

VFW Kicks Off 125th Anniversary Commemoration

The year-long campaign will celebrate the VFW's legacy of service

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., — This year the VFW enters its 125th year of service to veterans, service members and their families. As such, the VFW has proudly launched a year-long campaign to commemorate the momentous occasion.

The VFW traces its roots back to Spanish-American war when the battle wounded returned home to no health care, benefits and little support. Left to fend for themselves, a group of 13 veterans gathered in a small tailor shop in Columbus, Ohio, to discuss how they could assist their fellow veterans and dependents of their fallen brothers-in-arms.

In fact, they weren't alone. Several small, unaffiliated organizations were taking shape in areas across the United States with a common goal of advocating for veterans' needs, and in 1899, two key groups were established: the American Veterans of Foreign Service and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines. These groups would soon merge to become the VFW. It's mission: To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.

The VFW would quickly grow in membership and influence, expanding its advocacy efforts to educational benefits, disability pensions and hospital services. The group would also cultivate its local impact initiatives through community service, youth scholarships and programs, and civic engagement activities.

Today, and throughout its storied history, the VFW has led the charge in making available positive, life-changing support and resources through its advocacy initiatives and services to include the establishment of the Veterans Administration. It has played an instrumental role in the passage of every piece of vital veterans legislation and collects \$13 billion in benefits and compensation from the VA annually for veterans.

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Today's launch of the commemorative campaign celebrates the VFW's legacy of service with a dedicated microsite, commemorative VFW Post program and a sneak peek into an upcoming line of commemorative VFW Store items. New initiatives will be added as the organization builds momentum to its official founding date of Sept. 29 and to its conclusion at the 125th VFW National Convention in August 2025.