

Idaho Teacher Named 2022 VFW Teacher of the Year

The Mountain Home teacher takes home top \$3,000 prize

May 23, 2022

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to announce it has named the national top teacher in its annual Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award contest.

Established in 1999 and named after former VFW National Commander John Smart and retired VFW Quartermaster General Larry Maher, the award recognizes our nation's top teachers for their exceptional commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students by promoting civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism in the classroom.

This year's national winner is Lisa Russell, a first grade teacher at East Elementary School in Mountain Home, Idaho, who was sponsored by VFW Post 5423 in Mountain Home. With more than 23 years of experience, Russell is well known for her creativity, dedication to her students, and her work within the community. Her lesson plans proudly include patriotic projects centered around the events of Sept. 11 and Pearl Harbor, while including a first-hand account from Pearl Harbor attack survivor Lorraine Kirkland.

From encouraging students to participate in local patriotic essay competitions to providing enrichment opportunities like having the mayor attend virtual class, patriotism and civil responsibility are often key discussion points in her classroom.

As the 2022 VFW Teacher of the Year, Russell will receive a \$3,000 monetary prize, and a special plaque for herself and her school. Russell will also be honored in front of the thousands of national convention delegates in attendance at the 123rd VFW National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, July 16-21, 2022.

"It brings the VFW great pride to recognize Lisa with this national honor," said VFW National Commander Fritz Mihelcic. "The strength of our nation depends largely on our

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success in fostering and growing patriotism among our youth. Teachers like Lisa will ensure a strong America for many generations to come.”

Nominate a teacher you know at your local VFW Post, or find out more information on the [Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award](#).