



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



P.O Box 369, Choctaw, OK 73020
(580) 359-2963/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

May 2026

2025-2026 Series

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better"
—Maya Angelou

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

General Orders No. 11

2025-2026 Series

1. Each Department shall be governed by a Department Convention. The Department Convention shall consist of:
 1. The Commander-in-Chief and Past Commanders-in-Chief who are members in good standing in a Post within the Department.
 2. The National Council Member, the Department Commander, all Past Department Commanders who are members in good standing in a Post within the Department; all elected officers of the Department, Chief of Staff, Inspector, and the Adjutant.
 3. All District Commanders throughout the Department. In the absence of the District Commander, the District Senior Vice Commander, or, in the Senior Vice Commander's absence, the District Junior Vice Commander may be registered and function as a member of the Convention.
 4. All Post Commanders throughout the Department. In the absence of the Post Commander, the Post Senior Vice Commander, or, in the Senior Vice Commander's absence, the Post Junior Vice Commander may be registered and function as a member of the Convention.
 5. Delegates to be elected by the Posts.
2. Each member of the Department Convention as those persons are defined in Section 504, except delegates elected by the Posts, present at a meeting of the convention shall be entitled to one vote, and an individual possessing more than one qualification for membership in the Department Convention shall have no more than one vote. The delegate or delegates of the Post present at a meeting of the Department Convention shall be entitled to vote the full delegate strength to which the Post is entitled.

The Post Commander, or the Senior or Junior Vice Commander functioning in their place as a member of the Convention, may, at their option, choose to vote as a delegate rather than as a Post Commander. Should there be a division among delegates representing the Post, each delegate present and voting shall cast their pro rata share of the total delegate voting strength of the Post. A roll call may be required and entered upon the record of the Department Convention at the call of at least three officers or delegates representing at least three different Posts.

3. **The Post Commander may appoint a *Benefits Advisor* and such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Post or as may be required by Post Bylaws.**
4. Attention is directed to Section 213 of the National Bylaws concerning any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings; County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.
5. 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 to 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.
6. **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.
7. **District Meetings Dates & Changes:** District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org or okasstadj@vfw-oklahoma.org of any changes to district meetings including new dates for District meetings.

/os/
Jeff Harris
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /
Heidi Teeter
Adjutant

Commander Jeff Harris

Hello TEAM Oklahoma,

How has TEAM OKLAHOMA been doing, Team we are in the count down of our VFW year now. Our membership is at 98 percent now and still going. There are post and districts at or above the goal of 101 and I want to thank those for getting done. But TEAM, we still need to keep going till we have gotten to our goal. I am asking post and district to get out and contact your unpaid members and tell them that our membership is so close to reaching the goal. This will be another achievement of getting ALL AMERICAN back-to-back like we did last year. TEAM, this has not happened in a number of years. Our VFW has done so much this year in getting stuff done, and I am asking the post and district that have gotten 101, to not stop, but keep going so we can do this. If each post could recruit 4 or 5 new members, I think we can do this.

Post and Districts are electing new officers for the next year, the state rep can install you then. The district Commander will be installed at our State Convention in June. The dress at our banquet will be " BUSINESS ". We will have a good selection this time to choose to. It may be more to pay, but that is what we have to do. Hope you like BARBECUE. I think that will go good cause we are all down south people. Our National Rep will be David Prohaska, Senior Director, Membership and member Services. David has been in and around membership for a number of years. Back in the 2000s, he was an instructor for then National Recruiter. I think there were 3 or 4 recruiters from Oklahoma that went there.

I want to thank Derick Duncan and his committee for finding a buyer for our unsold property. That will help the state not having to pay any more taxes on them. And I want to think the people that helped at VFW 9265 for being there so post could come get what stuff they needed. All in all the state is getting better than it was and I want to thank TEAM OKLAHOMA for all the hard work that you have done on getting stuff done.

Let's not forget to bring items to the State Convention, like non-perishable food as well as pet food. The VFW has a contest to beat the AUX. So, comrades, you have not let me down all year, so I am counting on you. All this will go to help people that need some help with getting food for their family. So, I am asking for help to do this. Whoever brings in the most items. WE will all win, so please do what you can do.

Well in closing TEAM, let's not give-up till it's done and I am so proud of each and every one of you. I will be seeing you in your district meeting like Dist. 3 and Dist. 5. See you next time.

T.E.A.M. Oklahoma,

Jeff Harris

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew

Are you a leader in your Post?

