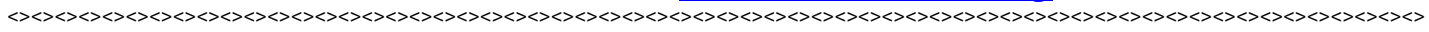




Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101-1126
405 850-0815/ www.vfwoklahoma.org



April 2022

2021-2022 Series

“There is no “I” in team but there is in Win”

Michael Jordan



**DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA HEADQUARTERS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

General Orders No. 10

2021-2022 Series

1. Attention is directed to Section 217 of the **National Bylaws, Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.** *Post officers shall be nominated, elected and installed as prescribed in Section 217 of the Manual of Procedure.*

Manual of Procedure, Section 217, Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office:

Nomination: *Nominations of Post Officers shall open in March and remain open until the Post is ready to vote, provided, however that when a poll system is used, as hereinafter described, nominations must be closed at the meeting prior to the election to allow the Adjutant to prepare a printed ballot.*

Election: *Post Officers shall be elected in April. Balloting for Post officers may be conducted by open vote or written secret ballot (handwritten or printed) at a regular Post meeting, or, if required by Post Bylaws or authorized by Post vote prior to the opening of nominations, by a poll system. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited.*

2. Attention is directed to: **National By-Laws, Sec 222, Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions:** provides that (a) delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. (b) Delegates elected under this section shall not be considered instructed and may exercise full authority in the duty to be performed. (c) Each Post will pay, in accordance with its Department ByLaws, a delegate registration fee for each and every delegate to which the Post shall be entitled. (d) Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified register delegate for the National Convention

Pursuant to MOP, Sec 222, Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st. Delegate and alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided, they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.

3. Proof of Eligibility Requirements for Officers: All Posts, Districts and Departments should be reminded of the provisions of Sections 216, 416, and 516 of the Manual of Procedure that officers, elected and appointed, shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.

4. Commanders on all levels are reminded that according to Section 105 of the National Bylaws, a member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They shall not attend meetings or conventions and shall not participate in Post, County Council, District, Department or National functions.

Pursuant to Article V, Sec 3 of the Department of Oklahoma, Veterans of Foreign Wars By-Laws,

“A delegate registration fee established by the Council of Administration will be paid by each Post for every delegate to which it is entitled and by others authorized to cast a vote as defined by the National By-Laws. This fee may be increased/decreased at each succeeding convention by the Council of Administration. Said fees shall be paid to the State Quartermaster 15 days prior to the opening session of the Department Convention. Anyone wanting to register after this date will be assessed an additional fee of \$1.00 for each delegate registered. Post delegate fees are due and payable regardless of convention attendance. Post that do not pay prior to the convention will be assessed the delegate fees at the plus \$1.00 rate.”

Pursuant to Article V, Sec 3 of the Department of Oklahoma, Veterans of Foreign Wars By-Laws,

“A delegate registration fee established by the Council of Administration will be paid by each Post for every delegate to which it is entitled and by others authorized to cast a vote as defined by the National By-Laws. This fee may be increased/decreased at each succeeding convention by the Council of Administration. Said fees shall be paid to the State Quartermaster 15 days prior to the opening session of the Department Convention. Anyone wanting to register after this date will be assessed an additional fee of \$1.00 for each delegate registered. Post delegate fees are due and payable regardless of convention attendance. Post that do not pay prior to the convention will be assessed the delegate fees at the plus \$1.00 rate.”

Commander Jim Bassett

Oklahoma is 10th out of 14 Departments within the Southern Conference.
Oklahoma is 45th out of 52 Departments within the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
As of 28 March 2022



According to Janine di Giovanni, “Easter is meant to be a symbol of hope, renewal, and new life.” This time of year is all about renewal. We need to look at this time of year to break out of our doldrums and start fresh. A time of renewal, we need to acknowledge that changes need to be made.

Did you know that in Oklahoma, it is against the law to share hamburgers? How about wearing your boots to bed? Saying curse words? It is illegal to have tissues in the back of your car. How about the fact that you need a Mayor’s signed permit to allow three or more dogs to congregate on your property? Imagine this, it’s a hot day, and a cold soda would hit the spot. Hold off. Don’t open the bottle alone. It takes the supervision of a licensed engineer to carry on with the task in Tulsa. How about reading a comic book while operating a motor vehicle? Well that one makes sense. But what about the fact that it is illegal to make faces at dogs? Women are not allowed to do their own hair unless licensed by the state? There is even a law that states your vehicle must be tethered outside of public buildings. Did you know that you can’t carry a fish in a fishbowl on a bus? And the last one. Did you know that it is against the law to go whaling in Oklahoma? Why do I mention these laws? Because some are funny, some are strange, and others are just sad. Understandably, some of these laws need to be changed. To keep up with the times or to check on how relevant they are. Our posts need to do the same. Because “we have always done it thay way” no longer applies. We need to change, not for the sake of change but to become releveant. If we don’t change, we will disappear.

The Mid Winter Conference is behind us. We had two days of training on various topics. We also held an open Town Hall with our National Representatives that was very informative. Our representative, John Muckelbauer, said that is was unique and he enjoyed it. I want to thank all of you for making this event a great success.

I also spent the weekend with the Auxiliary National President, Jean Hamil. It was great fun visiting posts and memorials in Oklahoma. We showed her that Oklahoma really is a great place. Congratualtions to our Auxiliary President, Polly, for setting up this great weekend.

