



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101-1126

580 515-0567/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

September 2025

2025-2026 Series

*"If we all climb together, we could climb the highest hill."
~Dolly Parton*

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

General Orders No. 03

2025-2026 Series

1. Pursuant to National By-Laws Article VII Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 703, Bonds, "Each officer accountable for funds or property pursuant to any provision of these Bylaws shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, they may be accountable. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department, District, County Council or Post to which each officer is accountable. The bonds of such accountable officers, in amount and as to surety, shall be approved by their respective units and held by their respective Commanders. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable officers in their unit."

2. **Attention of Post & District Commanders & Quartermasters:** Commanders & Quartermasters are reminded at all levels of the annual requirement to complete an IRS 990, IRS 990N, for tax exemption requirements. Failure to complete the required IRS 990 may result in loss of tax-exemption status.

3. **Department Directory/Roster:** Commanders & Adjutants are asked to send all corrections, changes etc. of the Department Roster to okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org for changes.

4. **District Meetings Dates & Changes:** District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at okadj@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

Howdy TEAM OKLAHOMA,

I am hoping that everyone is doing ok and not ill. I saw a few states and reported that some members had caught covid while at the National Convention. I called a few of our members to check on them and everyone was doing ok. Speaking of the National Convention, I am honored to be on the same team of the first female to ever be a National Commander in Chief. Carol will make us all proud, I am sure.

I want to tell the All-American winners that we are all proud of them and wish them luck this year. I would like to say good job to VFW Post 577 for having an All-American Post Commander and All-American District Commander and an All-American State Commander!!

Last year Commander Fuller told every post in the state that he would buy them 3 new members to help with membership. So, I was asked if I would do the same this year. Yes, I will. So, each post must send the membership application to the State Quartermaster for this to happen. I am also asking every District Commander to send in one name for National Aid de Camp.

The State Fairs are coming up soon and HELP is needed on the membership tables. If a post works the booth the whole day, it will count towards a recruiting event for All State. So, I am asking everyone to please help out where and when needed. Aux members are needed also, So let's all team together and make it happen

In closing TEAM, the fall fest is coming next month so please make plans to attend. It will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Norman. Hope to see everyone there!!

T.E.A.M. Oklahoma,

Jeff Harris

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma

Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew

Hi Comrades,

Well, it looks like fall has arrived. But what does that mean for us?

I guess the VFW could be compared to the fall season through the lens of transition, harvest, and preparation for a new cycle. Fall represents a critical period of winding down and reflecting, which is essential for organizational health and long-term sustainability.

Just as fall brings about a vibrant yet temporary change in nature, it represents a period of significant transition in an organization.

Shedding the old: Fall is characterized by trees shedding their leaves, letting go of what is no longer needed. In an organization, this corresponds to the “shedding”; of old ways of working, legacy systems, or outdated strategies that no longer serve the company.

Change as a constant: The shift from the long, expansive days of summer to the crisp air and shorter days of fall is a natural and inevitable process. Similarly, organizations must embrace inevitable transitions, such as new leadership, restructuring, or market changes, to remain relevant and competitive.

125 years ago, in 1899, a handful of warriors from different Veteran organizations met and began the process of banding together. Thus began the organization created from the merger of smaller, local groups of veterans, which is when I believe the need for a governing document became clear.

They sat down and formed an organization known as the VFW, of course you know that because you are a member. It must have been difficult to start with because of their varied personalities and different directions and ideas they thought the order should go. Thankfully they must have realized at some point the only way to get started and form a viable association was to put it in writing and agree on what they wrote down. I have no way of knowing but, I can imagine the heated discussions, arguments and concessions made in the beginning. They formally adopted a constitution and bylaws in 1913.

Even today, 125 years later, we struggle with opinions, ideas, hopes and dreams for our beloved organization, thankfully they left us our Bylaws and Manual of Procedures to guide us in our deliberations and why we take an oath to abide by them to keep our just cause and mission pure and reachable.

This month, I leave you with this challenge; Be the Comrade you would like others to be and the Oklahoma VFW cannot fail in its mission.

