

A B C'S **OF** **MEMBERSHIP**

**AN INTRODUCTION
AND MENTORING SERIES
FOR
NEW VFW MEMBERS
AND
EMERGING LEADERS**

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Developed by : Al Lipphardt, VFW all American Triple Crown Commander"

VFW 
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Preface

All those who have contributed to the many hours of mentoring new members and emerging leaders in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is hereby acknowledged and appreciated. It has never been more important we do stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

The idea of mentoring can no longer be the sole responsibility of our National organization. Each of us has an individual responsibility to provide institutional knowledge of the customs and traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to our comrades.

I come from the generation of “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country”. So, this is my effort to ask not what the Veterans of Foreign Wars can do for me, Ask what can I do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. For over 50 years I have been blessed to be in positions of leadership where I was able to share my experiences and lessons learned. These experiences came from service in uniform, from combat as a soldier in Vietnam, from the perspectives as an employee to perspectives as a successful business owner, to be part of and serve as a leader in an International Service organization, to personal and professional ups and downs, to a marriage of over 54 years, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Through all these things I understood one indisputable fact. The talent I have been given is a gift from my Creator. The use of that talent is my gift in return.

And so, I offer you my perspective on what I understand as the ABC's of Membership for new members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and emerging leaders. Make no mistake, our new members are our emerging leaders and unless we help prepare them for their responsibilities, we will not have the capacity to meet the needs of future veterans. I invite you to adopt the mantra “Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In” because “If it's to be, it's up to me”. Be the difference.

The work contained in this book is not endorsed, promoted, or published by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.



ABC's of Membership

**The Integration of Military Values in our
VFW and Family Lives**

Chapter 1

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Week One of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Loyalty

Integration of our military values into our values as a Veteran Service Organization.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW)

.... No One Does More For Veterans

For the next 10 weeks we will look at the values common and specific to each branch of service as they relate to the purpose of our beloved VFW. Each week we will focus on a different value. These are values we learned during our basic training and applied not only in our daily lives as service members but continue with us today.

The purpose in sharing these values is to help each of us to focus on what is hoped to be an acceptance or a reaffirmation of the mantra. "Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In".

Wednesday Defined

Loyalty

Loyalty, in general use, is a devotion and faithfulness to a nation, cause, philosophy, country, group, or person. Philosophers disagree on what can be an object of loyalty, as some argue that loyalty is strictly interpersonal and only another human being can be the object of loyalty. The definition of loyalty in law and political science is the fidelity of an individual to a nation, either one's nation of birth, or one's declared home nation by oath.

Core Values Specific Military Characteristics

Army's value of loyalty is to "Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal Soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow Soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army, you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show unit loyalty.

It may serve the Veterans Of Foreign Wars if it were to adopt the value of loyalty to be "Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the VFW, and its' members". Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal VFW Member is one who supports the leadership and stands for fellow members. By wearing the "Cross of

Malta” you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share you show loyalty to your post, district, department, and national organization.

Military Life

Loyalty is common to all members of the military services and to veterans, particularly those who deployed to harms’ way, and all honorably discharged service members.

The commissioned officer presiding over the Oath of Enlistment ceremony raises their right hand and asks the person (s) taking the Oath to raise their right hand and repeat the Oath after him/her. The officer traditionally pauses after each line to allow the members to repeat the preceding line. The oath of enlistment has no expiration and for many, the oath is as binding now as we did when first raising our hand.

“I (name) do solemnly swear (affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the officers appointed over me according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

VFW Life

Loyalty is an element of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Before one may become a member of the VFW it is necessary to take a solemn obligation in which there is nothing which will conflict with religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to families.

Family Life

Loyalty and Family. Wherever the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. Trust is an important word. Loyalty and trust are everything. It is the core of what we should be about and what the people around us are about. It is that certain thing that gives a sense of security. The foundation for balanced success begins with loyalty.

Loyalty

Soldiers Creed I am an American Soldier.

I am a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and I live the Army values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never quit.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained, and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life. I am an American Soldier.

Duty as identified in our Military Service.

Army

Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks, and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

Marine Corps

Marine Corps Values 1 Honor Marines are held to the highest standards, ethically and morally. Respect for others is essential. ... 2 Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the ability to face fear and overcome it. ... 3 Commitment

Navy

Department of the Navy Core Values as in our past, we are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved.

Air Force

The Air Force Values provide the expectations and standards that all Air Force people are expected to display every day. Our values underpin everything we do. Members of the Air Force are expected to demonstrate the Air Force, values always; at home, at work, and when deployed. Every member is accountable, always.

Coast Guard

Devotion to Duty. We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the

successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Thursday Inspirational “Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In.”

A duty is a commitment or expectation to perform some action in general or if certain circumstances arise. A duty may arise from a system of ethics or morality, especially in an honor culture. Many duties are created by law, sometimes including a codified punishment or liability for non-performance. Performing one’s duty may require some sacrifice of self-interest.

Quotes concerning duty,

“Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best; it removes all that is base. All men are afraid in battle. The coward is the one who lets his fear overcome his sense of duty. Duty is the essence of manhood.” General George S. Patton

“Duty, Honor, Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be.” General Douglas MacArthur

“Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less.” General Robert E. Lee

Military Life

Duty as identified in Military Service. Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks, and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. Fulfill your obligations as a part of the unit every time temptation is resisted to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

VFW Life

Duty as applied to our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, a Veteran Service Organization (VSO). As a VSO we are about more than brick and mortar locations. Our post homes and wherever VFW members meet is a place that should be humbly respected because it is where warriors gather, and heroes meet.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

You are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States if you are an individual who served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition in service that has been recognized as campaign medal service, and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the United States Government; on the Korean peninsula or in territorial waters for at least 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949 or in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger under section 310 of title 37

Family Life

Duty as it relates to our family, community, our nation defies description and calculation. One of the best ways examples of learning lesson as it relates to the inter-relationships of the family, community and our nation is simply to see “family” images. For those of us who served, family takes on a whole different context. Home is where we find ourselves stationed, and sometimes because of the dangers, we endure unaccompanied assignments and so for the service member he or she is now temporarily a member of a unique family. And, for loved ones left at home, that place where we were, neighbors, families of others whose spouse was deployed now become part of our family as we are of theirs.

For me, and I am sure there are many like me, the journey preparing me to meet the demands of my duties, to family, community, and nation, began long before entering service. The military only deepened the foundation of my upbringing and welded the values upon my heart. The day I take my last breath, is when I will stop caring for those who gave the last full measure of devotion and all that followed.

I take that as a duty and a debt. A therapist once told me I would never be able to repay the debt for the freedoms we have. In my heart of hearts, I know that to be true, but then again maybe, just maybe, If I “Believe In What I Do – Do What I Believe In” I may be able to help at least someone.

Motivation

May your motivation to do your duty be to live the life for which you were created, to be the best you can be. To integrate duty, it will require incorporating each of the remaining values.

The Value of Respect

Defined

Respect, also called esteem, is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important or held in high esteem or regard. It conveys a sense of admiration for good or valuable qualities. And it is also the process of honoring someone by exhibiting care, concern, or consideration for their needs or feelings. This is how the branches of our military approach the value of RESPECT.

Army

Treat people as they should be treated. In the Soldier's Code, we pledge to "treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same." Respect is what allows us to appreciate the best in other people. Respect is trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the Army value of respect, which results from knowing you have put forth your best effort. The Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute.

Marine Corps

This is the bedrock of our character. It is the quality that empowers Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior: to never lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; and to have respect and concern for each other.

Navy

Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.

Air Force

Integrity is the single most important part of character. It makes Airmen who they are and what they stand for and is as much a part of their professional reputation as their ability to fly or fix jets, operate a computer network, repair a runway, or defend an airbase.

Coast Guard

We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We encourage individual opportunity and growth. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team.

Thursday is a day to inspire. I can think of no better way than to share inspirational quotes about this week's value subject, RESPECT.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

“When we treat people merely as they are, they will remain as they are. When we treat them as if they were what they should be, they will become what they could be.” Thomas S. Monson

“I’m not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.” Jackie Robinson

“The best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to a child, a good example; to a father, deference; to a mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself respect; to all others, charity.” Benjamin Franklin
Respect is earned, not given.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Military Service

How our military service integrates the value of respect in the performance of our duties. In the Soldier’s Code, we pledge to “treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same.” Respect is trusting that all have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the value of respect. It results from knowing you have put forth your best effort to be the best you can be.

Paraphrasing one of the inspirational quotes from yesterday’s posting, “when we treat people as they are, they will remain as they are. When we treat them as if they were what they should be.....they will become what they could be.” BE THE DIFFERENCE

VFW Life

Within the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States there are numerous ways to show respect including awards and certificates at every level beginning at the Post, District, Department and National. When achievement is recognized as a show of respect it is extremely meaningful when it is presented out of a sense of selfless service. To do things because it is the right thing to do is, in and of itself, something to be appreciated. But when honor is bestowed recognizing the service, accept it humbly acknowledging that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Let gratitude be your attitude.

The overseas cap is the official cover to be worn at meetings. The hat is “brown” in color but there are additional covers that are for specific

achievement such as All State Team and All-American Team. All State covers are a white lower panel with a brown upper panel, All American covers for the post are a blue lower panel and red upper panel, The All-American District covers are a white lower panel with a red upper panel. The All-American Department cover is white lower panel with a blue upper panel.

The Overseas Cap (basic cover) has a corresponding trim color which indicates the level of the organization which the individual is representing. The gold trim is worn by members of a post. The green trim is worn by officers of a district. The red trim is worn by officers of a Department and the silver trim is worn by officers of the National organization. The historic and traditional overseas cover is worn because it was the first recognition of an overseas/combat deployment. Its historic traditions remain in high esteem in the only service organization dedicated to combat veterans.

Family Life

And I cannot think of a more appropriate gesture on this day, than reflecting on the value of RESPECT as it relates to our families by wishing each one of you a Happy Valentine's Day.

Motivation and the value of RESPECT

Respect.....to get it, one must earn it. As in winning, earning respect is not a one-time thing. It is an all the time thing.... a habit. One of the most effective ways to earn the respect of others is a result of a formula I like to call "feel", "felt", "found". Many, feel respect is realized when associating with other individuals who are respected.

They felt by being associated with persons of high character and ethical standards, they found an increase in their own inner sense of self-respect. And, in that association and increase in their own newly discovered selfrespect they soon found respect from others.

As respect is earned your ability to influence is often increased. The more you are respected the more influence you command. Leadership is about influence, that is followership. If you lack the capability to influence others you have no one to lead. To lead effectively, you must first earn the respect of others.

Wednesday Reflecting on the value of SELFLESS SERVICE as defined

Wikipedia Selfless Service is a service that is performed without any expectation of result or award for performing it. Such services can be performed to benefit other human beings or society.

Army

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain.

The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team member to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.

Air Force

As an Air Force core value, service is not about the Air Force institution. It is always about an enduring commitment and dedication of the individual to the age-old military virtue of selfless dedication to duty and in all circumstances. This includes putting one's life at risk if called to do so. How do you see the aspect of Selfless Service in your relationship as it reflects on membership and in your daily life?

Inspirational quotes reflecting on the value of SELFLESS SERVICE

“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity”.
Douglas Adams

“You have chosen to risk your lives for the defense of this country. I will not insult you by saying that you are dedicated to selfless service--it is not a virtue in my morality. In my morality, the defense of one's country means that a man is personally unwilling to live as the conquered slave of any enemy, foreign or domestic. This is an enormous virtue.” Ayn Rand

“The willingness of our citizens to give freely and unselfishly of themselves, even their lives in defense of our democratic principles, gives this great Nation continued strength and vitality”. Ronald Reagan

Military service

Selfless service is a part of our daily lives as members of the military and, as with most things, becomes a habit from repetition. The difference between simply performing our duty and selfless service is an attitude.

When you go about your tasks you do them in such a manner without regard for personal recognition or profit, that is with sincerity and integrity. Your actions become second nature. It is simply another way to execute the mantra of “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In.”

Today is a good day for you to reflect on your motivations for what you do. I think you will be amazed at what you do without thought, but rather do them out of habit.....the habit of Selfless Service.

VFW Life. The value of SELFLESS SERVICE as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

The description of our organization, a Veteran Service Organization indicates the need for an attitude of selfless service from our members. In addition to being a Veteran organization, we are a volunteer organization. Giving back is in the DNA of those who have borne the battle and made it home. “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Family Life

The value of SELFLESS SERVICE in our family life Selfless Service that we learned about in the military help to reinforce the foundations of service we learned in the family. Comparisons such as “love is natural - hate is learned”, so is learning to serve others, that is to Do unto Others as you would have them do unto you.

The value of SELFLESS SERVICE as a motivator.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the only veteran service organization founded on behalf of combat veterans. Founded over 122 years ago our focus remains and that is one, to care for the veteran, surviving spouse and orphaned children and two, to diligently advocate on their behalf to insure, the promises made are the promises fulfilled by this nation for their service.

To the ABCs of Membership, the poem “And Then Some” has been adapted to serve as a mentoring tool for members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Its’ relationship is to the values learned when we entered military service and implemented daily.

And Then Some....

These three little words are the secret to selfless service...

They are the difference between average members and the top members in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

And Then Some...

The top members always do what is expected of them.

And Then Some...

They are mission oriented and driven to succeed.

And Then Some...

They meet their obligation and responsibilities, fairly and squarely. They lead from the front, are relentless...

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

And Then Some...

They can be called on and counted on in an emergency...

And Then Some...

I am thankful for members such as this, For they make life better for veterans and their families. Their spirit of selfless service is summed-up in these three little words...

And Then Some.

Original author Carl Holmes
Adapted by Al Lipphardt for the
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Wednesday Honor Defined, A good name or public esteem, REPUTATION. A showing of usually merited respect, RECOGNITION.

HONOR is the idea of a bond between an individual and a society - as a quality of a person that is of a personal ethos, that represents itself as a code of conduct - and has various elements such as valor, chivalry, honesty, and compassion.

It is an abstract concept entailing a perceived quality of worthiness and respectability that affects both the social standing and the self-evaluation of an individual or institution such as a family, military, or quasi military organization like the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Army

The Nation's highest military award is The Medal of Honor. This award goes to Soldiers who make honor a matter of daily living — Soldiers who develop the habit of being honorable and solidify that habit with every value choice they make. Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage in everything you do.

Marine Corps

Values Honor Marines are held to the highest standards, ethically and morally. Respect for others is essential.

Navy

We are professional Sailors and Civilians - a diverse and agile force exemplifying the highest standards of service to our Nation, at home and abroad, at sea and ashore.

Air Force

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding

that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is extraordinarily complex and exists in a constantly changing world.

Coast Guard

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all our personal actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust. As in our past, we are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved.

Thursday Inspirational

Inspirational quotes and reflections relating to the value of HONOR in our military, VFW, and daily lives.

The Medal of Honor is the United States Armed Forces highest and most-prestigious military decoration that may be awarded to recognize American soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, and coast guardsmen who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor. Awarded for Conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.

“It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle.” — General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

“It is a proud privilege to be a soldier – a good soldier ... [with] discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to comrades and to his superiors, and a selfconfidence born of demonstrated ability.” — George S. Patton Jr.

“On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.” – Dan Lipinski

Military Life

Reflections on the value of HONOR in our military life. Honor is reflected in every aspect of our military service. Whenever we applied the values of our military service it also reflected honor upon the recipient as well as the act itself. The foundation of our values is as old as time.....it is found in what is commonly referred to as the Golden Rule from the Gospel of Matthew 7:12

“Therefore, all things whatsoever ye that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law of the prophets.” (King James Version)

VFW Life

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Reflections on the value of HONOR in our VFW life. Honor in the Veterans of Foreign Wars has much to do with the purpose of our Congressional Charter and our programs.

Our VFW programs are defined under two categories:

Community Service, Youth

Scholarships and Activities and Veterans & Military Support. For this week's reflection on the value of HONOR, The ABCs of Membership a Mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders, our Core programs are introduced.

Our core programs within the Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities (CYSA) include our scholarship programs; Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen, the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year program, Scouting, and "Buddy Poppy". Under the CYSA umbrella is called Special Projects and Activities (SPA), which cover Americanism, volunteer recognition, community service, awards and recognition and other miscellaneous youth activities.

"The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational". Chapter 2 of the ABC's of Membership will be an in-depth look at the purpose of our corporation for a second ten week series on our purpose to preserve and strengthen comradeship amongst our members, to assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, to assist the surviving spouses and orphans, to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws, to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies."

To me there is nothing more motivational in showing honor than images of those who stand watch over the tomb of the unknowns. From the extremes of heat and the cold, from the sunniest of skies to the most horrific of rain, sleet, snow, ice, wind, or combination of all storms there is a guard manning their post with the highest degree of respect, discipline, and dedication. May we all seek to show honor in much the same way.

Tuesday and the subject matter for week six is INTEGRITY. Perhaps the most critical of our values as everything we do is dependent upon our words followed by our actions. There is no middle ground. Take away from this series what you will on the values learned upon entering military service. May you use them to enhance your service in uniform, in your membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in your family and business relationships.

We are in the process of creating and producing these mentoring segments in an easy-to follow electronic media format and in printed form that both will be available free. This effort is an obligation and a responsibility of those of us who have, over time and experience, gained the knowledge to assist others in preparation for their assumption of leadership.

No matter who you are or where you come from, we all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Take advantage of our wisdom now. Implement as it fits into your vision.

May God continue to bless you in all things, but especially may HE fill you to capacity with the spirit of Commitment, Credibility, and Courage; And may you receive the grace to live the life for which you were created and that is to be the best you can be.

Defined

Week Six - Defining INTEGRITY. The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

I ntegrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions. The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective integer, meaning whole or complete. In this context, integrity is the inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character.

As such, one may judge that other "have integrity" to the extent that they act according to the values, beliefs, and principles they claim to hold.

The Value of INTEGRITY in the military

Army

Do what's right, legally and morally. Integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles. It requires that you do and say nothing that deceives others. As your integrity grows, so does the trust others place in you. The more choices you make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends, and, finally, the fundamental acceptance of yourself.

Marine Corps.

This is the bedrock of our character. It is the quality that empowers Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior: to never lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

code of integrity; to respect human dignity; and to have respect and concern for each other.

Navy

Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.

Air Force

The professional Air Force ethic consists of three fundamental and enduring values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. He or she must fully internalize these values to be better prepared in all situations—to maintain integrity, to serve others before self, to perform with excellence and to encourage others to do the same.

Coast Guard

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all our personal actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust.

Thursday Inspirational

Integrity should be the cornerstone of all we do. Having the courage of our convictions to stand strong against the immoral, the illegal, and ignorance. Knowing what is right and doing what is right should be as one, not be at odds. There is never a wrong time to do the right thing. When you undertake any endeavor begin by asking, “Is it the truth?”

Quotes from military leaders about Integrity.

“Without virtue, and without integrity, the finest talents and the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain the respect, and conciliate the esteem, of the truly valuable part of mankind”. General George Washington

“A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.” General Douglas MacArthur

“Dependability, integrity, the characteristic of never knowingly doing anything wrong, that you would never cheat anyone, that you would give everybody a fair deal. Character is a sort of an all-inclusive thing. If a man has character, everyone has confidence in him.” General Omar Bradley

**“The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it. Do what is right, not what you think the high headquarters wants or what you think will make you look good.”
General Norman Schwarzkopf**

Military Life

The application of integrity in military service is the norm and not the exception. There is not a request it is a demand. The day we raised our hand and took the oath of enlistment we pledged our word to the tenants of that oath. No branch of service is better than the members in it. To be a good member one must have discipline, self-confidence, self-respect, pride in the unit and pride in our country.

Integrity demands discipline, The dictionary defines discipline as training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects. Integrity therefore is required to make a person a decent, honest, and valuable member of unit. In business integrity (discipline) is required to make a living from one’s chosen profession. In an army integrity (discipline) is required to save lives. General Schwarzkopf is attributed with saying “leadership is about a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy” Your word is your bond. Integrity cannot be purchased.

Always be the individual you were created to be and that is to be the best you can be.

VFW Life

Applying the value of INTEGRITY as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our relationships with our comrades, to the responsibilities of membership. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a Congressionally Chartered fraternal organization. Formed in 1899 by those combat veterans who served in the Spanish American War and Chartered by Congress in 1936 our founding principles remain the pillar of our purpose. These are to care for the veteran, their spouse, and orphaned children and to advocate on their behalf in the Halls of Congress.

You will do well to recall Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter to wit “The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance

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to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.”

To meet these obligations our Congressional Charter includes Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Before you become a member one must take a solemn obligation in which you are assured there is nothing which will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligation to your family. As a fraternal organization our membership in an annual convention adopt changes to our Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual as adopted by the body present. For this reason, it is most important to obtain a copy of the most recent publication resulting from the Convention.

As suggested previously consider adopting a personal litmus test of your action based upon four simple but complex questions of the things you think, say, or do.

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Motivational Monday and day seven, the last day of week six

For the past week we have reviewed the value of INTEGRITY and the role it plays in our military, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and personal lives. We have come to learn that without integrity success is not sustainable.

As with any structure a strong foundation must be created to begin building. So, it is with our relationships with fellow comrades in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. As we go about the task of seeking to meet the purpose of our organization, we must ask ourselves four basic questions, which when answered in the affirmative will lay the groundwork for success.

Much of what was learned after leaving military service is attributed to my joining the world’s oldest international service organization for like-minded individuals who understood the significance of INTEGRITY in life beyond the military and the need to serve others. It was a response to the question of why I was spared. I chose to be the voice of those who never came home. Lessons learned and opportunities for personal and professional growth through that association have enabled the realization true satisfaction in life is achieved through service to others and to be sustainable must be based on truth.

May your involvement in the Veterans of Foreign Wars be a path that will bring you much satisfaction and understanding of how critical INTEGRITY is to your personal and professional life.

The Value of Personal Courage

Our focus this week is on the value of PERSONAL COURAGE, something we all experienced when we raised our hand and took the oath of enlistment. That value was again verified when we were deployed to combat. Personal Courage makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars the outstanding Veteran Service Organization it is today by our continued willingness to stand up for those who no longer have a voice, ensuring promises made are kept by Congress.

Personal Courage is defined on Wednesday. Thursday quotes reflect on experiences engaging personal courage. Friday is RED “remembering everyone deployed”. Saturday is integration of the value of personal courage as a VFW member. Sunday courage is presented in relationship to our family and community life. Monday.... Monday is motivational Monday to start your week confident in reliance on personal courage to see you through any challenge.

Wednesday Personal Courage Defined the adjective “personal” affecting or belonging to a particular person rather than to anyone else. The common definition of the word “courage” is (Noun)” The ability to do something that frightens one.” It originates from Middle English Simply stated, courage is commonly defined as being motivated from the heart.

Army

Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up for and acting upon the things that you know are honorable.

Marine Corps

Courage The heart of our Core Values, courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained in Marines that sees them through the challenges of combat and the mastery of fear, and to do what is right, to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct, to lead by example, and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure.

Navy

We are patriots, forged by the Navy’s core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. In times of war and peace, our actions reflect our proud heritage and tradition. We defend our Nation and

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prevail in the face of adversity with strength, determination, and dignity.

Air Force

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is complex and exists in a constantly changing world. They understand that all efforts in planning and executing airpower are designed to ensure the national security interests of the United States.

Coast Guard

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Thursday Inspirational quotes and reflections on the value of **PERSONAL COURAGE** and integration into our daily lives. May these few quotes provide inspiration as you encounter the challenges of today and days to come. Take solace in the fact you are not alone. Never be afraid to seek help.

"Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently." — Maya Angelou Quotes On Courage

"Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. - Winston Churchill

Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home, and think about it. Go out and get busy. - Dale Carnegie

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. — Douglas MacArthur

Military Life Personal Courage.....should be second nature to those who wear the fabric of our nation. Courage, especially on the battlefield, is expected. Those who serve do not view courage as heroic, but rather simply doing our "job". It is what we train to do. Every day we train, we train, we train so when the time comes to act, we do so without thought. It becomes a response to what we were trained to do. I submit those who serve in the military are not peacekeepers as our politicians would have you believe. The military is trained to close with and destroy the enemies of this nation in close combat. We are

warriors and as such peacemakers. Making the peace is not achieved without consequences.

The military protects and defends while law enforcement protects and serves. The deployment of our men and women into combat should be a last resort because brave men and women will die.

But they die knowing they offered the last full measure of devotion to this nation so future generations might have the freedom's all men and women seek. But personal courage in the military refers to the moral code that everyone in uniform is expected to live by and that is to stand strong having the courage of our convictions when living our values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

VFW Life

The value of Personal Courage carries over into our VFW membership as our moral commitment is on display in our daily actions. As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we pledged to abide by our National By-Laws approved and enacted by the most powerful authority in the VFW and that is we the members at our annual convention.

Recall, if you will, the definition of Personal Courage from Wednesday of week seven of the mentoring/orientation series. Personal Courage definition. "The adjective "personal". references affecting or belonging to a particular person rather than to anyone else. The common definition of the word "courage" is, "The ability to do something that frightens one." It originates from Middle English." Simply stated, courage is commonly defined as being motivated from the heart to do something brave."

Within our pledge upon joining a post we state our member's obligation "I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Ritual of this order". That pledge goes on to reflect that we are obliged to live a life of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. As a fraternal organization we are bound by this set of laws. Society today has, in my opinion, lost its sense of morality. We must combat against those who would dishonor themselves and this organization, We must combat against those who would lie, cheat, steal, and bring dishonor upon this organization. These should not be elements of character we seek, but rather what we demand.

Sunday in our Family lives

There are consequences to our actions and only we the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have the courage of our convictions to remove those who would violate our pledge. Our very

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survival as an organization is dependent upon our acceptance that the tired excuse of “we’ve always done it this way” cannot be our way forward to the challenges we face. To grow and thrive we must be innovative, technologically savvy, and made up of men and women, combat veterans, of impeccable character. We owe to those whose shoulders we stand on to live up to the expectations of what it requires to be an honorable comrade. As with all things the solution is quite simple.

Monday Motivation

“Last but by no means least, courage – moral courage, the courage of one’s convictions, to see things through. The world; is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It’s the age-old struggle – the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other”.

Douglas MacArthur

May you seek to better understand how you may integrate the value of Personal Courage in every aspect of your life. Put courage in perspective knowing courage is not the absence of fear but the realization that there are aspects in your life which require you put fear aside.

Tuesday The Value of Commitment. Week eight of our ten-week series we will consider the element of commitment as we go about our daily lives. For many, true commitment was not realized until they raised their right hand and took the oath of enlistment.

As we encountered the values learned upon entering service, we soon discovered those values revolved around a central theme **COMMITMENT**. If the values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage were the spokes on a wheel The hub holding each spoke is commitment.

Coming next week, week nine, we will see how the hub and spokes of the character “wheel” are held in place by the unyielding circle of the rim of devotion. Week ten of the ABCs of Membership, a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders, Chapter 1 is on the integration of our focus subject value to end this series, is Excellence.

Wednesday Defined

Commitment, (noun) a pledge, a promise, a responsibility. Within the context of the word pledge is a noun meaning promise. Promise is a noun meaning a declaration assuring that one will or will

not do something. Responsibility is a noun meaning trustworthiness. Only two branches of the military include Commitment in their stated values, and they are the Marine Corps and the Navy as indicated below.

Marine Corps

Commitment is the spirit of dedication and determination found in every Marine. It is what compels Marines to serve our country and the Corps. Every aspect of life in the Corps shows commitment, from the high standard of excellence to vigilance in training.

Navy

We are a team, disciplined and well-prepared, committed to mission accomplishment. We do not waver in our dedication and accountability to our shipmates and families. We are patriots, forged by the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. We are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved. Our actions reflect our proud heritage and tradition.

Thursday inspirational quotes on Integrating the value of Commitment

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor." – Vince Lombardi

"There's a difference between interest and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, you do it only when it is convenient. When you are committed to something, you accept no excuses; only results." - Kenneth Blanchard

"On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind." - Dan Lipinski

Military Service

Commitment, (noun) a pledge, a promise, a responsibility. Within the context of the word pledge is a noun meaning promise. Promise, meaning a declaration assuring that one will or will not do something. Responsibility is a noun meaning trustworthiness.

No matter what service, no matter what branch, our commitment began upon the recitation of the oath of enlistment. While you do not find the word commitment in that oath what you do find is a promise. And, the word commitment is a noun meaning a pledge, a promise, a responsibility.

Remember saying the words "and bear true faith and allegiance to the same" following the words "protect and defend the Constitution of the

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United States against all enemies foreign and domestic”. Where else do we find a reminder of our pledge and our allegiance? We know it is in our pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Our flag does not belong to the Government of the United States of America as is the case of so many other nations. No, our flag belongs to the people of the United States, not a king or a queen, not a ruler, not a dictator or other monarch. It belongs to us, especially those who have put their lives on the line in harm’s way.

Many are of the opinion the flag waves, not because of the wind, but on the breath of all those who gave the last full measure of devotion so that we may be free. Long may she wave. VFW Life

The definition of the word commitment is solidly embedded in our psyche. It is the very essence if we are to fulfil the purpose of our life. This is because our commitment, our pledge, our promise, our trustworthiness is contingent on our willingness to do whatever it takes to fulfill that commitment.

Our membership begins with a solemn obligation in which there is nothing that will conflict with our religious or political beliefs, freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to our families. At the beginning of the member’s obligation, it required you to say the words, in part, “I do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare” and further into the obligation ends with the words “all this I promise and pledge upon my honor of a true comrade and a citizen of our great republic.”

As a member you accepted the purpose of this corporation detailed in Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter issued by the 74th Congress of the United States, May 28, 1936, and last amended by the 113th Congress on December 4, 2014, Title 36 United States Code, Chapter 2301 Sections 230101 and 230102.

The purpose of the corporation will be presented in a future ABC’s of Membership, the week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders in similar in format to this series on the integration of our core values.

Monday Motivation

MOTIVATIONAL MONDAY - Integrating the value of commitment. The difference of involvement versus commitment is easier to grasp with the simple comparison of the chicken and the pig when contemplating breakfast. The Chicken is involved, the Pig is committed.

Tuesday The Value of Devotion

In this week's video and segments, we further explore the wheel of values with its seven spokes, hub, and rim. Together they form a value "wheel of excellence".

Our focus this week is on the value of DEVOTION. This value is identified in one of the branches of service and that is the Coast Guard. We will see it defined in tomorrow's segment followed by inspirational thoughts on Thursday, military service on Friday, VFW membership on Saturday, family life on Sunday and complete the topic on Monday with what is intended to be motivation to continue your devotion to all you hold important.

Last week, when visualizing the values, it was suggested, think of a bicycle wheel. Elements of the wheel are seven spokes, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage. Each spoke is secured in the center of the wheel by a hub. Commitment is at the center, hub, of our values. Spokes extend out from the hub to the rim. The rim symbolizes what it is required to ensure the spokes (values) are secured in the hub. (commitment) surrounded by a resilient rim (devotion). Elements of our wheel are spokes (values) a hub (commitment) and a rim (devotion) and together form the value of excellence.

Wednesday Defined Devotion (NOUN) love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause.

Coast Guard - Devotion to Duty

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

While the Coast Guard is the only branch of service to specifically refer to devotion in the context of duty, devotion is required when our values are put together. Devotion is a critical element in each of the values such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage, and commitment.

When these elements are viewed as a wheel the outer element would be the rim (devotion) the inner element at the center would be the hub (commitment) and the seven individual values would be the spokes. using the elements together, the "Wheel of Excellence" is created

Thursday

Inspirational quotes on the value of DEVOTION in our military, VFW, and family lives.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

“Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason, mastery demands all of a person”. – Albert Einstein

“I decided to devote my life to telling the story because I felt that having survived, I owe something to the dead. and anyone who does not remember betrays them again”. – Elie Wiesel

“Whoever benefits his enemy with straightforward intention that man’s enemies will soon fold their hands in devotion”. – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“I know of nothing more despicable and pathetic than a man who devotes all the hours of the waking day to the making of money for money’s sake”. – John D. Rockefeller

Military Service

Service members apply the military values to our daily lives. One of the ways to insure we maintained focus was devotion to the ideals represented in those values. Recalling the definition of devotion, that is, love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause, it is easy to understand how important it is to mission. objective.

Early on in my Army service I sought to instill, in myself and my fellow soldiers, the “Soldiers Creed” cited below. As you read it is apparent how critical devotion is to being the best, we can be by living a life where you –

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained, and proficient in my Warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself. I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

VFW Life Integrating the value of DEVOTION as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

Our VFW National By-laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, devotion and loyalty are cited numerous times to include our Members Obligation, Ritual Prayers, Commemorations and Memorial Dedications.

Our Congressional Charter clearly requires devotion in our purpose as a Fraternal, Patriotic, Historical, Charitable and Educational organization. There are eight calls to action to meet those purposes. Chapter 2 addresses each of these as it relates to new VFW members and emerging leaders.

Family Life “To the family you may be one person but to one person your family may be the world.”

**A family is like a circle.
The connection never ends,
and even if at times it breaks,
in time it always mends.**

**A family is like the stars.
Somehow, they are always there.
Families are those who help,
who support and always care?**

**A family is like a book. The
ending's never clear, but through
the pages of the book, their love is
always near.**

**A family is many things. With endless
words that show who they are and
what they do? and how they teach
you, so you know.**

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

**But do not be weary if it is broken. or
if through time it has been so worn.
Families are like that they are split up
and always torn.**

**But even if this happens, your
family will always be. They help
define just who you are.
and will be a part of you eternally.**

Source: "family friends' poems"

It is Motivational Monday.....so get fired up!

Today is a great day to use the occasion of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day as a reflection on what devotion looks like. From the definition we recall devotion to be love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause. I do not think most would include love or enthusiasm when referring to the Vietnam War.

I do believe loyalty toward all who served in that war, certainly applies to the devotion of those who earned the respect and appreciation for their service in uniform. And so, with that said, may I encourage you to take this opportunity to reach out to a Vietnam Veteran and if you have not had a chance to express your appreciation for their devotion to duty, do it today.

Week ten concludes Chapter 1 on the ABCs of Membership a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders. For ten weeks the focus has been on VFW members and the integration of military values in our membership and family lives.

We have suggested visualization of these values in the form of a wheel with the values representing spokes in the wheel, commitment as the hub in the center of the wheel, surrounded by devotion as the outer rim touching each value.

Tuesday The Value of Excellence

This is our final segment on the ABCs of Membership Chapter 1, a ten-week series for new members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and emerging leaders on integrating the values we learned upon entering our military branch of service. Week one began with loyalty followed by Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage, Commitment, Devotion and last but certainly not least, Excellence.

I suggested you think of a bicycle wheel with its spokes, hub, and rim. The spokes are seven values (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage), attached to a hub in the center (commitment) and attached to an outer rim (devotion). Assembled, these form a wheel (excellence). Our hope is that you take

these values from our military service and integrate them into your Veterans of Foreign Wars membership and leadership roles. Chapter 1 is published as an electronic version. Plans are to publish a hard copy to refer to from time to time. All are provided at no charge.

We are combat warriors. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a Veteran Service Organization. As members we have a responsibility to mentor (teach) those who will follow us on the meaning of volunteer service. Chapter 2, our segment in the ABCs of Membership a ten week mentoring series based on the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Section 230201 and 230102 of our Congressional Charter.

Wednesday Defined

Excellence Noun. the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.

The definition of excellence is simply defined as the quality of being outstanding. When you identify the definition of outstanding you will find it described as being exceptional. Seems to me to be shortsighted definitions. For someone's performance to be viewed as one of excellence requires much more than "simply" outstanding. I submit that, for performance to be. one of excellence, every aspect of our values must be outstanding.

In the military only one branch of service specifically lists excellence as a value and that is the Air Force. But the values held by our military branches require loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage be at a level of excellence including commitment and devotion. When our values are each performed in an exceptionally outstanding manner do the results rise to the level of excellence? The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that extra. It is always doing or giving more than is required.

Air Force

Excellence in All We Do

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is complex and exists in a constantly changing world. They understand that all efforts in planning and executing airpower are designed to ensure the national security interests of the United States. Therefore, they must always strive to meet or exceed standards objectively based on mission needs and continuously search for new and innovative ways to successfully accomplish the mission. It is not only a professional obligation but a moral responsibility as well.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Inspirational quotes on integrating the value of excellence in all we do.

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential, these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.” Confucius

Excellence is pursuing and doing the best we can with the gifts and abilities God gives us.” Anonymous

“Excellence is not a gift, but a skill that takes practice. We do not act rightly because we are excellent in fact, we achieve excellence by acting rightly.” Plato

Military Life

Integration of the value of excellence in our military is confirmed on the battlefield. Excellence confirms victory. While famed coach Vince Lombardi is quoted to have said in his game there is no second place. There is no truer statement in the military. There is not a runner up in battle. There are those who live, and we know them as winners. And there are those who are dead, and we know them as losers. In the military there is no second place. Victory is not some lofty goal but rather it is life or death. That may sound harsh, but it is the reality of war.

VFW Life

Seeking to achieve excellence in our VFW efforts is a natural progression of our inclusion of the values learned upon entering service. Excellence is not an act but rather a habit. If you are to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception it is our predominant attitude.

As military veterans we understand the need to adapt the values we learned such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage with an unwavering sense of commitment and devotion in our posts, districts, and departments. There is no such thing as perfection, but in striving for perfection we can achieve excellence. Mark Twain said, “Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection”. Perhaps better said “Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best.”

Family Life On this Sunday, our thoughts exceed excellence. May we dwell on the Spirit of Perfection. May you have a blessed and meaningful day of gratitude for the life you have.

Monday Motivation

Motivational Monday could be named Excellence revisited. I say that because this marks the end of Chapter 1, The ABCs of Membership a 10 week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders on integrating the military values to our VFW and Family lives.

We sincerely appreciate your comments indicating you have enjoyed what you have seen and heard. And really to the point, you appreciated the reminder for each of us to keep these values at the forefront of all we do in our personal and professional lives.

Chapter 2 of the “ABC’s of Membership”, a ten week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders will focus on the Purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as identified in the Congressional Charter of 1936 as amended. You will learn that the words contained in that charter demand action ensuring the principles established by our founding members, will continue if our nation sends its sons and daughters to war.



ABC's

of

Membership

**The Purpose of Our Organization And
Our Congressional Charter Section 230102**

Chapter 2

Week One of Ten Tuesday

Topic Tuesday - Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter, The Purpose of this Organization shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen Comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

For the remainder of this chapter we will look at the five elements of our purpose and the subsequent actions needed to fulfill that purpose. By reviewing these elements and needed actions, our goal is to encourage you to adopt, a “Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In” attitude.

The Purpose of our organization and Congressional Charter, Section 230102 Defining “Purpose” as it relates to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Purpose(verb) to set forth; to bring forward. Purpose (verb) to propose, as an aim, to oneself; to determine upon, as some

end or object to be accomplished; to intend; to design; to resolve; -- often followed by an infinitive or dependent clause.

The Congressional Charter was originally incorporated May 28, 1936, by the 74th Congress of the United States. Amended by the 83rd Congress, May 29, 1953, the 104th Congress March 7, 1995, the 107th Congress October 16, 2002, 109th Congress January 2, 2006, and the 113th

Congress December 4, 2014. Title 36 United States Code, Chapter 2301, Section 230102 to wit Section 230101 - Organization

- a. Federal Charter. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (in this chapter, the "corporations), a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, is a federally chartered corporation.
- b. Perpetual Existence. Except as otherwise provided, the corporation has perpetual existence.

Section 230102 - Purpose

The purposes of the corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational, and are

1. to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.
2. to assist worthy comrades.
3. to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans.
4. to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and Laws.
5. to foster true patriotism.
6. to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and 7. to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

Thursday is inspirational and motivational, familiar, and not so familiar, quotations and sayings that relate to purpose as members of the VFW and in our family lives.

Here are five quotes chosen that relate to our Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), a Veteran Service Organization (VSO) and our entire life.

"It's not enough to have lived. We should be determined to live for something." – Winston S. Churchill

"The two most important days in life are the day you are born and the day you discover the reason why." – Mark Twain

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

“The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for.” – Fyodor Dostoyevsky

“When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced; live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.” – Indian Proverb

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

And here’s a bonus inspirational purpose quote of mine, “Believe in what you do - do what you believe in”. As a relatively new member and incoming President of a Rotary Club in the world’s largest service organization, Rotary International, the International President selects a theme for their year of service. In 1993-1994 the theme chosen by Robert “Bob” Barth, was “Believe In What You Can Do - Do What You Believe In”. Although I had become a member of a Rotary Club five years after leaving the service. I was searching for fellowship with likeminded people, people who had a passion to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

There was in Rotary a sense of belonging to something greater than myself with resources that could possibly allow me to shed the demons of war and of survivors’ guilt. When I received word of the Rotary International theme for this year of service opportunities became abundant.

**Through Rotary I could take care of fellow veterans by volunteering in my community and even extend that care beyond our borders to ex-patriots who had taken residence abroad. In 1984 my life of service became my life. I end this posting with a quote from Albert Einstein, a German born theoretical physicist, widely acknowledged to be one of the greatest physicists of all time. “I believe in one thing—that only a life lived for others is a life worth living”
Remember Everyone Deployed (RED)**

As a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or its’ Auxiliary red shirt Friday has special meaning. It is a reminder that one of the bonds of membership is the fact that you as a member deployed to harm’s way in keeping with your oath of enlistment. Or you as an Auxiliary member had a family/eligible VFW member who deployed adding to the sacrifices families make for their loved ones. Encourage family members to join in this simple act of patriotism by wearing red

on Friday's and if possible, include the meaning of the acronym RED - - Remember Everyone Deployed.

VFW Life

Found in our Congressional Charter is a listing first of our purpose and actions are identified to meet those purposes. Setting direction or purpose without action is like planning a trip without a map to guide us. Some posts do not own a physical location and so their meeting are held at a location, time and date approved by the membership in accordance with current National ByLaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Current means as adopted by the delegates as approved on the floor of our annual convention. Each year an updated Podium Edition of our National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual is produced. It is highly recommended that, at a minimum, each Post purchase at least five copies of the new edition each year. All members of the VFW may purchase a Podium edition for personal use.

During this first week of Chapter 2 we have identified the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and actions needed to apply them. Each week of Chapter 2 we will take one subject and expound upon its' meaning and how it fits in our meeting and purpose objectives.

As a new member some of the best mentoring I received was on learning our By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. And, as we have heard many times you will only get out of your membership what you put into it.

Family Life

Like our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, there is also purpose in our family lives as well. But instead, we find our purpose in the why of our creation. For our family we follow the teachings of the bible and the Ten Commandments.

In the gospel of Mark 12:29-31, when asked which of the commandments is most important, Jesus answered "The most important one, is this, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. 'There is no commandment greater than these."

Monday Motivation

It is different for each person because it is the desired end goal that must chart our course.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Begin with the end in mind and then choose the path that will lead you to where you want to go. “If we keep doing what we’re doing, we’re going to keep getting what we’re getting.” – Stephen Covey.

Many people want to make positive changes but don’t want the struggles and hardships that come with change. But if you keep doing what you’ve always done you will keep getting what you’ve always got. Planning is one of the biggest keys to creating a successful future for yourself. The most successful people in the world have a daily, weekly, and monthly plan to achieve their goals. Do you have detailed plans? If not, make it a point each night to spend five minutes and map out the next day. Plan when you will wake up, exercise, invest in yourself and spend time with family. Don’t be afraid to change your life if you’re unhappy. Wake up earlier, challenge your body at the gym, and invest in your mind from reading new books. Remember, reading is to the mind what exercise is for the body.

Week Two of Ten Tuesday Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter, The Purpose of Our Organization

The purpose of Fraternal.

An introduction and mentoring series for VFW new members and emerging leaders. This week’s subject we will present a reflection on the idea of “Fraternal” as it relates to our purpose. “Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In”

Wednesday Fraternal Defined

Wikipedia defines fraternity or fraternal organization as an organized society, traditionally, of men associated together in an environment of companionship and brotherhood; dedicated to the intellectual, physical, and social development of its members.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is truly a fraternal organization whose brand, the Cross of Malta, symbolically reflects that fact. While long ago, fraternal referred to males and sorority referred to females, the Veterans of Foreign Wars reference to fraternal is inclusive as our membership is composed of combat veterans of both genders. The idea of strengthening comradeship amongst its members is key to meeting the purpose of our organization.

Future chapters on the ABCs of Membership will present the longstanding history and accomplishments of our storied past and why we remain such as strong and vibrant Veteran

Service Organization. We stand in solidarity at the tip of the spear, steadfastly holding Congress accountable to promises made to those of us who, even today, stand by their commitment to this nation.

Thursday is some inspirational and thought-provoking quotes dealing with the aspect of fraternal. May you find them useful, not only for today, but every day.

Time is the most valuable thing on earth: time to think, time to act, time to extend our fraternal relations, time to become better men, time to become better women, time to become better and more independent citizens. Samuel Gompers

Blessed is the servant who loves his brother as much when he is sick and useless as when he is well and can be of service to him. And blessed is he who loves his brother as well when he is a far off as when he is by his side, and who would say nothing behind his back he might not, in love, say before his face. St. Francis of Assisi

You cannot see brotherhood; neither can you hear it nor taste it. But you can feel it a hundred times a day. It is the pat on the back when things look gloomy. It is the smile of encouragement when the way seems hard. It is the helping hand when the burden becomes unbearable. Peter E. Terzick

We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects. Herman Melville

We do want more, and when it becomes more, we shall still want more. And we shall never cease to demand more until we have received the results of our labor. Samuel Gompers

“Remember Everyone Deployed”

We know from the definition of fraternal it’s an organized society, traditionally, of men associated together in an environment of companionship and brotherhood; dedicated to the intellectual, physical, and social development of its members. In the case of the Veterans of Foreign Wars every member deployed to harm’s way, recognized by medal service. In the case of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary every member had a qualifying family member that deployed to harm’s way recognized by medal service.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

These days (at the writing of this daily posting) happen to coincide with the commemoration of

Memorial Day and weekend to remember all who gave the last full measure of devotion to this

Nation. Not to get ahead of what is in the purpose of the VFW it bears posting today so that you may incorporate it into what motivates you. -TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY AND HISTORY OF

OUR DEAD, and To lay down one's life for their friend is a final affirmation of a life lived in concert with an absolute unselfish resolve.

Monday Motivation

May your motivation to do your duty be to live the life for which you were created, to be the best you can be. To integrate duty, it will require incorporating each of the remaining values.

The Element of Patriotic

Integrating the purpose of Patriotic into our VFW membership and daily lives. As a reminder, Wednesday is to define Patriotic and how it relates to our purpose; Thursday will be to share inspirational and motivational quotes on "Patriotic" with Friday being RED Shirt Friday

Defining Patriotic

Wikipedia Patriotic adjective having or expressing devotion to or vigorous support for one's country.

