

## VFW Programs

- Discuss each program—impact on the Post, community, youth, etc.
- Discuss how to select and motivate chairmen and volunteers
- Awards and how to use them
- Reporting and record keeping

## VFW Culture

- History of the Post and its personality
- VFW politics at the Post, Department & National levels
- VFW publications
- The VFW Canteen—advantages, disadvantages
- National officers—selection process, powers, impact on the organization
- Relationship between the Post, District, Department and National levels
- The values shared by veterans and VFW members
- The legacy of military service and the VFW
- Relationship between the service branches
- Recognizing and using generational diversity

## VFW & The Department of Veterans Affairs

- VA's history and purposes
- History of the relationship between VA and VFW
- VFW National Veterans Service—purpose, structure, activities

## VFW National Organization

- The purpose and responsibilities of each office under the Adjutant General
- The purpose and responsibilities of each office under the Quartermaster General
- Key staff members and their responsibilities

## VFW Membership

- Recruiting—its history, methods and necessity
- The value of membership—benefits, etc.
- Recruiting veterans from different conflicts, generations and genders

**Be a mentor** and ensure that VFW and its **values are persevered** for another century and beyond.

VFW is a **fraternity** brought together by a **common experience** and it is time to **guide future leaders** from young veterans.



**MENTORING &  
VFW  
SURVIVAL**

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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# MENTORING & VFW SURVIVAL

## What is mentoring?

Mentoring refers to a developmental relationship between an experienced mentor and a less experienced partner. The concept is simply one person (usually older), spending time with another person, for the purpose of sharing wisdom, experience and understanding in order to improve the younger person's chances for success. Often, mentoring is done within the context of a trade, a philosophy or a religion.

## Why does VFW need mentors?

The general public knows VFW as a group of veterans who share the experience of overseas service. However, as members, we recognize the organization as much more. To us, VFW is a fraternity brought together by a common experience. We are committed to certain values, including concern for fellow veterans, honoring and serving those in uniform and their families, patriotism and service to our communities and nation. Another common trait we share is our desire to see this organization and our values continue to future generations.

This is where mentoring becomes a vital factor.

To ensure that VFW and its values persevere for another century and beyond, we must do all we can to raise individuals who will lead this organization, remember its history and accomplishments, and carry on the legacy of service and patriotism for which we are known. In short, we need leaders who value the future of VFW enough to invest their time in guiding future leaders from young veterans. We need VFW mentors.

## What are the goals of mentoring?

A successful mentor will encourage other veterans to become committed, active VFW members. Ultimately, this individual should continue to seek more responsibility and a position of leadership to carry on the traditions, values and service that have made VFW a great organization.

## What does being a VFW mentor entail?

Because most of us learned to fire a weapon, make a bed and clean a latrine by the numbers, that's how we will present mentoring.

- 1) Find a VFW member who is willing. This can be a young vet or just someone who has not been active. He or she should understand VFW values, have an interest in VFW culture and be willing to serve as a leader.
- 2) Ask the member to have a cup of coffee and learn more about VFW. Try to set aside one evening per week to meet and talk. It is important to the success of the effort to identify a regular time and place, and stick to it. True leadership involves commitment and discipline.
- 3) Go through the curriculum included in this brochure. You don't need to be an expert on VFW history or policies. Just discuss each element from your own perspective, using your own experiences.
- 4) Encourage your mentee by introducing him or her to other leaders and active members. Encourage these other members to share their VFW experience.
- 5) Encourage your mentee to begin his or her VFW career by initially volunteering at a Post event. As they become involved and get to know other members, encourage them to consider accepting a chairmanship and recruiting their fellow veterans.
- 6) Encourage and support your mentee as a candidate for Post office. Guide the campaign and encourage others to support them.



## Mentoring Curriculum

This curriculum is a suggestion of elements that should be covered during the course of mentoring a VFW member. No portion is more important than another. As a natural part of the mentoring process, each VFW mentor will discover areas where his or her interests lie—programs, volunteering, community service, veterans service, active military, etc. You may have more passion and experience in these areas.

However, for the sake of the mentee, the VFW mentor should use this curriculum to ensure that the student's introduction and education about VFW is broad-based to allow a good understanding of all aspects of the organization and provide a solid foundation for future involvement. Every aspect of the curriculum should at least be touched upon.

An effective mentor will always attempt to identify areas of particular interest to the individual being mentored and cover those areas thoroughly.

## VFW History

- Reasons for VFW's creation
- The founders and their backgrounds
- Stated purposes and values addressed by the founders
- Significant milestones and accomplishments in VFW history
- Significant VFW members
- VFW's interaction with government, education and related organizations
- The differences between generations of veterans—WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, OIF/OEF

## VFW Congressional Charter and By-Laws & Manual of Procedure and Ritual

- Basic tenets and purposes of the Charter
- Relationships between the VFW National Convention, Councils of Administration, Departments, County Councils (where applicable), Districts and Posts
- The various rituals, their meanings and usage
- Parliamentary procedure
- Election of officers and various appointments

## VFW Departments, Districts & Posts

- Responsibilities and relationships
- Officers—their selection and responsibilities