During the Commander’s training we talked about National’s New and Reinstated Membership Grant initiative for VFW Posts. Now is the time to start calling your annual or overdue members and get them reinstated. Start calling the members at large and get them into the posts. It is extra money to help the posts. Recruiting versus retention. If we retain our

members, then we have cut the numbers needed to recruit. Let's make it easy on ourselves. What are you doing to keep your members?

Warm weather is coming. Chances to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Great opportunity to set up a recruiting table. Get out in the public and let them know that we are there. Set up a blood drive, or clothing, or food, or even school supplies.

I want to thank those that helped my class of commanders with the perpetual Voice of Democracy scholarship. Through your donations we will be offering a \$2,000 scholarship. The more money donated to the scholarship, the more can be awarded to the recipient. To donate to this worthy cause, you can send the money to our department to be collected as a total donation from the department or you can send your donation to:

Class 122 VOD Scholarship
James Lierz
VFW National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
816.756.3390

The donation window will permanently close June 30th, 2022.

We meet to “*transact business of mutual benefit. Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations. Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization and to the government of the United States of America.*” Nobody gains by spreading rumors, gossip, half-truths, or lies about someone or a post. It makes it harder to find unbiased members if a panel has to be convened. You may have noticed that I do not talk about investigations or discipline. I was taught in the military that you praise in public and criticize in private.

Mandates are being lifted and it is beginning to look like normalization of a post Covid world. Warm weather is coming. Chances to get out and enjoy the outdoors loom on the horizon. Enjoy the outside and sunshine, but be safe and smart. I think that the virus will always be with us like many other variants of the flu. With that in mind, I would like everyone to take the precautions that they feel are necessary to stay healthy. Be it wearing a mask, social distancing, taking the vaccine, or staying home. Do whatever *you* feel is best for your health and your family. Please keep an eye out on friends and family, don't be afraid to check with people. Buddy Checks. Stay healthy, stay on top of deadlines, but mostly, remember to have fun. We have many wonderful opportunities out there; we just need to capitalize on them.

Jim Bassett

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
P. O. Box 1126
Oklahoma City Oklahoma 73101
405.664.3929

Bassettj15@yahoo.com

<https://vfwoklahoma.org/>



Oklahoma

If not you, then who?

If not now, then when?

Hillel the Elder

Some thoughts from our Commander-in-Chief, Fritz Mihelcic.

Commander-in-Chief, Fritz Mihelcic held a Zoom meeting with all of the department Commanders on 29 March. We discussed a lot of items, but he had some thoughts that he wanted everyone to know. Other than item 1, these were taken as notes during the meeting. So, they are his info but my comments.

1. **Killed In Action Legacy of Merit:** the KIA Legacy Citation of Merit is now available. This certificate is for military personnel killed in the line of duty who were not able to become VFW members. There many posts named for these individuals in the VFW. This idea came about in part because of the 13 servicemembers who were killed in the last few days of Afghanistan, as they were eligible for membership but never had the opportunity to join. This does not confer membership in the VFW. It does recognize the sacrifice of servicemembers. I strongly suggest you push this to your posts and members. The certificate is beautiful, and many thanks go to Lynn Rolf, Dan West, and the great team in the Programs Department for completing this project. The instructions and link will get you where you need to go and will show you what the framed citation looks like. You can order the outstanding framed edition for \$135 or the document by itself for \$35. So many possibilities here. You can order one for your Post, for next of kin, whoever would appreciate an acknowledgement of service. There is no limit to the number you can order or how far back you can go. Instructions to access order form.

1. Go to vfw.org (direct link <https://oms.vfw.org/CitationOfMerit/?sec=3>)
2. Sign in
3. Click on OMS
4. Click on Tools, Products and Merch
5. Fill out form
6. Go to payment.
7. Make payment.

2. **VMS:** Veterans and Military Support (VMS) donations are down. Something that Fritz noticed is that many posts do not donate to VMS until they think they qualify for All-American. VMS supports many programs. The Military Assistance Program (MAP) grants that are used to pay for events to support military units. Unmet Needs Program. But more importantly, the money is used to support veterans during natural disasters. Oklahoma uses the MAP a lot, we use it to support two memorial runs as well as numerous family days, holiday dinners, or other events. So, please, at least donate the minimum to VMS.
3. **Buddy Poppies:** Buddy Poppy sales are down. Fritz stated that he has heard many times that posts have closets full. I have even heard that. How hard is it to give them to everyone that you see? That's the program, give them away. It opens conversations. The other side of this is that Buddy Poppy displays are way down. A post should be working with their Auxiliary to create the display. If you have a bunch of poppies stored away, consider giving them back to the department for our large events like the fairs.
4. **"I've got a secret.":** Fritz mentioned that he is seeing a lot of secret keeping. If I'm the only one doing this, I'm important! This is not true. All it means is that when they stop, no one knows about it and it dies. We need to work as a team. Teach and mentor other members on what you do.
5. **Rebate Program:** the program will continue until 30 June. You will receive free money just by doing what you should be doing, getting your members to reinstate, or upgrade to Life Membership. And yes, recruit.
6. **Action Corps:** Action Corp is designed to keep you involved with legislation that impacts us, those in uniform, and those that will wear the uniform. Someone pointed out something that I missed. At the bottom of every Action Corps email is an update on POW/MIAs. Those found, or identified, or returned. That should help make it easy to get people to sign up. This is open to anyone that is interested in veterans' affairs. It is not restricted to VFW or Auxiliary members only. Oh, by the way, because of Fritz pushing this, Action Corps has seen a 37% increase.
7. **National Sponsors:** National is picking up some new sponsors. Guitars for Vets and K9 Heroes. They are also working with some performance artists. Jesse James Dupree from Jackyl. They are also working with Anthrax and others. Just talking to people may end up in sponsorship support of the Oklahoma VFW and Auxiliary.