Sincerely,

Tony McGrew

State Senior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Candidate for State Commander

Junior Vice Commander Larry Hurd

Comrades,

Hello from the paw-paw patch. The National Convention is over, and the VFW made history. The first female Commander in Chief, a nomination from the floor for Senior Vice Commander in Chief and two roll call votes. Very interesting convention.

First, the nominee for Senior Vice Commander from the floor was elected as the new Senior Vice Commander with a vote of 4710 to 3448 on a roll call vote. The other roll call vote was for a bylaw change to section 615 eligible for appointment to a paid national position. No National Past Commander in Chief will be eligible until a minimum of 5 years has elapsed since their departure date.

Section 803 change was for alternative cap; baseball style was approved. The ball cap will be black in color, lettered with VFW initials, Post numbers, state, rank of office, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Cross of Malta may be worn by members other than officers during meetings of the Post and District. Lettering on each cap shall be in gold. The trim on the front bill shall be either gold, green, red, or silver corresponding to the official braid colors for the respective organizational echelon. The ball cap shall be an alternative to but not a replacement for the regulation overseas cap and shall not be worn in place of the regulation cap at formal ceremonies when in business attire or at events where the regulation cap is required. The ball cap will be available in November with a price of \$45 to \$50.

The National VFW Riders bylaws were approved.

Next year's convention will be in Reno Nevada. The Southern Conference and the Department of Oklahoma will need a good showing of delegates. Please think about going to the convention.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Junior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma

National Councilmember Curt Watts

National Council Meeting & National Convention 2025 Back-Brief

Comrades, I wanted to drop you a line to let you know that the VFW's Budget & Finance Committee (B&F Committee) meeting, the National Council Meeting and especially the National Convention 2025 was a success. A lot happened on the convention floor but let me first speak about the

B&F Committee and the National Council meetings first. Both of these meetings were held on the Saturday before the Convention.

Quartermaster General Marc Garduno and Chief Financial Officer Jim Lear briefed the B&F Committee and then the entire Council on the 3rd Quarter statistics for FY 24-25. Remember that while VFW State departments, districts and posts end their fiscal year on June 30, the VFW National fiscal year ends on 31 August.

As of June 30, VFW had \$1.5 Million in cash and \$121.8 million in our General Fund and Program investment portfolio. Our investments are split between our General Fund Reserve and several restricted programmatic funds. Although there has been plenty of volatility as we experienced an almost 20% decline in the S&P 500 during March and April, the VFW's total cash and investments have seen some overall growth since the end of our fiscal year ending August 31 2024. For the first ten months of the fiscal year, our cash investments have grown by almost \$4 million.

As always, the budget was broken down by each department within the National Headquarters (both Kansas City & Washington) allowing review of the revenue generated and especially the expenses accrued year to date. As of the 3rd quarter review, all departments were within the budget. Of course, there will be major expenses yet to be reviewed due to National Convention expenses which the B&F Committee and the Council will review when we meet in Kansas City in September. Once all FY 24-25 revenue & expenses are calculated we will know how we fared for FY 24-25. When the Council meets in Kansas City later in September is also when we approve the current Commander-in-Chief's budget.

NOW FOR THE EXCITING STUFF! THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

Of course, as usual, the VFW recognized many sponsors, VA Secretary etc. and awards were handed out during these times. However, the real excitement started on Tuesday and continued into Wednesday when the resolutions, bylaws, manual of procedure, and rituals proposed changes were presented and passed or defeated by the convention of delegates. Nominations for National Officers started on Tuesday and finished with elections on Wednesday. If you have ever wondered about THE POWER OF THE MEMBERS and their voice, you would have seen this in progress during Tuesday and Wednesday's business sessions. First, the Tuesday business session was spent entirely (with the exception of officer nominations) on debate, more debate, and more debate and then voting for the proposed resolutions. On many occasions, the chair called for a rollcall vote of departments and national officers to obtain the final voting results. Let me point out that each post delegates within their department told the State Commander how to vote. In other words, one post may vote yes, while another post might vote no or a post may even split their vote. It was up to the Department Commander to state how many delegate votes for yeah & nay on the motion. This procedure truly exercised "the power of the members". On Wednesday, we finally were able to get into the proposed changes on the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Rituals. There were a few Bylaw changes that had extensive debate. Two was the one on a VFW baseball cap, and the other one was on the VFW Riders becoming a separate entity like the auxiliary and cooties. Both changes have passed.

