



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



P.O Box 369 Choctaw. OK 73020
580 359 2963/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

July 2026

2026-2027 Series

"Not everyone's actions will make sense to you... That's why it's wise to give others the benefit of the doubt. It doesn't mean you're naïve — it means you choose peace over assumptions. You choose understanding over judgment." — Anonymous

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

General Orders No. 01

2026-2027 Series

1. Attention is directed to: **National By-Laws, Sec 216, Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.** Post Officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Post Adjutant. Post Officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within (30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National Bylaws.

2. Attention is directed to the provision of Section 222 (d) of the National Bylaws, "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 registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten-dollar (\$10) delegate fee." Post Quartermasters are encouraged to register their delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS). Posts failing to comply with this provision will be considered delinquent and in arrears.

/os/
Tony McGrew
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /
Heidi Teeter
Adjutant

Newly Elected Officers for Department 2026-2027:

Department Commander > Tony McGrew > Blachard Post 3608

Department Senior Vice Commander > Larry Hurd > Altus Post 4876

Department Junior Vice Commander > Deric Duncan > Edmond Post 4938

Department Quartermaster > Heidi Teeter > Clinton Post 4465

Department Chaplain > Marcus King > Edmond Post 4938

Department Judge Advocate > Randy Traxler > Ft. Sill Post 5263

Department Surgeon > James Patterson > Durant Post 3916

Department Budget & Finance Committee Member (3-year) Ancil Davis > Post 4938

***Commander
Tony McGrew***

Comrades, Happy 4th of July

Be safe over the holiday and do something good for yourself,

Thank you for all you accomplished during the 2025/2026 year. It was an amazing year, and it wasn't just all about the Department, because it was many, many, many individual efforts and dedication that started us down the path and carried us through to such a fantastic year.

Let's celebrate with each other when we can and give thanks for the Grace we received throughout the year and for the success of the coming year, because it can be another Banner Year.

I look forward to getting to know you a little better and thanking you personally for all that you do for Veterans and the VFW. With much admiration and gratitude.

Respectfully,

Tony McGrew

State Commander

Department of Oklahoma

***Senior Vice Commander
Larry Hurd***

Hello from the paw-paw patch.

For this time of the year the weather is unpredictable, HOT, Humid and Rainy. The City of Altus is having a weekend of 250 celebration all weekend including at the city reservoir with fireworks and drone displays.

The state convention was good and productive with the by-law changes that were approved. National Convention will be in July at Reno, Nevada. If you haven't been to a National Convention you should go to one at least once. There are a lot of meetings with resolutions changes, by-law changes, nominations and elections. The VFW store will be there with a lot of items on display. There are a lot of vendors including Twisted X boots and shoes with their merchandise on display.

With this year being our 250-birthday celebration I hope everyone has a good summer and fun with the family.

One last thing when members are talking to other members and Department staff talk to them with respect, that goes a long way.

Talk to you next month and have a good July.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Senior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma

Junior Vice Commander
Deric Duncan

Comrades,

First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the confidence you have placed in me by electing me to serve as your Department Junior Vice Commander. It is an honor that I do not take lightly, and I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the veterans and members of the Department of Oklahoma.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Department Commander, Jeff Harris, and to every District, Post, Auxiliary, and Department officer who dedicated countless hours to making this past year a success. The accomplishments of our Department are built on the sacrifices and hard work of volunteers who continue to prove that no one does more for veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As we begin this new VFW year, I want to challenge each of us to think bigger than we ever have before. Let's not be satisfied with simply maintaining what we've always done. Let's look for opportunities to grow our Posts, strengthen our communities, engage younger veterans, and accomplish things that may have never been attempted before in our Department's history.

There will always be people willing to tell us why something cannot be done. History, however, is made by those willing to step into the arena and try.

President Theodore Roosevelt said it best:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

That quote reminds us that progress belongs to those willing to step forward, take risks, and work together for something greater than themselves.

My hope for this year is simple: that we become a Department known not just for maintaining excellence, but for setting a new standard. Let us be bold in our ideas, relentless in our service, and united in our mission. Every Post, every District, every member has a role to play in making this a year that future Oklahoma VFW members will look back on with pride.

