



**October 19, 2020**

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### **VFW of Wisconsin Statement on Racial Injustice**

Madison- The following is an excerpt from Hal Roesch’s acceptance speech after being installed as the 112<sup>th</sup> National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

“We are at a major turning point in our nation’s history. All across our country, men and women are demonstrating and making their voices heard in an effort to end racial injustice. It’s imperative that the VFW answer this call and stand alongside these agents of change. To our African American members, veterans and communities—black lives do matter! The VFW stands shoulder to shoulder with you. Your VFW is here for you, but most importantly, we need you to help lead us into 2021, 2031 and beyond as we continue to fight for the benefits and entitlements that our veterans have earned by serving their country with honor and courage. You know the VFW has not always been the most inclusive veterans’ organization, in fact we were downright exclusive. But we have learned and changed over the years and we are still learning and changing. Our doors are open to ALL eligible veterans, and today I stand before you and personally invite all eligible veterans to join our organization. If you are a member of the VFW and you cannot treat people with dignity and respect, then I ask you to turn in your membership card and get out. Let there be no doubt in your minds—if you can’t treat people with dignity and respect regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation or religion, we do not need you in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I could not agree more with the words spoken by Commander-in-Chief Roesch. I am sharing them to assure they are spotlighted here in Wisconsin” says State Commander Jason E. Johns. “On behalf of the members of Wisconsin’s largest combat veteran service organization, I adopt these words as our own and am proud that they have been spoken by VFW’s national leadership” adds Johns.