



Department of Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars

P.O. Box 1106 OKC, OK 73101-1126
(405) 850-0815 / www.vfwoklahoma.org



The 46th Star Tribune January 2024

January 2023-2024 Series

"It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link of the chain of destiny can be handled at a time"

Sir Winston Churchill

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

General Orders No. 7

2023-2024 Series

1. Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records, and accounts are audited by the Trustees. Among the duties of the three (3) elected Post Trustees, they shall:

- a. At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.
- b. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant and any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted, or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
- c. The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify the accuracy of the information contained therein.
- d. Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

2. 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



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of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.

BY ORDER:

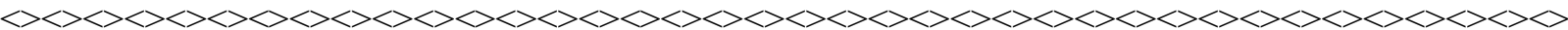
ATTEST:

o/s

o/s

Erica L. Traxler
State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Michael L. Merit
State Adjutant
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



State Commander Erica Traxler

**Department Convention Co-Chairman
Student Veterans of America Liaison
Citizenship Education Chair**

Comrades,

Hello Comrades. I hope this month's general orders finds you well. We have made it through the holidays. I hope your holidays were good and you were blessed this year. We get to look forward to the new year and everything it brings. As of 12/30/2023 our membership is at 88.81% and we are number 32. We need 1415 more members to hit the 102% goal. I know we can do it! Teamwork makes the dream work. We have our Mid-Winter conference coming up on February 9-11, 2024. It will be at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Claremore. Rooms are \$94 per night for either a king or two queen beds. I look forward to the scholarships and safety awards that we have the opportunity to provide to recipients in our communities.

Please remember to put your reports in the dashboard. There are so many posts deserving of receiving the All-State and All-American designations/awards but fail to put in their reports by the deadlines. The department Quartermaster Curt



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Watts recently sent out an email with a wealth of information that can help you with the dashboard. Also, if you have questions please don't hesitate to reach out.

The state commanders, national legislative representatives and some others will be "storming the hill" for national legislative week in Washington D.C. in

March. This is an exciting time for us to be able to discuss what is important to veterans and the VFW. We also get to meet the VOD winners from every department and congratulate them on a job well done. We also get to watch the Commander in Chief testify to congress. This is a tremendous opportunity for the comrades attending.

For the last couple of months, I have talked about the Auxiliary, The Military Order of the Cooties, and the VFW Riders motorcycle group. Please do not forget about how they add to this amazing organization to make it what it is. We would not be as successful without their efforts. The Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars is what it is today because of the membership, not because of the department. The department is here to help the posts and districts be successful. Please do not hesitate to reach out for assistance. Oklahoma VFW Riders is hosting the Operation Daily Battle festival in September at VFW Post 5263 in Lawton. This organization helps to reduce veteran suicide and to educate people on suicide awareness and prevention. The VFW Riders continues to need more members to join our ranks. We are partnered with Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas and will have a BBQ cookoff between the states. If you are interested in participating or coming to this event, we would be glad to have you. Just reach out and we will get you more information.

I want to thank everyone for their hard work so far this year. You are working your programs, membership, getting out into your communities, and supporting veterans and their families in the best way possible. You are doing amazing things. I am so grateful to be a part of the best department in the organization. I look forward to attending more district meetings and I hope to see people at the upcoming Mid-Winter in February.



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Erica Traxler

State Commander

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

989-239-5999

ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com

<https://vfwoklahoma.org/>



State Senior Vice Commander Dan Fuller

Comrades,

I would like to thank all the VFW members and Auxiliary members that have reached out to me on the passing of my mother on this Christmas Eve.

It has been a long struggle here in Tahlequah and the support of the State Commander, Post 577 and all the other people that have contacted me has been very comforting.

A special thanks to Post 3707 Tahlequah for allowing us to have a family gathering there.

With this new year I am positive that this Department will fulfill its membership Goal of a 102%. Please contact me at dan.mack10@yahoo.com if you need any updated listed of possible members in your area.

I am looking forward to the upcoming Winter Festival and will see many of you at the upcoming District meetings.



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The State Officers have been working very hard on the possibility of buying a State HQ building and selling of the many properties that are under the control of the Dept. HQ. Contact your COA representatives or any of the State Officers with your opinions or concerns.

Keep up the Good Work! And wear your own Kind of hat.

Respectfully,

Danny Mack Fuller

Department of Oklahoma State Senior Vice Commander.

*State Junior Vice Commander
Jeff Harris*

Greeting Comrades,

I am hoping everyone had a very merry Christmas and a safe New year celebration. I am sure you got everything you was wishing for. LOL

As we start our new VFW year, let's put our ideals together and see if we can make our VFW better. I have already seen how a Post has changed the operations of the Post and added new things and hours of operations to see if things will help. If it helps that would be for good for the whole VFW and maybe another post sees it and adds the ideals to help them. Sometimes we must do what is helping other Posts to help your own. Never be afraid to look at another Post. We must work together for the best of the VFW.