Reporting: Fritz noticed that a lot of events or items are not being reported. Some are being reported at the end of the year in hopes of making All-American. But more is just not being reported. He asked us to look into why. Is it that hard to report? Do people just not care? Do we have individuals that are not doing their job? Let's make this easy. If you have events and need to report and don't know how, ask. Ask other post members, even ask other posts. You always have your district as well as department that will help. If you have someone that is supposed to report for the post and they aren't, replace them with someone willing to do the job. If you go to the All-American Dashboard and look at the KPI's (Key Performance Indicators), it is roughly half of what we are doing. We are belittling ourselves by not reporting.

Senior Vice Commander Jeremy Owen

Comrades, I hope these comments find you happy and healthy! If not, I pray for your recovery you. This year is rolling along. Now is not the time to slow down. As of right now, we have 38 posts in our Department that are at 10 or fewer members needed for 100% in membership. Now is a great time to bring annual members back into our great organization with national's member rebates! The post gets money for their recruiting and retention so what are we waiting for? I have had a few comrades contact me about wanting to hold a chairmanship or help on a committee next year. If you feel that you can help with any of our programs, then reach out to me. I would like to fill these appointments with comrades who want to do it or have a passion for it.

We have elections coming the next two months for Post and district officers, I hope we are all motivated to fill these positions whether it be moving up or stepping aside and mentoring. I hope to see many of you soon and pray for health for all.

State Commander's Gift

Comrades, we have had a great year under the leadership of State Commander Jim Bassett. Commander Bassett has conducted himself in a professional manner and has been a great friend and comrade to all VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. He has reached out way beyond our own organization in efforts to get the VFW name and mission to many individuals and organizations. His dedication to our organization runs deep within his heart and his spirit to see our organization grow and become stronger is second to none. Therefore, it is my great honor to ask for gifts on his behalf.

It is tradition to present a gift to the outgoing state commander at the end of his/her term on behalf of the entire department. So, this is the official call to all District, Posts, and members within our department to please send a monetary donation to State Headquarters for Commander Bassett. We know that Commander Jim Bassett will deeply appreciate the gesture of kindness and I do as well.

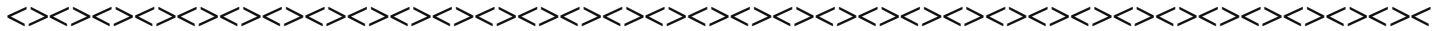
Please send all donations to the State Headquarters, Attn: Commander's Gift at P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK 73101. 100% of all proceeds go directly to the Commander or will be given as a gift to a charity/organization of his choosing.

Oklahoma VFW Foundation

Have you thought about supporting our very own Oklahoma VFW Foundation? There are several ways to do it: Amazon smile is a great way. Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com> once there then find Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation. Post donations & personal donations are another great way to support our Foundation. Donations are tax deductible. Donating to the Oklahoma VFW Foundation is a way of donating back to Posts within our

department and our programs. Donors may also designate where they want their donation dollars to go toward, for instance, Veterans Services, Honor Guards, etc. Donations can be sent to Oklahoma VFW Foundation, [P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK](mailto:VFW@okvfwfoundation.org) or by visiting the Foundation website at <https://okvfwfoundation.org> and the selecting the donate button.

Jeremy Owen
State Senior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma



Junior Vice Commander

Erica Traxler

***Student Veterans of America Liaison
Citizenship Education Chair***

Comrades,

I hope this month's general orders finds you well. We are about to head into nominations and elections of officers as well as our state convention. I said last month to "choose wisely, be open to change, be transparent, and be ready to work. I know the person you elect as your district and post commanders will represent you and Oklahoma well. If you are looking to take on more responsibility look to your post and district positions, look to the chair positions at the state level, and reach out to people to inform them that you are interested. If you have not yet held a position start with something small at your post or shadow a person to learn what the responsibilities are. I am still looking to fill chair positions at the state level for my command year." This information still stands. You are what makes the Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars successful. The hard work, dedication, motivation, passion, and discipline that you display toward helping veterans is phenomenal. I am honored and proud to serve alongside each and every person in this great organization.

The state convention is coming up June 9-12 at the Embassy Suites in Norman. I hope to see everyone there. These conventions are about comradery, mentorship, training, learning, and having fun. The more people we have come to these events the better for the organization and the veterans we are serving throughout the state.

I will have the honor of taking the Oklahoma check to the National Home for Children this year. I am very excited to be afforded the opportunity to represent Oklahoma.

Social media is still important and will continue to be so for the indefinite future. It is a powerful tool that can assist in the successes of every event we host in Oklahoma. The rules for

All-American have changed, so there is still time for each post and district to get their social media accounts up and running for credit toward All-American. Please reach out to Comrade Traxler (Randy) to have him post on the social media pages.

