

MILITARY SERVICES (VFW SUPPORT)

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From adopting military units to “Operation Uplink” telephone cards to donating TV-VCR units for American soldiers in Bosnia, the Veterans of Foreign Wars strives to enhance the quality of life for members of the armed forces and their families worldwide by identifying critical needs and providing emergency financial aid. Established more than three years ago, the VFW's Military Services program is a quality of life initiative that focuses on easing the financial emergencies of deploying service members and supporting them and their family through the hardships of deployment. Military Services also provides one-time grants up to \$500 using CAVFW FORM – MAP for service members and or dependents needing emergency financial assistance. In addition, Military Services has forged partnership with various service providers, aimed at providing the transitioning service member with relocation and employment assistance.

Post and District Chairman should refer to the National VFW Programs Guide “It’s About Service.”

Military Services materials are available from VFW Emblem and Supply, or by visiting www.vfwdepartmentresources.org.

OPERATION UPLINK – This is a unique program that provides free phone cards to active-duty and hospitalized veterans so they can keep in touch with their families and loved ones. This is perhaps the premier program that supports our service troops and veterans. It is helping thousands of service members and it also helps ease the loneliness of our hospitalized veterans. This program provides an easy way for individuals and organizations to make an immediate difference in their lives. The VFW has something to offer our young troops, our future. It is a useful tool in recruiting membership. Operation Uplink is a program supported solely by donations and volunteer efforts. Continued success requires commitment, hard work and generosity of so many dedicated Posts, individuals and more. Your contributions are the only way that this fine program is able to provide this desperately needed phone time to friends in need. ***HELP A HERO CALL HOME***

Note: All requests for Operation Uplink cards shall be requested through the Department Chairman.

UNMET NEEDS - According to the Department of Defense, our country has over 700,000 military spouses across all services - 93 percent of whom are women. In addition, almost half are married to enlisted members who make less than \$20,000 a year in basic pay. When you include Reservists, the average yearly pay per individual drops much lower. It's easy to imagine how financial hardship can increase for the spouse and children when the service person is sent overseas. The Unmet Needs Program is set up to alleviate stress during such hardships.

Since 2003, the VFW Foundation - with the generous help of corporate sponsors like Vermont American Power Tool Accessories - has provided millions of dollars of support to Americans

serving in harm's way. But, as the risks to our country increase, so do the needs of these families. Donations will go a long way toward helping with everyday, but critical, expenses:

While our military troops are working to keep us out of harm's way, the Unmet Needs Program is attempting to do the same for their families. Remember, 100 percent of your donation will benefit the program.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP) -

MAP is unknown to most of the VFW membership. Your challenge is therefore two-fold. As well as working to make the membership of the military communities aware of MAP and its benefits, you must also promote awareness of MAP to the Post Membership. The services offered will benefit personnel that most likely are not members of the VFW.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The VFW may provide emergency financial aid to qualified military personnel or their dependents for the purpose of avoiding financial hardships resulting from military deployments. Emergency aid would be in the form of a "one time grant" to service members. The National Headquarters may furnish matching funds to the local Post's contributing emergency aid up to an amount of \$500.00.

ADOPT-A-UNIT PROGRAM:

Adopt-A-Unit Program is an initiative where veterans and their families can become involved in sponsoring active military units or ships. The VFW Post will keep in touch with the unit and can assist with family and community needs.

POST MATCHING FUNDS:

VFW Posts participating in the Adopt-A-Unit Program may apply for up to \$250.00 in Matching Funds to provide assistance for VFW Family Sponsored events for members of the armed forces and their families. Events that qualify are events such as family dinners for returning units, VFW Military Spouse's Night Out or Welcome Home Rallies.

HOW TO REPORT

All activities should be reported on-line via the Department website under **Military Services** at <http://www.vfwca.org/membertools/programform12rpt.html> or by submitting a report (Form-12) to the Department Chairman.

Important! – To qualify for awards a Post must send a copy of the Program Reporting (Form 12) to the Department Chairman with all applicable attachments.

AWARDS

Awards will be presented at the State Convention as follows unless otherwise noted elsewhere in this guide:

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd overall (Post & District) will be awarded a plaque, based on Chairman recommendation.