Now for the election of National Officers. In the past over many years, the VFW has recognized the VFW Conference system where each of the four conferences would put the candidate of their choice from their conference in for the Commander-in-Chief, Senior Chief, Jr. Chief, Surgeon General, Judge Advocate General, and National Chaplain. Depending on the rotation, it determines which positions

would come from your conference. All went according to this Conference plan except for the Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief position. According to the Conference plan Tim Peters who was the current Jr. Vice Chief from the Western Conference was to move up to the Sr. Chief position. However, the Big 10 Conference felt like Cory Geiser from Wisconsin would be a better choice. Collectively, the Southern Conference chose to back Cory as well. This is quite unusual, however fully allowed by our National Bylaws. Once both candidates were allowed to speak, a rollcall vote was conducted. Posts, Departments, National officers, and Past Commanders-in Chief voted. After the number of delegates were calculated, Cory Geiser from Wisconsin became our National Senior Vice Commander-in Chief for the FY 25-26 VFW year. Wow!

On a lighter note, I would like to say that the National Council approved the Committee on National Convention (Time & Place) proposals. In 2029, the VFW Convention will be held in Reno, Nevada and in 2030 we will be returning to New Orleans, Louisiana.

For those who wish to review the official outcomes of the proposed resolutions and amendments presented and voted on by the delegates, you can find the full results posted on the VFW website here: <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/national-convention-bylaws>.

Hopefully, comrades this will give you some insight as to what was accomplished during the 126th National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. I apologize for the length of my report. As usual, if you have any comments or questions, feel free to contact me.

Curt Watts

National Council of Administration, 2022-26
Oklahoma
vfwokncm@outlook.com
405.590.8577

*Surgeon
Deric Duncan*

Comrades,

As we enter September, we are reminded that our mission is strongest when we work together. Success in our Department does not come from one Post or one leader alone—it comes from each of us uniting with purpose and passion to serve our veterans, families, and communities.

Upcoming VA Events

We have two important opportunities to support our comrades this month:


Vet FEST – Veteran Resource Rally Point

 Saturday, September 6, 2025, |  10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

 American Legion Post 12, 6101 NW 50th Street, Warr Acres, OK

Lawton PACT Act Event

 Tuesday, September 23, 2025, |  9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

 Lawton Farmers Market Building, 77 SW 4th Street, Lawton, OK

Both events connect veterans directly with the resources they need and demonstrate the VFW's commitment to standing with those who served. I urge each of you to attend, spread the word, and support.

Oklahoma State Fair – September 11–21, 2025

Our Department's **largest recruiting event of the year** is upon us. At the OKC State Fair, we recruit more members than almost any other time throughout the year, drawing in veterans and families from across Oklahoma. To make this successful, we must have every Post, District, and Auxiliary engaged. Please sign up for a shift:

[State Fair Volunteer Sign-Up Link](#)

Your time and presence help ensure that our flame of service is seen by thousands.

VFW Programs

Now is also the time to push forward with our **core programs**:

- **Patriot's Pen**
- **Voice of Democracy**
- **Scout of the Year**
- **Teacher of the Year**
- **First Responder Awards (Police Officer, Firefighter, EMT, Dispatcher, K-9 of the Year)**

These programs are the heart of our outreach, showing our communities that we honor not only veterans, but all who dedicate themselves to service.

Bylaws and Brotherhood

I encourage every member to spend time with their **bylaws**. Understanding the framework of our organization gives us the confidence to lead, the discipline to stay united, and the knowledge to strengthen our Posts.

Ignite the Flame

The passion and fire that we show in our communities to support our fellow veterans is what draws people into the VFW. When our neighbors see us serving with pride, energy, and purpose, they want to join us. That is how we grow. That is how we succeed.

Let us work together—united in service, strong in purpose, and proud in our mission.

Bring the Spark. Build the Flame.