Recruit! Recruit! Recruit! It is important for us to recruit and retain members so we can address congress and have our needs addressed and supported by members of congress. We have earned this opportunity, but we must maintain the members to be able to continue this opportunity. There is an updated flier on what we do for veterans and their family members. It is a great recruiting tool.

I am fundraising for my State Commander year. I have to be able to purchase things like shirts for the CofA members, coins, gifts for each state commander, my National Commander gift, and anything else that comes up. The first fundraiser I am doing is a ¼ beef with a deep freezer. Tickets are \$10 for one or \$25 for three. You can purchase at any time. The drawing will be on Saturday at the state convention. If you live in Oklahoma, I will deliver the beef to you. I appreciate the support from every person so that I can continue these traditions.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve you as the Oklahoma Junior Vice Commander. This is truly an honor. As you know I am running for state Senior Vice Commander and would appreciate your vote. Please call, text, or email if you need anything.

--

Erica Traxler

Junior Vice Commander, VFW Oklahoma

Student Veterans of America Liaison

Citizenship Education Chair

989-239-5999

ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com

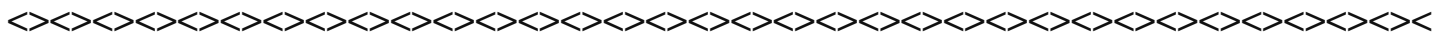
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Curt Watts

Department Parliamentarian (RP)

COMMANDERS & ADJUTANTS: Pursuant to **MOP, Sec 222**, Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st. Please note that on 31 March 22 is sent out a delegate worksheet showing the delegate strength of each Post and the required Department delegate dues owed by each Post. The cost of dues payable to the Department is \$5.00 per delegate. This rate is determined by the Department of Oklahoma Council of Administration vote. Pursuant to VFW Oklahoma Bylaws, the delegate fee must be paid no later than 15 days prior to the opening of the Department Convention. Dues paid within the 15-day window are subject to the additional \$1.00 charge per delegate.

Assistant Department Adjutant/Quartermaster: Comrades, I hope each of you at our Mid-Winter Conference was able to reach out to Comrade Andrea Melcher from Glenpool Post 9126 who is serving as our Assistant Adjutant/Quartermaster for the remainder of the 2021-2022 year. As of this writing, Sr. Vice Commander Jeremy Owen is planning on appointing Andrea as State Adjutant for next year during our VFW 2022-2023 year allowing me to step down from some of the Department duties. Andrea is currently serving as Glenpool Post 9126 Adjutant/Quartermaster. Andrea's email is vfwokasst.adj@gmail.com Please don't hesitate to contact her.



National Council Member

Curt Watts

Comrades, as we come into our Convention season, I hope and pray that you are well and in good spirits. It would be a great honor of mine to see each of you at our 101st Annual VFW Oklahoma Convention in Oklahoma City in June. Our National Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic will be our National representative on the VFW side. In talking with the Chief during our Washington D.C. Legislative Conference and Council of Administration meeting, he is looking forward to his visit to Oklahoma.

I would be remiss in my duties if I did not give a big thank you to Commanders Bill Richey of Post 2976 in Claremore and Dan Fuller of Post 577 in Tulsa along with their fellow Comrades and Auxiliary members in welcoming our National Auxiliary President Jean Hamil into their Post homes during her recent visit to Oklahoma. While I was unable to attend all the activities Polly McCord and her team had planned for Jean, Sharon and I were able to attend the dinner at

Claremore in President Hamil's honor. Again, thank you to all whose efforts were made to support her visit!

Current VFW National Topics and Issues:

2nd Quarter National Budget FY 21-22 Report:

Quartermaster General Marc Garuno recently sent the National Council the National Budget Report for the 2nd quarter of the VFW 2021-2022 fiscal year. In Marc's words "While Fiscal Year 2020-2021 provided stellar market returns, there has been more volatility and a pullback in the markets due to high inflation rates and the war in Ukraine. Our General Fund Reserve investments ended the second quarter with market losses just over \$2 million. We continue strategizing with our investment consultants and managers while adhering to our investment policy statement to help minimize the overall risk to our portfolios." If you would like a full copy of this report, feel free to contact me at vfwokncm@outlook.com and I will be happy to forward it to you.

Fund-Raising:

How many of us have received fund-raising material from the National organization in the mail that was very, very late? I know I have. First, please don't let that keep you from donating to our national organization and supporting our services to veterans. Secondly, due to global supply chain issues, labor shortage events, port delays overwhelmed trucking, warehouse and rail logistics have contributed significantly to mail delays. Unfortunately, due mostly to the above stated issues, the VFW National organization is showing a deficit of \$8,596,594.

As I have stated before and continue to state, that as your National Council Member, it is my goal and desire to always represent you, speak out for you, and do what is best for the VFW Department of Oklahoma within our National organization. I want to thank each of you who let me know your thoughts.

Programs: Programs Director Lynn Roth is asking for support for our *Voice Of Democracy Parade of Winners*:

The VFW will be hosting its second annual virtual Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners live on April 7 at 7 p.m. CDT, live on Facebook.

Join us as VFW and VFW Auxiliary state and national leadership, a representative from program sponsor [Twisted X](#), and this year's 52 Voice of Democracy Department (state) winners come together from all over the world as we crown the 2022 national Voice of Democracy first place winner.