What Veteran Service organization is better suited to express devotion and vigorous support for our nation than those of us who are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Auxiliaries? There is not any. We who have offered to sacrifice our lives in defense of the freedoms fought for by those who went before us are in position to lead in promoting patriotism. Our families who supported us while in uniform sacrificed everything so we could focus on our mission. Patriotic for us is more than an adjective it is the very essence of our being. Stoke the fire in your belly and let your patriotic passion overflow in your involvement in your post and in the life of your family. You combat veterans whose courage is undeniable, when called to engage our enemies in faraway lands you did. Be proud. I'm certainly proud of you and for you.

Remember Everyone Deployed

Patriotic is having or expressing devotion to or vigorous support for one's country. I hope you can spend time with family and VFW Comrades, may you celebrate this nation and our right to show our pride. We have much to be proud of. Our bond comes from shared circumstances attributed directly to the deployment to harms way and being recognized as required by our Congressional Charter.

Patriotic in our VFW Posts

The idea of patriotism is alive and well in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. To see it visit a post home or event, because it is where heroes meet, and warriors gather. Patriotic is having or expression to or vigorous support of one's country. It is an affirmation of our oath and our pledge.... I do solemnly swear that I will protect and defend the Constitution of the United States and bear true allegiance to the same. That I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the officers appointed over me according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, So Help Me God.

Patriotic in our Family lives

On a recent vacation to France, Carol and I were able to locate the gravesite of Private Harris L. Collins, in the American Cemetery, Normandy, France. He was Carol's Mother's first husband. After his death she re-married and Carol was born. What is so moving about this cemetery is, unlike most others, those who are buried there, died there. We consider all gravesites to be hallowed ground, but when you stand on such hallowed ground, you can feel the courage of those who gave the last full measure of devotion to this nation. Looking for a definition of patriotic? If you want an image of patriotic, envision those rows upon rows of crosses and you will understand what patriotic means.

"Motivational Monday". With the commemoration of D-Day plus 77 years, there is no memory more patriotic than what soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen did on that day. Those men and women are one of the reason we have an organization called the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States dedicated to combat veterans. We are proud members and proud to be still serving.

The Element of Historical

Historical defined as an adjective of, pertaining to, treating, or characteristic of history or past events: historical records; historical research. based on or reconstructed from an event, custom, style, etc., in the past: having once existed or lived in the real world, as opposed

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

to being part of legend or fiction or as distinguished from religious belief.

Motivational quotes and inspirational ideas

“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.” – Maya Angelou

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.” — George Orwell

“History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people”. Martin Luther King Jr

**“Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”
– George Santayana**

Remember Everyone Deployed

When we reflect on the element of historical, we think about the fact that our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is predicated upon honorable service as a member of the armed forces in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition recognized by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the United States Government.

We believe we must never forget the cost of those deployments to us as individuals but to our families as well. For those with boots on the ground our experiences were not the same but for many of us time has stood still on our memories

Historical in our VFW Posts

How historical applies to our VFW Membership is extremely significant when you reflect on the achievements our organizations have garnered on behalf of every individual veteran and family member benefitting because of our unequalled advocacy. Too often members and those considering membership tune in to what I like to call W I I - FM. This is an acronym for What’s In It For Me? They forget the Veterans of Foreign Wars is preeminently qualified to declare itself as THE premier Veteran Service Organization. We are a SERVICE organization whose selfless service and tenacity in advocating on behalf of veterans and their families has resulted in Billions, yes Billions of dollars in recovered benefits because of service-connected disabilities and countless other benefits in home ownership, educational and occupational benefits, healthcare, quality of life issues

and pay for our active-duty service members and that's just to get started.

Family life

While attending a casual forum featuring Joe Galloway, a Vietnam War Correspondent and veteran of the famous Ia Drang Battle, in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division and Lt. Col Hal Moore. Something he said, made an unforgettable impact upon me. Asked when was he in Vietnam, his response will remain in my mind, and I think may apply to you as well.

When someone asks you when you were wherever you were they expect you to give a date. But, for Joe Galloway, on this day, after a night of horrific memories, said when was I in Vietnam? He responded; I was there last night. For those of us who experienced the killing, saw the horror of wounded comrades, screams of pain, body parts, blood, and the stench of death we are forever changed.

You may be asked, when were you in Somalia, Grenada, Kosovo, Bosnia, Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan, or many other places not known to our citizens. Your answer may very well be the same as Joe Galloway's. When was I there? I was there last night.

We as an organization and as individual members must not let history dismiss our sacrifices and those of our families. Thank you for being a member of the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to combat veterans,

Monday Motivation

Think about Flag Day, a day to reflect on the significance of our National colors. As stated in the United States Code, our flag is more than a symbol it is a living thing. When you take your Flag out to fly, hold it carefully. You are holding the whole country in your hands. Also, on flag day we celebrate the United States Army, our oldest military service, birthday.

To understand what it means to be a soldier, here again is the Soldiers Creed, shared for all who served this nation.

I am an American Soldier.

I am a warrior and a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained, and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

Tuesday

This is week five. Our focus is on charitable which makes perfect sense considering that the

Veterans of Foreign Wars is an IRS designated 501 C 19 and includes our IRS designated 501 C 3 Foundation. Our obligation is to report our charitable activities and financial contributions supporting those activities as a Veteran Service Organization.

Thursday Inspirational

What are some inspirational thoughts and some motivational quotes that apply to our VFW membership? Here are some short quotes for your discernment.

“For it is in giving that we receive.” – St. Francis of Assisi

“If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap”.

“If you want happiness for a day, go fishing”.

“If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune”.

“If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody” – Chinese

Proverb

“If you get, give. If you learn, teach.” – Maya Angelou

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give” - Winston Churchill

RED Shirt Friday

The subject for this week’s understanding of the purpose of our organization is charitable. Our eligibility for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars came because of our deployment to harm’s way. There is no greater act of charity than to lay down your life for your friends. You came home. What now? Your comrades understand where you have been and what you have done, but what about your community? Sounds harsh, but the community has not a clue what you have endured on their behalf. Personally, I’m okay with that because we

don't (or shouldn't) do good because we are looking for something in return. We learned from St. Francis of Assisi "For it is in giving that we receive".

My vision for the Veterans of Foreign Wars consists of three elements, Commitment, Credibility, and Courage. To get the attention and support of your communities establish your credibility, that is you have much to contribute, and your community can count on you and call on you.

You might create a signature project that your community will recognize the impact you and your post, district, or department make. They will want to join you because they too realize the value of giving. Soon veterans like yourself will want to be a member and part of the good you do.

I am aware of a post chartered in 2002 that sought to do something good in the community that would be beneficial and at the same time provide them an avenue to advance the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In 2003, truly understanding the toll the War on Terror was having on our warriors and their families, especially their children, they decided on a project called Operation Santa and an event called the "Freedom Fighters Open". The beneficiary of the project would be the children and families of those deployed military from their state. Funds from contributions to the Freedom Fighters Open and other contributions are used to support these efforts. Although named Operation Santa it is a year-long effort. It reflects Christmas because of the spirit elicited by that season. For many deployed. missed holidays are celebrated upon their return.

In our VFW Life

If there was ever a time in our recent history that charity was on full display in the Veterans of Foreign Wars it had to be the hurricanes, tornado's, ice storms, snowstorms, record low temperatures, record high temperature.....Mother Nature had run amuck. But as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we reached out and helped not only our communities but all those effected wherever and whoever they were.

It reminded me of the anonymous poem written on 9 11. I share it here because it speaks to who we really are and not what those who seek to divide us tell us we are.

"One", a poem for unity

As the soot and dirt and ash rained down, We became one color.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

As we carried each other down the stairs of the burning building We became one class.
As we lit candles of waiting and hope
We became one generation.
As the firefighters and police officers fought their way into the inferno
We became one gender. As we fell to our knees in prayer for strength,
We became one faith.
As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement, We spoke one language.
As we gave our blood in lines a mile long,
We became one body.
As we mourned together the great loss
We became one family.
As we cried tears of grief and loss We became one soul.
As we retell with pride of the sacrifice of heroes, We become one people.
We are.....One color.....One class.....One generation.....
One gender One faith.....One language.....One body..... One family.....One soul One people.....We are The Power of One.....We are United. We are America.

Motivational Monday

Check out the latest numbers regarding the charitable efforts of our members by visiting VFW.org.

I find it “humorous” when talking to people about contributing and they respond.... I can’t afford it. Having been around the block once or twice I must tell you.....that is untrue. IT IS NEVER WHAT IS IN YOUR WALLET IT IS WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART.

We, including me, will always find a way to spend our resources on the things we want, not necessarily what we need. While we must care for ourselves and our families, we have an obligation to assist others as we are able. We can’t be the world to everyone, but we can be the world to someone.

Educational as a Purpose of the VFW

Tuesday visit www.vfw.org and click on “youth and education” for resources.

Educational Defined

Definition - educational, ADJECTIVE relating to the provision of education. Education is further defined as the process of receiving or

giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university and a body of knowledge acquired while being educated. In the area of educational in the Veterans of Foreign Wars our contact with youth and programs relating to patriotism is a major element of our educational focus. But, also, our focus is on our members insuring they receive the process of systematic instruction acquired while being educated.

Put in terms most of us would be more familiar with as a veteran of the armed forces would be on the job training (OJT), All of us would probably agree this is the most common way we learned about our military occupational specialty (MOS). Most of the systematic instruction at a school was enhanced by practical application in the field. There is an old Chinese proverb attributed to Confucius that reads "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." Perhaps put in the language of today it could read there is no better learning lesson than the lesson one learns from experience. So, our educational programs within the areas of youth require, in the case of scholarships an essay on the subject chosen by the Veterans of Foreign Wars each year for grades 6 to 8 for middle school students and 9 to 12 for high school students. There is also Patriotic Art for students which require original art created by students, scouting programs, recognition of teachers and veterans in the classroom. To learn more about these programs visit www.vfw.org and click on "youth and education" for resources

Inspirational and motivational quotes and thoughts on aspects of educational

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." Albert Einstein

"Aim for success, not perfection. Never give up your right to be wrong, because then you will lose the ability to learn new things and move forward with your life. Remember that fear always lurks behind perfectionism. "David M. Burns

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not: nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not: the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. "Calvin Coolidge

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of becoming" Goethe
Remember Everyone Deployed

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Its Remember Everyone Deployed (RED Shirt Friday) and that is us. With that deployment we find educational promises made and the Veterans of Foreign Wars successfully advocating those promises be kept, not in word but by actions. And that was not just to provide the opportunity, but for funding. Without financial assistance much of these educational opportunities would be lost. So, here again, is where we proudly say “VFW No One Does More For Veterans”

Your best source to learn (do you like how I fit that critical element of education in there) is found at <http://www.vfw.org> at “Assistance” and also at “Community”

The national website is where you will find \$2.9 million is the number of scholarships, monetary awards, and other incentives the VFW distributes annually to middle and high school students through two major patriotic essay competitions. 29,000+ is the number of high school students (grades 9-12) who competed in the 2020–21 VFW Voice of Democracy competition and 84,000+ is the number of middle students (grades 6 who competed in the 2020–21 VFW Patriot’s Pen competition

The VFW National Website is where you will find \$9.2 million is the number of scholarships awarded to more than 2,054 veterans and service members through VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” since January 2014.

Remember Everyone Deployed. Let’s celebrate that fact by joining the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to combat veterans and their families who sacrificed with them.

Purpose of Educational as a member of the VFW

Knowledge is power. Your quest for the who what when where and why of the Veterans of Foreign Wars will enable you to be a much better leader not within our organization but in life. Remember, though, to be a good leader, you must first be a good follower. When those whom you seek to lead know the hard work you have put in to position yourself to lead the more readily you will gain support.

Attend post, district, department, and national meetings It is there you will be exposed to every aspect of our organizational makeup.

The key is self-motivation. We ARE a volunteer organization, and no one will force you to learn and engage. No one will force you to attend a meeting as a member. That is entirely up to you. As an officer.... that is entirely a different matter. When you accept an officer or appointed responsibility you place your hand on the flag and take an

obligation. You will only get out of your membership the dividends of the time, energy, and resources you put into it.
The VFW Purpose of Education in our family life

Your motivation should simply be to “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”, Having the courage of your convictions to move from mediocrity to excellence the more support, including family members you will enlist. Everyone wants to be part of a winning team. In the military, especially in the military, there are no second-place finishers. There are only winners and losers. It is the nature of combat, and no one understands that more than a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. So, make the most of the opportunities to learn.

Monday

As we seek to integrate the element of “educational” as the fifth purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars let us be ever aware that what we learn is to be shared. Knowledge is power as we have heard said and it is certainly true.

Use your membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars to educate others on the value of involvement. The real joy is sharing in your knowledge for the benefit of others. Don't hide the lamp of knowledge, use it to shine on ignorance and falsehoods. Let what you learn brighten the lives of those around you.

Tuesday's Topic

Actions to apply the Purposes of the VFW To Preserve and Strengthen Comradeship Among Its' Members and Assist Worthy Comrades. Over the last five weeks we have addressed the purpose of our organization as found in our Congressional Charter and they are Fraternal, Patriotic, Historical, Charitable and Educational. For the next five weeks we will focus on the action required to integrate these areas into a workable plan.

Definition of this week's focus To Preserve, To Strengthen, Comradeship among its members Webster

Preserve. 1: to keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction. 2: to keep valid, intact, or in existence (as pending a proceeding)
Strengthen VERB make or become stronger.

Comradeship NOUN the company and friendship of others with common aims

Fraternal (members) ADJECTIVE of or like a brother or brothers. of or denoting an organization or order for people, especially men, that have common interests or beliefs. (of twins) developed from separate

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

ova and therefore genetically distinct and not necessarily of the same sex. So, we understand that within the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we are a fraternal organization that strives to preserve (to keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction: to keep valid, intact, or in existence) and strengthen (make or become stronger). comradeship (brother or brothers. of or denoting an organization or order for people, especially men, that have common interests or beliefs) among its members.

Though we have existed for more than 121 years since our founding, if and unless we grow our organization, that is strengthen, we are in significant danger of losing our ability to preserve those principles upon which we were founded. Our ability to care for the veteran, surviving spouse and orphaned children and advocate on their behalf ensuring promises made are promises kept.

Thursday Inspirational and Motivational quotes on the actions required to meet our purpose regarding fraternal, that is to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.

“Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.” —Napoleon Hill

“That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” —Friedrich Nietzsche

“I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.” —Thomas Paine

“A concerted effort to preserve our heritage is a vital link to our cultural legacies. All those things that make us who we are” - Anonymous

Remember Everyone Deployed, and actions required to meet our purpose to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.

By studying the rich history of our organization are we able to do what is necessary to preserve and strengthen the comradeship amongst our members. Every aspect of our purpose is important to the success of our organization.

In our VFW life

Commitment, Credibility, Courage is a “feeling” when members of the VFW gather. It is beyond description. Some have suggested it is the shared experiences of combat. Those who have not walked in those shoes may wonder how can that be?

How is it that a veteran of WWII and a veteran of current conflicts relate? Blood. Fear. The exhilaration of battle with the realization you are still alive. There are no differences in those emotions from the 1940’s to the emotions felt by warriors today. When you face the enemy, when you face death, you are forever changed and not everyone is able to adapt and overcome those changes. This is one of the many reasons, membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is so important to the well-being of the warrior. Preserving and strengthening comradeship amongst our members begins the healing process. Get involved and get engaged in the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat veterans.

VFW in Family Life

This was on my mind all day and I can’t call it a night until I get this said. What say we do something “radical” on our nation’s independence? Let’s remind the media it isn’t about the 4th of July, it’s about our Independence. Let’s not sit complacent. Let’s be Americans. It’s not about a date. How about the 3rd? How about the 5th? Wait, how about the 19th? Why July, how about June. Why not?

I’ll tell you why not. It’s because THAT day is when this nation declared our independence from a tyrannical King determined to keep us subjects of his rule. It was on the 4th day of July 1776. To omit the reason we celebrate this day, to me, demeans our reason to celebrate those brave men and women who dared to defy oppression. And while we are at it, remember our founding fathers (at that time) were not those wise and noble gentlemen pictured by historians. They were young men much the same as our young men and women we send to war today.

Our nation calls and we answer. We ask for nothing in return as did those in 1776, except care for those who have borne the battle. What has changed? Loyalty, Duty, Respect Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage, in a word Attitude.

“Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In”

Monday Motivation

Let us resolve to stand steeled against those who would seek to remove the tenants of our founding principles. We hold these truths to

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

be self-evident, that all men are created equal endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. My friends, my comrades, may you always keep the significance of

Independence Day centered in your heart. Freedom will never be free and as Thomas Jefferson said “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time by the blood of patriots and tyrants.

Week Eight Actions to apply the Purposes of the VFW Tuesday - To Perpetuate the Memory and History of Our Dead and to Assist Their Surviving Spouse and Orphans

Wednesday Defined

The purpose of the VFW, “to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and to assist their surviving spouse and orphans” Defined

“to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead”

Perpetuate Verb make or keep alive, keep going, keep in existence, cause to continue indefinitely: to preserve something valued from oblivion or extinction

Memory noun the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information ability to remember — something remembered from the past; a recollection, remembering or recollection of a dead person, especially one who was popular or respected

History, noun the study of past events, particularly in human affairs. «the whole series of past events connected with someone or something».

Dead, adjective no longer alive.

To assist their surviving spouses and orphans» assist

(verb) to help (someone) (noun) an act of helping

surviving (adjective) remaining alive, especially after the death of another spouse (noun) a husband or wife, considered in relation to their partner.

orphans (noun) a child whose parents are dead.

From these definitions one may derive that this element of the purpose as a member of the VFW is to keep alive, keep going, keep in existence, and cause to continue indefinitely, the faculty by which the mind stores information. and the remembering or recollection of a

dead person, especially one who was respected. And to help their remaining, that is alive, husband or wife and a child or children whose parents are dead. This is one of those cases where less words are much more efficient than being verbose.

Inspirational and motivational thoughts about the purpose of the VFW

In our Congressional Charter we learn about our founding principles and the purpose of our organization. Each element of our purpose is significant, but I do not believe any is more important than that which we reflect upon this week. May we always hold those who have gone before us in high esteem and seek to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans.

Some view this purpose as a responsibility. I see it as an obligation. Had I not been spared you might very well be here to assist my surviving spouse and my orphan children. We are the voice for those who no longer can speak for themselves. If not you their comrade, then who? If not now, then when?

Remember Everyone Deployed

As important to the Veterans of Foreign wars as an organization, as the integration of our military values is to each of our members. It is through our day-to-day actions that we employ the purpose of this week's focus and that is "to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans" These are men and women who deployed before us. Who, in leading the way in the highest traditions of military service, lived lives of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage, with commitment and devotion. They applied these values in pursuit of excellence. Let us then honor their service and sacrifice by perpetuating the memory and history of these dead and continue to assist their surviving spouses and orphans.

VFW Life

VFW Posts, Departments and National seek to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead most effectively through public gatherings and events. Visibility in honoring those who served this nation with honor and sacrifice brings a renewed sense of bond to those who may have lost touch with those they stood side by side in harm's way. Participating in these events is a great way to show your commitment to get involved.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Our efforts to assist surviving spouses and orphaned children is best served when we advocate to ensure the benefits their spouses earned are provided by Congress. Congress has a way of appearing to look out for our best interest by passing legislation but then failing to fund that same legislation. We must continually monitor the actions of those who represent us and hold them accountable. Passing new and more legislation is a complete waste of time and resources when they fail to implement these benefits. It is seen by many veterans as mere lip service. So, what can you do as new members and emerging leaders? Get involved by learning about our advocacy and taking an active role in representing those who have no voice.

Monday Motivation

May images of desecrated monuments and memorials serve as your motivation to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and at the same time serve to steel your resolve to not permit the desecration of those who served this nation with honor be destroyed nor forgotten so long as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is in existence.

Week Nine

This week's focus is on VFW's purpose to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws: to foster true patriotism.

Wednesday - Defined

Maintain is defined to mean keep in an existing state (as of repair, efficiency, or validity):

preserve from failure or decline. 2: to sustain against opposition or danger.

True Allegiance is defined as fidelity owed by a subject or citizen to a sovereign or government:

the obligation of an alien to the government under which the alien resides.

Government is defined as a means by which organizational policies are enforced, as well as a mechanism for determining policy.

The United States of America commonly known as the United States (U.S. or US) or America, is a country primarily located in North America. It consists of 50 states, a federal district, five major unincorporated territories, 326 Indian reservations, and some minor possessions.

Fidelity is Faithfulness to obligations, duties, or observances.

Definition of constitution is basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people.

Laws are a system of rules created and enforced through social or governmental institutions to regulate behavior,

Foster defined is to promote growth or development

True Patriotism or national pride is the feeling of love, devotion, and sense of attachment to a homeland or the country and alliance with other citizens who share the same sentiment to create a feeling of oneness among the people.

So, how do we incorporate this purpose into our VFW membership? On the surface, it may appear to be challenging. As we expound on the meaning of each of the terms cited in the purpose, if we focus on the desire to be the difference in our posts, communities, and nation there is a proven method insuring successful result.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In” is a surefire way to apply the purpose of our organization in our VFW membership and daily lives. It will require your Commitment, Credibility, and Courage to be the best you can be in all the things you think, say, and do by asking yourself.... Is it the Truth? Is it Fair to All Concerned? Will it build Goodwill and Better Friendships? and Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?

You will never go wrong by doing the right thing. It's what leaders do.

Inspirational quotes and motivational thoughts

“There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag...We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language...and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people”. - Theodore Roosevelt

“The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. Only if every single citizen feels duty bound to do his share in this defense are the constitutional rights secure.” — Albert Einstein

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

“There are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations.” — James Madison

“In the beginning of a change the patriot is a scarce man, and brave, and hated and scorned.

When his cause succeeds, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot”. - Mark Twain

“True patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom and equality not only for Americans but for all people on earth, universal brotherhood and good will, and a constant and earnest striving toward the principles and ideals on which this country was founded” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Remember Everyone Deployed

Reflect on the bond of deployment that each of us experienced. No matter the conflict, no matter the branch, and no matter the MOS we all served in harm's way.

With our purpose being to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws: to foster true patriotism, may your thoughts turn to remembering those with whom you served. I recall my first reunion with the unit I served in Vietnam, 1967-1968. That reunion took place 45 years after the fact. Didn't want to attend. My cope was to be a workaholic. I was very good at keeping battle memories at bay. But after 9/11, I could envision a prolonged and protracted war in the Middle East. The victories of Desert Storm and Desert Shield seemed forgotten by those who were not engaged in those conflicts.

Our citizens and our Congressional representatives conveniently forget the sacrifices made by those who have been called to face the enemy. It took me forty years to come to grips with my deployments and another five years to be willing to reconnect with my Comrades. Time was frozen.