Respectfully,

Deric Duncan

State Surgeon
Department of Oklahoma

☎ 405-250-4887

✉ dericduncan@gmail.com

Adjutant/Quartermaster
Heidi Teeter

Comrades,

Fall is finally here! My second favorite season. Now is a great time to start getting the VOD and Patriot Pen information out to your schools. We have received a grant from Devon Energy that has allowed us to increase the Department scholarship for the winners, so let's get out there and get these kids involved.

This was my third National Convention to attend, and it was an interesting one. As Junior Vice Commander Larry Hurd mentioned there were two roll call votes. The members spoke and their voices were heard. It was proof that this a member driven organization.

If you have not already sent in the bond application, please do so as soon as possible. If you are bonded through an outside vendor or have a multi-year bond please send me a copy of the certificate or proof of bond. I have included the letter and questionnaire for the VFW Accountable Officer Bond and the VFW Club Manager/Employee Bond. The accountable officer bond is valid for September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026, and the manager/employee bonds are valid for October 1, 2025-September 30, 2026. When you are filling out the questionnaire, please put the amount you want covered for not the total cost of the bond. The rates for both bonds are as follows:

- \$4.50 per thousand for \$3,000 - \$99,000 (example $\$4.50 \times 3 = \13.50)
- \$3.50 per thousand for \$100,000 - \$250,000 (example $\$3.50 \times 100 = \350)
- \$2.50 per thousand for \$251,000 - \$299,000 (example $\$2.50 \times 251 = \627.50)
- \$2.00 per thousand for \$300,000 - \$600,00 (example $\$2.00 \times 300 = \600)

The applications can be emailed to me at okqm@vfw-oklahoma.org or to the admin assistant, Maecy, at okadminassistant@vfw-oklahoma.org. Please mail payments to Department of Oklahoma VFW, PO Box 1126, OKC, OK 73101.

As a reminder if you are mailing your 990 or audit to the Department make sure to keep a copy in your records. These are items that are checked during post inspections.

The information to book your hotel room for Fall Fest has been sent out. Our room block **WILL** close on September 26, so make sure you book before that date. If you are calling the 1-800 number and having issues, call 405-364-8040 dial 0 and tell them you are using code **91H**. I will tell everyone that booking online with the link is the best and most accurate way. If you are trying to book and get told there are no more rooms, please let me know. If the hotel is not full, I can add rooms. The schedule for the weekend will be out soon.

Commander Harris announced that he will be paying for three (3) new members per post. If you wish to use one of these, they **have to be put in by me**. The applications can be mailed to me at Department of Oklahoma VFW, PO Box 1126, OKC, OK 73101 or emailed to me at okqm@vfw-oklahoma.org.

The digital edition of the 2026 Podium: Bylaws, MOP, and Ritual is [here](#), or they can be found by signing into vfw.org, and going to “**Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates**”. I have ordered physical copies. They are first come first serve, I have had some members and posts pre-order them. They cost \$10 per copy if you would like to order copy/copies please email me.

I look forward to working with each one of you throughout the year. Again, if you need anything please reach out.

Charlie Mike,
Heidi Teeter
State Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma

Judge Advocate
Randy Traxler

"Order in the House"

“Culture emerges from actions that are accepted.” – Dr. Alex Miller, Army Chief Technology Officer

When we reflect on the meaning of culture within our Posts and communities, it becomes clear that it is not defined by words alone, but by the actions we consistently choose to accept or reject. The VFW’s Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual are more than administrative documents—they are the foundation of how we operate, serve veterans, and represent our organization to the public.

Culture does shift. A clear example was seen when, at last year’s Department Convention, officers nominated from the floor were publicly berated and shamed—an action inconsistent with the respect and dignity our organization demands. Yet just a year later, the Department demonstrated a

different posture, supporting those same actions when they occurred on the floor of the National Convention. This contrast underscores how culture can drift depending on what we collectively accept or allow.

Our charge is to ensure that our culture remains rooted in the bylaws and established procedures of the organization. The current culture, as reinforced through adherence to our governing documents, is one of accountability, order, and mutual respect. The previous actions, while tolerated at the time, were more likely aligned with personal beliefs or frustrations than with organizational values or authorized practices.


