

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 2475
Version: As Introduced

DATE: February 24, 2010

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Subject: Veterans; May 28th designated as Veterans of Foreign Wars Day

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Overview

This bill designates May 28th of each year as *Veterans of Foreign Wars Day* in Minnesota. Though the VFW was founded in 1899, it was on May 28, 1936, that congress officially chartered this veterans service organization.

Background:

On May 28, 1936, congress (under Title 36 U.S.C.) formally chartered the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) as a veterans' fraternal, patriotic, historical and mutual aid organization.

Members must be US citizens and be currently serving in the US military or have an honorable discharge from the US Armed Forces. Membership also requires military service overseas during a military conflict, and decoration with an expeditionary medal, a campaign medal or military ribbon for that service. Thus, the VFW includes US soldiers and veterans who went to war, as well as those who have deployed abroad in support of contingency operations for a conflict or war.

Founded in 1899, the VFW is America's oldest major veterans' organization, and with 1.6 million members, it is currently the largest American organization of *combat veterans*. (The American Legion, on the other hand, with 2.5 million members is the nation's largest organization of American veterans generally.)

Special Note:

VFW eligibility has always been based on earning a military campaign medal. Currently, six campaign medals, encompassing some 30 military actions, operations and duty stations during the Cold War, all constitute VFW eligibility. Soldiers and veterans who have earned the Korean Defense Service Medal – for 30 or more consecutive days of military service in Korea at any time since the end of World War II – have also been made eligible for VFW membership. So, too, have those service members who flew clandestine reconnaissance flights over the former Soviet Union or its satellite states, provided that they were awarded hostile fire or imminent danger pay or an expeditionary medal for that duty.