

**VFW DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK
COMMANDER
JACK SANFORD
2026 - 2027**

Generations of Veterans Caring for Veterans and their families



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

**2026-27 MEMBERSHIP
PROGRAM**



June 14, 2026 (Rev 0)

Comrades,

You now have the 2026-27 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York **Commander's Membership Program** in your hands. My theme for 2026-27 will be Generations of Veterans Caring for Veterans and Their Families. Two of our tenants in our VFW mission statement is to "assist our worthy Comrades" and "to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans." This is why I have chosen the this theme. My Special Project for this year will be geared to helping both our veterans and their widows and orphans. I am looking to support two major organizations that aim to help both our veterans and their families – The Helmets to Hives, and the Headstrong Project. More detailed information on both of organizations can be found at the end of this booklet and hope you help me support these dedicated organization with your donations.

We all know that membership is the lifeblood of the VFW. We also all know how difficult it is to go out and recruit new members. I am asking you this year to not only seek out new members but work even harder to reclaim some of those members who have gone out the back door and failed to pay their dues in previous years. We will do our best to provide you the leads for those members who have failed to renew.

The **All-State Program** is the Department Commander's program designed to recognize the best Districts and Posts from across the state. I have designed this year's membership program to continue our two objectives, first, provide you some incentive to recruit with a variety of recognition awards for your hard work and second, develop this year's program for the coveted All State Commander's Award around improving our tenant programs - Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Teacher's Award while continuing a training initiative to instill the basics of Post administration and management. Work your programs and networking will take place and you'll gain those new members as well as bring back some of those whom you have lost. **The goal this year is 100% PLUS One New Member in the Department of New York running parallel with The National Commander's goal of 100% PLUS One New Member.** I hope you will strive to do your best to support both.

Following the notification of posts being selected to receive awards, including the All-State award, you **must notify the Department Headquarters no later than July 13, 2027 of anyone wishing to contest eligibility.**

Let's work as a TEAM and keep the Department of New York where it should be in membership – ON TOP!!

WORK *TOGETHER* AND MAKE IT HAPPEN AGAIN IN 2026-27!

Yours in Comradeship,

Jack Sanford

Jack Sanford
Commander

POST GOALS

Increase the number of new members by 5%
Increase life members by 5%
Increase re-instated members by 5%

Post 100% Banner Award

Department **will award the first 100 Posts** that **attain 100% Membership** by **May 1, 2027** the following: (Excludes 100% Life Member Posts who have not recruited a minimum of one New or Reinstated member during the 2026-27 VFW year.

100% Banner

Post Divisional Awards

A Department plaque will be **awarded to one post** in each Membership Division that shows the **Largest Numerical Gain** over their *June 2026 National Membership Report.

AND

- Post Inspection has been Submitted and received at Department
- Has submitted **TWO Community Activity Reports**
- Have submitted the **first three** (3) quarters **Trustee Reports**
- **Three Year Post Trustee trained** at a District or Department OTI
- **Post Quartermaster trained** at a District or Department OTI
- **Districts must notify all their Posts 20 days in advance of the OTI Date (Copy of the notice to the Department Adjutant)**

(The award will be given to the Post, not an individual & Excludes 100% Life Member Posts who have not recruited at least one new member during the 2026-27 VFW year.

All-State Teams of Post Commander's & Quartermasters

Being cognizant of the important role of the Post Quartermaster in membership, both the Post Commanders as well as their Quartermasters will receive:

All-State Cap for the Commander & Quartermaster

And

A membership Award of \$100 will be awarded to the Post Commander and Quartermaster qualifying for All-State.

Post Minimum Requirements:

1. Must report 100% **Plus One** new member over the June 2025 National Membership Report (As recorded at Department Headquarters).
2. Must submit a minimum of TWO Community Activity Report through the Dept on-line Portal and must be entered **prior to May 1, 2027**.
3. **Inspected prior to May 1, 2027** and the 2026-27 Inspection Report received **and accepted** in the Department **prior to May 1, 2027**
4. **Post Quartermaster** must be trained at a District or Department OTI **prior to Feb 28, 2027**.
5. **The Post THIRD Year Trustee** must be trained at a District or Department OTI **prior to Feb 28, 2027**.
6. The first 3 quarters Trustees Reports in Department **prior to May 1, 2027**.
7. Donates a minimum of \$75.00 to support the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPPA)

NOTE: *The First 75 Posts which have met the reporting requirements for the All-State Award if Received in HQ or Postmarked by May 1, 2027 will receive the All-State Award at the State Convention; however, a Post that has all of their reports completed and turned in by May 1, 2027 still has until June 30, 2027 to meet the 100% Plus One Member requirement. The Post All-State Awards earned by the June 30, 2027 date that are not presented at the State Convention will be presented either at a District Meeting or the 2027 Fall State Conference.*

The total number of All-State Awards shall be limited to **THE FIRST 75** and will be allocated to each Membership Division. (Additional All-State Awards may be authorized by the State Commander).