Our culture is the sum of these daily choices. By committing to the responsibilities entrusted to us and leading by example, we ensure our Posts reflect the honor, tradition, and camaraderie that define the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let us strive to be deliberate in our actions, mindful that every accepted practice today will shape the culture of tomorrow.

Last Months Bylaw Pop Quiz answer: D and 2, Congrats to Janis Swager for your correct answer.

September Bylaw Pop Quiz:

Who are the additionally insured required on your Post insurance policy?

Think you've got it?

Send your answer to  randytraxler@icloud.com by the 23rd of the month.

v/r,

Randy Traxler

Judge Advocate
Department of Oklahoma

Training

Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett

Comrades,

Leadership Grounded in Bylaws

Strong leadership in the VFW is not measured by position alone, but by how faithfully we lead within the framework of our Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual. These governing documents are not obstacles—they are the very tools that allow leaders at every level to act with authority, fairness, and credibility.

This month, the Training and Development Committee emphasizes the connection between leadership and bylaws. Leaders set the tone in their Posts and communities. When leaders apply the bylaws consistently, they build trust, prevent confusion, and foster a culture of accountability. When leaders drift from these standards, decisions can quickly become clouded by personal opinions, favoritism, or short-term convenience.

Bylaws provide the foundation for good governance, but leadership gives them life. Leaders who study and apply these rules demonstrate integrity and model discipline for others. Just as importantly, they empower future leaders by showing that success in the VFW comes not from personality or popularity, but from a steady commitment to our shared responsibilities and values.

As you take part in meetings, programs, and community efforts this month, remember: leadership is not simply about directing others—it is about safeguarding the culture and mission of the VFW through actions grounded in the bylaws we all swore to uphold.

Development in Motion,

Randy Traxler

Jim Bassett

Chairs, Training & Education Committee

✉ oktraining@vfw-oklahoma.org

Chaplain Marcus King

Comrades,

September brings a mix of service, remembrance, and opportunity. Here's what's ahead:

Sooner Stand Down – September 5

For the past two years, we've been proud to support the Sooner Stand Down—an outreach effort that directly impacts our veteran community. This year, we're again looking for up to five volunteers to assist wherever needed. If you're available to serve, contact me directly at **405-651-5509** or email **vfwokchaplain@outlook.com**. This is meaningful work, and your help makes a difference.

Fall Fest – Peer Support Training October 17–19

During this year's Fall Fest at the Embassy Suites in Norman, we've partnered with the OKCVA Social Work Department to offer **Peer Support Training**. It's open to chaplains and **any VFW member** who wants to add practical tools to their kit. If you've ever found yourself wishing you had more ways to help someone through a tough moment—this is for you.

Funeral for Comrade Russ Wilcox – September 2

Russ Wilcox's funeral will be held at **Fort Sill Cemetery in Elgin, Tuesday, September 2 at 11:00 AM**. If you knew Russ or simply want to stand in respect, your presence will be felt.

September 11 Remembrance

As we approach the anniversary of 9/11, I encourage each of you to take a moment—whether in prayer, reflection, or conversation—to honor those we lost and the unity that followed. If you're leading a post event or observance, I'd love to hear how you're marking the day.

Thank you for all you do, seen and unseen. We're stronger because of it.


In service,

Marcus King

State Chaplain

Department of Oklahoma

 vfwokchaplain@outlook.com

 405.651.5509

*Inspector
Jason Burns*

****Post, District Commanders, and Inspectors,****

I hope this message finds you all well.

Please remember that Post Inspections must be completed and submitted to the Department Quartermaster no later than ****December 20th, 2025****. District Inspections are due by ****February 1st, 2026****.

I encourage everyone to complete Post Inspections early and bring them to Fall Fest. This will give us an opportunity to review them together and ensure their accuracy.

Additionally, I plan to begin District Inspections in October. If you have any questions about filling out the inspections or if you require training, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am also available to inspect your Post if needed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

****Jason Burns****

State Inspector

(580) 439-4627

Combat.ministry1@gmail.com

P.O. Box 505

Comanche Ok, 73529

POW/MIA

Deric Duncan

Comrades,

Each September, we pause to honor the deepest sacrifices made in defense of our nation. These solemn observances remind us of our duty never to forget and never to stop fighting for those who cannot speak for themselves.