No, I am not an elected or appointed officer. Well, this doesn't mean you are not a leader! You may very well be one of the best leaders your Post has and don't know it. When others in your Post asks you a question, or for your opinion on a matter. Do you listen actively and show empathy, maybe ask questions to clarify and understand the situation. Do members of your Post seek you out to see what you think about Post activities and issues. Are you the one who always has a positive attitude and encourages the members to press on and find positive solutions. If integrity is important to you, your Post will and probably already have sensed this in you.

Do you actively seek communication with Post members? Are you the one who always shows up at Post events because you are passionate about the work the VFW does? They know this! Are you the one who is positive and encouraging and praises in public those who deserve it. This does not go unnoticed!

See! You're a leader in your Post and didn't even know it. Congratulations Comrade.

With Respect and gratitude for all that you do,

TONY MCGREW

State Senior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Candidate for State Commander

Junior Vice Commander Larry Hurd

Hello from the paw-paw patch.

The weather is predictable when the rattlesnake derby and the rock and rumble car show is planned for the weekend, rain. Oklahoma has already had several tornados last month with Vance AFB getting some damage. Watch the weather, plan accordingly and stay safe and dry.

With March and April post meetings completed, the department will have some new post officers elected. Remember to complete your election and delegate reports. May is a good month to install your new officers, but you can go to June if needed.

The Department Headquarters is looking good inside and out. The Senior Vice Commander is back from his training at Kansas City, and he has received a lot of information. I will be going to the National Home orientation on the 13th to the 16th of May. I am looking forward to this trip.

May 2nd I will be at the District 1 meeting in Locus Grove, May 8th will be at District 8 in Ponca City. Both district meetings will be exciting to meet with members of each district.

Don't forget Memorial Day, May 25, the last Monday of the month.

The Department Convention will be June 11th to 14th. This will be a good convention, so I hope to see you there. Have a good month of May.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Junior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Adjutant/Quartermaster
Heidi Teeter

Comrades,

Well, we are almost through the year! We are now through Post election month. I still have 38 posts that haven't submitted an election report. I have put the list below, right before the District Meetings. If you need me to submit it for your post, please get it to me. These MUST BE submitted by June 1.

I will have the Convention Agenda and Banquet information out by the end of the week. I am trying to find a sponsor for the banquet to hopefully reduce the cost of tickets. I want to thank Madam Department President Iva Spurlock for helping me plan the food. We hope everyone enjoys it and we look forward to seeing everyone.

This year our Nation Rep is Senior Director of Membership & Member Services David Prohaska. Please be sure to give the Oklahoma hospitality we show to all guests.

As we move towards the end of the VFW year, let's make the final push on membership. Work your members that are expiring by June 30. You might also work those members that are 1 and 2 year expired, those will be the easiest to get signed back up.

Charlie Mike,

Heidi Teeter

State Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Judge Advocate Randy Traxler

Tactical Pauses

Take a knee, face outward, and drink water is a common phrase for soldiers. I imagine there are different versions of this phrase in other branches (email me what they are). Most of the time this phrase is uttered while you are waiting for a leadership to make a decision. Sometimes it is based on an obstacle, a threat, or sometimes just a pause to allow them to collect more information before moving forward. As we lean into the mentorship of your newly elected and appointed Post leaders, keep this in mind. I challenge you all to not "run and gun" at full pace but to take a tactical pause when needed. As we prepare to continue in our current position, maybe step up into a new one, or welcome our replacement we are about to be faced with lots of moments where taking a moment is going to allow you to "execute accordingly", as my friend and mentor Past State Commander and National Council Member Tori Haddox says. Exercising tactical patience ensures we have the right information, can present it in the best method to be received, and the impact can build consistency and trust. We are all bound to make mistakes, misspeak, and even wave off important things, but when we take that knee we have a moment to reflect and redirect our actions. We can only grow in a positive manner if we just take a knee, face out, and drink water.

Respectfully and fraternally,

Randy Traxler

Judge Advocate
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Chaplain Marcus King

Comrades,

As we move into May, I want to thank every Post and Auxiliary for the work you continue to do in your communities. This month moved quickly for many of us, but your steady presence, your outreach, and your commitment to veterans and their families have not gone unnoticed. The quiet, consistent work you do is what keeps this organization strong.

With Memorial Day approaching, I encourage each Post to stay focused on the purpose of the day. However, you choose to observe it—whether through ceremonies, partnerships, or community events—your efforts help ensure that the meaning of Memorial Day remains clear and respected. I look forward to hearing how your Posts honor the fallen this year.

I also want to remind everyone that *The Wall That Heals* will be in Oklahoma this month.

- **Edmond (Mitch Park): May 14–17**

This exhibit provides a powerful opportunity for reflection, remembrance, and connection. I encourage Posts to help spread the word and support attendance however you can.

