

VFW Was Born of Battle

This year, the VFW celebrates 125 years as America's oldest major organization of overseas combat veterans

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From its humble beginnings in a tailor shop in Columbus, Ohio, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has a rich history of service to those who have served in uniform to protect our freedoms — it is a history that spans 125 years as of this month.

The VFW traces its roots to Spanish-American War veterans of Cuba and the Philippines who established separate groups in three locations: American Veterans of Foreign Service in Columbus, Ohio; Colorado Society, Army of the Philippines in Denver, Colorado; and Philippine War Veterans in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Throughout VFW's history, its members and leaders have achieved a great many milestones, including leading the charge on Capitol Hill for veterans care. From the War Risk Insurance Act Amendments in 1917 to the GI Bill of Rights in 1944 to the most recent PACT Act, VFW has been at the forefront of veteran-centric legislation throughout its history.

From day one, VFW has advocated for veterans' rightfully earned benefits. The formation of the VFW National Service Bureau (NSB) in 1919 ensured the returning Doughboys of World War I were properly cared for.

Now called National Veterans Service, headquartered in VFW's Washington Office, it is still the essence for which VFW stands.

As VFW continues to carry the torch for veterans everywhere, its members will celebrate this momentous occasion throughout the year.

VFW Posts are encouraged to sign up for the VFW 125th Anniversary Commemorative Community Service Post Program. VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their families during this anniversary year.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

Additionally, encourage communities to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Be sure to check out VFW magazine's 125th VFW Destination Post Series. The series will feature 125 VFW Posts located in sought-after tourist destinations. Featured VFW Posts are those that make a real difference in the communities in which the Posts are located.

The VFW Store offers a line of 125th commemorative items. See p. 40 or visit <https://www.vfwstore.org>.

Visit [vfw125.org](https://www.vfw125.org) to be in-the-know on all things 125th anniversary. There, you also can view a video on the history of the VFW.

However your VFW Post plans to celebrate, VFW magazine wants to hear about it. Send in your celebration photos and be sure to include contact information. You may see the photos in a future issue of the magazine or Checkpoint.

View the VFW Family Tree and read a firsthand account of the first meeting on Sept. 29, 1899 [here](#).

Happy 125th Anniversary to all VFW members.

This article is featured in the 2024 September issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor of VFW magazine.