Be sure to [visit the VFW Facebook page, select the Virtual Parade of Winner event, tap “interested,” then “going” to ensure you stay up-to-date and receive all event notifications and reminders.](#)

Meeting & Events:

To date, 854 reservations have been made for the National Convention. If you are planning on attending the National Convention, please get your reservation made as soon as possible. The hotels fill up quickly. Oklahoma Convention attendees have been assigned to the Crowne Plaza along with five other Departments Convention attendees from the Southern Conference.

National Legislative Service

- House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Ranking Member Mike Bost (R-Ill.) held a mock hearing with this year’s VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows. Each fellow had the opportunity to testify on their proposal and answer questions. Topics included work-study parity, preventing toxic exposure, ensuring non-VA health care provider awareness of veterans, VA health care services, and extending the Forever GI Bill to include all veterans who left service after December 2001. [Read more about the fellowship.](#)
- The House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing to discuss pending health care legislation. VA representatives responded to questions on its policies and procedures regarding non-VA emergency care reimbursement, long-term care alternatives, lactation stations, and an increase in the structural alterations amount for disabled veterans. In a statement submitted for the record, VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Tammy Barlet commented on [H.R. 5754](#), the *Patient Advocate Tracker Act*, which stemmed from a proposal by 2021 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow Cameron Zbikowski. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony.](#)
- The House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing to review legislation regarding education, employment, transition, and housing. Proposals included creating permanent policies to protect VA education benefits in cases of national emergency, expanding eligibility of the self-employment track within Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E), and making it easier for veterans facing housing insecurity to receive rental assistance. In a statement submitted for the record, VFW National Legislative Associate Director Emily DeVito commented, "The COVID-19 pandemic’s massive impact on higher education and training, including unforeseen closures and rapid changes to modalities, brought to the forefront the urgent need for permanent legislation that would direct VA in these times of crisis." [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony.](#)
- The House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs conducted a hearing to address VA health care workforce recruitment and retention challenges. VA highlighted steps it is taking to attract and retain employees, such as maximizing bonuses, increasing opportunities to

advance, and investing in programs like VHA Reduce Employee Burnout and Optimize Organizational Thriving (REBOOT) to ensure employee well-being. [Watch the hearing.](#)

- The VFW currently [supports 159 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, PMurray@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

- VFW's Pre-Discharge Service Representatives hosted a series of benefit briefings for separating service members around the country this week to include Naval Support Activity Annapolis, Fort Hood, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Joint Base Andrews, and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. NVS also participated in an Air Force General Officer TAP course to discuss benefits assistance.
- NVS Health Care team participated in a Veterans Family Caregiver and Survivor Federal Advisory committee meeting
- NVS participated in a Project ATLAS listening session this week alongside VHA to hear from the VFW's pilot sites on their perceptions of the program. Two of the VFW's five sites participated in the discussion – Eureka, Montana, and Gowanda, New York.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci, RGallucci@vfw.org.

Comrades, I will continually state that as your National Council Member, it is my duty, privilege, and desire to represent Oklahoma VFW and its members. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email address or my cell number below if you desire. I am always willing to listen to your comments and/or share information from the National side.

Respectfully,

Curt Watts

National Council of Administration 2021-22

Oklahoma

vfwokncm@outlook.com

405.590.8577

National Legislative Committee Member
Mike Merit

2022 Spring National Legislative Conference
VFWOK After Action Report

Congressman Kevin Hern Feb 28th

HR 4673 EVEST Act

Agrees it should have been in place many years ago. Can't anticipate backlogs, wait time and costs. Believes that it will cause higher priority veterans already in the system will have to wait longer once this bill is put into place. The bill has not been really thought through. That's why they cannot support it.

HR3967 PACT Act

Agrees that toxic exposure needs to be addressed, however, more specifically and not broad reaching like this bill is. Suggest more focused bills that have been introduced.

HR1282 Major Richard Star Act

Happy to support this bill.

HR1510 Veterans Camera Reporting Act

Only no vote in our delegation. Asked why but could not answer. Will get back to us later.

HR1836 Guard and Reserve Parity Act

Thinks the refinancing fees in this act are higher and should not be passed on to the veteran. Wants the qualifying times to be more defined and not as board. Needs to be more specific according to the missions, not generality.

HR2492 Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act

Only no vote in our delegation. Believes that it is a duplication within the administration, it is not needed and an expensive waste of money. Will find out more info as to why they did not support the measure.

Notes: Meeting was via Zoom. Did not meet with the Congressman. Was on the floor voting. Appreciated receiving the legislative tracker we have. Gives them something to review concerning all the VFW Legislative Priorities.

Senator James Inhofe Mar 1st

S344 Major Richard Star Act

Cost was the reason that it did not make the NDAA last fall. Does not like the possibility of the cost coming out of the DoD budget, especially due to what is going on with China and Russia. Appreciates that it is owed to veterans. Must figure out the costs and where it can be paid from. Want to support it if that can be answered in a fiscally responsible way.

S3003 COST of War Act

Cost is extremely prohibitive. Understands that the exposure must be looked at. However, given current financial issues and who bares the responsibility for it, does not believe that Congress has the stomach for it.

Notes: Meeting was via conference call. Met with his staff including Dan Archer. Senator was not available. State Commander Bassett did listen in on the meeting. Had limited time to discuss bills outside of what is noted above. Discussed how the Department is tackling veteran suicide in the state and how National is helping in that area. Discussed the company Clearforce.com. Wanted to know what our thoughts are on it. Stated we would get back to them on it.