100% Life member Post will not qualify if no new members are attained

New Post Commander's Award

The Post Commander of any New or reinstated Post chartered during the 2026 – 2027 Membership Year that obtains a membership of 50 or more members by May 1, 2027 will receive a *Life Membership* in the VFW and a *Life Member Cap*. If the Post Commander is a Life Member then they will receive a \$100 gift certificate from the National Emblem and Supply Catalog. This number of 50 includes the 25 new members needed for the charter.

DISTRICT GOALS

A District which meets all requirements for the All-State Award by May 1, 2027 will receive the All-State District Award at the State Convention; however, a District still has until June 30, 2027 to meet the All-State Award 100% Plus One membership requirement. The District All-State Award earned by the June 30, 2027 date will be presented at a District meeting if requested or at the 2027 Fall Conference.

All-State District Commanders

Each District Commander whose District attains 100% and has by April 15, 2027
Retention Rate of at least 80%

And

Has a **SVA Chairman** who has provided the three (3) Required Reports
to the Department & National.

And

Who has completed all of the following Requirements **by May 1, 2027:**

100% Posts Inspected and Received by Department

- **District Quartermaster and District Inspector** trained at a Department OTI by **February 28, 2027.**

- **At least One District Trustee trained** at a Department OTI by **February 28, 2027.**

- Donations a minimum of \$100 to support the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPPA)

Will be awarded a Distinctive All-State District Commander VFW cap and a membership Award of \$100 will be awarded for attending the Department Convention to accept the All-State Award.

In addition

Each District Commander whose District attains **100% in membership** as of
March 1, 2027

Will also receive a Special Recognition Award in meeting this goal

District Membership Chairman Award

Recognizing the valuable contribution made by the District Membership Chairman, the Department will award a \$100.00 Gift Certificate from the VFW Emblem and Supply Catalog to each District Membership Chairman whose District Commander receives the All-State District Commanders Award.

District Early Bird Award



SPECIAL DISTRICT COMMANDER'S WASHINGTON CONFERENCE TRIP AWARD

The First District Commander who reaches 90% in membership for their District by **January 18, 2027**, will be awarded a **monetary travel expense award** up to **\$1,500.00** (hotel/travel receipts required) to be used for attendance at the Washington Conference held in Washington, D.C. enabling the Commander to attend the Commander-in-Chief's testimony before Congress.



District Student Veteran Association Liaison (aka SVA)

Each district is required to have a Student Veteran Association Liaison to qualify for the Department All-State Award. The Liaison is required to provide a **written Quarterly activity report** to the State Chairman. The report form and guide can be found at

http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/StudentVeteranLiaisonGuide.pdf and
[http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/SVALiasionReport\(1\).pdf](http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/SVALiasionReport(1).pdf)

NATIONAL DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF

TO RECEIVE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE AND PER DIEM FOR THE DEPT CONFERENCES

Fall Conference

80% Membership in the District by October 1, 2026 - based on the first National Membership Report Totals.

OR

75% Membership –based on the first National Membership Report Totals, and one (1) Documented Membership Event* in the District by October 1, 2026.

To receive mileage at the current per diem to attend the conference, they must attend the Membership Committee meeting.

Spring Conference

100% Membership in the District **by March 1, 2027** - based on the first National Membership Report totals.

OR

90% Membership per the National Membership Report, and one (1) Documented Membership Events* in the District by March 1, 2027.

To receive mileage and per diem to attend the conference, they must attend the Membership Committee meeting.

* A documented membership event is a membership recruiting event in the community **away from the Post home** such at a fair, car/boat show, home show, or mall where a table and or tent can be set up and the participants man the event for at least three hours. Documentation of the event can be made by memo, letter or e-mail to the District Membership Chairman who will compile the reports to determine award eligibility. Photographs are strongly encouraged but not mandated.

Individual Post Member

Recruiter Award

Individuals who recruit 5 New Members will receive a \$10.00 VFW Store Gift Certificate

Individuals who recruit 10 New Members will receive Coin & Membership Medal

Individuals who recruit 20 or more New Members will receive a \$100 Gift Certificate to VFW Store

Individual recruiter awards will be mailed to individual recipients as membership accession reports are received in the Department from National.

Special Individual Membership Drawing



VFW Special Tribute Henry Rifle

As an additional individual recruiting incentive in addition to the five-member gift certificate to be awarded, individuals can also qualify to be entered into a drawing for a VFW Special Tribute Henry Rifle to be awarded at the end of the membership year.

For every Fifteen (15) new or reinstated members that are recruited the individual will earn **three** tickets in the drawing; for every twenty (20) or more members **five** (05) tickets

Awards

Post 100% Award:



Banner

First 100 Posts who reach 100% -

These awards will exclude 100% Life Member Posts
Who Have Not Recruited one new member in the 2026-27 VFW Year

All State District Commanders **101% Membership Award**

*Special
Gift Selected
By the
State Commander*

Individual Post Member Recruiter Awards



5 New Members



**15 New Members
&
20 New Members**

+ Entry in Henry Rifle Drawing

20 or more will get:



STATE MEMBERSHIP TEAM



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DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP STANDING COMPETITION

To enhance our membership drive during the 2026-27 year I will be awarding a Special Designed Jacket to each District Commander who attains 101% membership by June 30, 2027.