Together, let's bring the spark and ignite the flame.

Yours in Comradeship,

Deric Duncan

State Junior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma

Surgeon
James Patterson

Hello Team Oklahoma,

As your newly elected Department Surgeon, I want to congratulate everyone on a strong finish for the Oklahoma VFW. As we enter the hottest part of the summer, I would like to share some important health reminders.

Each July, I join my fellow coaches in completing refresher courses on heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest, and concussion protocols. In that spirit, I want to remind us all to prioritize hydration. Please ensure you are drinking plenty of water daily. It is best to pre-hydrate before heading outdoors for activities like yardwork, continue hydrating while active, and follow up with more fluids afterward.

Water is absorbed more efficiently than any other beverage, making it the best defense against heat stroke. For recovery after heavy sweating, consider adding electrolytes to your water or consuming sports drinks. However, please try to avoid energy drinks. While we all enjoy our

morning coffee and other caffeinated beverages, they should not replace the water necessary to maintain proper hydration levels.

Don't forget to check on your members regularly and be willing to lend a hand when needed. Don't forget we have resources at the Department such as our Emergency Relief Fund should your post need assistance in helping a veteran during these hot and humid months.

Stay safe and stay hydrated.

Best regards,

James Patterson

State Surgeon
Department of Oklahoma

Adjutant/Quartermaster
Heidi Teeter

Comrades,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 year! Let's work together to make this another great year. We have some upgrades coming this year to benefit the Posts, Districts, members and dependents. First, close to the end of the 2025-2026 year the Council approved funding for a technology grant that will be available to posts and districts. This grant falls under the purview of the Grant Committee and once we all meet and iron out the details, application process and qualifiers that will be pushed to the posts and districts. Secondly, we will be looking to add a sub-committee to the Comrade Relief Committee. The sub-committee will consist of all female members and be specifically for women in distress. Speaking of the Comrade Relief I will be working on making the application available on the website as well as making it possible to submit it online. Once this is complete, I will provide the information to the membership. These are just a couple of new things or updates we will be making.

Commander McGrew has created 3 new committees; the Sergeant-at-Arms Committee, Department Honor Guard Committee, and the GWOT Veterans Committee. The Sergeant-at-Arms Committee and Department Honor Guard Committee are tasked with researching the membership interest, cost and benefit to having a Department Honor Guard and Sergeant-at-Arms. The GWOT Veterans Committee is tasked with researching what it takes to get the GWOT veterans to join, where this class of veterans are located in the state, and what these vets need from the VFW. If you are interested in assisting with any of these committees, please reach out to me.

We have School of Instruction coming up on July 18th, 9:30 am at Altus VFW Post 4876, located at 500 N Veterans Dr, Altus, OK 73521, as reminder Schools of Instruction are open to all members. The next School of Instruction will be August 29th at Tulsa VFW Post

577, located at 1109 E 6th St, Tulsa, OK 74120 9:30 am. Our Officer Training to be held at the Guthrie and Edmond VFW Posts on September 19-20, is specifically designed to provide an in-depth understanding of critical officer duties and responsibilities. While essential for current Post and District officers, we strongly encourage all members to attend. As we work out the details I will be pushing that information out.

This session offers valuable insight into the intricacies of each officer position, enabling you to better support our leadership team and help them stay on track. Furthermore, it serves as an excellent opportunity to inspire and prepare members who may consider running for an office next year or in the future, especially those new to leadership roles. Your participation contributes significantly to our collective success and future leadership. We want you all to have a successful year and want to do what we can to help you succeed.

As the same as last year my goal is to have the General Orders out by the end of day on the last day of the month prior to the month that the General orders apply to, and at the very latest by COB on the first day of the month that the General Orders apply to. If anyone has anything they would like published in the General Orders, I ask that it be submitted to okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org or okasstadj@vfw-oklahoma.org by the 25th of the month.

You will see a couple of extra things added to this month's GOs. I've included the 2026-2027 appointments, an example of the proper way to complete the bond application, the most current National approved Department bylaws, and a letter outlining Official Department Communication. Please review, save and share these as needed.

In accordance with Section 703 of the National Bylaws "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, as the case may be, 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.