For those who could use a word of encouragement, I offer this reminder from Scripture: *“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”* (Galatians 6:9) Your work matters. Your presence matters. Stay steady.

In service and support,

Marcus King

State Chaplain

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

 vfwokchaplain@outlook.com

 405.651.5509

Training and Development ***Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett***

What Officers Should Pass On: Building Continuity That Lasts

Leadership transitions don't cause failure—what isn't passed on does. Each new officer brings energy and ideas, but without a deliberate transfer of knowledge, relationships, and systems, the organization risks starting over. In the VFW, where continuity and structure matter, that creates real setbacks.

Officers must pass on institutional knowledge—the “why” behind decisions, what has already been tried, and the unwritten norms of the Post. Bylaws provide structure, but experience provides context. Without it, new leaders repeat mistakes or disrupt what works. Just as critical are operational systems: calendars, reporting requirements, key contacts, access to accounts, and financial processes. If a task depends on one person's memory, it's already a vulnerability.

Equally important are relationships. Community partners, donors, Auxiliary leadership, and local officials don't automatically carry over with a new administration. These require deliberate introductions and continuity. Incoming officers also need a clear picture of the Post's current state—financial conditions, membership trends, ongoing issues, and pending actions. This must be honest, not polished, to prevent surprises and build trust.

Outgoing leaders should also pass on lessons learned: what worked, what didn't, and where common pitfalls exist. This is not about directing the next leader but preparing them. From a compliance standpoint, officers must ensure continuity in bylaw interpretation, ongoing disciplinary matters, contracts, and reporting requirements. Gaps here create risk, not just confusion.

Transition is not a single event—it is a process. New officers need more than a title; they need the knowledge and tools to lead effectively. The goal is not simply to change leadership, but to ensure the Post continues forward instead of starting over.

Respectfully,

Randy Traxler

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Jim Bassett

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans and Military Support

Jim Bassett

With activity worldwide, units are again being deployed. Reach out to your locale units and find out how we can help. I also encourage each post to reach out to units in their area to build a relationship with them. If you are unsure, let me know and I can help you find someone.

I would also like each post that has adopted a unit to contact them and find out what events they will need help on in the upcoming year. From July to June. We can fill out the MAP grant when the window opens and hopefully have them funded. I also suggest identifying one member of the post as the main point of contact (POC) with your unit. This POC will be the one they reach out to and coordinate to support their needs. It may be the Commander, Quartermaster, Adjutant, or any post member that is willing to take it on.

The impact that VMS has in Oklahoma is huge! We have provided \$146,392 for 191 applicants. We provided \$75, 498 in Military Assistant Program (MAP) grants to military units.

Please start thinking about supporting SportClipss in October. They will be doing their annual VFW Help-A-Hero Scholarship fundraiser. If there is a SportClips that is near you, talk to them. During the fundraiser, visit the shop and welcome patrons. Tell them about this outstanding program. Hint, hint!! You can use this as major talking point with potential members in uniform. This program has awarded \$198,900 to 48 military recipients in Oklahoma. While writing this article, one more scholarship was awarded. More than \$15 million has been awarded since 2010. Support this worthy program.

Jim Bassett

State VMS Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services

Tony McGrew and Jim Bassett

The VA is always looking for volunteers. They are needed from highly skilled to handing out popcorn. If you are interested, let us know. We encourage you to volunteer at homes or hospitals. If you are interested in the VA hospital, let us know. Contact Tony McGrew, tony.vfw8706@gmail.com. Or Jim Bassett, bassettj15@yahoo.com.

Are you interested in visiting the veterans in the VA hospitals? Just visiting them helps them greatly. If your post is interested in visiting the ODVA homes or the VA hospitals, let us know and we can help coordinate your group.

Tony McGrew

Jim Bassett

State VAVS Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

VOD/Patriot Pen/Teacher of the Year

Jim Bassett

Congratulations to Ehimen Umobuarie, from Clinton, Oklahoma, representing the VFW Department of Oklahoma, she was awarded the \$1,000 Department of Mississippi Toxie K. Stapleton and Post 6473 Luther J. Cox Memorial Scholarship.

Congratulations to Cora Peden, from Stratford, Oklahoma, representing the VFW Department of Oklahoma, she was awarded the \$1,000.00 Golden Valley VFW Post 7051 (Golden Valley, Minnesota) Award.

This year's themes have been announced and we can take applications. The new post QR code posters are also now available.

Voice of Democracy "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Patriot's Pen "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Majority of the essays that we received last year were submitted through Scholars App. Scholars App is an online program that students can enter, upload their application and essay. What does the post or district chair need to do? Get the QR codes out in public, monitor the Scholars App dashboard, select your judges. When the time comes, you make sure the judges are evaluating the student's essays. When they are done the dashboard automatically ranks your essay. You just "promote" your top three. If you have enough to promote additional, it does it for you.

