ANNUAL TREK TO THE

TOMB OF THE UNKNKOWNS

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

The Military Order of the Cootie has gathered on a yearly basis for over 69 years to pay tribute to those who answered the call of our nation at the Tomb of the Unknown, Arlington National Cemetery. Each year a maximum of 450 wreaths are presented at the Tomb of the Unknown and the Argonne Cross by units of the Military Order of the Cootie. Arlington National Cemetery will always be a place of hallowed memories and a Shrine of Each ***Patriot's Devotion."***

FROM THE BY-LAWS

The Military Order of the Cootie is recognized as a subordinate and auxiliary order to Veteran Of Foreign Wars of the United States. It shall be considered as the ***"Honor Degree"*** of the parent organization and shall be governed by and under the control of the National Convention, the National Council of Administration and the Commander-in-Chief.

Only active members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be eligible for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie, and such membership shall be continued and conditioned upon retaining active membership in the VFW.

The objectives of the organization are to promote social and reunion features among the members of the order and to keep alive therein the spirit of optimism and humor so characteristics of the American servicemen.

LOCAL PUP TENT

INFORMATION & POINTS OF CONTACT

Pup Tent Name and Number

Primary Contact Name

Primary Contact Email

Primary Contact Phone

Secondary Contact Name

Secondary Contact Email

Secondary Contact Phone

Supreme HQ Military Order of the Cootie
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MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

"WE PICK OUR COMPANY"

While the Military Order of the Cootie is desirous of increasing its membership, it is particular as to who may become a member.

By invitation, persons making application for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie shall have done much toward the promotion of the greater VFW, through being active members for at least six months in a Veterans of Foreign Wars and through completion of satisfactory service on a Post committee or satisfactory performance of Post duties or participating actively as a leader of Post functions. The applicant's Post Commander and Post Adjutant certify eligibility by signing the MOC Application.

"WHY COOTIES? AREN'T THEY...?"

Yes, they're just what you think they are! They're those things that, as a little child, you were told the kids had. Pests! When our organization was founded, most VFW members were World War I Veterans. They looked for something humorous that they all had in common. Many non-combat hours were spent

attempting to rid themselves of these parasites. Our forebears decided to emulate the qualities of the louse. For examples they were

⇒ **Industrious:** when you found one, there was usually a dozen more nearby.

⇒ **Fraternal:** Cooties worked together to remain with their host. Many stories were told of how Cooties saved their host by "putting the bite" on him just before a round went over his head, thereby saving him from harm.

⇒ **Persistent:** Once they decided on a host, they remained on the job through thick and thin.

We would take up these qualities and look for others like us. We would work hard for our Posts. We would work together to further its aims. We would remain steadfast to each other becoming "Closer than a brother, busier than a bee." We would increase our circle of friends within the VFW. We discovered that kids were no more pests than we were. (Who knew!?) We would increase and multiply by signing up as many eligible comrades as we could in the VFW, thereby increasing the number of possible candidate for our "crummy fraternity." Best of all, we would have fun doing it together!

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER"

Organized 17 Sept 1920, in Washington DC, a number of VFW members and others recognized the need for an organization that would provide comic relief to Foreign Service veterans. On 30 August 1923, at the National Encampment of the VFW held at Norfolk, VA, the MOC became the official "side degree" of the VFW, ancillary to the parent that would bring the membership closer through social activities. This would be a diversion from the serious business that usually took place during a local, state or national gathering of the VFW. Originally classified as the "Fun Degree" this subordinate order of the VFW, together with its social functions, began to assume some of the obligations of its parent order so that greater stress could be applied by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America to it's major programs.

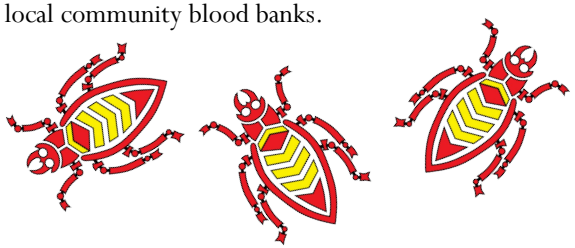
"BUSIER THAN A BEE"

It was not long before the MOC began its program of activities that brought about its designation as the "Honor Degree" of the VFW. The activity began with the founding of the VFW National Home for Children at Eaton Rapids, MI and the filling of a library with practical books for the children. Later, Cootie Field, the swimming pool, the bathhouse, and the boat dock were constructed through donations and various fund-raising functions sponsored by the local Pup Tents. Each year a Cootie Christmas Party is given under the sponsorship of the Grand Pup Tent of Michigan. This party has grown with the years with each child receiving a personal gift. The Cooties presented a fire truck, a fire station and equipment that have protected the National Home. The youngsters were given training in combating fires.

HOSPITAL VISITATION AND BLOOD PROGRAMS

With the outbreak of World War II, the MOC visualized the need for hospital visitations and the presentation of entertainment for hospitalized veterans. A program of "Keep 'em Smilin' in Beds of White" was inaugurated and trained personnel were commissioned to serve with and work for the Veterans Administration Volunteer Service. This program has grown to such magnitude in our VA Hospitals that Hospital fund credits each year by local Pup Tents has reached over $9,000,000 with over 1,000,000 patients being visited, over 31,000 visitations and over 3,800,000 miles traveled per year!

The Supreme Blood Program is designed to highlight the Community Activity program of the VFW. The Supreme Organization recognizes the efforts of our Cooties for their donations of blood and blood products as active VFW members in support of their local community blood banks.



"HONOR DEGREE" OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

The Military Order of the Cootie has a worldwide membership of over 30,000 Cooties. Over 700 Pup Tents are located in our nation and in foreign lands. A local unit of the MOC is known as a "Pup Tent". A State Unit is called a "Grand Pup Tent" and the National Organization is called the "Supreme Pup Tent". Our meetings are known as Scratches and our officers designated as Shavetails.

This is a brief outline of the makeup of the Military Order of the Cootie. We strive to emulate our mythical leader, The Great Blue Louse as we follow our motto of **Industry, Comradeship and Perseverance**. It was he who motivates one of our own to extend invitations, and while all VFW member small by choice, and only those most eligible may become members of the "Honor Degree of the VFW", the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America.

"HIGHER EDUCATION"

The Christie Braun Supreme Scholarship Program, sponsored by the Military Order of the Cootie, is designed to provide college educations for all student graduating from the National Home each year. In addition to undergraduate degrees, the program sponsors technical school scholarships and post-graduate scholarships for National Home alumni for annually selected students. The voluntary financial support by members of the MOC since the program's inception in 1960 has been generously over-funded, and action of the 1985 convention has capped the Scholarship and Athletic Fund at their June 30, 1985 level. All monies received after June 30, 1985 for the Scholarship-Athletic Fund will be placed in the National Home Projects Fund. Should the Scholarship Fund decrease to a level not commensurate with expenses, donations to the fund will be re-instituted.