As District meeting will be happening in the state, I will make as many as I can .



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As you know, I will be running for the office of State Sr. Vice Commander. I have a lot of dedication and am willing to help wherever I am asked to help. So, if any post or district is any help at whatever I am needed for please ask me

Thank you so much,
Jeff Harris

State Adjutant Mike Merit

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

I know that a lot of people are frustrated concerning the Department Dashboard. Comrade Randy Traxler is working diligently to fix all of the issues that are going on. Last month, I worked on everyone's login, but there are still some with issues. Until we figure out what the issue is, please try this process to login in for reporting.

1. www.vfwoklahoma.org
 2. Login drop-down, select Members Only, NOT Report Entry.
 3. Member ID#: Your VFW member number.
 4. Password: Your last name. (It is not case sensitive.)
 5. Once you are logged in, select Program Reporting to continue to enter your reports.
 6. If you are still having issues, please let me know at:
vfwokadj@outlook.com
-



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State Surgeon

Tony McGrew

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Oklahoma VFW,

I hope you had a beautiful Christmas and an awesome New Year's. As usual I want to encourage you to keep moving forward and this year, do those things that make you happy and make your heart smile.

In just a few short months we will be holding nominations and elections for Post, District and State Offices. I have given this a lot of thought since I am running for JVC. I have given a lot of thought to whom and what type of person I would want to fill these positions. After some questions and research, I came up with a measuring tool to help me decide.

According to Ryan Sauers, an Internet Blogger and Researcher, He states there are basically 3 types of people and organizations.

The First type, are those that Make Things Happen.

The Second type, are those that Watch What Happens.

The Third type, are those that Wonder What Happened.

To me it is clear that since organizations (VFW) are made up of people with these types of characteristics, the organization itself will fall into one of these 3 categories.

Food for thought; Ryan says "The Wonder what happened types are the ones, not growing, losing people and money, making excuses and complaining about times past.



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The Watching What Happened types are the ones just simply hanging around, doing the same thing as always, basically refusing to change and dismissing any new ideas.

The Make Things Happen type are doing more with less, re-inventing themselves, making lemonade out of lemons. They seek to provide content to their customers in the manner their customers want to receive it, WOW.

Now, What category do you want your Post, District and State to be in. It's all up to you, the members!

Ps, if there is any subject you would like to see discussed in my GO's article, please let me know.

Respectfully,
Tony McGrew
State Surgeon

*State Chaplain
Jason Burns*

Comrades,

Time is approaching that we get the Chaplain of the year's nominations turned in by Mid-Winter. Please review the following criteria and get everything turned in. Have a blessed year.

Chaplain of the Year Criteria

1. Performance of Duties:



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- A. Exemplary conduct of normal duties: e.g., attendance, dependability, punctuality, timely submission of Chaplain's Reports, etc.
 - B. Exemplary performance above and beyond the normal expectations of the position and duties.
2. Personal attitude which is positive and professional in all contacts with others and which represents the VFW and Post in the best possible way.
 3. Commitment to the ministry and duties of the Chaplain, as reflected by service to comrades and their families and responsiveness to needs.
 4. A member of the VFW in good standing with the Post, District, and Department.

Review Committee Composition and Instructions

1. A committee assembled by the State Chaplain will review nominations for the award and recommend a recipient.
2. The committee shall include:
 - A. The State Chaplain
 - B. The Past State Chaplain and Past National Chaplain if we have one, if not then the Current National Council Member will step in.
 - C. The most recent past recipient of the Chaplain of the Year Award. After 1st award
3. Instructions to the Committee
 - A. The committee shall follow procedures and criteria as outlined in this document. However, if no candidates are nominated or judged by the committee to meet the criteria for Chaplain of the Year, the committee shall not recommend a recipient.
 - B. All proceedings of the committee must be kept strictly confidential.
 - C. The State Chaplain will review with the Department Commander the recommendation for Chaplain of the Year prior to announcing the award recipient.

Procedure

The following procedure is recommended for receiving and reviewing nominations:



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1. The State Chaplain shall solicit nominations from District and Post Commanders beginning at the Mid-Winter Conference in February.
2. All nominations should be submitted to the State Chaplain by April 1st.
3. A nomination shall address the above criteria and shall not exceed one type written page.
4. The committee shall review each nomination according to the selected criteria and recommend a recipient by April 15th .
5. The State Chaplain will review the Committee's recommendation for Chaplain of the Year with the Department Commander by April 30th .
6. The State Chaplain will notify the recipient of the nomination and request attendance at the Annual State Convention in June to receive the award.
7. The Chaplain of the Year Award will be presented at the Annual State Convention.
8. The Award will be a Plaque, 2 tickets to the Awards Banquet and be recognized on the Dept website.

