

# Public Relations and Publications Programs

**We exist to serve Veterans.** In that regard we must project a positive image to the public at large. This must be done to maximize our exposure for:

- \*Veterans and their awareness of our programs
- \*The public for their help, support and goodwill
- \*Our elected representatives at every level for their support to enact and enforce laws affecting Veterans' issues, problems and ongoing entitlements

All District and Post Officers must ensure that their words and conduct reflect a positive image and official doctrine as enunciated by national and state directives and publications. Whether making a statement through personal initiative or if asked by journalists or the public, one must be aware of the effect of one's words and conduct. When in doubt, defer to Department personnel. You are an "official" representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars when identified as a member of the VFW.

In an effort to improve communications with the public, the following is recommended:

- \*Establish a Public Relations officer at the District and Post levels
- \*Promote Post/District events through public service releases to local newspapers, radio/TV announcements, and community organizations, e.g., churches, service clubs, Senior centers
- \*Be sure to make use of Patriotic holidays for Post events and to visit schools and distribute Buddy Poppies in the community
- \*Join with other neighborhood groups to sponsor causes, e.g., child awareness, "get out the vote", neighborhood watch
- \*Visit hospitals, nursing homes, etc. in VFW attire to encourage veterans and others who are recovering, ill or shut-in

## Media Exposure-Feature Articles

Members and others are encouraged to submit **articles** which are positive and patriotic and serve to increase community awareness of the VFW and its programs in both the print and electronic media.

Public Relations activities should be reported by the originating member/post to the Chairman as follows:

- \*Articles that highlight the VFW in a positive way, especially with a visually attractive layout or picture, may be submitted as published or cut out.
- \*Electronic publicity such as TV commercials or news broadcasts and internet website, blog, etc. may be reported on in a way that can be verified

**Awards:** Those entries judged the most outstanding will receive a plaque for First Place and a framed certificate for Second, and Third place to be awarded at the State Convention in June. The deadline for submission is 30 April.

# Newsletter of the Year

In accordance with the National VFW Newsletter of the (Calendar) Year program the Department of Washington provides instructions and guidelines through which each Post and District may submit their ongoing Newsletters for evaluation and possible awards. The winning Posts and Districts will be honored at the State Convention in June of the VFW year. Specific information is provided further herein.

## National Newsletter Contest

A Recent **National Revision** of the Annual Newsletter Contest has provided changes as follows:

\*All newsletter submissions will fall into 2 categories according to number of issues sent to members: 1-3 issues per year or 4 or more per year.

\* Both post and district are judged together. In the past each was divided into 3 categories according to number of members.

## National Featured Article

A news Media (newspaper, magazine, etc.) article published during the calendar year prior to VFW Convention may be submitted for judging.

Any Veterans/military subject highlighting the VFW or member can be submitted with a minimum of 300 words in newsprint or paper stock. The date, name of publication and author must be visible.

## NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR AWARD - RULES & REGULATIONS

For the Publishing Year 1 January through 31 December 2015

Recognizing the value of Post communications and wanting to encourage and help that process, the annual Newsletter of the Year Awards Program is designed to reward Editors' newsletter efforts through competition within the VFW. The Newsletter of the Year program is a formal part of the VFW's Awards portfolio and is administered by the Public Relations and Publications Committee made up of a Chairman and four members, two of which are members of the Ladies Auxiliary.

In order to level the playing field and allow Posts to enter their Newsletter for competition at their peer level, the following three entrant classes, based on Post membership size, will be in place for each **publishing year**. The three class sizes are based upon Post/District membership as of the close of the VFW year, 30 June. The class sizes (Subject to Change) are:

Large Posts	Medium Posts	Small Posts
590 or more	101 – 589	100 or fewer
Large Districts	Medium Districts	Small Districts
2500 or more	1000 – 2499	999 or fewer

## RULES FOR ENTRY SUBMISSION

1. Any Post/District may submit their Newsletter for judging in their peer class with the following restrictions:
2. Only ONE ISSUE per Post/District will be accepted for judging.
3. To be considered all Post/District Newsletters must be created and published by the Newsletter Editor. The use of outside printing facilities is permitted. Post attestation to this requirement must be a part of the Post's Cover Letter.
4. The newsletter selected for submission must be the exact same newsletter in the exact same format and style as was sent to its members and other interested parties. For example: An entry will be disqualified if it was sent to the membership in black and white, but the entry submitted was a single run-off copy in full color.
5. The Post/District may select and submit any (your best) Newsletter that was published during the Period 1 January through 31 December of the publishing year. (A bi-monthly newsletter covering the December-January period is not acceptable.)
6. Two methods of submitting entries will be accepted. FIVE (5) Paper Copies of the submitted entry should be printed and mailed (USPS) to the Public Relations Chairman **no later than 1 March**. Or, Newsletters may be submitted by Email, **IF** this is the **Primary** means of post dissemination, either in a Microsoft Word or PDF format.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Newsletter of the Year Awards will be presented at the annual Department of Washington Convention in June. First Place Winners in each Class will receive a Plaque. Second and Third Place will receive Certificates

### CRITERIA

This list of items can provide tools that Post/District editors may use in developing a newsletter. It is not expected that the winning Post Newsletter will exhibit all elements listed, but all reflect **important areas** that should be considered when communicating with members.

Use the following list as a **guideline** for your Newsletter:

- Use of Customized Masthead
- Table of Contents
- Publisher's Box with Editor's Name and Post Contact Information
- Frequency of publication, address for Article submission
- Post Officers' Names and Contact Information
- Commander's Report
- Officers' Reports
- Adjutant's Minutes of Last Meeting
- Quartermaster's Report
- Chaplain's Column
- New Member Column
- Officers and Committee Reports and Columns
- VFW Auxiliary Member Column(s)
- Member Recognition, Member of the Month, New Member Profile, etc.
- Articles supporting Post Memorials, Ceremonies, and Programs
- Outings, Post Activities
- Information as to Next Meeting (Dates, Times, Places)
- Veterans Information (Legislation, Veterans Administration, etc.)
- Humor (Military Jokes, Cartoons, Member anecdotes)
- Layout
- Graphics Use (Pictures, Graphs, Tables, etc.)
- Font Use (Type, Appropriateness, Clarity, Minimum Change)
- White Space (i.e. Readability vs. Crowded Text)

If applicable:

- Post Website Information
- VFW District News Events
- Post Advertisers and Supporter Recognition
- Post Canteen Report & Upcoming Events Calendar