We were now older, but it was as if no time had lapsed. I have stayed in touch with my “battle buddies” since then, thanks to our ability to communicate electronically. It was clear to me as a Vietnam Veteran that we had reached the age where we had time on our hands. Time where we could not escape the memories and the experiences. Some refer to this as “stinkin’ thinkin”. For many, anger, loss of health, loss of jobs, family issues, all sorts of issues we could not control, became unbearable. I tried to warn the veteran community the United

States had never seen a tsunami of veterans in need of care. It was clear our Government was not prepared to provide the care and benefits promised and frankly continue to fail us daily. With the end of our engagement in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of US Armed Forces the overburdened Veterans Administration system is woefully lacking the resources in facilities, personnel, and funding to address the needs of our current conflict veterans not yet enrolled for VA care. But we must hold our government accountable to provide the care which we were promised and cease to delay the benefits earned by our service and sacrifice and the overwhelming sacrifices of our families.

In our VFW Life

Current conflict veterans have the advantage of technology, and you appear to be making the most out of your ability to reconnect with comrades. I encourage you to continue to reach out and reconnect. Continue to build upon that bond of combat. As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars you have learned first-hand you are only able to count on each other. The future is yours. Prepare yourselves as you must understand no one from the Government is coming to care for those who have borne the battle. Without getting political, I'll just say, I understand it. But that does not relieve our nation of keeping the promises made to us. And it is up to us to be the voice for the voiceless. We must, as an organization, be innovative in how we deal with Congress. We must adapt to changing and challenging technologies to take advantage of them.

In our family life

Thank you for your service and sacrifices. Thank your family and friends who supported you and sacrifices they may have made on your behalf. Those of us who have gone before you have a responsibility to prepare you for leadership, that is to meet the responsibilities of assisting the surviving spouse and orphans of our dead and to advocate on their behalf in the halls of Congress. Those are the very foundation blocks upon which our organization was founded.

Motivation Monday

To make a difference, you must first decide to BE THE DIFFERENCE. Only you can make the decision of how you will apply your skills, talents, and resources to insure that, as VFW members, we are doing all we can to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws

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and to foster true patriotism. I do not believe any of us would argue that our Government is functioning as it could and should. So how do we maintain “true allegiance to the Government of the United States”. It is by getting involved.

You are the voice of one. Let’s look at how fast this multiplies when we act together to double our efforts each day. Now there are two voices, 4 voices tomorrow, followed by eight, then 16, then 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1,024, 2,048, 4,096, 8,192, 16,384, 32,768, 65,536, 131,072, 262,144, 524,288, 1,048,576 “voices” in 21 days. Where does it start? If it’s to be it’s up to me...and YOU!

VFW posts are where heroes gather, and warriors meet. It is in that environment where we determine as a body how we will fulfill the purpose we are reflecting upon. But it is in taking the action that we succeed. When it’s all said and done there is more said than done. Let that not be the case when we meet the purpose of our organization. This series is extremely useful for new VFW members and emerging leaders. As current leaders it is your responsibility to mentor the new member. We are inclusive. Make all feel welcome. They may not remember your name, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

The most effective way to do that is to
“Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In”

Week Ten

The last of the actions to meet the purpose of the VFW is to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

Wednesday definition

Maintain is defined to mean keep in an existing state (as of repair, efficiency, or validity):
preserve from failure or decline. 2: to sustain against opposition or danger.

Extend VERB cause to cover a larger area; make longer or wider

Institutions NOUN a society or organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose.

American ADJECTIVE relating to or characteristic of the United States or its inhabitants.

Freedom NOUN the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

Preserve VERB maintain (something) in its original or existing state.

Defend VERB resist an attack made on (someone or something); protect from harm or danger.

Enemies NOUN a hostile nation or its armed forces or citizens, especially in time of war.: a person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something.

If we were to use the definitions to state this element of the purpose, it would read, “The purpose of the VFW, is to maintain (to mean to keep in an existing state and to sustain against opposition or danger) and extend (cause to cover a larger area; make longer or wider preserve from failure or decline. to sustain against opposition or danger) the institutions (a society or an organization founded for a religious, educational, social, or similar purpose organization) of American (relating to or characteristic of the United States or its inhabitants) freedom (the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint)

and to preserve (maintain something in its original or existing state) and defend (resist an attack made on someone or something; protect from harm or danger) from all enemies (a hostile nation or its armed forces or citizens, especially in time of war.: a person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something)

When you know and understand the meaning of all those words in the purpose then you truly understand the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter.

The Purpose of this Organization shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen Comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In



ABC's of Membership

Leading volunteers in the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States a
veteran service organization

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Week One

Week 1 of 10 Leadership, an Overview

Tuesday

As with Chapters 1 and 2 of this mentoring series we begin our focus for the week on Tuesday, followed by defining the focus on Wednesday, motivational and inspirational quotes on Thursday, Remembering Everyone Deployed on Friday, Integrating the focus in our VFW membership on Saturday, in our family life on Sunday concluding with Monday as Motivational

Again, this series is what I consider to be the ABCs of Membership, which is from my fifty plus years of experience in the world of leading volunteers. It started as a soldier and infantry platoon leader in combat, a successful business entrepreneur, and immersion in the non-profit world of volunteerism. My motivation was not altruistic but a means to cope with my service in combat. I did not turn to drugs or alcohol but instead became a workaholic. Mysteriously, I learned that serving others gave me a sense of satisfaction not found in my vocational pursuits.

Let me dispel several myths relating to leaders and delegating responsibility. Let us begin with the false belief of the "born leader". There is no such being. Extensive research has concluded after hundreds of thousands of birth announcements were verified, not a single birth certificate contained a reference to leadership. What was confirmed was that either a male child or a female child was born. From that we may determine, indeed, leaders are made and not born. Of

course, there are specific character traits that make up the leader but the most critical of these is integrity. Everything I want to know about a person starts with the question of integrity. With integrity as a foundation other quality can then be developed. Honesty can only be legislated to a point.

In the world of volunteerism there is a tendency to allow others to step forward. Of course, the problem with that, especially in the world of military veterans, as members of the armed forces stepping forward was a trait that was not looked upon favorably. It is for that reason we want to see if “Somebody Else” will step up. I find it quite humorous when I see a new post commander stand at the podium and ask for volunteers.

There is a service that volunteers step forward, but I was not in that service. Again, after research into hundreds of thousands of rosters including those beyond the roles of the Veterans of Foreign Wars membership, I have not seen anyone by the name of “Somebody Else”. We cannot wait for somebody else to take our place. If it is to be, it is up to me must be response if success is to be achieved.

It is up to the leader to inspire, motivate, reach out to others to become members of your team. One surefire method to do that is by your example. When you “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In” you will earn the respect of those whom you seek to influence to join with you. When you set the example, they will follow up much like the “Field of Dreams” - - - “Build it and they will come”

Wednesday Leadership an Overview

Defined as it relates to the military, industry/business, service organization.

Military definition (Army)

“Leadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improving the organization. An Army leader...is anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals. Army leaders motivate people both inside and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking, and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization.

Industry/business definition of Leadership in business is the capacity of a company’s management to set and achieve challenging goals, take

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

fast and decisive action when needed, outperform the competition, and inspire others to perform at the highest level they can. Service Leadership is the powerful force that occurs once a person discovers their heart to serve, answers their call to lead, and summons their courage to engage. Most of my leadership has been as a member of Rotary International and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I share with you the Object of Rotary which is what leaders in this organization seek to achieve.

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and to encourage and foster: **FIRST: The Development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service.** Rotarians can create relationships with businesses, professional, and community leaders.

SECOND - High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society. Being a Rotarian authenticates the person and their business or profession.

THIRD - The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life. Rotarians nurture this personal characteristic; the cornerstone of building and sustaining relationships.

FOURTH - The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

May these definitions bring clarity to what type of leadership is required for our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a Veteran Service Organization.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Thursday Leadership, an Overview

Inspirational and Motivational Quotes relating to Leadership in a service organization such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Service to others is one of the major keys to realizing your purpose in life. Those members who focus on serving others to the best of their abilities live a life of greatness. Benefiting humanity and making a difference is of utmost importance. May these quotes inspire you to live a life of service for the benefit of those who have borne the battle and their surviving spouse and orphans.

“If you make the choice to serve the veteran, as in a veteran service organization, then serve the veteran, not yourself”. Al Lipphardt (paraphrased from a quote by Jack Abramoff)

“I want to be remembered as a great friend, an outstanding father, an amazing husband, and a good soul who always strived to serve God and man. And during that time of service on earth, I would like people to think, He brought joy, love, opportunity, and fulfillment to millions of people.” Tony Robbins

“Don’t feel bad if people remember you only when they need you. Feel privileged that you are like a candle that comes to their mind when there is darkness.” Anonymous

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader”. John Quincy Adams

Friday Leadership an Overview - Remember Everyone Deployed

We are reflecting on leadership. Did you ever look back at your deployment and suddenly realize the difference you made in a stranger’s life simply by being there? I think about the roads we cleared in Vietnam years ago and the villagers we met, especially the children. Your deployment was probably the same. As you walked the streets of the villages you encountered people, regular people. They loved, they cried, they feared, they cared, just like you. They were not so much different than us. Your service was to protect them on their soil, so we were safe here at home. Never EVER doubt the value of your service. I know what you did. Others who have walked in your shoes know what you did. You, who raised your hand to serve understanding you may be required to forfeit your life for your fellow man. No greater love is there than that acceptance. Taking care of others is what leaders do. It is not about title, position, reward, or recognition.

Saturday Leadership, an Overview

Leadership as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Post meeting, District meetings, Department meetings, National meetings. What is our leadership structure in the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Every member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the VFW National ByLaws, Manual of Procedures and Ritual as approved at the National Convention by the delegates chosen by the member’s post. You the

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

member rule, if choose to make your voice heard. We laud and hold our Commander in Chief in the highest esteem. He holds the title, but he is a member in good standing in a post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

You might have heard there are three kinds of members in the VFW. There are those who make things happen, there are those who watch things happen and there are those who wonder what happened. Be one who makes things happen.

The tools are available, but like the hammer, until you pick it up it will have no impact.

Monday Motivation – Leadership, an Overview

Be The Example. Focus not on success but on significance. When significance is achieved you have attained success. The sooner one realizes to live a life of significance, we must set aside our desire for success and what we, as an individual, accomplish and instead concentrate on what we can do for others.

The true value of leadership is exactly that, what we can do for others. Self-centeredness is the primary cause of every problem -- both personally and globally in our world today. Leaders think and act beyond themselves and by doing so succeed. This is how significance is achieved and continues.

Chapter 3 Leadership in a volunteer service organization.

Week 2

Tuesday Making a Difference, Topic Tuesday

Not everyone has a desire to lead. And that is okay. To be a good leader, you must first be a good follower. That same principle is found in Making a Difference and Be the Difference. It is, in practicality, impossible if you have not chosen to be that difference. Perfection should always be our goal, but excellence should be tolerated. The talent you have is your gift from God and your use of that talent is your gift to God.

Wednesday Leadership, Making a Difference Defined

Making is a noun defined as the process of making or producing something; essential qualities or ingredients needed for something.

Difference is a noun defined as a point or way in which people or things are not the same.

So, making a difference is to say this is the process of making or producing something having essential qualities or ingredients for something or a way in which people or things are not the same. Therefore, it is said to make a difference you must first be the difference. You are being by having the essential qualities or ingredients for something or a way in which people or things are not the same. By possessing those qualities, you are now able to apply them to produce something.

Thursday Making a difference

Inspirational and motivational quotes on making a difference

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” - Jake Goodall

“To make a difference in someone’s life, you do not have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care enough and be there.” - Anonymous

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.” — Edward Everett Hale

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.” - Bobby Kennedy

Friday Making a Difference “Remember Everyone Deployed”

There are so many different aspects to combat deployment. But, in every case they each contribute to the overall mission. In Rotary, a service organization, there is an objective to recognize the worthiness of all useful occupations. It is not to say that the role of the boss or leader is more important than those who deal with the trash. It is in the acceptance that everyone contributes to mission accomplishment. All service, executed, using the values we embraced upon entering service, with honor is to be respected as is the individual performing that service.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Resources and personnel in the operational rear area are critical to the survival and mission accomplishment of the front-line service personnel prepared to close with an destroy the enemy. Every job worth doing, is worth doing well when you “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe. The role of the leader, especially in volunteer service organizations is to put the members in the best possible positions to allow them to contribute to the fullest of their capabilities not because you demand it be so, but because they want to excel. That is leadership.

Saturday Making a Difference in our VFW membership

**“What the mind can conceive and believe the mind can achieve”
Napoleon Hill**

As a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars leadership is by example. We are a fraternal organization but that does not mean we select our leaders based on the buddy system. We must, and I cannot overemphasize must, select our leaders based not on their words but on the record of their achievements. When you evaluate who you would follow, clearly you should verify their experiences and achievements as claimed because experience does not equate to achievement. As you look at the achievements of an individual, ask yourself was this an individual achievement or was it a team effort? Remember, you are looking for a leader. All State recognition, All American Recognition are not individual achievements. They appropriately recognize Post, District and Department achievements with the Commander having the honor of wearing the cap. Pay attention to how one refers to this recognition. It says much about the individual.
Leaders lead.

Success in our organization, which is veteran service, is not achieved by the efforts of one individual but by the ability to encourage others to be part of something bigger than themselves, a team. It is in cooperation milestones are attained.

Where does it start? It starts at the top, or that is certainly where it should start. If you have a commander at the top who does not inspire, motivate, encourage, support the purpose of our organization, chances of mission failure are assured. Be the best you can be in all things.

The decision to refute mediocrity is the responsibility of everyone. It is my experience after over 50 years of working in the volunteer community, continued acceptance of mediocrity leads to complacency and complacency leads to acceptance of the status quo

and finally the acceptance of the status quo leads to failure. It is impossible to remain static.

In life there is no such thing as “status quo” Every aspect of our being is in constant motion either forward or backward. You need not be a theoretical physicist to know if you are not improving you are declining, or as it has been said “you need not be a rocket scientist” to realize this fact. And, with that thought in mind the solution is simple. Basically, believe in what you do - do what you believe in.

In the successful book, “Think and Grow Rich”, author Napoleon Hill posed the theory, “What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.” It is unavoidably true. The fact is, that what a person achieves in life is the result of what one conceives and believes, no matter what it is. But nobody said it would be easy. So, lead.....**BE THE DIFFERENCE.**

Motivational Monday - Making a Difference

This motivational Monday is dedicated to the memory of thirteen of our bravest warriors who were killed in action. displayed here. They were deployed to aid US citizens; Afghan supporters and remaining forces evacuate from Kabul Afghanistan. They went knowing full well the price that they may need to pay in exchange for the safety and security as was their mission. They were brought home from harm’s way in flag draped coffins.

The Gold Star families that were created because of the sacrifice of their loved ones will know the answer so many of our warriors ask, “Did I make a difference?” Rest in peace there is no doubt you chose to be the difference and thus you have forever made the difference in the lives of those whom you saved in exchange for your life.

Week 3

Tuesday Leadership’s Practical Habits

Accepting a leadership role should begin by assessing a starting point. The way we see a situation is based entirely on our own perceptions. To change a situation, we must change ourselves and to change ourselves, we must be able to change our perceptions. We think the problem is out there, but that thought is the problem. We must not be reactive but initiative-taking. Initiative-taking people realize they have a responsibility - or response ability, to choose how you will respond to a given situation. The way we see a problem is the problem. We must allow ourselves to change ourselves fundamentally and not just alter our attitudes and behaviors on the surface.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

So, what are these methods that will help you as you develop. You are in charge; You choose the script to live your life. Use selfawareness to be initiative-taking taking responsibility for your choices. What distinguishes you as humans is your inherent ability to examine your own character to decide how to view yourself and your situation to control your effectiveness.

Upon conclusion of your assessment the next method is to begin with the end in mind. Start with a clear destination. Being a good leader is in setting the strategic vision. Start by considering “What is it we are trying to accomplish?” Here is where you focus on the values we learned when entering service and integrate them with the end in mind.

The method of prioritizing that is to put first things first. Integrating our values with the end is mind, the second method, is followed by focusing on putting first things first. To maintain the discipline and the focus to stay on track we need to have the willpower to do something when we do not want to do it. We need to act according to our values rather than our desires or impulses at any given moment. There are variations in getting to a winning position. Win-Win where agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfactory. Lose-Win (I lose you win) where people are quick to please, appease and seek strength from popularity.

Win people are those who do not necessarily want someone to lose but are only concerned on getting what they want. And lastly the Win-Win or No Deal individuals cannot reach an agreement that is mutually beneficial thus there is no deal. Winning, it has been said is a habit. And unfortunately, so is losing.

As a new leader, approaching your role with the five methods above will provide a foundation you can use to move onto the steps of honing your listening skills. Seek to understand rather than be understood; To build cooperation you must leave your comfort zone and embrace valuing differences - the mental, emotional, and psychological differences between people. If two people have the same opinion, one is unnecessary.

When we become aware of someone’s different perspective, we can ask “Good, you see it differently help me see what you see.” Use the differences in other people to expand your perspective. Seek first to understand and find strength in those different perspectives to create new possibilities and positive results.

Lastly, as we look at methods that have proven to be success in developing leaders, we must devote the time to renewing ourselves physically, spiritually, mentally, and socially. Continuous renewal allows to synergistically increases in our ability to practice each

method. The sum of what has just been provided is contained in just ten simple words

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Wednesday Defining Leadership’s Practical Habits

Leadership (noun) is a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual, group or organization to “lead”, influence or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations.

Practical In philosophy, practical reason is the use of reason to decide how to act. It contrasts with theoretical reason, often called speculative reason, the use of reason to decide what to follow.

Habit (noun) a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.

Leadership Practical Habits could thus be defined as a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual, group or organization to “lead”, influence or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations, using reason to decide how to act (practical) by a settled or regular tendency or practice (habit), especially one that is hard to give up.

Thursday Leadership’s Practical Habits

Inspirational and Motivational Quotes and Sayings

“The subconscious mind makes no distinction between constructive and destructive thought impulses. It works with the material we feed it, through our thought impulses. The subconscious mind will translate into reality a thought driven by fear, just as readily as it will translate into reality a thought driven by courage or faith”. Napoleon Hill

“Our character is basically a composite of our habits. Because they are consistent, often unconscious patterns, they constantly, daily, express our character.” – Stephen Covey

“Empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy is a form of agreement. Empathy is not agreeing with someone; it is fully, deeply understanding that person, emotionally as well as intellectually.” – Stephen Covey

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

“Are leaders born or made? This is a false dichotomy – leaders are neither born nor made. Leaders choose to be leaders.” – Stephen Covey

Lastly, I want to share this thought. CARPE DIEM!!! Carpe diem is a War Cry. Carpe diem invokes the sleeping giant within you. It urges you to shed your inhibitions, pluck courage, and grab every opportunity that comes your way. Carpe diem is the best way to say, “Yesterday is the past, Tomorrow is yet to come, but today is a gift and that is why it is called the Present.” So, whatever you are doing may you make it the best it can be.

Friday Remember Everyone Deployed - Leadership’s Practical Habit’s

On September 11, 2021, we commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. In response, the United States engaged in the Global War on Terror and for twenty years our military successfully deployed to prevent future attacks on our homeland such as 9-11-2001.

We should acknowledge and understand that less than one half of one percent of our citizens were part of this global response. To say that we owe a deep sense of gratitude to the brave men and women who served is clearly an understatement. There are no words that will ever erase the horrors of this war nor the impact it has had on their families and supporters. The cost of human suffering both physical and mental will require care beyond our current capacity within the Veterans Administration System. We must seek solutions beyond our Government. The future is bright if we as Veteran Service Organizations have a common goal. It is time to mass our resources and energy so solve tomorrow’s crisis of care.

I challenge veterans of past conflicts to be the bridge in order the current generation of veterans have the tools and the understanding of what needs to happen. As former soldiers/members of the armed forces of the United States, we know firsthand what two decades of conflict does not only to the warrior and their families but the strain it has placed on our resources to care for those who have borne the battles. We must fight against the urge to give in to the naysayers and those who have given up hope for our world. Open our hearts and our minds to innovation and technology. Break out of the cycle of mediocrity. “But the way we have always done it is not the path to the future”. That attitude is an obstacle to growth.

We lived the warrior ethos then and the only clear path to a bright future is to re-embrace a mantra that requires us to always place the mission first, never quit, never accept defeat, and never leave a comrade behind. The only way forward is to remember we are the

United States of America founded on the principles in our constitution. Let us remember those who have gone before us upon whose shoulders we stand. Embrace their courage and faith to guide.

Saturday Leadership's Practical Habits – Our VFW Membership

Accept and understand that you will only get out of your membership in the VFW what you are willing to invest in it. Great news for those whose first question is what will the VFW do for me, it has already been done. Look at the benefits you have as a veteran today. It is not what you did it is what those whose shoulders we stand upon have done for us.

I suggest you take the time to see the rich history of our organization and the legislation enacted to ensure promises made to you are promises kept. But we know the fight must continue. Memories of the nation and of our Congress are not so good when it comes to remembering the sacrifices you and I have made to keep this country free and defend it from attack by those who would see us destroyed.

This mentoring series is intended to bring you awareness and resources. There is much to learn, and the information is at your fingertips. Our national organization has posted many helpful resources at <http://www.vfw.org> The site is easily navigated. But unless and until you access it will be of no help.

Another extremely helpful resource is your district and department meetings where leadership usually includes a school of instruction on a myriad of topics. Take advantage of the information, but more importantly to me is take advantage to meet and learn from your fellow VFW members. Do not wait to be spoon fed take the initiative to learn on your own. I hear and I am not sure, I see, and I forget. I do and I remember. Get involved.

Motivational Monday – Leadership's Practical Habits

The greatest discoveries made were made by people just like you. No, they may not look like you, their life experiences may be different than you, their socio-economic circumstances may not have been the same as you, but they are just like you.

So, how is it I can say with certainty that they are just like you and me? The simple fact is, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Chapter 3 Leadership in a volunteer service organization.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Week 4 Adding Value

Topic Tuesday

This week we focus on adding value to the practical methods in preparing for the assumption of a leadership role at any level in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a Veteran Service Organization

I have been humbled to have members say how grateful they are for teaching them everything they know about our organization. That is very humbling but then I realize there is a problem with that, and that problem is me. While it is gratifying on a personal level to know the impact, it is troubling to realize I should have done so much more. You see, they know everything I shared, the problem is I have not shared everything I know.

Each of us has much to offer in the way of education, resources, and counsel. But, as valuable as those are, the most helpful element I have is the benefit of experience. That is the value we must add to the education, resources, and counsel in preparing our future leaders, the new members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Each of us also joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars for a reason. Those joining today are no different. We have an obligation to prepare them for the roles they will serve the veterans of this organization and our nation.

“THE TIME IS NOW”, as Commander in Chief Fritz has embraced. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Begin today to serve as the bridge from where we were to where we need to be in the future. Realize and accept the future belongs to the young. “Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Chapter 3 Leadership in a volunteer service organization.

Week 4 Adding Value

Wednesday Defining Added Value

Add (verb) adding (present participle) to join (something) to something else to increase the size, number, or amount.

Value (noun) the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something. a person’s principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life.

From these definitions when we say adding value to our mentoring, we are implying we do more than just ensure our new

members are included in positions of leadership. We should be continually providing advice, counsel, and the wisdom of shared experiences. The end goal of mentoring is not simply to check a box that says we met our obligation to seek and bring in new members, current conflict members, and re-engaged members.

Think of a new member as a seed in your hand. Nothing happens to that seed until you plant it in the ground. You surround and cover it with good soil. But if you fail to nurture it with proper nutrients, water, sun, shade, and care as it grows, it will die.