From there you notify your top three winners. Easy. But don't forget to enter your report on the National Dashboard so you get credit.

An added advantage of this Scholars App does not affect you, but means a world to parents, school counselors, and students. It opens thousands of other scholarships that students can apply for.

Jim Bassett

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair
Department of Oklahoma

From the Desks of the Department Adjutant Teeter and Public Relations Chair R. Traxler:

Stay Connected – Update Your Email and Check Your Inbox!

We want every member to receive the Department's *General Orders* and important updates without interruption. Please take a moment today to ensure we can reach you:

1. **Verify your email address** with your Post and on your VFW member record.
2. **Check your spam and junk folders** – if you find any Department emails there, mark them as “Not Spam” so future messages go directly to your inbox.

Your involvement starts with staying informed. Help us strengthen communication across the Department by making sure you and your fellow members are connected and receiving the information you need.

We Want to Feature YOU for Warrior Wednesday!

Every week, we're spotlighting the dedicated veterans and leaders who make our organization stronger — and we want your story to be next. “Warrior Wednesday” is our way of celebrating the service, sacrifice, and continued commitment of VFW members across the Department.

📌 Here's how you can be featured:

- Send us your **name, current position, Post number, and location**
- Share your **branch of service, years served, MOS, and eligibility details**
- Tell us **why you're active in the VFW** and what keeps you engaged
- Add a few **hobbies or interests** that show who you are beyond the uniform
- Include **1–2 high-quality photos** — one from your time in service and one current

Submit your information to okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org, okasstadj@vfw-oklahoma.org or oktraining@vfw-oklahoma.org and join us in highlighting the stories that inspire, connect, and strengthen our VFW family. Let's make every Wednesday a celebration of the warriors among us!

2026-2027 Post Election Reports Needed

Dist	Post	PostName
1	2592	Jack D. Crittenden Memorial Post
1	3573	Sequoyah-Downing Post
1	3698	Cherokee Nation Post
1	5307	Grass-Morrow Post
1	8380	George L. Husong Post
3	4446	Elliott-Warren Post
3	8384	Muldraw Post
3	8403	Heavener Post
4	1048	Boswell Post
4	3658	George L. Sparks Post
4	4777	Idabel Post
4	4869	Washita Memorial Post
4	5805	Choctaw County Post
4	8316	Hugo Post
5	577	Tulsa Post
5	3077	Joe Keith Post
5	7180	Owasso Post
5	10099	Dewey Post
7	474	Yank Tipton Post

Dist	Post	PostName
7	1098	Robert B. Thomas Post
7	1189	Okmulgee Post
8	1201	Harvie Kothe-Ed Rieman Post
8	2855	Ivan M. Swaim Post
8	3656	Wake Island Memorial Post
8	7966	Pawnee Post
9	1719	Mattheyer-Jordan-Pitts Post
9	2270	Enid Post
9	4578	Sooner Post
9	7740	Lloyd R Payne Post
10	1202	Stratford Post
10	10876	Robert N. Miller Post
13	6141	Fairview Post
13	6143	Weatherford Post
13	7203	Okeene Post
14	8580	Doss E Baker Post
14	11201	Harlis C. Sales U.S. Army Post
15	1193	Lawton Post
15	3669	Elk City Post

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

- D-1** > May 2nd, Locust Grove, 1100, State Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew
- D-3** > May 2nd, Stigler, 1100, State Commander Jeff Harris
- D-4** > May 2nd, Durant, 1100, State A/Q Heidi Teeter
- D-5** > May 3rd, Claremore, 1400, State Commander Jeff Harris
- D-7** > May 2nd, Henryetta, 1100, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-8** > May 9th, Ponca City, 1100, State Jr Vice Commander Lary Hurd
- D-9** > TBD
- D-10** > May 9th, Del City, 1000, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-13** > April 25th, Clinton, 1100, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-14** > Apr 25th, Ardmore, 1000, State Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew
- D-15** > May 16th, Woodward, 1100, State A/Q Heidi Teeter

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Loyalty Day>>May 1

Cinco De Mayo>> May 5

VE Day, German Unconditional surrender signed, 1944>>May 8

Mother's Day>>May 10

Memorial Day>>May 25

Oklahoma VFW State Convention>>11-14 June>> Embassy Suites, Norman, OK

Flag Day>>June 14

Army Birthday>> June 14>> 251 years young

Juneteenth>> June 19

Father's Day>>June 21