

The Military Order of the Cootie is an organization within an organization. Much like the Rangers, or Airborne, or Special Forces are all part of the Army, the Cooties are a part of the VFW. It is a distinction reserved for "active" members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; those who have succeeded as an officer on any level, or who have demonstrated ability as a leader of a major Post committee or function. These Comrades-in-arms have a special place reserved for them in the MOC; a place of recognition for efforts made by those who want to make a difference in the world around them. In addition to the important work of the VFW, Cooties take on the added responsibility of support for the kids at the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and in the spirit of taking care of our own, we follow our self-appointed directive to "Keep (em Smilin' in Beds of White," and support the hospitalized veterans in VA Medical Facilities, domiciliaries, and hospitals around the United States, and throughout the world. These efforts earned us the title of, "The Honor Degree of the Veterans of Foreign Wars," a title that we hold as precious and one that we take seriously. Our local units or "Pup Tents" as they are commonly known, recruit thousands of new VFW members each year. Though small in number, we raise thousands of Dollars for our local Post programs; thousands more for the National Home, and literally Millions of Dollars in volunteer credits at VA Medical Centers each year. Our distinctive red hat is earned by effort and a sign of recognition. It is the badge of honor for those committed to the values of the VFW and the extra effort of being a Comrade, "Closer Than A Brother Busier Than A Bee." You probably already know some Cooties, since nearly every officer on every level of the VFW is also a member of this elite society.

The prime directive of the Military Order of the Cootie is to Have Fun. It is the Preamble of our Supreme ByLaws. It is the glue that holds us together and makes us special. It is what helps us to hang on and give that last push to get us over the top for a program when things get tough. Our hat, our uniform, even our name is designed to bring a smile to those who come in contact with us. As our hero, The Great Blue Louse instructs us, "A smile is the one thing that you can give that you will always get back," we strive to bring humor to our efforts, to our fellow veterans and to those less fortunate than us.

As a small assembly who at times acts a little off-beat within a larger, more serious organization, we are always looking to Increase and Multiply. If what

Why Join Us you've read here has piqued your interest, we have more information for you. If this sounds like something you might be interested in doing, we want to know about you. If you are not currently a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., we can help you to take that first step. If you are currently a member of the VFW, and would like to have more information about our work, simply contact us at [bcmillican@aol.com](mailto:bcmillican@aol.com) or call 601-582-9314