Congressman Frank Lucas Mar 1st

HR3967 PACT Act

Is hearing that the Senate wants to pass its version, but the House is not wanting to hear it. Still needs to read up on it and understand the cost of it, but it is cost prohibitive in either form. Will have to research it more prior to the upcoming floor vote on it.

HR1282 Major Richard Star Act

Stated he wanted to speak with Bost of Illinois to get the bill moving. Agrees with the concept of the bill.

HR2335 VET TEC Enhancement Act

Supports the concept of the bill because of the large tech schools in Oklahoma.

HR4673 EVEST

Will consider it. Agrees that it needs to be done because too many veterans fall through the cracks.

Notes: Meeting was via Zoom. Did meet with the Congressman and his staff. State Commander Bassett and State Legislative Chair Rebecca McGary participated in the meeting as well. Congressman wants to talk about the VA facilities here in Oklahoma. Wants to have a status update when we meet again in the fall.

Congressman Tom Cole Mar 2nd.

HR3967 PACT Act

Believes that the bill has enough votes to pass and that it will pass, but he does not believe that it and 3003 can be reconciled unless the majority comes up with a way to fund it.

HR1282 Major Richard Star Act

Agrees that it needs to be passed, but also believes that nothing can be done with it until a true CBO cost estimate is made of either it or S344.

HR4673 EVEST Act

Only one of our delegation to vote for the bill. Believes in the program but really aggravated with how slow the current DOD-VA records merger is taking. Thinks it has been a big waste of money.

Notes: Meeting was via Zoom. Did meet with the Congressman and his staff. State Legislative Chair Rebecca McGary participated in the meeting as well. The Congressman supports more of our bills each year than the rest of our delegation. Will usually sign on as a bill nears a floor vote.

Congresswoman Stephanie Bice Mar 2nd

HR3967 PACT Act

Congresswoman is a big supporter of the K2 bill which is a stand-alone bill but also wrapped up into this bill.

HR2797 Green Alert Act

Wants to get behind the bill and believes they can definitely support it.

HR239 Equal Access for Contraception for Veterans Act

Voted no because it supported certain drugs than can be abortive type drugs. Took the position due to religious beliefs.

Notes: Meeting was via Zoom. Met with staff. Congresswoman was not available. State Legislative Chair Rebecca McGary participated as well. Brief meeting due to their time constraints. They are working on putting together a bill that would provide standards for caskets unclaimed veterans are returned to be buried in. To ensure they are not buried in a cardboard box. Something like that recently happened to a veteran here in Oklahoma.

Overall notes. Election year politics are in swing, and this delegation drops back down to its base which is deeply religious and highly fiscally conservative. Sadly, that is why we cannot get them to get behind most of our bills and we get tired of that excuse. We were not able to meet with Senator James Lankford or Congressman Markwayne Mullin. They did not respond to multiple attempts to reach out to them. They also do not respond to Action Corps Alerts when members respond to them. For Senator Lankford, that is not a surprise. For Con. Mullin, it is surprising because it is usually his office that coordinates all my other meetings. He has announced for Sen. Inhofe's Senate seat, so his priorities are probably elsewhere. Additionally, he is known for asking what top five bills we would like him to sign on to. We provide that list and then he never does follow through.

PACT Voting results for Oklahoma:

Cole – nay

Lucas – nay

Mullin – nay

Hern – nay

Bice – yea

VFW Commander-in-Chief Testifies Before Congress: VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. The VFW delivered its top priority of toxic exposure reform, telling Congress to pass comprehensive legislation for veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in service. “For generations, veterans have returned home from war with an array of unexplained health conditions and illnesses associated with the toxic exposures and environmental hazards they encountered in service. Today is no different, and toxic exposure has become synonymous with military service. For this reason, the time is now for Congress to change the way veterans receive health care and benefits to help save our lives.” [Read the testimony.](#)

House Passes the Honoring our PACT Act: The House passed VFW-supported [H.R. 3967](#) Honoring our PACT Act, the of 2021. The passage of this comprehensive toxic exposure bill

came the day following VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic’s speech at a press conference at the U.S. Capitol in support of this legislation and his testimony in front of a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. The VFW now calls on the Senate to pass comprehensive toxic exposure legislation.

Congress Passes Government Funding Legislation with Veteran Provisions: The House and Senate passed a government funding omnibus package that includes 12 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2022, supplemental funding to support Ukraine, and three VFW-supported provisions that would affect veterans. The first provision would increase the maximum rate of basic pay for VA nurses and physician assistants, allowing VA to offer more competitive salaries. The second provision would permit VA’s National Cemetery Administration to grant individual states the ability to decide who is interred in their state veterans’ cemeteries and to open their application process, ensuring all National Guard and Reserve members can be buried with fellow service members. The third provision would increase funding for VET TEC from \$45 million to \$125 million to meet the high demand for the program and enable its operation through the end of the fiscal year. The bill now heads to the president for signature.

House Hearing on Pending Health Legislation: The House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing to discuss pending health care legislation. VA representatives responded to questions on its policies and procedures regarding non-VA emergency care reimbursement, long-term care alternatives, lactation stations, and an increase in the structural alterations amount for disabled veterans. In a statement submitted for the record, VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Tammy Barlet commented on [H.R. 5754](#), the Patient Advocate Tracker Act, which stemmed from a proposal by 2021 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow Cameron Zbikowski. [Read the testimony.](#)

VFW Testifies at Senate Hearing on Toxic Exposure: The VFW and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough testified on Tuesday, March 29, before the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs on [H.R. 3967](#), Honoring our PACT Act of 2021. VFW National Legislative Associate Director Kristina Keenan testified for the VFW on the urgent need to pass this comprehensive toxic exposure bill as it would help millions of toxic-exposed veterans, and ensure VA has the appropriate staff and resources to implement this legislation.