Additionally, the State Commander will recognize **one District** Commander at the end of the membership year with a special award who excels above and beyond all the other districts. Criteria to be used will consist of membership, reports, inspections, initiative, communication, community interaction and other criteria as determined by the State Commander.

The District Commander that exceeds expectations of their position as determined by the state commander will receive a \$250 gift certificate to the VFW store.

And

A Special Gift of Recognition selected by the State Commander will for superior recruiting achievement in 2026-27.



(Sample Trophy)

4 Steps for the Post Commander In Planning A Successful Recruiting Campaign

Step #1:

Select and organize a membership committee.

- **Qualities of a successful Membership Chairman:**
Popular, organized, good speaker, knowledgeable about the VFW, dedicated
- **Qualities of a successful Committee member:**
Active, knowledgeable about the VFW, dependable

Step #2:

Develop a recruiting plan

5 Elements of a recruiting plan that works:

1. Analysis of the current situation

Where you are in terms of members, recruitments, other Posts' territories' members and recruitments. Use last year's membership as a base for your goals.

2. Goal Setting

Where you want to go

3. Development of action plans

- Territory and time management
- Manpower management and planning
- Recruiting meetings and techniques

4. Implementation of action plans

Translate plans on paper into actions carried out by the recruiting team

5. Tracking results

Use a system of controls and measurements to assure results are achieved

Step #3:

Set realistic goals

Two types of goals in your plan should include: Quotas and Objectives

USE THE SMART system for goal setting:

Specific.

For example, the focus of the plan should not be just to increase recruiting by Numbers, but to increase by a certain number through specific recruiting Techniques

Measurable.

A definite measure – to increase members in your Post by a certain percentage or set number

Attainable/A**mbitious**

Goals should require effort (ambitious), but attainable

Results-oriented.

Goals aimed at achieving a specific result

Timed.

Track your progress throughout the time period to ensure you achieve goals at the end of the stated time. Consider setting up recruiting deadlines to coincide with National, Department and District/County awards so members are eligible for awards sponsored by National, Department, District and County.

Step #4:

Plan your activities.

The 3 R's of membership growth:



Retain Continuous members



Reinstate former members



Recruit NEW members

Five proven recruiting techniques:

1. Personal contact

Door-to-Door, membership booths, meetings

2. Recruiting booths/tables

3. Mail

4. Referrals

5. Telephone campaign

Note: Personal contact is the most effective way to reach prospective Members. Whatever recruiting method you use, always arrange a face-to-face meeting with the prospect.



STATE COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT



Helmets to Hives & Headstrong

Background: This year State Commander Jack Sanford has chosen to support our veterans and their families through two recognized organizations that meets the needs of veterans and their families – Helmets to Hives the Headstrong Project.

Helmets to Hives:

Why Beekeeping?

Beekeeping is a unique way to reconnect with nature and spend time outdoors. When practiced in a safe and supportive learning environment, the hobby has been shown to:

- aid in PTSD recovery
- increase self-sufficiency
- improve social connections among veterans
- relieve anxiety
- foster emotional well-being

While anyone can struggle with mental health issues, isolation, or difficulty engaging with others, these issues are often more prevalent in the veteran community. Helmets to Hives was created by veterans who have found the hobby of beekeeping to be therapeutic. Sensitivity to the unique experiences that a veteran brings to the program is at the heart of everything the program offers. From working together to care for a colony, to spending time re-engaging with the natural world, learning the hobby of beekeeping in a therapeutic environment can provide myriad opportunities to lessen the weight many veterans carry with them.

The Program



Through classroom instruction and hands-on learning with mentors, participants will learn Safe and effective beekeeping practices from Local experts



Small groups are assigned to a honeybee colony and are responsible for its care during bi-weekly mentored sessions throughout the season.



All necessary beekeeping equipment and safety gear is provided to veterans enrolled in the the program, reducing the expense and the guesswork

Headstrong Project:

The Headstrong Project is a non-profit mental health organization providing confidential, barrier-free, and stigma-free PTSD treatment to our veterans, service members, and family connected to their care. Their goal is to help their clients “Triumph Over Trauma.” by providing them with effective mental health treatment. Headstrong’s network of trauma-informed clinical partners provide individualized, evidence-based outpatient care to their clients. Their three-tier method of treatment is:

Connect

Connect to care with a Headstrong intake specialist who completes a phone intake and schedules an initial evaluation. The client is matched with a therapist for treatment.

Collaborate

Collaborate with a Headstrong therapist through individually tailored, effective interventions deployed to help the client identify problem areas and implement change.

Close

Close treatment moving forward with new tools and skills.

Monetary Donation Support:

- All monetary donations to the Special Project will be divided amongst the two designated organizations to assist veterans and their families.

Department Special Project Chairman: *Gene Ratigliano, PSC,NCM*

Your generous donation should be made out to: Department of NY VFW

**Mailed to: Department of NY VFW
Attn: Commander's Special Project
69 Sand Creek Road
Albany, NY 12205**