The same thing happens with our new members. Planting it in the ground is to provide responsibility as a post member, Surround and cover your member with comradeship of other members. Nurture their growth with information on the rich history of the VFW (nutrients), provide water, (schools of instruction), sun (involvement in community events), be available to the new member (shade) as you care for their growth to be a valued stakeholder of this proud organization called the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Do not just throw your seeds on the ground and fail to tend to them. We know from the Bible and from our own experience, Your seeds will simply wither and die.

Chapter 3 Leadership in a volunteer service organization.

Week 4 Adding Value

Thursday Inspirational Quotes and Sayings about Adding Value “What it comes down to, I believe, is that mentoring often involves telling people what they need to hear, rather than what they want to hear.

When you are able to be humbly honest with someone about a situation with which you have personal experience-even if you risk angering or hurting that person-you are offering the most valuable gift of all.” John Wooden

“You cannot transmit wisdom and insight to another person. The seed is already there. A good teacher touches the seed, allowing it to wake up, to sprout, and to grow.” Thich Nihat Hanh

“People who add value to others do so intentionally. I say that because to add value, leaders must give of themselves, and that rarely occurs by accident”. John Maxwell

Mentoring has no easy answer or secret mantra to build a relationship that will succeed, but there are elements to use as a basis for mentorship connections.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Respect. The mentor and mentee may have quite different backgrounds, personalities, and experiences. These differences can be a great opportunity to gain experience from one another when the level of respect is maintained on both sides.

Guidance. The mentor's role is to guide, and help the mentee develop themselves both professionally and personally. The mentor should recognize that they are the leader and advisor in the relationship. **Trust.** The mentee needs to have confidence in the mentor and trust that the mentor has the mentee's best interests at heart. Once trust is established, the advice that the mentor provides will be easier to accept and act on. If there is no trust in the foundation of the connection, there will be no growth.

Encourage. Mentoring relationships do not only focus on the mentee's successes, failures, and opportunities to improve should be discussed as well. Good mentors know how to talk to and encourage their protégé. Resilience is an important quality in any line of work and mentees should be taught to develop it.

Friday – Remember Everyone Deployed – Adding Value

If there was ever a situation that created a bond it is in the fact that as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we share the experience of deployment to harm's way. It is in that situation that we can integrate one of the elements that can help in setting a path to add value by focusing on the mission. Begin with the end in mind.

What do I mean? It goes without really saying that our end goal, other than the mission, is to return to our loved ones and our home. If I may, allow me to suggest that as you walk in the dangers, wherever you are, know you are not alone. Those who are with you are experiencing the same. Allow that to form a positive bond that you will call upon at a point in the future.

Life is about attitude. When you see the possible, your mind prepares the probable. What the mind conceives and believes it can achieve. I am most grateful for the lifelong friends I have made that have come out of the stressors of life. I am thankful for the wisdom to understand that we make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give.

Walk with your head high, your back straight and an open mind to opportunity, so you can be a resource to help someone through their challenges. That is just one way you will add value to your life and to others.

Saturday – Adding Value to our VFW Membership

Each of us have our own reasons for being a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to combat veterans. It is evident in our Congressional Charter. Our strong legislative advocacy is testimony to our purpose.

All that said, how do you and I add value to being a member of the VFW? From my perspective I believe the most effective “Adding Value” tool we have is first, our common bond of combat. There is yet an explanation how, when combat veterans meet, there is an uncanny connection. It is not because we share the same conflicts. We served in different wars. It is not because of gender? We are people. Is it we have a common MOS? No, we have varying military skills. Is it because we share the same faith? We are of many faiths and religions. It is my assessment that our commonality is the deep sense of pride in our oath. The oath which may require us to sacrifice our life to keep this nation and its’ people free.

Second, and most profound is our understanding of the fragility of life. It is understanding that with the blink of an eye we, and our comrades may be taken from this life.

It is for these reasons that we “Believe In What We Do - Do What We Believe In”.

Motivational Monday Adding Value in our VFW Membership

A wonderful way to add value to your life and certainly in your VFW service is quite simple. As you meet people or as you interface with them in a ceremony or meeting for the first time remember you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

They may not remember the circumstances that causes your paths to cross. They might not even remember your name. But they will always remember how YOU made them feel.

Look beyond yourself

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In.”

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Week 5 of 10 Building Your Team

Topic Tuesday and our focus this week is building a team in a veteran service organization and non-profit entities. While there are many aspects mirroring other team building characteristics, a veteran service team’s mindset, such as with members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, is different. Our team is composed of combat veterans.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

As new members and emerging leaders, and that is who you are, we need to one, understand our purpose and two, who we are. Who are we? In earlier chapters of the ABCs of membership we recalled the values each of us shared as we wore the fabric of this nation. In the chapter that followed we reviewed purpose of our organization and our Congressional Charter Section 230102.

Wednesday Defined – Building your team in a veteran service, nonprofit, organization

Building (noun), the business or process of building something

Team (noun), coming together as a team to achieve a common goal

Veteran Service Organization is a phrase referring to an organization that represents the interests of veterans.

Non-Profit is a legal entity organized and operated for a collective, public, or social benefit.

From these definitions we can surmise. The process of building or coming together as a team to achieve a common goal in representing the interest of veterans for a collective public or social benefit. The definition makes sense in understanding what we seek to achieve as a team. But it is critical to understand our team members are also our fellow veterans.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

Week five

Thursday - Inspirational and Motivational quotes on building a team in a Veteran Service Organization/Non-Profit

**“Leadership really comes down to two fundamental things and if you get them right, then your 80 percent of the way there. The first one is establishing the vision for a team; the second one is establishing a culture for your organization that helps contribute to mission success.”
Jake Wood Co-Founder and CEO at Team Rubicon**

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Mahatma Gandhi

“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.” - Mother Teresa

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” – Andrew Carnegie

Week five

Friday Remember Everyone Deployed - building a team in a Veteran Service Organization/Non-Profit

We should all understand that volunteers in a Veteran Service Organization are different than most others, especially those of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Why? Our deployment to harms' way and the inescapable, undeniable, and life-long repercussions, for which we are, in many ways grateful, changed our lives. At times, our volunteers are impatient. At times, our volunteers are intolerable, particularly when those who are responsible to provide care, is not evidenced by their level of care.

The care should begin when we walk in the door. If we appear agitated, irritated, anxious even paranoid, let me offer insight from a combat veteran's point of view. In the blink of an eye life can go from living to dead. Do you know when that will be? Neither do we, so our urgency is not a perception, it is a reality.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars advocate through Congress, on our behalf, for the Veterans Administration on both Healthcare and Benefits and Compensation. We do this through our strong consistent advocacy with Congress We ensure funding exists to meet the needs of our members and all veterans.

But is it adequate to keep the promises that have been made through the years? No. As a result, the purpose of the VFW contained in our Congressional Charter must be pursued with a tenacious and selfless sense of Commitment, Credibility and Courage that combat veterans bring to the fight. But we need the help of every member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. How you help is simple, but it does require you to get and stay engaged.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Week five

Saturday building your team as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a veteran service organization whose members are volunteers. Each of us has a common bond with our fellow members and that is the oath we took and the deployment we each served. It is natural to gravitate to other likeminded individuals such as ourselves. This aspect is great for creating camaraderie but not necessarily for building a team. Inclusion reflects diversity and it is in this diversity that creativity flows.

Chapter 3 Leadership in a volunteer service organization.

Week 6 A Matter of Character

Topic Tuesday

“Leadership is about building followership – and it’s your values that build followership. And its substance and character, not style, that determine followership. People follow not just because of what you do, but because of who you are” Michael Finer, The Feigner Points of Leadership.

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.” General Norman Schwarzkopf. What is being said here is that without character there can be no leadership. The key to character is integrity. Integrity is the basis for all we do as a leader and frankly as a good person. For without integrity relationships cannot exist. Proof of your integrity is not based on a piece of paper. Your word is you bond.

Wednesday – Defined - a matter of character

Matter (verb) be of importance; have significance.

Character (noun) the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.

The subject for week six of Chapter regarding leadership is a matter of character or as the definitions imply, leadership is a matter (be of importance, have significance) of character (the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual)

Thursday - Motivational and inspirational quotes relating to the matter of character for leaders

“Character in many ways is everything in leadership. It is made up of many things, but I would say character is really integrity”. Dwight D. Eisenhower

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.” General Norman Schwarzkopf

“Character creates consistency, and if your people know what they can expect from you, they will continue to look to you for leadership”. - John C. Maxwell

“We could sum up the entire message of this book in the following way; leaders stand for something - vision. Leaders stand on something - values.”

— Myles Munroe, The Power of Character in Leadership: How Values, Morals, Ethics, and Principles Affect Leaders

Friday – Remember Everyone Deployed – A matter of character Like me, you looked back on your deployment and thought, what, in me, gave me the strength to deploy when called. It is a one-word answer, integrity.

Integrity is synonymous with character. It is not the contract you signed that makes it binding. It is not the money you invest that makes it binding. What compels us is the unique asset each of us has and that is our word.

Our word is worth more than any amount of money we may have. Our word is worth more than any binding document. We are our word. Character is to integrity as integrity is to character, inseparable.

Saturday – A matter of character in our VFW membership

In our VFW membership and most certainly in our daily lives you can never over emphasize the importance of your word. People rely on what you say. Flippant and insensitive remarks while in most cases are unintended, they always answer to the law of unintended consequences. Official documents relating to financial records and responsibilities contain signatures, our bond, verifying and validating

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correctness. One of the most unappreciated position in a VFW Post is that of Trustee.

It is the trustees who review the books and records of the adjutant and the quartermaster. These individuals have the responsibility to ensure the records are correct. They sign the audits affirming its' accuracy. The general membership relies on the Trustees to oversee all records relating to the financial operations of the post. The position of the Trustee is an elected one and must be someone the post can trust.

Week six

Motivational Monday

Members of the organization named Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), today hold a long-standing history of volunteerism in their communities. Not only have they served their country, but they continue to serve their fellow veterans, families, and communities by sponsoring scholarships, career fairs, mental wellness campaigns, and so many more excellent services.

Since its inception VFW membership has been instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Administration, the creation of the national cemetery system and passage of the GI Bill.

I am immensely proud to be a member of this prestigious organization dedicated to combat veterans. Through the VFW, veterans honor veterans and serve their communities. Let us use National VFW Day this year, September 29, as motivational Monday. Take a moment to recognize all the VFW does in your community.

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Week 7

Topic Tuesday – Servant Leadership

We are all aware that while a head football coach (or any sport) may hold the title but would not be the team's leader unless the players respected him as an individual. Respect stems from trust. Trust in the leader's knowledge of their job, is proficient and that they care about each member of the team.

Therefore, to be an effective leader one must be a servant leader. The Chinese sage Lao Tzu in 600 B.C. wrote of how the greatest leaders forget themselves and focus on developing their followers. Jesus taught his disciples that whoever want to be great among you must also be your servant.

Wednesday Defined

Servant Leadership in a volunteer organization such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Servant (noun) one that serves others: a public servant especially one that performs duties

Leadership (noun) the action of leading a group of people or an organization.

Servant leadership will improve an organization and/or society over the long-term and. caring treatment of volunteers often encourages similar treatment of the organization's recipients and sponsors. One of the most beneficial results of servant leaders is they attract volunteers' trust, which can improve the credibility of the organization's brand. As you build your team of volunteers always remember it is not about you, it is about what your team can do with your support and guidance.

Thursday Inspirational and motivational quotes and ideas about servant leadership in our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars

“Leadership is not about personality, possessions, or charisma, but all about who you are as a person. I used to believe that leadership was about style but now I know that leadership is about substance, namely character.” — James C. Hunter, The Servant

“Thoughts become actions, actions become habits, habits become our character, and our character becomes our destiny.” — James C. Hunter, The Servant

“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Trust is a function of two things: character and competence. Character includes your integrity, your motive, and your intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, your skills, and your history. Both are vital.” — Stephen M. R. Covey, Speed of Trust

Week seven

Friday - Remember Everyone Deployed – Servant Leadership

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Being deployed in harms' way was for many the first step on our journey of selfless service. Respect stems from trust. As the Veterans of Foreign Wars our members must trust that their leader knows his or her job - the need to be proficient is a given - but also that he or she cares about each member of the post.

The Chinese sage Loa Tzu back in 600 B.C. wrote of how the greatest leaders forget themselves and focus on developing their followers (members). Jesus taught his disciples whoever wants to be great among you must also be your servant.

The solution for succeeding in a volunteer service organization is simple, the application is the challenge. It has been my experience in working in the volunteer arena for the past fifty years, we must put our members first by creating an environment that is rewarding, challenging, trusting, and encouraging of their own expectations so much so they treat every opportunity as a critical action. As an illustration, think of a pyramid with our posts on the bottom, districts departments, national headquarters above them and the Commander-in-Chief at the top. By reversing the order, our members will be more likely to buy into the leader's agenda and will deliver significantly better results than under a traditional hierarchical top-down managerial approach. To be clear this is not to say the chain of command is reversed, but our approach to motivate and inspire others to be the best they can be in service to others. THE TIME IS NOW.

The objective is not to use the power that comes with the leadership title, but to seek ways to help each member in our posts develop to the best of their abilities. We become their coach (mentor) trying to find what they do best and then provide them with the tools and encouragement - always cheering them and rooting for them to succeed.

Let me say again, the solution is simple the application is the challenge. We must return to the founding principles of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and that is we are a service organization whose purpose is to care for the veteran, their surviving spouse, and orphans and to advocate to ensure the promises made by our Government are fulfilled.

Week seven

Saturday – Servant Leadership in our VFW membership

We hold no rank as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars although we are all former members of the military and/or currently

wearing the fabric of this nation or retired. We are volunteers. Our reasons for volunteering are as varied as there are members.

Whatever they are they are honorable even if sometimes they may appear to be self-serving. While some think it is self-serving another may see it to assist others in similar circumstances or situations.

In this, week seven of Chapter 3, Servant Leadership as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a volunteer service organization I recall something President Calvin Coolidge is reported to have said. “No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave”. This applies to a servant leader.

As a member of the world’s oldest international service organization, I recall attending an event and being told of an interesting story. In Victorian England, the two greatest political rivals were William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli. The story goes that a young lady had dinner with both men, on consecutive nights. She was then asked for her opinions of the two famous, powerful political opponents. While she sat next to Mr. Gladstone, she thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli she thought she was the cleverest woman in England. What that said to me is that I should always try to focus on the other person, rather than try to impress them with me. That is servant leadership.

If we were to substitute the word leaders for the word love as we try to define leaders today. Instead of Love is patient it would be “Leaders are patient”. Instead of Love is kind it would be “Leaders are kind”. Love does not envy, love does not boast, love is not self-serving, nor easily angered. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Servant leaders do not envy, they do not boast, they are not self-serving nor easily angered. “Leaders always protect, always trust, always hope, always persevere.”

“Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In”

Week seven

Motivational Monday – Servant Leadership in the VFW

Your gifts are not about you. Leadership is not about you. Your purpose is not about you. A life of significance is about serving those who need your gifts, your leadership, your purpose.

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Week 8

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Topic Tuesday - Thinking Positive

Attitude is critical in a veteran's service organization whose members are volunteers. As a leader, let gratitude be your guiding attitude. Words can impact a volunteer's contribution in the same way money motivates a livelihood. Recall, what the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve. One of the ways I have found to be most valuable is to focus on an area each day.

Tuesday - studies indicate that positive thoughts boost resistance to, and improves the ability to recover from, health setbacks.

Wednesday - we are all drawn to positive people, so being positive brings more people into our lives. With a cheerful outlook, we are better at communication and negotiation.

Thursday - You're driven to achieve the things that matter to you with the power of positive thinking. You can tune out the noise, and 'tune in' to what needs to be done.

Friday - positivity extends to your view of yourself and your value. The more positive you are, the more you believe in your own potential and self-worth.

Saturday - as a positive person, you not only attract success by being a success, but are also better at developing and at inspiring others.

Sunday - with a cheerful outlook, it makes sense your joy, optimism, and satisfaction increase. You notice and appreciate those things that inspire you.

Monday - become faster and more effective when dealing with stress by looking for solutions versus dwelling on the negative.

Week 8

Wednesday defined - Thinking Positive, it is about attitude in a veterans' service organization whose members are volunteers. Words can impact a volunteer's contribution in the same way money motivates a livelihood.

Definition

Impact (noun) The striking of one body against another; collision. The force transmitted by a collision. The effect or impression of one person or thing on another:

Positive (adjective) consisting of in or characterized by the presence or possession of features or qualities rather than their absence. constructive, optimistic, or confident.

Thinking (noun) the process of using one's mind to consider or reason about something.

To defining the impact of thinking positive, would be the effect or impression of one person or thing on another consisting of in or characterized by the presence or possession of features or qualities rather than their absence as in the process of using one's mind to consider or reason about something.

Thursday - Inspirational and motivational quotes on thinking positive in a volunteer service organization such as membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.” ~Aristotle~

“Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.” ~Marcus Aurelius~

“There are no easy answers, but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right.”-Ronald Reagan

“Moral courage is the most valuable and usually the most absent characteristic in men.” General George S. Patton

Good leaders encourage their team to always act with integrity, even when it is not the most popular thing to do. Moral courage is all about doing the right thing, even if that decision may result in adverse consequences. Positive thinking helps leaders understand the value this is to good leadership — along with the reason most people do not have the moral courage to act with integrity.

Week 8

Friday – Remember Everyone Deployed – Thinking Positive – Attitude

Coming home from deployment our psyche is on high alert and is normal. Decompressing is a process and does not adhere to a schedule. It is an individual thing. But the more positive the attitude the sooner we will adjust to a non-combat frame of mind.

As a new member and an emerging leader our engagement in our membership will present us the opportunity to impact our post, district, and department. When it comes to selecting leadership, we must not confuse attitude with ability.

Attitude is about confidence. Ability is about competence. I could tell you that I am going to be the best center in NBA. But at my height you know no matter how confident (cheerful outlook) I am it is not going to happen. You see I do not have the ability. I do not have the

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competence. Yes, I have the right attitude/desire, but I do not have the ability.

While my attitude could raise my performance slightly, it would never raise my ability to the level required of an NBA center. Take note Attitude is confidence, Ability is about competence. This statement is so important I am repeating it. Take note Attitude is confidence, Ability is about competence. Do not confuse the two. One is emotion the other is fact. Choose those who have the attitude and the ability to lead volunteers.

Week 8

Saturday – Thinking Positive - Attitude in our VFW membership

We talked about the importance of attitude in our membership involvement. You may recall there is a difference between attitude and ability. Attitude is a feeling. It is based in emotion. Confidence is a good thing, but it is a feeling. Ability is a fact. It is based.

Achievement is a confirmation of fact You can boost your attitude and it will improve your performance to a small degree. Your ability is based in fact and the fact is, it is a reality. You certainly can improve upon your knowledge and that is significant.

Your attitude as a leader is critical to your success. A leader is not a leader if there is no one following. Leadership is about influence, that is, your ability to influence others.

Perception is reality. When you walk in a room, when you speak, what does your demeanor say to others? How do people see you, that is how do they feel about you?

Motivator John Maxwell identifies it as the WOO factor. As service members we knew it as having a command presence. When you walk in a room, when you speak, what does your demeanor say to others? Your WOO factor is your ability in “winning others over”. It is your ability to influence others. It is leading by example.

Motivational Monday – Thinking Positive – Attitude

Thinking Positive, it is about attitude in a veterans’ service organization whose members are volunteers. While attitude is most important it is not the only thing. To make a difference you must first be the difference. “Good, better, best, never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best”

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**Week 9 Do not Bring Me Problems – Bring Me Solutions (DBMP-BMS)
Topic Tuesday Focus on solutions and do not get bogged down in the problem.**

As leaders we have a responsibility to involve and develop our members in order that they realize their full potential. One of the areas we can involve them in is the decision-making process. A portion of that is the element of critical thinking. As we learned earlier an approach to problem solving is to start with the end in mind. You have realized and identified a problem. Next you need to determine the end goal. Getting from the problem to the end goal is the solution. DBMP - BMS

Wednesday Defined

Focus on solutions and do not get bogged down in the problem, as it applies to our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Focus (noun) the center of interest or activity. VERB pay particular attention

Solution (noun) a means of solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation

Bogged Down [verb-link adjective] When you get bogged down in something, it prevents you from making progress or getting something done

Problem (noun) a matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.

Here we have definitions relating to the premise “Focus on solutions and don’t get bogged down in the problem” When you focus (center of interest or activity) on solutions (a means of solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation) don’t get bogged down (preventing you from making progress or getting something done) in the problem (a matter or solution regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with an overcome).

Introducing the topic for this week a suggested approach when situations arise needing solutions is to keep in mind these letters “DBMP-BMS” Those letters refer to Don’t bring me problems - bring me solutions”. You have a team. if an issue is identified needing to be addressed allow your members to suggest how the issue might be

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

resolved. As the leader you are perceived to have the answers. If and until you welcome the input of others you will always bear the burden of solving problems.

One of the responsibilities of the leader is to mentor others in order they grow personally and professionally. Helping them to develop critical thinking skills will prevent a problem from becoming a problem.

Week nine

Thursday - Inspirational and motivational quotes on “Focus on solutions and don’t get bogged down in the problem”

Focus

“Always focus on the front windshield and not the review mirror.” — Colin Powell

“Lack of direction, not lack of time, is the problem. We all have twentyfour-hour days.” – Zig Ziglar

Solutions to Problems

“When you find no solution to a problem, it’s probably not a problem to be solved but rather a truth to be accepted.” Anonymous

“Sometimes the easiest way to solve a problem is to stop participating in the problem.” Anonymous.

“If the challenge exists, so must the solution.” Anonymous

Friday – Remember Everyone Deployed – Do not Bring Me Problems – Bring Me Solutions

Deployments, effect each of us differently. You cannot arbitrarily lump everyone together. Oh, you are a veteran of the Iraq War, so you fit in this stereotype. Or you are a Vietnam vet, so this is where you belong. How about Operation Just Cause or Korean Service or recipients of an expeditionary medal? They are all deployments so they must all be the same.

While there may be common aspects each of us is unique and therefore, we have unique circumstances as we returned home. Before you can begin to find solutions, you must first identify the problem and how you got to this point in your return home. It is then you can begin to focus on the solution.

Too many of us respond with I am fine when asked how we are. When I hear a veteran say I am fine, I know they are not. Until you accept you have a problem you cannot begin to solve it.

But what is common to each of us is, each of us shares in the fact we came home different than when we left.

Our families know it, our friends know it and our co-workers know it. It is you and I who are in denial....."I'm fine" is a statement that too many times means I refuse to accept my situation. Healing cannot begin, that is a solution cannot be understood until we accept, we have been changed. Let us move forward as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by assisting others whose experiences. e not the same as ours.

The fact there was an experience gives credibility to our understanding of the challenges of assimilating back into society. As it has been said, it takes one to know one. Focus on solutions and do not get bogged down in the problems.

Week 9 Saturday Do not bring me problems – Bring me solutions in our VFW membership

The overall focus of Chapter 3 of the ABCs of Membership is on Leading volunteers in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a veteran service organization. The main point is your posts are composed of volunteers. Our Posts have a Commander, but the role is not commanding. The most important member in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is the individual member because nothing happens without the approval of the members of a post. Because we do not require attendance at our monthly business meeting, or frankly at any meeting, we lack participation thus engagement in the day-to-day operations of the post suffers.

Take a post with say 250 members. Monthly meetings are attended by "a rough estimate" three to five percent of the membership. That is right, between eight to t4 members. In most volunteer service organization, the estimate would be fifty members. Do you see it? The problem.... lack of participation. Who, what? where? why? and when? are good questions to consider when ascertaining how the problem as come to exist.

