

December 2025

Subject: Important Notice on Fraudsters Preying on VFW Posts

As we enter the Holiday Season, we are often asked to donate to worthy causes or support individuals down on their luck, including Veterans. Please exercise the “prudence of a true soldier” as our VFW ritual directs us to do when confronted with situations of Veterans needing assistance. Many Veterans in fact need assistance and the VFW is exactly the organization and the people to lend that helping hand to. However, we all know there are those out there who have never served who claim Veteran status.

This notice is being issued regarding a recent situation involving a private citizen who falsely claimed to be a Medal of Honor recipient, a former Prisoner of War, a multiple Purple Heart recipient, and a Veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard. These claims were made during requests for assistance at multiple VFW Posts.

Upon repeated inquiry, this individual failed to provide any documentation or verifiable proof of military service or award status and has exhibited hostile behavior when challenged. This appears to be a clear case of stolen valor, particularly as it involves false claims of the Medal of Honor—the nation's highest and most sacred military decoration.

Please take the following precautions:

- Do not engage with individuals making unverified or suspicious claims of military service or high-level decorations.
- Do not provide services, money, or organizational resources unless you are confident the individual is known to your Post or their service has been previously acknowledged and verified through proper channels.
- Be aware that some individuals may exploit the goodwill of the Veteran community by fabricating military honors for personal gain.
- If you feel threatened or if the individual becomes confrontational, prioritize safety and contact local authorities.

While we remain committed to serving and honoring all who served, we also have a duty to protect our members and uphold the integrity of the VFW.

If you or your Post encounters an individual or others making unverified claims of high-level honors, please notify your Department Headquarters immediately. Cases involving claims of the Medal of Honor or other top-tier decorations may also be reported to Federal Authorities under the Stolen Valor Act.

Thank you for your continued vigilance and dedication.

This time of year, can also bring anguish to those who survived traumatic experiences themselves or through the loss of a loved one. Know that we care and all we ask is that you reach out when the demons come as we will help you fight them, anyone of us will. Consider us to be your Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Buddy checks are approved and expected.

May all of you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please share this message with all.