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new members by June 30th, 2025, will receive a 5-night hotel accommodation at the VFW National Convention and a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge. In the event that an Elite Recruiter has already received a 5-night hotel accommodation from another award, a \$1,000 stipend will be issued at the National Convention.

### **Recruiter of the Year:**

The Elite Recruiter who signs up the greatest number of new members greater than 250 by June 30th, 2025, will receive an additional \$1,000 stipend, reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session, a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge, and the Commander-in-Chief's Crystal Eagle trophy.



### **Life Member Recruiter Award:**

Any VFW member who recruits at least 75 New Life members by June 30th, 2025 will receive a special citation from the Commander-in-Chief and a Recruiter Satchel with the Commander-in-Chief's logo.

### **New Post Development Department Grant:**

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.

Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership Department.

### **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 month through the year, 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 month, 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 monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

### **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 an Awards Banquet at the National Convention with a special Triple Crown pin.

**Post Division Breakdown:**

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

**District Division Breakdown:**

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	5000+	
2	3,282	4,999
3	2,172	3,281
4	1,447	2,171
5	906	1,446
6	10	905

**Department Division Breakdown:**

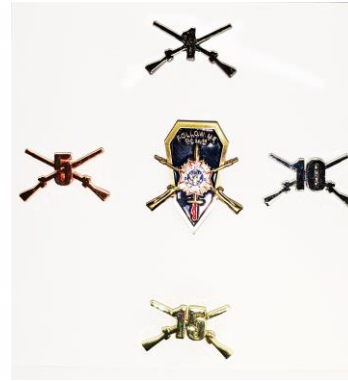
Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	29,000	above
2	15,750	28,999
3	12,000	15,749
4	7,000	11,999
5	2000	6,999

## FRAGO: Items and Materials

Below you will see examples of some of the awards and items mentioned in this program. For more information, contact the VFW Membership Department.



Commander-in-Chief  
Medallion and Coin



Commander-in-Chief Pin  
and Recruiting Pins



Travel Charger



Cavalry Saber



Recruiter Satchel