

Veteran Support Groups Need Young Vets

It is obvious from the first time one walks into a meeting of any of the congressionally sanctioned Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) that — more often than not — the membership in attendance is mostly comprised of pre-Gulf War veterans. The VSOs advocate for veterans and their families, assist veterans with benefits, and provide many other resources and programs as well.

While these services are vital, the lifeblood of these organizations is new membership. The total membership level of these groups is significant. It is also worth noting that the median age of their members keeps rising. As a result, the issues addressed by these groups tend to reflect the needs of the older veteran population.

Today, many of our post-Gulf War veterans are coming back with a different set of needs. Those needs deserve to be identified, validated and addressed by ALL existing VSOs. All veterans can join the VSO(s) of their choice (depending upon membership criteria) and make the existing memberships aware of the needs and concerns of younger veterans, so that each generation of veterans is adequately represented.

To learn more about each VSO's individual programs and membership, select the following: [The American Legion](#), [American Veterans](#), [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#), [Disabled American Veterans](#), [Military Order of the Purple Heart](#), and the [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](#).