The more people you have brainstorming the better your chance of determining a solution. The key here is cooperation of purpose of members attempting to develop solutions to consider. BUT and this is a big but, the brainstorming should not take place as a part of the business meeting and should be inclusive. The business meeting is for business. It is in the business meeting where a motion is made to approve a solution. Again, the members rule.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

How many members does it take to have a quorum at a meeting in order that business is conducted? The answer is five. So again, you can see a potential issue. From the theoretical post of 250 members a decision may be made by 2% of those who have a say.

Does the VFW have a membership problem? Yes, but is not a numerical problem it is an attitude problem. It is apathy. As a veteran service organization do, we need to increase the numbers of members to enable us to exert more influence on Congress. Of course we do. But what we need most of all is more VFW in the members who are already on our roles.

Rule of thumb in the world of volunteers is 80/20. That is 80 percent of the work is done by 20% of the membership. Yes, is the same 20% in most cases, but it is 20%. Imagine, just imagine, how much we could accomplish if we have just 10% of our members actively involved in our organization. It can be done. Do not get bogged down in the problem. Focus on the solution

Our National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual direct what we shall do. Compliance is what we pledge as members. Work within the rules. Well, who determined these rules? You did as members of the organization. If you failed to exercise your voice your silence was an affirmation to support of the rules. Hence, they were adopted at our annual National Convention by the delegates so assembled.

Motivational Monday – Do not Bring Me Problems – Bring Me Solutions

Do not bring me problems bring me solutions is a phrase that I think about when I recall the Hewlett Packard commercial about facing future challenges. Their phrase was, “What If”. Not contemplating a solution when you understand there is an issue is the same as being part of the problem. You cannot allow the problem to overwhelm your actions.

Many realize “there is more than one way to skin a cat” or “look at the advantages comparing them to the disadvantages”. My favorite is “You never go wrong, doing the right thing” and the one that goes along with that thought, “There is never a wrong time to do the right thing,” But all of these require action, and that action is to “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In.”

Week 10 The Courage of Your Convictions Topic Tuesday

We begin this last week of Chapter 3 reiterating “Managers do things right” and “Leaders do the right thing standing in the face of courage of convictions”

Though, it is understood, you never go wrong, doing the right thing and there is never a wrong time to do the right thing, doing the right sometimes is not the popular decision. For that reason, leaders sometimes back away from doing what is right because of peer pressure. It is very disappointing when leaders fail to have the courage of their convictions. Some refer to it as not having a back-bone. It is a lack of integrity.

It has been my experience when a leader, at any level within the Veterans of Foreign Wars allow peer pressure, personal aspiration or self-interest overshadow decisions made for the benefit of the organization, leadership has failed. Trust has been betrayed. We see this failure primarily when it comes to determining the best candidate to serve in an elected office such as Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain, Judge Advocate and Surgeon. Far too often our elections at the Post, District, Department and yes, at for National office go to our friends or favorite sons or daughters. Our members come from society and when you look at society it is all about my friend, my friend, that person who is going to do the best for me. Forget about one’s attitude, or one’s self-confidence. The individual we select for these positions should be the most qualified as evidenced by their achievements, education, and above all ability. Throughout this Chapter we have talked about what leadership is and made to understand it is nothing more or less than followership. The most impactful leaders, those who are superlative in winning others over (WOO), have followers vast in numbers. They stand steadfast on issues in accordance with their courage of convictions.

It is in people like this that we must entrust our resources. The understand what is at stake and they are not willing to compromise themselves for the benefit of themselves or their fellow members if the decision is not the right decision.

We are thankful for these people for they make the world a better place to be.

Wednesday defined-The Courage of our Convictions

Courage (NOUN) The ability to do something that frightens one and strength in the face of pain or grief.

Conviction (noun) convictions (plural noun) The quality of showing that one is firmly convinced of a firmly held belief or opinion

To say that a leader has the courage of their convictions is to say they can do something that frightens them and the strength to face pain or grief while holding steadfast in that belief or opinion.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

It has been my observation that far too often our leaders at the post, district, department, and National organization do not have the courage of their convictions when it comes to selecting those to serve in leadership roles. It seems to me to be friendship outweighs accomplishment. We must select our leaders based first not on effort, but on achievement and second, on followership and not friendship. The same goes when it deals with taking care of our veterans, their surviving spouse and orphan children and advocating on behalf of our veterans, active- duty military and families. Let us not confuse attitude (based upon feelings) with ability (based upon facts)

Inspirational and motivational images and thoughts on the courage of our convictions.

“The feeling for what ought and ought not to be grows and dies like a tree, and no fertilizer of any kind will do much good. What the individual can do is give a fine example and have the courage to firmly uphold ethical convictions in a society of cynics. I have for a long time tried to conduct myself this way, with varying success.” Albert Einstein

“Out of fear, out of the desire for approval, out of the misguided notions of duty, people surrender themselves-their convictions and their aspirations-every day. There is nothing noble about it. It takes far more courage to fight for your values than to relinquish them.” Nathaniel Brandon

“It is a blessed thing that in every age someone has had individuality enough and courage enough to stand by his own convictions, -- someone who had the grandeur to say his say.” Robert Ingersoll “Last, but by no means least, courage-moral courage, the courage of one’s convictions, the courage to see things through. The world is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It’s the age-old struggle, the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other.” – Douglas MacArthur

Friday – Remember Everyone Deployed – The Courage of our Conviction

If ever there was evidence of the courage of your convictions it was confirmed in your actions to engage your oath to this nation and your fellow warriors.

“I (your name) do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So, help me God”

Week ten

Saturday – The courage of our convictions in our VFW membership

Living a life in accord with the values learned when entering the military is a prime example of the courage of our convictions. Our values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage with Commitment, Dedication and Excellence.

Motivational Monday

When you think about the courage of your convictions and how you might put it another way may these eight seemingly ordinary words serve as your life’s motivation “If It’s To Be, It’s Up To Me”

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In



ABC's

of

Membership

The History of the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States And The
Cross of Malta

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Week
About Our Rich History

Topic Tuesday. In our first three chapters of this series, a weekly schedule served as a way of presenting the subject. We have chosen to alter the format of the first eight weeks of Chapter 4 to present it in segments covering twenty-year periods. As you would imagine since our founding in 1899 there has been much accomplished in the arena of advocacy by dedicated and committed members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who seek to fulfill our purpose.

We begin by defining the term history as it relates to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Cross of Malta. Following the definition of history, we take a more indepth review of what has been accomplished. And I believe you will be amazed at the number of Legislative Victories we have achieved. These victories result in creating our Community Achievements impacting the quality of life in the veteran community. All this is done because we stand steadfast in meeting the purpose of our organization.

Wednesday Defined. History as defined is a noun and is the study of past events, particularly in human affairs; the whole series of

past events connected with someone or something; a continuous, typically chronological, record of important or public events or of a particular trend or institution.

Thursday Motivational and Inspirational quotes. Regarding VFW history it is intended to fill you with resolve in moving our organization forward continuing our purpose. We have what we have because of the commitment and efforts of those who have gone before us. Without the Veterans of Foreign Wars who would represent us in the Halls of Congress?

Friday. Remember Everyone Deployed continues to play a critical element in our membership because that is the single most significant requirement in our eligibility. So, as you think about the legislative victory and community achievements, consider the impact they have made on your life and the lives of your families

Saturday. Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The same can be said of the legislative victories and community achievements and the impact they have made on our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Our purpose is repeated here for we are who we are because of what we have become. And, that is the finest Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat veteran, their surviving spouse and orphaned children and advocating our government to ensure they receive the care promised for their service.

We conclude the week's information suggesting that you begin next week with a check up from the neck up. In Chapter 3 there was a discussion about "Attitude and Ability". As new members and emerging leaders you will be presented opportunities to impact posts, districts, and departments. When it comes to selecting leadership, we must not confuse attitude with ability.

Attitude is about confidence. Ability is about competence. I could tell you that I am going to be the best center in NBA. But at my height you know no matter how confident (cheerful outlook) I have, it is not going to happen. You see I do not have the ability, that is, I do not have the competence. Yes, I have the right attitude/desire, but I do not have the ability.

While my attitude could raise my performance slightly, it would never raise my ability to the level required of an NBA center. Take note - - Attitude is confidence, Ability is competence. This statement is so

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important I am repeating it. Take note Attitude is confidence, Ability is competence. Do not confuse the two. One is emotion the other is fact. Choose only those who have the attitude and the ability to lead volunteers.

A Look Back

VFW at a Glance. The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. The VFW and its Auxiliary are dedicated to veteran's service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs

Origins

In 1899, the American Veterans of Foreign Service (Columbus, Ohio) and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines (Denver, Colorado) were organized to secure rights and benefits for veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippines War (1899-1902). These two organizations merged in 1914, creating the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The VFW was chartered by Congress in 1936.

Membership Eligibility

Citizens or nationals of the United States serving honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces in a foreign war or overseas operation recognized by a campaign medal, in Korea after June 30, 1949, and recipients of hostile-fire or imminent danger pay. Veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and other smaller expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, qualify.

Partner Organization

A national volunteer service organization, the Auxiliary of the VFW was founded in 1914 and is the backbone of many local VFW volunteer efforts.

Membership Size

More than 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary members in all 50 states, and many foreign territories. (as of 2022)

Week 3 Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1899 - 1919

In the first 20 years of existence the impact of our advocacy efforts is realized in the passage of three key pieces of legislation.

- 1918 War Risk Insurance Act Amendments
Vocational Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 178) and**
- 1919 Census Act Rider on Veterans Preference Discharge Allowance**

Chapter 4 Week 4 Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1920 – 1939

Legislative Victories

- 1920 Widows and Orphans Pension Act (Spanish-America War)**
- 1921 Veterans Bureau Act**
- 1923 Veterans Preference Point System**
- 1924 House Committee on Veterans' Affairs World War Adjusted Compensation Act**
- 1925 Senate Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs**
- 1926 Spanish-American War Benefits New Johnson Act (WWI benefits)**
- 1930 Veterans Administration (VA) World War Service Disability Pension Act (P.L.522)**
- 1931 Bacharach Amendment (P.L.743) allows borrowing on WWI bonus certificates**
- 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act: Veterans Employment Service**
- 1934 Pension for widows of WWI vets**
- 1936 VFW congressional charter signed by President Roosevelt Bonus bonds (\$2.4 billion) to WWI vets redeemable**
- 1938 Armistice Day (Nov 11) legal holiday**

Community Achievements

- 1922 "Buddy" Poppy program began**
- 1923 Entered the war on drugs by printing a resolution calling for an international conference**
- 1927 Provided \$10,000 to Mississippi Valley flood victims**
- 1930 First VFW scholarship award (\$300) goes to a Boy Scout**
- 1936 Boy Scout-VFW plan of cooperation was signed**
- 1938 Supported the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis**

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Thursday, Week 4 of Chapter 4 and motivational and inspirational quotes concerning advocacy and community involvement.

While there are hundreds of quotes on advocacy and community involvement, I have chosen these four because they speak, in my opinion, to the core of our purpose. It is for this reason I encourage each of our members to adapt the mantra “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In” when it comes to interacting with our national legislators. Hold them accountable to match their actions to their promises.

**“I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me.”- Maya Angelou.
“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”- Harriet Tubman.**

“Advocacy groups and voters are not wrong to push candidates to declare their position clearly on policy issues. That is good citizenship. Hard questions should be asked of every candidate, every politician. And those public servants should be prepared to answer, but in their own words.”- Mark McKinnon.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”- Mahatma Gandhi.

Friday, Week 4 Remember Everyone Deployed

The four quotes above relate to advocacy and community involvement. Without efforts by those who advocate on behalf of our member’s we would not have secured the benefits we currently enjoy. The fight will always be to maintain those benefits.

It was from deployment that these benefits became earned entitlements. That is to say if you received compensation resulting from a service connection during that deployment you earned the entitlement to which you receive payment. The compensation for a service connected injury is not a benefit, it is due you and or your surviving spouse and orphans.

Saturday, Week 4 the impact of the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the period 1920 to 1939. The efforts those early days of our organization were understandably on legislative advocacy. But our

founders had the foresight to realize that relationships within our communities would be the key to building for the future.

Community Achievements

- 1922 “Buddy” Poppy program began
- 1923 Entered the war on drugs by printing a resolution calling for an international conference
- 1927 Provided \$10,000 to Mississippi Valley flood victims
- 1930 First VFW scholarship award (\$300) goes to a Boy Scout
- 1936 Boy Scout-VFW plan of cooperation was signed
- 1938 Supported the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis

Week 5 Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1940 - 1959

Legislative Victories

- 1940 National Service Life Insurance Selective Service & Training Act
- 1943 Benefits to WWII veterans (P.L. 10) Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act
- 1944 GI Bill of Rights (P.L. 346) Veterans Preference Act
- 1946 Veterans Emergency housing Act
- 1947 Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights (BVRR)
- 1950 Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- 1951 Servicemen’s Indemnity & Insurance
- 1952 Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill)
- 1954 Veterans Compensation Act, November 11 declared as Veterans Day (P.L. 380)

Community Achievements

- 1940 VFW Junior Rifle Clubs are formed with National Rifle Association
- 1942 VFW Aviator Cadet Program began
- 1950 Cooperative disaster-relief plan developed with the Red Cross
- 1952 The Dunn family (Kansas flood victims won a \$67,000 farm in Washington from the VFW
- 1953 VFW National Teen-er Baseball” First tournament was held in Hershey Park, Pennsylvania
- 1956 150,000 kids took part in the national VFW marble competition
- 1958 Became full partner with Voice of Democracy (VOD)
- 1959 Minnesota VFW/Auxiliary raised \$325,000 for dedication of the VFW Cancer Research Center at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis)

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Thursday Inspirational and motivational quotes. Legislative Victories and Community Achievements.

“Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.” — Abraham Lincoln

“The brave men and women, who serve their country and as a result, live constantly with the war inside them, exist in a world of chaos. But the turmoil they experience isn’t who they are; the PTSD invades their minds and bodies.” — Robert Koger, Death’s Revenge

“We who have seen war, will never stop seeing it. In the silence of the night, we will always hear the screams. So this is our story, for we were soldiers once, and young” — Joseph L. Galloway, They Were Soldiers: The Sacrifices and Contributions of Our Vietnam Veterans

“Those who do not appreciate the soldiers and instead pompously talk about peace, should try to live a single day without the soldiers.”— Abhijit Naskar, Sleepless for Society

Chapter 4 week 5 Friday - Remember Everyone Deployed. Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1940 to 1959.

It bears repeating that from deployments our benefits became earned entitlements. That is to say if you received compensation resulting from a service connection during that deployment you earned the entitlement to which you receive payment. The key words in that description is earned compensation for a service-connected injury so not a benefit.

Legislative Victories

- 1940 National Service Life Insurance Selective Service & Training Act**
- 1943 Benefits to WWII veterans (P.L. 10) Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act**
- 1944 GI Bill of Rights (P.L. 346) Veterans Preference Act**
- 1946 Veterans Emergency housing Act**
- 1947 Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights (BVRR)**
- 1950 Vocational Rehabilitation Act**
- 1951 Servicemen’s Indemnity & Insurance**
- 1952 Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill)**

1954 Veterans Compensation Act, November 11 declared as Veterans Day (P.L. 380)

Chapter 4 week 5 Saturday - Membership in the VFW. Critical to our success in achieving the purpose of the VFW is our involvement in our communities. Here's a look at the VFW's

Community Achievements during the period 1940 to 1959

1940 VFW Junior Rifle Clubs are formed with National Rifle Association

1942 VFW Aviator Cadet Program began

1950 Cooperative disaster-relief plan developed with the Red Cross

1952 The Dunn family (Kansas flood victims won a \$67,000 farm in Washington from the VFW

1953 VFW National Teen-er Baseball" First tournament was held in Hershey Park, Pennsylvania

1956 150,000 kids took part in the national VFW marble competition

1958 Became full partner with Voice of Democracy (VOD)

1959 Minnesota VFW/Auxiliary raised \$325,000 for dedication of the VFW Cancer Research Ctr

Chapter 4, Week 6 VFW's Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1960 – 1979

It should be noted, at this point in the history of our organization, the majority of our current members are Vietnam War veterans.

Legislative Victories

1962 Veterans Benefits Act (Cold War GI Bill)

1966 Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act (P.L. 89-358) (Vietnam Wr GI Bill)

1970 Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

1972 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act

1973 Federal Court agrees veterans preference applies to state jobs

1974 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Vocational Rehabilitation)

1976 Veterans Education & Employment Assistance Act

1977 Post Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act

1978 Veterans preference preserved

Veterans & Survivors Pension Improvement Act

Veterans Day returned to November 11

1979 Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program (creates Vet Centers)

Community Achievements

1961 Assumed primary sponsorship of VOD - within four years

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262,000 participated

1962 Lite-a-Bike program: A \$300,000 project with 3-M co of St Paul, Minnesota, provided

“Scotchlite” reflector tape - 50,000 VFW members from 4,500 posts participated

1964 VFW/Auxiliary provided nearly \$100,000 to earthquake victims in Anchorage, Alaska

1970 Drive to Strive program began

1973 Drug Awareness program began

1979 VFW Political Action Committee formed

The best way to learn more about each of our victories and achievements is to research each, but as you see what has been done by the VFW to improve the lives of those serving and our veterans, you begin to realize why we claim. “the VFW, no one does more for veterans”

Remember Everyone Deployed (RED)

Our bond as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars centers around the fact we were deployed to harm’s way. Our eligibility to be members requires, as contained in our Congressional Charter, meeting those requirements. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is an inclusive organization although some may argue our eligibility is discriminatory. Not everyone can join the military.

You and I come from different branches of service. Each service is proud of the contributions it has made to protecting this nation. We are inclusive of race, creed, gender, branch of service, or conflict. This RED Friday is special as today is Christmas Eve. There is not one of us who did not miss a holiday, birthday, for some anniversaries, for others the birth of a child and other special times.

So, on this day, during this season, please remember all those who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy, especially those who are no longer with us. If you are deployed, know that your sacrifice is appreciated by those who have walked in your shoes and those families who have endured your time from loved ones. May you and your families celebrate this season in whatever tradition you may hold in your heart. For me and mine we celebrate the birth of what we believe is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and so please know we wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Our membership in the VFW

How many times have we heard a prospective member ask “So, what is the VFW going to do for me?” As you look at the history of the VFW it is fair to say to them, It’s already been done. Those who have gone before you have fought to obtain the benefits you now enjoy. Simply take a look at our long history of Legislative Victories and Community Achievements. Take pride in knowing you have the opportunity to share in the fight for future generations

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat veteran. Now is the time to invite all those who qualify for membership to join. If you were ever needed, the is time now. Do it today. Visit www.vfw.org and join.

Next week, week 7 continues our list of Legislative Victories and Community Achievements for the period 1980 - 1999 and week 8 covers the period 2000 - 2020. During week 9 we review the VFW Cross of Malta and it’s unifying symbolism. Week 10, the last week we will recap Chapter 4 and introduce Chapter 5. Please be sure to like and follow this mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders.

Motivational - Chapter 4 week 6, History of the VFW and Legislative Victories and Community Achievements for the period 1960 to 1979 What is the Veterans of Foreign Wars going to do for you? It has already done it and now it is your responsibility to build upon those successes for future generations.

Week 7 VFW’s Legislative Victories and Community Achievements 1980 - 1999

This week we continue to identify a great deal more about our organization by understanding our founding principles and their inclusion in our Congressional Charter, especially those dealing with legislative advocacy and community involvement.

The VFW has played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans’ legislation passing in the 20th century as well as bills enacted in the 21st century and takes great pride in its history of service to its communities both stateside and abroad. Each year, VFW and Auxiliary members donate millions of community service ours, projects, relief efforts.

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Legislative Victories 1980-1999

- 1980 VFW calls for Agent Orange Study
- Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments
- 1981 Former POW Benefits Act
- Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act
- 1982 Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS)
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated
- 1983 Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act
- 1984 Montgomery GI Bill Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act (P.L. 98-542): Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure
- 1987 New GI Bill Continuation Act
- 1988 Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act
- Department of Veterans Affairs Act
- Veterans Judicial Review Act
- 1989 VA becomes a Cabinet department Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
- 1990 Agent Orange service-connection
- 1991 Agent Orange Act (P.L. 102-4)
- Persian Gulf War Veterans Assistance Act (P.L. 102-25)
- 1992 Veterans Health Care Act
- 1996 Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act
- 1999 Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act

Community Achievements

- 1980 Minnesota VFW posts sponsor the U.S. hockey team in the Winter Olympics
- 1983 Agreed to permit the Red Cross to use VFW facilities as shelters and relief centers during natural disasters and emergencies
- 1986 Donated \$122,000 to the Statue of Liberty Restoration Fund
- 1990 Provided \$49,000 to California earthquake victims
- 1992 Provided \$197,000 to relieve victims of Hurricane Andrew and other disasters
- 1993 Relife funds totaled \$500,000
- 1995 Youth Essay Contest (7th & 8th grades) began
- 1997 "Buddy Poppy" celebrated 75th Anniversary
- 1998 VFW Posts raised \$100,000 for the March of Dimes 1999
VOD gave \$2.5 million in scholarship monies to high school students

VFW donated \$50,000 and 25,000 reprints of its war chronology to

Vietnam Veterans Memorial's Young American Vietnam Era Studies Project

VFW 's Legislative victories and Community Achievements 1980 - 1999. Inspirational thoughts and motivational quotes.

As you review the Legislative Victories and Community Achievements over the past 121 years of advocacy you will find there are a number of repeat issues that are addressed from time to time. The reason is simple we live in an ever-changing society and an ever-changing focus. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the watchdog for veteran's issues facing our current and future war fighters, the combat veteran. Hence the quotes below.