Veteran Mammography Bills Pass Senate: The Senate passed VFW-supported [S. 2102](#), Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans In Combat Environments (SERVICE) Act of 2021, and [S. 2533](#), Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act. The SERVICE Act would require VA to provide mammography screenings to veterans who served in known toxic exposure locations. The MAMMO Act would require VA to carry out a mammography telescreening pilot program, upgrade VA mammography suites to 3-D digital screening, and develop a breast imaging strategic plan for veterans.

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR ACTION CORPS!



***Veterans and Military Services Committee Chair
Tony McGrew***

Hello Comrades,

VMS Programs are an integral part of the VFW's never-ending obligation to assist members of the active-duty military, National Guard and Reserves, as well as their families. VMS is broken down into 3 distinct stand-alone programs.



Unmet Needs

Military Assistance Program (MAP)

VFW "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" program

- * Unmet Needs provides financial assistance to service members, veterans, and their families experiencing a financial hardship directly related to their military service.
- * Assistance, not a handout.
- * The financial assistance is in the form of a one-time grant in an amount up to \$2,500. All grants are paid directly to the "creditor" companies (such as the electric company, mortgage company, landlord, etc.) and not to the individual.
- * Funds can be used for rent, car repairs, medical expenses, infant-care items and many other necessities.
- * Each case is reviewed individually, and acceptance determined by a committee.
- * Applied for online at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

Adopt a Unit

Did you know a Post can adopt a Military Unit and provide support for Family Days, Yellow Ribbons, Deployments, Holiday Events, Meeting and Support Seminars, Direct Assistance and more?

This is an excellent way to locate and enlist new members into your Post. If you need more information on Adopting a Unit, please get in touch with me.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

Oklahoma Army National Guard Crossroads Events

Location: 3535 NE Military Circle, OKC 73111

Dates:

9 April, 21 May, 4 June, 16 July, 6 Aug, and 17 Sep.

Times: 0800 Until

** Crossroads Events are sponsored by the OKANG and provides information to troops on transitioning to civilian life and their VA Benefits. They are planning on more events in March, April, May, June, July, August, and September.

All for One; One for All

Tony McGrew

State VMS Chair

District 10 Commander

Department of Oklahoma

405-820-6467

Tony.vfw8706@gmail.com

<https://www.vfwoklahoma.org>

Still Serving
By State Assistant Adjutant/Quartermaster
Andrea Melcher

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GET A FREE #STILLSERVING DECAL



Display your decal proudly to show your support.

This offer is intended for military and veterans to show their #StillServing pride.

Glenpool VFW Post 9126 was nominated for #StillServing Post of the Month for the month of May 2022. #StillServing is a campaign to encourage all posts to serve in their communities. You can listen to the #StillServing podcast or even share what you or your post are doing to support this cause.

Ever since the beginning, VFW Post 9126 decided we wanted to provide a healing and safe environment for veterans. Glenpool VFW Post has been dedicated to helping Veterans and bringing awareness to Veteran's needs. Our post handed out hand sanitizer during the beginning of COVID. It was not only available to local veterans but the community as well. We have spent countless hours repairing vehicles, homes, and trailers for needy and/or disabled veterans. We even rebuilt a camper for a homeless veteran and their family that was living in a dangerous black mold situation. Many members have provided transportation to and from VA appointments, VFW meetings and events, or simply helped Veterans with a ride to the grocery store.

Post 9126 has proudly partnered with Unite-Us to increase the amount of resources available to Veterans, allowing other organizations to not only refer Veterans to us for resources, but we refer them to other organizations who are better equipped to help in certain areas. We have worked closely with the City of Glenpool and advocated for them to become a Purple Heart City, helped raise money to remodel a local Veterans Memorial in Glenpool, and we partnered with a local American Legion chapter to raise the American Flag during Black Gold Days.

Our post is very passionate about Veteran suicide prevention and improving quality of life for veterans. We started what we have coined Warrior's Night, to help bring all Veterans together in fun and engaging opportunities, some of which are free to Veterans and their families. This allows Veterans to network with one another, build trust and develop friendships with other Veterans in a safe and controlled environment. Warrior's Hope was also established to provide Veterans and their families a program to help deal with PTSD and Moral Injuries. This is a structured 12-week program but is designed to allow someone the ability to jump in at any point. This program understands that although the Veteran experiences PTSD, their family can be affected and helps them to better cope with and understand what is happening. Additional benefits and resources are available during the Warrior Hope meetings.

Why is this so important to us? Every one of us has answered the call, we have gone to war. But what happens when you go back home to your families? The United States military has the best training programs in the world! For some of us, that button didn't switch from the "on" position to the "off" position when we came back home. This doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you, you are doing what you were trained to do. It is our goal to help give veterans struggling with PTSD/moral injury a new mission and set them on a new path. One of the biggest causes of Veteran suicide is loneliness, you go from having a squad/platoon, etc. that has your back to being by yourself. You aren't the same person you were before you deployed. In the military you had battle buddies that had your six. We want to create places for veterans to meet new battle buddies and realize that we got their six!