POW/MIA Recognition Day

 **Friday, September 19, 2025**

This day is dedicated to the more than 81,000 service members who are still missing in action. It is a reminder that our promise is eternal: *"You are not forgotten."* I encourage Posts and Auxiliaries to hold observances, raise awareness in their communities, and ensure the POW/MIA flag is flown prominently.

Gold Star Family Day

 **Sunday, September 28, 2025**

Gold Star families bear the permanent reminder of the cost of freedom. This day gives us the opportunity to honor them, stand beside them, and let them know their sacrifice is shared by a grateful nation. I urge every Post to reach out to Gold Star families in their communities—invite them to your halls, recognize them in your programs, and ensure they are never alone.

Call to Action

Remembrance must go beyond ceremony. I encourage every member to **reach out to your elected officials** at the local, state, and federal levels. Urge them to keep the fullest possible accounting of our missing a national priority and to support policies that care for the families of the fallen. Our voices, united, carry the weight of those we represent.

Our Charge

As the POW/MIA Chairman and Department Surgeon, I ask each of you to reflect on the values that bind us—sacrifice, remembrance, and service. By honoring the missing, uplifting Gold Star families, and engaging with our leaders, we fulfill our sacred duty to those who gave all.

Deric Duncan

MIA/POW Chairman
VFW Department of Oklahoma
dericduncan@gmail.com
405-250-4887

Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year

Jim Bassett

As of 26 August, we have had 240 views and 3 applications so far. Not bad considering school has just started or just getting ready to start. If your post or district wants to participate in the Scholars App process, let me know by sending a name, valid email, and what post or district they are chair of.

Teacher of the Year, remember it is for instilling patriotism in class. If you are unsure of a teacher to nominate, watch the news. A lot of times they run an article on a local teacher who is making a difference. And you just found your candidate.

oice of Democracy, Teacher of the Year, and Patriots Pen time is coming up in a few months. National has already released the themes for next year. They are:

Voice of Democracy:

“How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?”

Patriot's Pen:

“How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?”

If your post wants to work with your Auxiliary and have them with your program, that is allowed. We can enter them into the Scholars App program. My contact information has not changed, bassettj15@yahoo.com.

Jim Bassett

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services

Tony McGrew and Jim Bassett

Interested in doing a Post or District visit to one of the VA hospitals? Please coordinate with the VAVS representatives to set it up.

At the School of Instruction, I mentioned Pearl Russell celebrated her 105th birthday to Lynn Rolf. He told us about a certificate of recognition offered by VFW National. The certificates showed up before the National Convention and we presented it to Pearl after the convention. Pearl also was recognized by the state as well as other organizations. One of the organizations is called “Centenarians of Oklahoma”. The Centenarians started in 1991 and have inducted over 3,000 statewide. Currently they have over 300 still with us. If you know anyone that should be recognized by this organization, please contact them or me so that I can pass on the information.

If you visit the hospitals and homes throughout the state, you may run into someone that should be inducted. Reach out to them at centenariansofoklahoma@gmail.com and let them 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.

Tony McGrew

Jim Bassett

State VAVS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Veterans and Military Support

Jim Bassett

This month we are supporting the 45th Memorial Run as well as Tinker AFB POW/MIA 9/11 Memorial Run. We are working with the Air Guard for a family day at the zoo as well as other events. I would also like to remind you that starting in October, SportClips will start their Help-A-Hero fundraising.

If you are unsure on how to contact a local unit, let me know and I can make the introductions.

SportClips Help-A-Hero is one of the main points that I talk to potential members interested in joining the VFW. \$195,900 to 47 military recipients in Oklahoma as part of the Help-A-Hero Scholarships. When you tell them that this can be used in conjunction with other scholarships nor do need to be a VFW member. Education is something important to most military, Active, Reserves, or Guard. Talk to them about Help-A-Hero scholarships, or the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program, Voice of Democracy, or Patriot's Pen. The VFW Auxiliary even offers a continuing education scholarship as well as Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest. Inform everyone you can about the opportunities.

