

# VFW National Headquarters Building Reaches Centennial Milestone

**A fixture since its creation in 1925, the 12-story National Headquarters building in Kansas City has been the organization's command center since 1930**

Jan 30, 2025

In a city filled with old, redbrick relics and modern towers alike, the VFW National Headquarters building in Kansas City, Missouri, has stood as a symbol of permanence.

Seen from any point on Broadway Boulevard in Kansas City's midtown, the 12-story, 165,000-square-foot VFW Building celebrates its centennial birthday this year as the administrative home of the country's oldest combat veterans organization.

The two have coexisted in perpetuity since VFW moved its headquarters into the building, then called the Porter Building, in 1930 and purchased it in 1946.

For current VFW National Quartermaster Marc Garduno, purchasing the building in 1946 made strategic sense for the VFW, which had exceeded 1.5 million members and seen a 728 percent increase following World War II.

"I'm certain the reasons were many, but the one that makes the most sense is that we could serve veterans more easily through this centralized location and because Kansas City was easily accessible by rail," Garduno said.

Originally opened in 1925 as the Medical Arts Building to house physicians, surgeons and dentists, the building's location failed to attract as many medical users as planned and gradually evolved into a general office complex.

When VFW headquarters moved into the building in 1930, it occupied 45 percent of its office space. At the time, the building also housed the first FM radio station in Kansas City, as well as other local stores and private businesses.

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To expand its manpower and cater to the needs of veterans returning home following WWII, the VFW purchased the building in 1946 for approximately \$500,000. This included four-and-a-half acres containing the 12-story building, a small building to the south that once housed the Ladies Auxiliary Supply Department, several tenants and parking for almost 500 cars. Among those tenants who rented from VFW in those years was the H&R Block tax preparation firm, whose world headquarters are now three miles away in downtown Kansas City.

Today, the building houses 60 percent of VFW's administrative functions and more than 34 tenants, such as a travel agency, law firms, an employment placement service, counseling practitioners, insurance companies, spas and estheticians, as well as a few nonprofits.

For many of the tenants and in-house VFW employees who are Kansas City natives, the building's presence has remained a fixture in their memories of their hometown.

"I am a transplant to Kansas City, but I have had conversations with some who, as children, vividly recall passing by the building and seeing the huge light-up VFW sign on the roof, and that's how they learned about who we are, and what we do," Garduno said. "Sometimes, when aerial views of downtown KC are shot for televised sporting events, the sign is clearly visible. If nothing else, the sign is certainly a part of the Kansas City skyline."

Throughout their linked history, both VFW and its home have also continued to evolve to meet the needs and demands of the times, an unrelenting approach that, according to Garduno, includes constant renovations to maintain the integrity of VFW's headquarters.

"Many may not realize it, but it takes quite a lot of effort and resources to maintain a 100-year-old structure," Garduno said. "Some current plans include renovation of several restrooms on the first floor, renovation of the warehouse space we have across the street to make it suitable for a potential tenant, and some improvements to the mezzanine that have taken a backseat to a couple of urgent repairs that took priority."

Since purchasing the building in 1946, the VFW also has added to the facility by creating memorials that both educate and show the sacrifices made by its members and all veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

Among those projects is the Centennial Plaza, which sits beside the VFW building at the corner of Broadway and Linwood. Unveiled on Oct. 5, 2001, the monument serves as an axis for visitors and sightseers visiting landmarks around a city as rich with history as Kansas City.

The Plaza commemorates 100 years of "veterans helping veterans" and features a life-sized, two-figured bronze sculpture depicting a soldier transitioning into civilian life as a VFW member.

Known as The Citizen-Soldier, the statue was created by the late sculptor Jim Brothers and depicts his friend, Vietnam War veteran and esteemed poet and memoirist John Musgrave, a Life member of VFW Post 6240 in Russell, Kansas.

“Centennial Plaza has become a point of interest for the public and visiting members who routinely visit to admire and photograph,” Garduno said. “The flag poles and VFW monument at the base are clearly an eye-catching sight for anyone who stops at the light facing west at Linwood Ave. The bricks located all around the Citizen-Soldier statue also represent hundreds of endowment donations from our Gold Legacy Life Members.”

*This article is featured in the 2025 January/February issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.*