"We can draw lessons from the past, but we cannot live in it." President Lyndon B. Johnson

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" George Santayana

"It has been said that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from it". US Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren

"History does not repeat itself, humankind repeat history" Anonymous

Remember Every one Deployed. The period 1980 - 1999

In addition to our previous deployments there were significant additions of new combat engagements creating eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. If you know of anyone meeting the criteria, please tell them how important their membership is to our voice in Congress. While some think it is adding one voice but most of our members are married or get married which now makes the voices of two. Many of our veterans are married with two children who are married with two children so now the number which began with 1 and not counting, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends and supporters is estimated at over 500 from that first member. Now if we could only get them to vote favorably on veteran's issues. "Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

**Newly added eligibility campaigns
Army Occupation Medal (30 consecutive days of duty)**

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Germany West Berlin 5/9/45 to 10/2/90
 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
 El Salvador 1/1/81 to 2/1/92
 Lebanon 6/1/83 to 12/1/1987
 Operation Urgent Fury - Grenada 10/23/83 to 11/21/83
 Eldorado Canyon - Libya 4/12 - 4/17/86
 Operation Earnest Will 7/24/87 to 8/1/90
 Operation Just Cause - Panama 12/20/89 to 1/31/90
 United Shield and Operation Restore Hope - Somalia 12/5/92 to 3/31/95
 Operation Uphold Democracy - Haiti 9/16/94 to 3/31/95
 Operation Joint Endeavor - Bosnia, Croatia, the Adriatic Sea and
 Airspace 11/20/95 to 12/19/96
 Operation Vigilant Sentinel - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, & Persian Gulf
 12/1/95 to 2/15/97
 Operation Southern Watch - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Persian Gulf,
 Bahrain, Qatar, UAE,
 Oman, Gulf of Oman W of 62o E long. Yemen, Egypt & Jordan 12/1/95 to
 3/18/93
 Operation Maritime Intercept 12/1/95 to 3/18/2003
 Operation Joint Guard 12/20/96 to 6/20/98
 Operation Northern Watch 1/1/97 to 3/18/2003
 Operation Joint Forge 6/20/98 to 3/23/99
 Operation Desert Thunder 11/11/98 to 12/22/98
 Operation Desert Fox 11/16/98 to 12/22/98
 Southwest Asia Service Medal
 Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm 8/2/90 to 11/30/95
 Personnel assigned to support units serving in Israel, Egypt, Turkey,
 Syria, Jordan 1/17/91 to 4/11/91
 Kosovo Campaign Medal
 Operation Allied Force Air Campaign 3/24/99 to 6/10/99
 Kosovo Defense Campaign Ground Action 6/11/99 to 12/31/2013
 Combat Infantry Badge & Combat Medical Badge Army 12/6/41 to open
 Combat Action Ribbon Navy, Marine, Coast Guard 12/6/41 to open
 SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia navy 1/21/61 to open
 Korea Duty 6/30/49 to open
 Korea Defense Service Medal 7/28/54 to open
 Legislative Victories

**Week 8 VFW's Legislative Victories and Community Achievements
2000 – 2020**

- 2003** Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more
2004 Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled.
Traumatic Injury Insurance supplemental created
2005 Protesters banned from military funerals Stolen Valor Act signed
into law
2006 VFW calls VA/military health care system review after Walter
Reed outpatient debacle
2008 Record VA discretionary budget approved GI Bill for the 21st
century signed into law
2009 Advanced appropriations for VA becomes law
2010 Family Caregiver Legislation signed into law
Ensured all VA and DOD health care programs met minimum health
care coverage standards **2011** VOW to Hire Heroes Act
VFW stopped Tricare premiums from increasing annually
2012 Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejuene
Families Act Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for
TSA
2013 Reinstated military Tuition Assistance programs
New Stolen Valor Act signed into law
Stopped creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drone Medal)
2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014
In-State Tuition for Post-9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans
Advance Appropriations for VA benefits
2015 Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act
Eliminated 1 percent COLA reduction penalty on future military
retirees
Created government match to military Thrift Savings Plan accounts
2016 Topic Exposure Research Act to evaluate impact on
descendants Enhanced fertility treatment and adoption services **2017**
Forever GI Bill gives veterans a lifetime to use GI Bill benefits
Veteran's Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017: VA
Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act
2018 Global War on Terrorism Memorial
Improved VA hiring and retention authorities
Veterans Choice Program improvements and expansion
Declassifying toxic exposure documents
Prevented significant copayment increase for TRICARE
2019 Expanded caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras

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Consolidated community care into one improved program
Established a process to evaluate and improve VA facilities to better serve veterans **Defeated proposed cuts to Individual Unemployability**

2020 Blue Water Nave Vietnam Veterans Act

Elimination of the Widow's Tax

2021 Added bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and parkinsonism to VA's list of presumptive conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange

Changed the statutory definitions of Vietnam veterans to include individuals who served in the Republic of Vietnam from Nov 1, 1955 to Feb 17, 1961

Deborah Sampson Act

Elimination of the 12-year limit on using Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) benefits.

Community Achievements

2000 Distributed 60,000 audio books to armed forces worldwide through Operation Yarn spinner

2002 Donated \$110,000 to diabetes research

Equally distributed \$120,000 among families of active-duty personnel killed in the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon

2003 Partnered with USA Freedom Corps home-front initiative

2004 Established relationships with the National Council for Social Studies (NCNS) and National Association of Secondary school Principals (NAASP)

2005 Provided \$560,000 to Gulf Coast veterans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Distributed 5,000 copies of CD entitled "Vietnam; A Nation Remembers"

Established VFW Military Scholarship program

Expanded Patriot's Pen Essay Competition

2007 Radiothon raised nearly \$100,000 for Unmet Needs

2010 Donated over \$648,000 toward construction of the Vietnam Veterans Education Center
Increased Voice of Democracy National Scholarships to \$150,000

Provided over \$20,000 to assist service members with family in Haiti following the January earthquake

2011 Pledged \$500,000 toward the Construction of the Veterans Hall in the National Museum of the United States Army

Provided over \$145,000 in emergency financial relief to military families living in tornado-stricken areas

- 2012** Provided over \$120,000 for Hurricane Sandy victims on the East Coast
 - 2013** Provided \$30,000 for the Moore, Oklahoma tornado victims and over \$30,00 for the flood victims in Colorado
 - 2015** Provided \$10,000 to the Pacific Areas for typhoon relief
 - 2016** Provided \$25,000 for flood relief in Louisiana
 - 2017** Provided \$621,300 in aid for victims of Hurricanes Matthew, Irma, Harvey and Maria and \$19,000 for victims of the California wildfires
 - 2018** Provided \$139,000 in aid for victims of Hurricanes Matthew, Irma and Florence and \$35,000 for wildfires in California and Colorado. Provided \$55,000 for Pacific area victims of Tropical Cyclone Gita and victims of the Mount Kilauea volcanic eruptions and \$20,000 for disaster relief efforts in Saipan
 - 2019** Provided \$32,182 in aid for victims of Hurricane Florence in North Carolina and \$15,000 for flood victims in Nebraska
Provided \$15,000 for Pacific area victims of Typhoon Yuta
 - 2020** Provided \$30,000 in aid for victims of floods from hurricanes in Louisiana
- The VFW and VFW Foundation provided \$400,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries for Community Service Grants

Here are some additional motivational and inspirational thoughts regarding advocacy on behalf of combat veterans and their families.

“I think being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than someone who has nothing to eat “Mother Teresa

“The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves” Jane Goodall

“I am only one, but still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can still do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do” Helen Keller

“Advocacy” is to change “what is” into “what should be” Unknown

And so once more, I believe it bears repeating, “What is the VFW going to do for me if I join? Take a look at the list above and you can see what the VFW has already done for you. Now, we need you to step

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up and join the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat veteran. Visit www.vfw.org and find out how to join. Do it today!

Remember Everyone Deployed

What a tough 20 years 2000 to 2020. War, Earthquakes, Tornadoes, Floods, Winter Storms, Hurricanes, Disease, Hunger, Suicides, Healthcare Issues, Protecting our benefits, seeking new benefits as promised. The VFW fought day in and day out with our legislators to ensure our veterans were taken care of. And who are the veterans the Veterans of Foreign Wars talks about when we talk about our purpose? It is you.

It dates all the way back to our founding. But during this period we are talking about, the WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, conflicts in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Terrorism around the world including the Gulf War, Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom Operation Enduring Freedom, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan. And exactly what organization took the lead to ensure our veterans were cared for?

The VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, a veteran service organization.

History in our VFW membership

In Chapter 4, we have focused the first 8 weeks identifying our legislative victories and community achievements since we began in 1899. Take the time to learn what has been done for you by those who have gone before you. Each of us stands on the shoulders of those who came before us. Now is the time for us to stand up and take our place among our heroes. I can say that because I know that is who you are.....a hero. Thank you for your service. Your dedication and sacrifice has enabled us to continue as a free nation.

Week 9 The VFW Brand, “The Cross of Malta”

How the Cross of Malta became the brand by which the Veterans of Foreign Wars is known. History shows that the Cross of Malta, the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, is 1,000 years old.

Nearly ten centuries ago the Maltese Cross was made the symbol of fighting men who were united by a solemn pledge of comradeship to fight for freedom and to aid the sick and the needy. Those ancient obligations are still symbolized by the Cross of Malta today for the more than 1.5 million former servicemen who are the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Cross of Malta is the symbol of their battles in time of war and of their campaign to defend the God given rights of human beings in time of peace. The Cross of Malta symbolizes the compassion, or sympathy, of those men and women for the needy. It is the sign of services which our contemporary veterans render to help make living a little better for everyone.

To appreciate fully the original meaning of the Cross of Malta we must look back a thousand years, to the Crusaders serving in the Middle East. There we find the Knights of St. John, the world's first great brotherhood of warriors pledged to chivalry. The Knights of St. John represented all walks of life. They were noblemen and priests, artisans and laborers. Regardless of those differences, however, they were united by a solemn pledge of unwavering courage and compassion.

Together they fought against oppression. They carried their crusades far from home across deserts and seas, into the Holy Land, Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. At the same time, they administered to the sick, the needy and to the poor. The Crusaders adopted the Cross of Malta as their insignia because its eight points represented the eight Beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. Those, in effect, declare (1) blessed are the poor in spirit, (2) the meek, (3) the pure, (4) the merciful, and (5) the peacemakers, (6) blessed are they that mourn, and (7) seek righteousness, and (8) blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake. The Cross of Malta had a religious origin, but the Knights of St. John also made it their battle standard for the liberation of all men, women and children who suffered oppression. The ideals for which the original Crusaders fought parallel the principles of democracy today, freedom and justice.

Centuries passed to the year 1899. Again, fighting men banded together. Again, they pledged themselves to campaign for the rights of mankind and to administer to the sick, the needy and to the poor. That was the birth of a new organization, known today as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Why did the Veterans of Foreign Wars select the Cross of Malta emblem? What has been added to the

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Cross and what does the symbol mean? Let us look at the VFW ensign closely. We see the eight-pointed Maltese Cross. Upon the Cross is superimposed the Great Seal of the United States, encircled by the name, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Within the circle is the American eagle, the emblem of a proud nation whose warriors of many generations have fought and sacrificed to preserve the free man's way of living. Between the four arms of the Cross, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has added the sun's rays to emphasize the vigor and warmth with which the present-day brotherhood defends our ideals. Every detail in the VFW emblem has definite meaning. The Cross, the rays and the seal together symbolize the vows, purpose and character of men and women who have traveled far from home to defend humanity.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the world's oldest and largest overseas war veteran's organization. It is chartered by the Congress of the United States. That charter states specifically that the objects of the VFW shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; that its members shall preserve and strengthen comradeship; that they shall maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; that VFW members shall foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institution of American freedom and defend the United States from all enemies.

Upon joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a person vows in the presence of Almighty God and the members of this order to maintain loyalty to the government, to the VFW, and to his fellow comrades. When the Cross of Malta is bestowed upon a new VFW member, he or she is pledged to advance the principles of the organization. Like the original Crusaders 1,000 years ago, the 1.5 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Auxiliary fulfill their vows through a wide variety of vigorously executed services. They foster true patriotism and strengthen the institutions of freedom by word and deed. They improve their cities, towns and neighborhoods through community service. They give aid to worthy comrades and to the widows and orphans. They extend helping hands to the needy and the sick. Like the original Knights of St. John, those who wear the VFW Maltese Cross express their comradeship in terms of service.

These are the reasons why the Veterans of Foreign Wars chose the Cross of Malta as its emblem. The Cross of Malta symbolizes truly the character and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. People qualified through military service to wear the VFW

Cross of Malta do so with pride because that emblem represents the highest of ideals. Every member has earned the Cross of Malta proudly - and he or she wears it proudly.

The History of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Cross of Malta

The Time is Now, “So If I become a member, what’s the VFW going to do for me?” Share with them the ABC’s of Membership, Chapter 4 and the list of Legislative Victories since our founding. These are significant examples of what the VFW has already done for them. And then tell them how important it is to have them as members when it comes to advocacy. Those benefits are in addition to what they will derive from the comradeship we share as combat veterans.

The main thing, is the main thing.

The time to recruit is now.

Get your ask in gear.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

“There’s one blessing only, the source and cornerstone of beatitude -- confidence in self.”.

Marcus Annaeus Seneca The Elder

“I love the melodies in the Old Testament, how preachers highlight them when they read from the Scripture. But I was influenced forever by the New Testament. I love the Beatitudes, informing us that the meek shall inherit the earth”. Maya Angelou

“We need to build up society in the light of the Beatitudes, walking towards the Kingdom with the least among us”. Pope Francis

“They’re called in the Scripture the Beatitudes. You know why they’re called the Beatitudes without being prestigious? Because they should be the attitudes of every believer”. Leonard Ravenhill

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Remember Everyone Deployed - The VFW brand, the Cross of Malta and its' association with our deployment.

The Cross of Malta symbolizes the compassion, or sympathy, of those men and women for the needy. It is the sign of services which our contemporary veterans render to help make living a little better for everyone.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the world's oldest and largest overseas war veteran's organization. It is chartered by the Congress of the United States. In part, that charter states specifically that the objects of the VFW shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational; and shall maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; shall foster true patriotism, extend the institutions of American freedom and defend this nation from all enemies.



ABC's of

Membership

Combining Membership and Leadership for Emerging Leaders

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Combining membership and leadership for emerging leaders

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

The importance of having a vision for our membership and leadership

–

Commitment, Credibility, Courage

Vision is a future-oriented concept of a business and in this case, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Forming a strategic vision is an exercise in thinking about where a company needs to head to be successful and again, in this case it concentrates on our ability to be more relevant to our current and new members as they emerge into leadership roles. Perhaps you might think of this vision as a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. Having a vision is certainly critical for our members and future leaders but we need plans to get from where we are today to where we must be in the near term and beyond. Ours is a very limited pool of eligible members and is so by design. While there is much in common among all veterans ours is targeted to the combat veteran, that is one who has deployed to harm's way beyond the shores of our nation.

That which separates us from other Veteran Service Organization are three elements;

Commitment (the oath we took and accepting we never took “an un-oath), Credibility (our word is our bond when it comes to fulfilling the obligation of our oath to our communities and our comrades who know we can be called on and counted on) and

Courage (while all raise their hand when entering the armed forces, - members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars displayed that courage by placing themselves between the weapons of our enemies and our people). It is vital that we combine the elements of our membership requirements to the abilities and character of our emerging leaders, whose aptitudes (ability) is matched to their attitudes (confidence) and indisputable character (integrity)

Motivational and inspirational quotes and sayings of and from people of vision

“Good leaders have vision and inspire others to help them turn vision into reality. Great leaders create more leaders, not followers. Great leaders have vision, share vision, and inspire others to create their own.” — Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart

“The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but has no vision. “ – Helen Keller

“The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.” - Thucydides

“Teamwork makes the dream work, but a vision becomes a nightmare when the leader has a big dream and a bad team.” - John C. Maxwell

Deployment as it relates to combining our membership and leadership

Red shirt Friday is a day of the week that we remember everyone deployed who is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We also remember the toll it took on our families as we deployed across the globe where our enemies sought to destroy our way of life. The purpose of the VFW is clear and that is to care for the Veteran, their surviving spouse, and orphaned children and to advocate on their behalf in the halls of congress.

Is there a good time to advance our membership and combine it with our leadership abilities? The simple answer is yes, and the time is now. Of your abilities, key is your capacity to understand leadership is nothing more or less than influencing others and then matching your

actions to what you seek to achieve. Motivator and inspirational speaker, John Maxwell coined the phrase it's your "WOO" factor, that is winning others over. I don't think there is a more powerful phrase when it comes to meaning of leadership, your ability to win others over....
INFLUENCE.

Think of combining membership with leadership in terms of a mathematical formula,
 $M^2 + L^2 = I^2$, that is membership multiplied plus leadership multiplied equals Influence multiplied, the results are a significantly more effective advocacy.

A very good friend of mine, a leader in an international service organization said to always remember the main thing is the main thing. Focus. What should we concentrate upon when we combine membership with leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (reflecting on our common bonds)? Inclusivity. As a fraternal organization of combat veterans our former rank, our former branch of service, our former MOS, our gender, our race, our creed, do not make us eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are all equal as members.

Oh, to be sure, we have procedures, as you would expect. Our Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual are specific. And, who makes the decisions on these Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Ritual? The individual whose membership is in good standing in a Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. Now is the time to combine our membership and leadership for emerging leaders.

It's meeting day. It is here that we combine membership and leadership for all to witness and to be involved. While we do not require a member to be present at a post meeting, in your orientation of a new member counsel them they will only get out of their membership what they put into it. The more involved they are the more they will benefit. He (gender neutral) who serves best, benefits most.

People join volunteer service organizations for numerous reasons, but primarily it is a desire to give back for what has been given to us. Remember the smiles, the handshakes, the hugs the words for the kindness and generosity you have shared with a comrade, their family or community. Give, not until it hurts, but until it feels good. All you can do is all you can do. Judge not lest ye be judged.

Later in this chapter we'll talk about the conduct of a business meeting. But it should be noted, the success depends on the person with the gavel.... the Commander. A successful meeting meets these requirements - It starts on time; It is kept short; It is interesting It is informative; and It accomplishes something.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

Meetings are business meetings and not brainstorming sessions. The post has a set day of the month for the business meeting and a time to begin. Too many meetings start at 7 sharp and end dull when they end. Limit yourself to the business that needs to be completed not an arbitrary time to end a meeting.

Here's an easy "test" to determine the effectiveness of a post. At your monthly business meeting, do members show up early to fellowship, do they stay after the meeting to continue in that fellowship. Rule of thumb for volunteer service organizations is 80/20, that is 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the members. If your membership roster is 100 members who live within 10 miles of your meeting place you should expect to see 20 of them at a meeting. For the most part it will be the same 20.

You will have a variance depending on the time of year and what you have going on, but meetings that are energetic, disciplined, and interesting, produce results by inspiring members to be engaged. Lead by example "Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Mentorship is the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced person. In a volunteer service organization, a mentor influences the need for teambuilding and developing relationships.

Ideally, mentorship in the Veterans of Foreign Wars involve having experienced leader's mentor those taking on new roles and responsibilities. What matters is that mentors have institutional knowledge and a record of achievement that others can learn from. Mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior than the people they mentor.

THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES BYLAWS, ARTICLE II, POSTS.

Delegates to the 122nd National Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, approved amendments to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual 2022, as amended August 3, 2021, effective September 2, 2021.

Bylaws and corresponding Manual of Procedures changes are found on page 2 of the current podium edition. Bylaw pages are yellow, Manual of Procedure and Ritual pages are white. The Table of Contents for the Bylaws are found on pages 3, 4, 5, and 6. The Index for the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure are found after the Appendix (Article IX Forms).

The VFW Ritual begins after the Manual of Procedure and is indicated by a black glossy cover-page dated for the current year. The ceremonies described in our Ritual symbolizes the high ideals for which we strive.

There are four distinct levels of service in our organization, and they are Post, District, Department, and National. Every member serving in a leadership position, in any of these levels, be it elected or appointed, must be a member in good standing in a Veterans of Foreign Wars post,

Article II - Posts in the Bylaws contains Sections specific to Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts (Yellow Pages). Article II - Posts in the Manual of Procedure (white pages) contains sections specific to the subject (procedure). You should become very familiar with Article II - Posts, Section 218 - Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations at the Post level.

At this point in our mentoring series, it's good to reflect on what is our purpose and what is your responsibility in pursuit of that purpose. To be an effective mentor, ensure the member who seeks a leadership position has the institutional knowledge to succeed.

There are five distinct purposes of our organization and seven objectives. The purposes are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational and our seven objectives are:
to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members. to assist worthy comrades to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans, to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies

To comply with the Charter, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has adopted Bylaws, a Manual of Procedure and Ritual that applies to every member of the VFW regardless of length of service in the VFW or position held. These Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual apply to all members. Each year we conduct a National Convention where delegates from every department assemble to consider the business of the organization including the adoption of new and or changes to existing Bylaws. Therefore, it is critical to have the most recent Podium Edition of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

The Bylaws are not to be interpreted. They say what they say. When in the Bylaw it reads “shall” this is not a suggestion. Shall is a requirement. You may find there are some provisions that may be improved or changed, but until they have been presented in accordance with our Bylaws to the delegates at the National Convention they remain in effect. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a Fraternal Organization with Bylaws. Failure to abide in accordance with those Bylaws have negative consequences.

Article II of our National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual specifically Section 218 details Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations. As one moves from being a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to a leader in the Veterans of Foreign Wars institutional knowledge is paramount, critical, to understanding the responsibilities of the positions of leadership.

As you read the Manual of Procedure, the 218, 418, 518, and 618 series contains, Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations, itemized and defined responsibilities. However, you will also find a responsibility containing the words “perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office” and “perform such other duties as are incident to such office or may from time to time be required for the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority”. We will delve into exactly what those words refer to later in this chapter.

By in large, be it the Post (218), District (418) Department (518) and National (618) the Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations have many of the same responsibilities but there are differences requiring your understanding and actions.

Ensure you have the current edition of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

Note that in each series when citing responsibilities, the very first sentence for the position states, “Among the duties of the (listed), the (listed) shall. That, my comrades, is a word not to be confused with a suggestion. SHALL MEANS YOU MUST.

Lastly there is a difference between a manager and a leader. Not all managers make good leaders and conversely not all leaders make good managers. But as warriors, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we deserve the opportunity to serve at whatever level we choose. In VFW you make the decision to serve.

Should you choose not to accept an appointment to a position or nomination for an office, it is your right. You are a volunteer. Should you accept either of those, are installed, you accept the obligation of SHALL and will be held accountable.

While some may not find leadership in the VFW as exhilarating as a fire fight and defeating the enemy, knowing you have successfully

led a group of combat veteran volunteers to meet a goal, hold your head high.....you have made a difference.

“I read about a few generals and colonels who are said to have wandered about exhorting the troops to advance. That must have been very inspirational! I suspect, however, that the men were more interested and more impressed by junior officers and NCOs who were willing to lead them rather than having some general pointing out the direction in which they should go.”. – Stephen E. Ambrose

“All leading from the rear gets you, is first place at the back of the line.”. – Mark W Boyer

“A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.”
— Douglas MacArthur

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.” – Peter Drucker.

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

When thinking about “Remember Everyone Deployed (RED)” combining membership and leadership for emerging leaders, I think about the fact leaders are not born, they are made (developed). Secondly, I think about the camaraderie we shared in the hell holes of far distant lands. We existed in the severest of conditions with the prospect of death ever present.

None of us, I believe, miss those places or times, but we certainly miss the comrades on our right and left and behind us. We knew whichever way we turned our comrades had our backsides covered.

While the reference was to “comrades” that is synonymous for soldier, marine, sailor, airman, or coast guardsman. We are and were inclusive. Branch of service is irrelevant to those who served. Short, tall, fat, skinny, hairy, bald, ugly, beautiful, male, female, white, black, red, brown, or whatever other description or label you add, we that is those who were there did so understanding the ultimate sacrifice that may be required. We were truly one force - one team - one fight. The time is now to get back to the unity of our service. Our nation needs us perhaps as critically as we were needed when “The shot heard round the world” referred to the opening shot of the battles of Lexington and

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Concord on April 19, 1775. Our nation has needed us to secure and protect our freedom ever since. Today, I ask myself how close we are, as a nation, to that day in 1775.

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Article II, Section 218, Article IV, Section 418, Article V, Section 518, and Article VI, Section 618 Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations and Manual of Procedure. There is an element in Officers and Chairman Duties and Obligations that may appear to be confusing. Because the word SHALL applied at every part of the listings, we needed to be sure we understand the intention of the phrase “perform such duties as are incident to the office or as may from time to time be required”. In contacting the Director of Operations, at the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, asking for clarification, with a quick response he explained. Essentially, the phrase means the officer shall perform duties as required by their respective Commander in line with the historical duties and responsibilities of that office as found in Sections 218, 418, 518, and 618 Officers and Chairman, Duties and Obligations

Some Posts, in addition to covering down for the Commander in their absence, the Junior Vice position is responsible for community service and the Senior Vice oversees membership recruiting although that is not defined in the bylaws. The responsibilities of these positions may vary from Post to Post or even from Commander to Commander in the same Post.