Jim Bassett

State VMS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Historian Richard Elsheimer



Do you recognize this gentleman? His name is Joseph Virgil Fitts. He was born on the 18th of February 1890. He enlisted in the Army on the 6th of April 1917. He was promoted to 1st Sargent, Company C, 142nd Infantry. For those curious, he earned his VFW eligibility during World War I. He passed away on the 15th of March 1974. He was buried at Marsham Cemetery, Pawnee, Oklahoma. He was a member of Pollock-Stewart VFW Post 405, located in Pawnee, Oklahoma. He served as the Post Commander.

He was given a very hard task. Some may even say insurmountable. He created the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Oklahoma. That is correct. He was appointed as the Department Commander on the 15th of January 1921 and charged with creating the organization that we are all members of. April 16th, 1921, the Department of Oklahoma VFW held their first encampment with the purpose of voting in officers. As of that date, the fledgling Department had more than 900 members. Mrs. J. F. Capps, President of the Ladies' Auxiliary, as were other members were in attendance "to aid the furtherance of this branch".

I think he did a great job! Are we living up to his expectations? I certainly hope so. We have been living and supporting his work for 104 years.

Now that we know where we came from, let us look to the future for another 100 plus years of helping veterans.

For the Pawnee Post 7966, his goal was to erect a Memorial in the Highland Cemetery in Pawnee. Did he succeed it? Let us know.

Richard Elsheimer
State Historian

District 14 Commander Erica Traxler Credentials Chair Redistricting Committee Student Veterans of America Liaison

Comrades,

I hope this month's General Orders finds you well. I have had a volunteer come forward to assist on the Legislative Committee. If there are any others, please reach out to let me know.

Thank you to District 14 for the elections and appointments that happened on August 23rd. The district can only be successful through the members. We need to work together as a team, build the posts

membership up, and share information with one another to help each other be successful. Leaders should be teaching others to succeed them, but you have to learn how to follow before you can lead. If there are new roles you would like to take in the next year, please get with the people currently in those positions so you can learn from them, almost like a left seat right seat ride, and prepare yourself for what you would need to do.

Post Commanders are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring a copy of the completed Election Report is provided to both National and Department Headquarters. Posts are considered not in good standing until the completed and full 2025-2026 Election Report is received by National Headquarters. Failure to comply in a timely fashion could result in suspension of the Post Charter. Posts are encouraged to file the Election Report online through OMS @ www.vfw.org. If not filed online, copies must be sent to the Department.

**DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA DISTRICT 14
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

General Orders No. 01

2025-2026

1. Pursuant to National By-Laws Article IV Districts, Section 418, Officers: Duties and Obligations, "Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.

(a) Officers.

(1) Commander. Among the duties of a District Commander, the Commander shall:

a. Preside at all meetings of the District conducting such convention and meetings in accordance with Article X and other applicable parliamentary rules and procedures.

b. Promote schools of instruction for Post officers at District meetings.

c. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.

d. Insist that District business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on the District, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

e. Decide all questions of law and usage in the District, subject to an appeal pursuant to these Bylaws.

f. Appoint officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.

g. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the District by use of a voucher or payment order.

h. Assure that the office of District Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of these Bylaws.

i. Assure that all monies due the Department and National Headquarters are forwarded promptly.

j. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded and that all the business of the District is handled with dispatch.

k. Assure that the District Trustees have examined the books and records of the District and prepared the District Trustees Report of Audit. The Commander shall forward a copy within thirty (30 days) to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.

l. Assure that the District Inspector has properly inspected the books and records of the Posts within the District in accordance with the Department Bylaws or as directed by the State Commander.

m. Assure that eligible veterans are encouraged to join and maintain membership.

n. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.

o. Serve as a member of the Department Council of Administration."

2. Pursuant to National By-Laws Article IV Districts, Section 218, Officers: Duties and Obligations, "Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

(a) Officers.