From the start VFW Post 9126 has wanted to help Veterans. We are striving to bring Veterans from all generations together and continue the great work of the VFW. #StillServing You can learn more about #StillServing and how you can share how you or your post is #StillServing here:

<https://todaysvfw.org/>

You can find the #StillServing Podcasts here: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/vfw-podcast>

Andrea Melcher
State Assistant Adjutant/ Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma
Vfwokasst.adj@gmail.com

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

D-1 > 09 Apr 22 1100hrs>Post 5307 Salina> State Surgeon Mike Irons
D-3 > 01 May 22 1100hr>Post 4446 Stigler> State Surgeon Mike Irons
D-4 > 07 May 22 1100hrs>Post3916 Durant > State Surgeon Mike Irons
D-5 > 01 May 22 1000hrs>Post 2976 Claremore > State Commander Jim Bassett
D-7 > 07 May 22 1100hrs>Post 1098 McAlester> State Commander Jim Bassett
D-8 > 01 May 22 1100hrs>Post 1320 Sapulpa> State Adj/QM Curt Watts
D-9 > 14 May 22 1000hrs>Post 2270 Enid> State Adj/QM Curt Watts
D-10 >14 May 22 1000hrs>Post 7192 Midwest City> State Sr. Vice CDR Jeremy Owen
D-13 >07 May 22 1230hrs>Post 6143 Weatherford> State Jr. Vice CDR Erica Traxler
D-14 >07 May 22 1100hrs>DAV Building, 101 N. 6th St, Chickasha State Sr. Vice CDR
Jeremy Owen
D-15 >14 May 22 1100hrs> Post 4876 Altus> State Jr. Vice CDR Erica Traxler

DATES TO REMEMBER:

03 Apr> National Former POW Recognition Day
06 Apr > Army Day
10 Apr> Palm Sunday
11 Apr> Persian Gulf War Official Cease Fire (1991)
15 Apr> Good Friday/Passover Begins
17 Apr> Easter Sunday
18 Apr> Income Tax Day
09 Jun> VFWOK & VFWOKA Convention Begins, Embassy Suites, Norman, OK
16 Jul> 123rd VFW National Convention 2022, Kansas, City, MO begins

CONVENTION BOOK ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Greetings from the Department of Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars:

As non-profit organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) depend on you and your donations to remain viable nationally and within our great state. Donations help us care for the State's Veterans and conduct programs throughout communities within Oklahoma.

As we head toward our Annual State VFW and Auxiliary Convention on June 9-12, 2022, we ask for your support by advertising in our convention/ program book or helping us to find business that would like to advertise in our convention book. Our convention/ program book is distributed to our posts throughout the state and is available to over 20,000 VFW and Auxiliary members. That state-wide exposure alone will multiply your advertisement investment. An added benefit is the potential notoriety as you consider banner, booths and other mediums that are available. We have also taken a direct approach for publishing the book to assist in making your advertisement exceptionally reasonable.

The purpose of the VFW Program Book is to serve as a commemorative keepsake for the members and their families as well as provide an excellent medium for advertisement and showcasing our supporters. We appreciate what you have done for the Veterans of the state and their families. Additionally, we appreciate your business and offer a "great Oklahoma Thank you" in advance.

VFW CONVENTION PROGRAM BOOK

FULL PAGE (COLOR)	\$300.00
HALF PAGE (COLOR)	\$150.00
FULL PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	\$175.00
HALF PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	\$100.00
QUARTER PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	\$50.00
2.5 x 4 LINE (BLACK AND WHITE)	\$25.00

CONVENTION SPONSORSHIP INCENTIVE \$1000.00

Sponsorship package includes; a full page color ad, posting a banner at the convention and other VFW/ Auxiliary events for one (1) year, VFW Oklahoma website advertisement for one (1) year and ability to set up an information booth during the convention (09-12 June 2022) as well as other conference events for one (1) year.

WEBSITE ADVERTISEMENT ONLY INCENTIVE

\$25.00 PER MONTH (\$300) OR a pay upfront incentive of \$250 for one (1) year. Feel free to visit our website at vfwoklahoma.org or searching VFW Oklahoma.

BOOTH RENTAL ONLY \$100 PER EVENT (STIPULATIONS APPLY)

A message from the Special Olympics Oklahoma

Special Olympics
Oklahoma



Hello Volunteers!

First off, you are SO missed! Here at Special Olympics Oklahoma we are searching for ways to stay connected and active during these times and want you to know we have not forgotten about you!

I actually need some volunteers for a few upcoming events & then I want to share an at-home volunteer opportunity that you can be a part of.

For the last few months an at-home opportunity has been available and has been very successful for reaching our athletes in an encouraging way! This opportunity is called **Volunteer From Home** and allows you to make homemade posters, letters, videos, and photos encouraging our athletes across Oklahoma. More information regarding this event is available through the link here to sign-up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4EA4AC2BA6F58-volunteer>

If you have any questions regarding any of the above opportunities or have suggestions as well, please reply to this email and I will do my best in communicating back with you as soon as possible. Thank you again for all that you have done and will continue to do for Special Olympics Oklahoma and our incredible 12,100 athletes!

Josie Stephens

Volunteer Manager

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Special Olympics Oklahoma

Tel +1 918-481-1234

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Volunteer Facebook [Special Olympics Oklahoma Volunteers](#)

Instagram [@SOOKlahoma](#)

Twitter [@SOOKlahoma](#)