Additionally, some posts thought the traditional role of the Post Surgeon keeping a log of medical equipment, was missing an opportunity to utilize the position for the health and welfare of our members, so they expanded those duties to provide that the Surgeon would focus on health and wellness for members in the form of organizing fitness activities and events such as 5K's. Some have also taken a more expansive view of the role of our Chaplain who could be better utilized beyond just leading prayers. We imbued our Chaplain with the responsibility of looking after the mental and spiritual wellness of our members.

At the end of the day, these duties and responsibilities are not clearly defined which is an opportunity to expand or shift their scope for the betterment of the Post and its membership. Next, we delve into the characteristics of leadership in combining them with our membership -managers for emerging leaders.

We begin this segment by considering what it is to be a member. Have you ever heard a member, when asked about their role, answer by saying “I’m just a member”? There is no such thing as “just a member”.

As a member you preserve and strengthen comradeship among other members. You perpetuate the memory and history of our dead. You assist their surviving spouses and orphans. You maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws. You foster true patriotism. You maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom. You preserve and defend the United States from all enemies. So, though you may not hold an elected or appointed position in the post, district, department or national organization, the next time you are asked about your role tell them with an immense sense of pride what your membership represents. We are the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat warrior established in 1899 by veterans of the Spanish American War. Our power as an organization, that is our influence, does not come from the top but rather it is from the volume and combined voice of the grassroots member. So, to hear someone say they are just a member is both disingenuous and demeaning. It indicates a dismissal and lack of understanding of the sacrifices to be eligible for membership in this prestigious organization and the strong influence as a collective body of individuals. The statement “there is strength in numbers” is not without validity.

Let’s now focus on how we combine our membership with our leadership to continue our legacy of over 123 years, as President Abraham Lincoln noted, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.” There are many descriptions of what constitutes a leader. I’d have to say that for the most part, all are correct when correlated with a particular circumstance.

These are the three elements, that enable an individual to lead a Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in any elected or appointed position. These same three elements enable elected or appointed individuals to fulfill the role at the district, at the Department and at the National levels.

First and foremost is Integrity, followed closely by comprehension, and personal courage. There are volumes upon volumes written about integrity. It is the foundation upon which every other character is based. Without

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integrity there is no honesty, without integrity there is no loyalty, without integrity there is no respect, without integrity there is no honor, without integrity there is no compassion, without integrity there is no fairness, without integrity there is no reliability and without integrity there is no authenticity.

“Leadership is about building followership – and it’s your values that build followership. And its substance and character, not style, that determine followership. People follow not just because of what you do, but because of who you are” Michael Finer, The Feigner Points of Leadership.

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.” General Norman Schwarzkopf. What is being said here is that without character there can be no leadership. The key to character is integrity

We, the Veterans of Foreign Wars are known as a Fraternal organization and while we continue to be referred as such, I would submit we are an assimilation of men and women united by the bonds of combat deployment. Back in the day you could say we were much like a fraternity in the sense of socialization, but we are so much more today. If we are referred to as a fraternal organization, we are assuredly, not a fraternity.

Those whom we choose to lead our organization at each level must be chosen based on a clear and undeniable understanding of the purpose of our organization and substantiated achievements of successful leadership in a volunteer, not for profit endeavor where synergy is key. They must have demonstrated a comprehension of the complexities as members in a volunteer veteran service organization chartered by the Congress of the United States of America to be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational.

Our leaders must possess a vision ensuring relevance and significance involving the lives of not only yesterday’s veterans but those who serve today and into the future. To select the leader at any level in the organization based simply on popularity, aka our buddy, is a dis-service to our membership, our community, and frankly our nation.

A MATTER OF CHARACTER

As members, we have a uniquely deep, personal, and clear, comprehension of the dangers of combat. As such, we must always keep in mind the differences between “Institutional Loyalty” and “Personal Loyalty”. When choosing between the two, the future requires we place loyalty first on the institution and secondly on our personal relationships.

I believe there has never been a time in the history of humankind when morality was at the decline we witness today. While we have intellectually exploded as a culture with unthinkable advances and achievements in the areas of science and medicine, farming and agriculture, business and technologies, robotics and artificial intelligence, manufacturing and distribution, logistics and so much more. But unfortunately, we have seemed to have lost our way when it comes to the most basic human interaction – “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. That is respect.

Laws upon laws upon laws have sought to legislate morality. All stem from the Ten Commandments. According to the book of Exodus in the Torah, the Ten Commandments were revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai and inscribed by the finger of God on two tablets of stone kept in the Ark of the Covenant. What were those original commandments?

1. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God In vain
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.

“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.” General Norman Schwarzkopf.

“Character in many ways is everything in leadership. It is made up of many things, but I would say character is really integrity”. Dwight D. Eisenhower

What is being said here is that without character there can be no leadership. The key to character is integrity. Integrity is the basis for all we do as a leader and frankly as a good person. For without integrity relationships cannot exist. Proof of your integrity is not based on a piece of paper. Your word is your bond.

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Defined - a matter of character Matter (verb) be of importance; have significance. Character (noun) the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. Leadership is a matter (be of importance, have significance) of character (the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual) relating to the matter of character for leaders.

“Character creates consistency, and if your people know what they can expect from you, they will continue to look to you for leadership” - John C. Maxwell

“We could sum up the entire message of this book in the following way; leaders stand for something - vision. Leaders stand on something - values.” — Myles Munroe, The Power of Character in Leadership: How Values, Morals, Ethics, and Principles Affect Leaders

Perhaps, like me, you looked back on your deployment and thought, what in me, gave me the strength to deploy when called. It is a one-word answer, integrity. It is not the contract you signed that makes it binding. It is not the money you invest that makes it binding. What compels us is the unique asset each of us has and that is our word. Our word is worth more than any amount of money we may have. Our word is worth more than any binding document. We are our word.

Character is to integrity as integrity is to character, inseparable. You can never over emphasize the importance of your word. People rely more regarding your actions than what you say. Except, flippant and insensitive remarks, in most cases are unintended, they always answer to the law of unintended consequences verifying and validating correctness.

One of the most unappreciated positions in a VFW Post is that of Trustee. Official documents relating to financial records and responsibilities contain signatures, our bond, It is the trustees who review the books and records of the adjutant and the quartermaster. These individuals have the responsibility to ensure the records are correct.

The general membership relies on the Trustees to oversee all records relating to the financial operations of the post. They sign the audits affirming its' accuracy. The position of the Trustee is an elected one and must be someone the post can trust.

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), hold a longstanding tradition of volunteerism in their communities. Not only have they served their country, but they continue to serve their fellow veterans, families, and communities by sponsoring scholarships, career fairs, mental wellness campaigns, and so many more excellent services.

Since its inception VFW membership has been instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Administration, the creation of the national cemetery system and passage of the GI Bill. You should be immensely proud to be a member of this prestigious organization dedicated to combat veterans. Through the VFW, veterans honor veterans and serve their communities.

ATTITUDE AND APTITUDE

Life is about attitude. When you see the possible, your mind prepares the probable. What the mind conceives and believes it can achieve. But can your attitude overcome your aptitude? There has been much said and written about the power of positive thinking and rightly so. You're your attitude, that is how you "feel", an emotion, can only do so much about reality or "facts".

Attitude is about confidence. Ability is about competence. I could tell you that I am going to be the best center in NBA. But at my height you know no matter how confident (cheerful outlook) You see I do not have the ability. I do not have the competence. While my attitude could raise my performance slightly, it would never raise my ability to the level required of an NBA center. Take note Attitude is confidence.

Ability is about competence. This statement is so important I am repeating it. Take note Attitude is confidence, Ability is about competence. Do not confuse the two. One is emotion the other is fact. Choose those who have the attitude and the aptitude to lead volunteers, that is the ability to build a synergetic team. The importance of attitude is centered in our membership involvement. There is a distinct difference between attitude and aptitude. Attitude is a feeling. It is based in emotion. Confidence is a good thing, but it is a feeling. Aptitude is a fact. It is based. Achievement is a confirmation of fact. You can boost your attitude and it will improve your performance to a small degree. Your ability is based in fact and the fact is, it is a reality. You certainly can improve upon your knowledge and that is significant. But your attitude as a leader is critical to your success. A leader is not a leader if there is no one following. Leadership is about

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influence, that is, your ability to influence others. It is no more or no less than winning others over. It's the "WOO" factor.

Leadership deals with direction, membership deals with participation. Leadership deals with vision with keeping the missions in sight and effectiveness and results. Membership concentration is on establishing structure and systems to get those results. It focuses on efficiencies, cost-benefit analysis, logistics, methods, procedures, and policies.

Research on brain theory helps us to understand some of us are great managers but weak leaders. The research basically demonstrates that the brain is divided into two hemispheres, the left and the right, and that each hemisphere specializes in different function, processes different kinds of information and deals with different kinds of problems. Although both are involved in logical and creative processes, the left works more with logic (aptitude) the right works more with emotions (attitude). The left deals with analysis, which means to break apart, the right with synthesis, which means to put together. The left with sequential thinking, the right with simultaneous and holistic thinking.

In any organization people usually perform one of three essential roles; producer, manager, or leaders. Each role is vital to the success of the organization. If there are no producers, great ideas and lofty goals are not carried out. The work simply doesn't get done. If there are no managers, there is role conflict and ambiguity: everyone attempts to be a producer, working independently, with few established systems or procedures. And if there is no leader, there is a lack of vision and direction. Although each role is important the role of leader is most important.

Peter Drucker, management consultant, educator, and author, whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation. He was also a leader in the development of management education, he invented the concept known as management by objectives.

Drucker teaches that within a few years of establishment, especially not for profit organizations lose sight of their mission and essential role and become focused on methods, or efficiency or doing things right, that is managing, rather than an effectiveness (leadership) or doing the right things.

It seems that people tend to codify past successful practices into rules for the future and give energy to preserving and enforcing these rules even after they no longer apply. Indeed, traditional procedures and practices die hard. It's one of the reasons many get

bogged down in the excuse of, but we have always done it this way not knowing or understanding why

LEADERSHIP'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

It is clear to me as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States our rules of engagement, the way we conduct our business, is found in the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. There are facts each of us must be aware of and they are the individual member in good standing in a post in working order in our organization is the ultimate decision maker when that individual voice is combined with the voices of every member whose membership is the same. That is to mean, is an individual member in good standing in a post in working order in our organization.

On a personal note, I owe my success as a leader within the notfor-profit world to my association with Rotary, an organization of likeminded individuals worldwide whose purpose is to be a humanitarian service organization which brings together business and professional leaders to provide community service, promote integrity, and advance goodwill, peace, and understanding in the world. It is a non-political, non-governmental and non-religious organization. Membership is by invitation and based on various social factors. Opportunities for me to serve in this volunteer service organization since 1984 have enabled me to interact with like-minded individuals and business professionals who place service to others above self.

I have learned through this service, as an individual member and leader in a Rotary Club, Rotary District, Rotary Zone and Rotary International elected and appointed positions, Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self". My membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars has enabled me to continue my service to others because we as Veterans have selflessly served our communities. I am deeply indebted to my association with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Rotary International, both amazing organizations, for my professional development as a leader following my service in the United States Army and other volunteer service organizations. Leadership in Rotary has been as club president, district governor, rotary foundation district chair, rotary international zone coordinator and numerous national and international committees. Working with volunteers worldwide has given me a unique and exceptional perspective in what it means to serve.

Herbert J. Taylor joined the Rotary Club of Chicago in 1927 later becoming Club President and eventually the President of Rotary

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International 1953-1954. “The Herbert J. Taylor Story is a book from the author of “The 4 Way Test”. Many articles have been written about “The Four Way Test”. It is made up of twenty-four words written in 1932 during the darkest days of the Great Depression. These words were not only responsible, to a great degree, for the success of his company the Club Aluminum Products Company but they are also credited with changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. The first job was to set policies for the company that would reflect high ethics and morals for any business. If the people who worked for Club Aluminum were to think right, I knew they would do right. What was needed was a simple easily remembered guide to right conduct – sort of a yardstick which all of us in the company could memorize and apply to what we thought, said, and did in our relations with others.

I searched through many books for the answer to our need, but the right phrases eluded me, so I did what I often do, when I have a problem, I can’t answer myself: I turn to the One who has all the answers. I leaned over my desk, rested my head in my hands and prayed. After a few moments, I looked up and reached for a white paper card. Then I wrote down the twenty-four words that had come to me.

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

I was brought up by my parents to be a “good person”, that is one who treats others as I want to be treated and to be truthful in all things. I joined Rotary 5 year after leaving the service because I was seeking like-minded individuals with whom I could associate much like Rotary founder Paul Harris in 1905. I missed the camaraderie of the military. What I found in Rotary was not only the camaraderie I sought but an outlet to serve my community while creating and establishing my vocation.

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

“Doing Unto Others”

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States must remain an inclusive organization yet place limitation on eligibility for its members. We can be both exclusive because of eligibility Section

230101 - Organization a) Federal Charter. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (in this chapter, the “corporations), a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, is a federally chartered corporation. b) Perpetual Existence. Except as otherwise provided, the corporation has perpetual existence. but inclusive when it comes to gender, ethnicity, branch of service, conflict, religion, or age. As a veteran service organization, we serve the needs of the combat veteran, surviving spouse and orphans and advocate on their behalf in the halls of Congress.

Found in our Bylaws our federally chartered by Congress in 1936, our purpose is defined as Section 230102 - The purposes of the corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational, and are

- 1. to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members.**
- 2. to assist worthy comrades.**
- 3. to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans.**
- 4. to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and Laws.**
- 5. to foster true patriotism.**
- 6. to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and 7. to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is bigger than any one individual and any one office elected or appointed. Our Bylaws dictate our obligations and responsibilities. There is absolutely no place in our organization for disunity, disloyalty, or disrespect. Prejudice is learned. Hate and derision cannot nor should not be tolerated. And who has the charge to ensure the conduct of our members? It’s our members. But, to understand what is going on in your post, you must participate, that is you must be involved.

Are you familiar with the general rules within our Ritual as set forth by our National organization?

During the meeting when addressing the Commander or presiding officer do you rise and salute?

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Are you welcoming? Do you introduce yourself to others?
Are you respectful of the Commander? Are you respectful toward others?
Are you courteous? Do you get along well with others?
Do you participate in the meeting?
Do you consider yourself well informed on local and world affairs?
Are you sincere, dependable and takes an active part in the post and community activities?
Do you appreciate what others have done for you and accept responsibility for the future betterment of your post and community?
Are you fair and just in your dealings with other members?
Do you vote impartially on matters pertaining to the post versus self-interest?
Are you a productive member of the post recruiting and offering to mentor new members? Do you volunteer to serve in a leadership role?

So many people want to make positive changes but don't want the struggles and hardships that come with change. But if you keep doing what you've always done you will keep getting what you've always got. Doing unto others is one of the biggest keys to creating a successful future for yourself. The most successful people in the world have a daily, weekly, and monthly plan to achieve their goals.

TIME, TALENTS, TREASURES, AND COMRADES

When I first joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars there were several things pulling on me for my time not the least of which was, I recently started a new business venture. I was also very involved in a volunteer International service organization with meetings weekly during the day. And then was my involvement as a youth coach with my grandchildren and youth religious education program with my church. My life mantra centered around "Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In" followed by "Be the Best I Can Be" including the Warrior Ethos from my military service.

1. Always place the Mission First
2. Never Quit
3. Never Accept Defeat
4. Never Leave a Comrade Behind

The way I dealt with my combat service and my family life was I became a workaholic, dedicated to serving others. Later I understood

my feelings were survivor's guilt and I didn't realize that was a coping mechanism. I did not cope by abusing alcohol or drugs. I was consumed with my family, my work, and serving others. I missed the comradeship of the service and the bonds of combat. September 11, 2001, came and pressures and feeling of helplessness took a toll.

My business was located on a military base and because of security reasons, the post was closed except for essential personnel only. When it did open it was severely affected by the war. My wife saw my anger and self-isolation intensify along with feelings of hyper vigilance. It began to impact my health. A fellow veteran reached out to me and took me to the VA for help.

About the same time, I was introduced to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and a new post that was being chartered. The VA healthcare and VFW literally saved my life. I received the healthcare and therapy I needed and the association of those who understood the aftermath of war. I learned how to deal with my issues and in doing so allowed me to better utilize my time, my talents, and my treasures with the help of VFW comrades and the love of my family. I still run full speed in everything in which I am involved.

And Then Some

These three little words are the secret to success...

They are the difference between average people and the top members in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The leaders always do what is expected of them...

And Then Some...

They are mission oriented and driven to succeed...

And Then Some...

They meet their obligation and responsibilities, fairly and squarely. They lead from the front, are relentless...

And Then Some...

They can be called on and counted on in an emergency...

And Then Some...

I am thankful for people such as this, For they make life better for Veterans and their families.

Their spirit of service is summed-up

In these three little words...

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In

And Then Some

Repeated from Chapter 1.....Yes, it's that important!!! A
TIMELESS TEST

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS LEADERSHIP (Suggested)

Perhaps there is a place in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual for a set of principles that would include and reflect high ethics and moral standards for leaders in our organization. Now is an ideal time to implement such principles. VFW members come from every part of today's society and share many similarities to those of a hundred and twenty years ago when morals and individual integrity were abandoned. History has a way of repeating itself.



ABC's

of

Membership

A Mentoring Series for New VFW Members and Emerging Leaders

Epilogue

The Back Story

This product is not an official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States but has been published with the consent of the National organization by the author at no expense to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With the impact of the COVID epidemic on our ability to conduct the business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in our Posts, Districts, Departments, and our National organization it became noticeably clear there was an apparent need for additional education for our members, and in particular our newest members and our emerging leaders, on the tremendous history of the VFW. Our organization is unique by design. The VFW is the only Veteran Service Organization dedicated to the combat veteran. As you go through the series you will see how from our very founding, the principles on which we were established remain the purpose for which we exist. What has been lost over time is the fact ours is a service organization and service is our product. We have morphed over time from a fraternal (male veterans) organization to the addition of female veterans who make up increasingly of our membership. You may hear me from time to time refer to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a “fratority” combining fraternal (traditional male memberships) with sorority (traditional female memberships). We have surpassed gender-based limitations of a brotherhood or sisterhood.

So, the ABCs of Membership, a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders was created from the perspective of a grass roots member, recognized by our National organization as a Triple Crown, All American Commander. A Triple Crown All American Commander is one who has achieved the goals of the National organization as a Post Commander, as a District Commander, and lastly as a Department (State) Commander. In this case it was 2006, 2010 and 2015 in Post 12002 North Fulton, Georgia, VFW Department of Georgia District 3, and VFW Department of Georgia. At the current time there are slightly over a total of one hundred triple crown commanders recognized out of 5903 posts and 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary members (March 18, 2022)

What is different or unique about this mentoring series is the fact it is from the perspective of a commander, a successful commander, at all three levels of our organizational structure. Not from the perspective of the corporation but from one who has been and continues to serve with “boots on the ground.” Our members are incredibly talented and possess leadership skills that are only developed in combat. But what is lacking is institutional knowledge. Why is this so critical? What makes this so critical is the fact that as a Congressionally Chartered organization we have an obligation to record and report our service to the Congress of the United States. We do this annually at our National Convention with the approval of the delegates in attendance. The most important individual in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the

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United States is the individual member. Every post member in good standing has a vote.

Authorship Disclaimer References, Quotes, Articles, Seminars, Encounters

I am very humbled and honored when a member says, “everything they know about the VFW they learned from me.” But I am also very embarrassed because while I may have taught them everything they know about the VFW; I have not taught them everything I know. And unfortunately, none of us know when we will no longer be able to share this knowledge and life experiences. Over the last year and a half, I have worked hard expending hundreds of hours to research, recall, assemble background material on the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an organization researching articles, quotes, training materials, from various encounters I have had over the past 50 years with the most influential and dynamic leaders and innovators in this nation.

At no time has there been an attempt to suggest this is singularly original material. The majority of the content is from my experience. as earlier stated, augmented with lessons and information learned from researching related materials, attending seminars, participating in, and networking with professionals in the leadership arena with for profit business, military service and education, and a not-for-profit international service organization.

While I have diligently made every attempt to identify the source of quotations, references, incidents, or seminars any omission was not intentional. If you find there has been an oversight of credit, please do not hesitate to let me know and I will make every attempt to include the credit in future updates as needed. The ABCs of Membership, a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE. It is a gift from me to you. It’s FREE. Download the series or print out the information you seek.

Social media has been the primary means of distribution. There is a total of five Chapters that covered ten weeks each. Preparing the material for review took approximately two weeks per chapter. The total time to create and publish this work was 78 weeks and in person-hours was more than 3100 hours.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is most appropriate and fitting that I should express my grateful appreciation over these 50 years to the hundreds of Rotary Clubs,

Districts, Conferences, Assemblies and Institutes and most recently to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts, Districts, Departments and other groups which have so generously allowed me to tell some of the stories about my leadership experiences and to encourage emerging leaders to discover the values of service to others.

My wife Carol deserves special acknowledgment, not only for her willingness to be my sounding board but also for sitting through an almost endless string of speeches and humorous stories that she could always tell if I added a new element or left one out.

And lastly, I must acknowledge and express my deepest thanks to those whose shoulders I stand upon. You have taught me to be humble. You have shown me how to be grateful. You gave me opportunities that I had not fully earned at that point. But you took a chance and trusted that I am a man of deep faith and unwavering conviction that there is good in all. You have supported my life's mantra of "Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In" as I walk in faith inspiring and motivating others to be the best they can be in all things, always.

Believe In What You Do-Do What You Believe In



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 service, he received the Combat Infantryman Badge, Bronze Star with Valor device, Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service, Purple Heart Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Silver Star and two Bronze Stars, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Medal, and the Vietnam Staff Service Medal First Class.

He joined the VFW in 2002 at Post 12002 in North Fulton, Georgia, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department Levels, culminating with his election as the VFW Department of Georgia Commander from 2014 to 2015, in which he achieved Triple Crown All-American Commander status.

On the national level, he has served on the Legislative Committee, the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and the National Council of Administration.



Al is retired. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Pacific Western University in 1990.

He is a member of the Rotary Club of Stone Mountain, Georgia, American Legion, and life member of the Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, the VFW National Home for Children, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, and an inductee to the United States Army Officer Candidate School Alumni Association Hall of Fame. He is also a Life Member of the Military Order of the Cootie, Pup Tent 1, Savannah, Georgia

Al and his wife, Carol were married on Feb. 24, 1967, and reside in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

-vfw-

To receive this series free simply email your request to al.lipphardt@georgiavfw.org. Hard copies may be ordered by emailing your request to al@lipphardt.org Copies are \$15.00 each. Mail orders and correspondence may be sent to Al Lipphardt, PO Box 1336, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30087
"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

A TIMELESS TEST

Rotary International 's

4 Way Test

Of the things we think, say and do

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build good will and better friendship?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

A CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR MEMBERS OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
(suggested)

As Veterans of Foreign Wars members and emerging leaders let us consider a Code of Conduct to be adopted by the delegates at a future National Convention that is in line with an almost century old test for building effective relationships.

Our code identifies with the purpose of the VFW and is dedicated to the inclusion of combat veterans from all qualifying conflicts and branches of service.

1. Is it done with Integrity?
2. Is it applied equally to all?
3. Is it done with mutual respect for the good of all?
4. Is it Service Above Self or simply Self Serving?

