

MILITARY SERVICES (VFW SUPPORT)

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Military Service has been in existence for quite sometime. There are three programs that make up the VFW Military Service Program; they are Operation Uplink, Military Assistance, and Unmet Needs.

Military Service information, forms, grant applications can be reviewed and downloaded from two different areas on the VFW national website www.vfw.org. On the home page you can find it by clicking on the word “assistance” which is located in the information bar of the page heading or you can log into the membership section and click on Military Service under the Get Involve section.

OPERATION UPLINK – This unique program was launched in 1996 to provide free phone call time to help ease the loneliness for thousands of active duty and hospitalized veterans so they can keep in touch with their families and loved ones. Initially this was accomplished by distributing phone cards, but due to growing demand, the VFW is currently hosting “Free Call Days” twice a month for those service members serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. They also have Operation Uplink Domestic Cards – Virtual Pins which takes the place of phone cards and are provided at deployment ceremonies, military hospitals, and VA facilities as well as to troops in regions not served by “Free Call Days”. These Virtual Pins allow the veteran 100 minutes of time and have a 24 month expiration time from first use.

HELP A HERO CALL HOME

Note: All requests for Virtual Pins shall be requested/coordinated through the Department Chairman.

UNMET NEEDS – This program helps service members and their families who face unexpected financial difficulties, often as a result of unexpected or extended deployments. They can apply for cash grants of up to \$2,500 to cope with emergencies and help them get through tough times. To qualify for this grant you must have served on active duty (Any branch of the military including Guard and Reserve units) within the past 36 month and have an Honorable or General Discharge, or individuals who have a financial crisis resulting from Military Service, medical emergency, death of a service member or their dependent or natural disaster. Unmet Needs assists with basic life needs such as: mortgage and rent, home or auto repairs, insurance, utilities, food and clothing. All grants are paid directly to the “creditor” and not the individual. Each case is reviewed individually and acceptance determined by a committee.

If you are a handyman or have a skill and would like to register with the VFW to donate time and skills for the VFW Unmet Needs, contact me for information on how to register.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP) – The Military Assistance Program is working to give service members and their families the help they need before, during and after their deployment. We provide this through farewell events, welcome home celebrations, or family readiness group activities.

ADOPT-A-UNIT PROGRAM:

Adopt-A-Unit Program is an initiative where veterans and their families can become involved in sponsoring military units or ships, whether they are regular, reserve, or national guard units. The sponsoring VFW Post is required to keep in touch with the unit and assist with family and community needs. The post is required to file an Adopt-A-Unit Activity Report at least once a year to the National organization, failure to comply with this requirement will result in removal from the program.

MONETARY DONATIONS:

Both the State and National Veterans of Foreign Wars have obligated funds established to support the different Military Service Programs. You can either donate to the individual programs (Operation Uplink, Unmet Needs, and Military Assistance) or to the Military Service Program. They prefer to have the donations to the Military Service Program, so that they can utilize the funds where they are needed most.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

You can keep up to date with the VFW Troop Support Programs of the National Military Services by signing up with for the bimonthly E-Newsletter which is emailed on the 1st and 15th of each month. To sign up go to www.vfw.org/assistance/national-military-assistance and in the box on the lower right side and click on NMS UPDATE and follow directions.

All requests to National (applications, reports, and requests) need to go through me. If you do not have computer access, you can request these items by contacting me.

HOW TO REPORT

PLEASE NOTE NEW REPORTING FORM (visit our home page at www.vfwca.org or go to www.ca.vfwportal.net/) and enter your program reporting information.
PLEASE NOTE – FORM 12'S ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTED

Important! – To qualify for awards a Post must send a copy of the Program Reporting to the Department Chairman with all applicable attachments.

AWARDS

Awards are based on Chairman recommendation and will be presented in both categories at the State Convention as follows unless otherwise noted elsewhere in this guide:

- 1st Place (Post & District) will be awarded a plaque.
- 2nd and 3rd Place (Post & District) will be awarded a certificate.