(1) Commander. Among the duties of a Post Commander, the Commander shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Post, conducting such meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary rules.
- b. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Post, County Council (if applicable), District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities.
- c. Insist that Post business and activities be conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- d. Decide all questions of law and usage in the Post, subject to appeal pursuant to the Bylaws.
- e. Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.
- f. Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the Post by use of voucher or payment order.
- g. Assure that the office of Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of the Bylaws.
- h. Assure that all dues and other monies due the National Headquarters and Department are forwarded promptly together with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto.
- i. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all the business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the ensuing year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.
- j. Assure that the Post Trustees have examined the books and records of the Post and prepared the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit no later than the end of the month following the last day of each quarterly period.
- k. Assure that the Commander or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable).
- l. Comply with and perform all of the duties required by the laws and usages of this organization, the provisions of these Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure and Ritual and Department, District, County Council (if applicable) or Post Bylaws pertaining to the duties and obligations of a Post Commander and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.

m. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.

2. Attention of Post Commanders: All post inspections will be completed before December 20, 2025, so they can be submitted to the department by the due date of December 20, 2025. Post commanders are recommended to review MOP section 218(a)(1)k which directs the commander or their representative to attend all properly called district conventions or meetings. Failure to do so may not accurately represent the best interests of that post membership and demonstrate a failure to fulfill the duties of office specified in 218 of the bylaws and MOP.

3. District Communication: In order to develop a timely and cost effective pace plan for communications within the district we will use email as our primary, telephone calls as our alternate, traditional post mail as our contingency and face-to-face communication as our emergency communication. Please make sure that your information is correct and up-to-date on the election reports.

4. District Meeting Dates & Changes: District meetings are published in advance to allow everyone the opportunity to be present. If a Post Commander cannot be present, they shall send an authorized representative, i.e. SVC or JVC in their place for the meetings. The upcoming district meetings will be held on OCT 4, 2025, FEB 7, 2026 with an alternate date of FEB 28, 2026 (inclement weather), and APR 25, 2026. All meetings will be held at 1000 hours. Place TBD by the posts in the district. If your post can host a meeting please let the district adjutant, Ron Albert, know so we can get them updated with the department. There will be a SOI held at the next regularly scheduled district meeting.

Thank you for everything you do for your veterans, their families, and your communities. I look forward to serving the department in my new roles. Please reach out if you need anything, now and in the future.

v/r

Erica L. Traxler

Past State Commander
District 14 Commander
Post 5263 Service officer
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Oklahoma

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

D-1 >

D-3 >

D-4 >

D-5 >

D-7 >

D-8 >

D-9 > September 6th, Edmond, 1000, State Adjutant/Quartermaster Heidi Teeter

D-10 > September 27th, Shawnee, 1000, State Commander Jeff Harris

D-13 > September 20th, Clinton 1100, State Surgeon Deric Duncan

D-14 > October 4th,

D-15 > September 20th, Woodward 1100, State Judge Advocate Randy Traxler

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Labor Day >> September 1st >> HQ (National and Dept) Closed

Fall Legislative Conference >> September 7th – 11th, Washington DC

Patriot Day >> September 11th

Air Force Birthday >> September 18th >> 78 years young

Accredited SO Training >> September 21st – 26th, Annapolis, MD

CiC Carol Whitmore Homecoming >> September 25th – 28th Des Moines, IA

Dept Adjutant/Quartermaster Training >> October 2nd – 5th, Kansas City, MO

Dept Junior Vice Training >> October 9th – 12th, Kansas City, MO

Navy Birthday >> October 13th >> 250 years young

Southern Conference >> November 6th – 9th Montgomery, TX

Marine Corps Birthday >> November 10th >> 250 years young

Veterans Day >> November 11th

Thanksgiving >> November 27th >> HQ (National and Dept) Closed 27th and 28th

Native American Heritage Day >> November 29th

Pearl Harbor Day >> December 7th

National Guard Birthday >> December 13th >> 389 years young

Space Force Birthday >> December 20th >> 6 years young

Christmas Eve >> December 24th HQ (National and Dept) Closed

Christmas Day >> December 25th HQ (National and Dept) Closed

New Years Eve >> December 31st HQ (National and Dept)

New Years Day >> January 1st HQ (National and Dept) Closed