Chaplain Jason Burns
OK State Chaplain Veterans of Foreign Wars
P.O. Box 505 Comanche ok 73529
vfwokchaplain@outlook.com

Youth Essay Programs *Mike Devenitch*

Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen & Teacher of the Year

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS: This is a very busy time of the year for the state programs. I have been organizing, scanning, checking and double checking the entries to insure they meet national requirements. State Voice of Democracy judging will be held on Thursday, January 11th at 6:30 p.m. at the Moore Community Center at 301 South Howard in Moore, 73160 right next to the Moore



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Public Library. If you are attending, please let me know. If you have any questions, please contact me. See <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships> for more info.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR (ToY): 2023-2024 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award: We have a record number of entries this year! <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year>

VOD/PP/ToY CONTACT: Michael H. Devenitch, (405) 819-9914. 4224 Manhattan Dr. Moore, OK, 73160 sentrymike@yahoo.com

State Inspector Bradley Blume

District Commander, District Inspectors & Post Commanders,

As of 30DEC2023, only 49.38% of posts in the Department have reported their annual inspection to the state. District Inspections are going well with 90.91% of Districts reporting their annual inspection to the state. All inspections must be forwarded to the Department for our records. The VFW Document Retention Policy and 29 CFR Part 516 require the Department, Districts, and Posts to maintain a copy of the Inspection Report on file for three (3) years. Below is a list of posts that have not submitted an Inspection Report for the 2023-2024 year. If your post has completed your annual inspection, it can be forwarded to me at: BradlyBlumeVFW@gmail.com.

As always if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please let me know and I'll do my best to help.

District #	Post #	Post Location	District #	Post #	Post Location
1	2592	Bernice	8	1201	Ponca City
1	3573	Locust Grove	8	1320	Sapulpa
1	3707	Tahlequah	8	2027	Stillwater
1	5307	Salina	8	2855	Blackwell
1	8380	Grove	8	3656	Bristow
3	3085	Hartshorne	8	7966	Pawnee
4	1048	Boswell	9	4938	Edmond
4	1198	Coalgate	13	13	Alva



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4	3658	Antlers	13	382	El Reno
4	3916	Durant	13	4465	Clinton
4	4777	Idabel	13	5914	Thomas
4	4859	Atoka	13	6143	Weatherford
4	4869	Tishomingo	13	7203	Okeene
4	5805	Fort Towson	14	1015	Anadarko
4	8316	Hugo	14	11201	Chickasha
5	577	Tulsa	14	4574	Ardmore
7	1098	McAlester	14	8580	Elgin
7	1189	Okmulgee	15	8676	Hollis
7	4609	Webbers Falls			
7	474	Muskogee			
7	539	Henryetta			

Upcoming Inspections:

- 04JAN2024 @ 1700 - District #4 @ Durant VFW
- 04JAN2024 @ 1700 – Post 3916 @ Durant VFW

Post Areas of Concern found during this year’s inspection so far:

- Question 1 – 15% of posts do not have bylaws.
- Question 1A – 42.5% of posts to date have not had their bylaws reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief.
- Question 2A – 42.5% of posts have not had their Articles of Incorporation reviewed by the Commander in Chief.
- Question 2B – 17.50% - Could provide a date that the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of Oklahoma.
- Question 2D – 20% of posts have not updated or listed a registered agent as part of their Articles of Incorporation.
- Question 9 – 12.5% of posts have not submitted Community Activity or Program Activity Reports.
- Question 9A – 12.5% - of posts have not submitted Community Activity or Program Activity Reports.
- Question 16H – 25% of posts were insufficiently bonded.
- Question 18 – 17.5% of posts did not have all officers accountable for funds bonded.
- Question 19G – 17.5% of posts could not produce or have not filed a 990N for the current or previous year.
- Question 19K – 20% of posts did not have a 990N available for inspection.
- Question 26 – 20% of posts were uninsured.
- Question 26A – 47.5% of posts have not listed the Department of Oklahoma and/or VFW National as additional insured.

V/R,
Bradley Blume



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District Meetings

D1 Feb 3, 1100, Grove 8380 Sr Vice Fuller

D3 Feb 3, 1100, Wilburton 3649 COS Bates

D4 Feb 3, 1100, Boswell 1048 Surgeon McGrew

D5 Feb 4, 1400, Mannford 7441 Jr. Vice Harris

D7 Feb 3, 1100, Okmulgee 1189 Cmdr. Traxler

D8 Feb 4, 1199, Ponca City 1201 Surgeon McGrew

D9 Feb 3, 1000, OKC 9265 Jr. Vice Harris

D10 Jan 20, 1000, 11600 S Penn Okla City Cmdr. Traxler

D13 Jan 6, 1100, El Reno 382 Jr. Vice Harris

D14 Jan 6, 1100, Ardmore 4574 Sr. Vice Fuller

D15 Jan 13, 1100, Lawton 1193 Cmdr. Traxler