The last page of these General Orders is the questionnaires for the VFW Accountable Officer Bond and Clubroom, Canteen, and Bingo Employees. The accountable officer bond is for September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026, and the Clubroom, Canteen, and Bingo Employees are for October 1, 2025-September 30, 2026. If you are bonded through an outside entity (not the Department) please provide me with a copy as proof of being bonded. The rates for the bonds are as follows:

- \$4.50 per thousand for \$3,000 - \$99,000

- \$3.50 per thousand for \$100,000 - \$250,000
- \$2.50 per thousand for \$251,000 - \$299,000
- \$2.00 per thousand for \$300,000 - \$600,00

Your April 1- June 30 quarterly audit is due by July 31. Also, if you are fiscal (July 1 – June 30) tax filer your annual 990 can be done anytime from July 1 – November 15. The IRS deadline is November 15. My recommendation is don't wait, especially if you are a 990N (e-postcard) filer. If you use a CPA, get your files to them as soon as possible. Once you have it filed email or snail mail a copy to okqm@vfw-oklahoma.org or PO Box 369, Choctaw, OK 73020.

When sending any documents to HQ I prefer email so that I have a paper trail, however if you prefer USPS mail, make a note of when you put it in the mail. Also, please keep in mind that I receive at least 50 emails a day and just as many phone calls. Penny Whipkey-Jefferson, the Assistant Department Adjutant/Quartermaster is a volunteer so she does not work as much as I do, so you may not get a response immediately. Also, please keep in mind that I DO NOT work 24/7. If you call or email me after 6 pm or on weekends I will not respond until the next business day at the earliest, as weekends and evenings are my time for my family, my post and my district. I ask for at least 10 business days for a follow-up if one is required, we have over 10,000 members, 73 posts and 9 districts that Penny and I take care of by ourselves. The order of response is based on priority and then order of receiving. If you talk to me in person about something that needs a follow-up, please, PLEASE send an email as well.

I will be taking some vacation time at the end of July. National Convention starts July 25, so my kids and I will be driving out the evening of the 22nd. I will be taking off the 22nd so that I can get some sleep to be able to drive through the night. My vacation officially starts at the close of Convention on the 29th and will go through August 4th. During that time Penny will be available. If you need to get a hold of her email her at okasstadj@vfw-oklahoma.org or call Department HQ at 580-359-2963 and choose option 1.

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

Judge Advocate's Corner: Leadership Through Learning

As new officers begin their terms, one of the most important things to remember is that none of us start with all the answers.

Every successful Commander, Quartermaster, Trustee, Adjutant, and District Officer was once new to the position. The difference between those who struggle and those who thrive is often not experience—it is a willingness to learn, ask questions, and seek mentorship.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has invested significant time and effort into developing resources designed specifically to help officers succeed. Before reinventing the wheel, take advantage of the tools already available to you.

At VFW.org, officers can find valuable publications and guides including:

- Commander's Guide
- District Commander's Guide
- Quartermaster's Guide
- Trustee Guide
- Adjutant resources
- Bylaws and Manual of Procedure
- Ritual
- Training materials and reference documents

Many of the questions that arise throughout the year have already been addressed in these resources. Whether you are preparing for your first meeting, reviewing financial responsibilities, planning inspections, or navigating a challenging procedural issue, there is likely a guide available to help.

That said, leadership is not a self-study course. The most valuable resource in our organization remains the collective experience of our members. Reach out to past officers, District leadership, Department officers, committee chairs, and mentors. Most are more than willing to share lessons learned and help you avoid common pitfalls.

As Judge Advocate, I encourage every officer to adopt a mindset of continuous learning. Read the guides. Review the bylaws. Attend Schools of Instruction. Participate in training opportunities. Ask questions before problems develop rather than after they occur.

The strongest Posts and Districts are not led by individuals who know everything. They are led by officers who know where to find answers and are willing to seek guidance when needed.

This year, challenge yourself to learn something new about your position each month. Share that knowledge with another member. Mentorship is not a title; it is a responsibility that strengthens our organization, one leader at a time.

Together, through learning, mentorship, and a commitment to doing things the right way, we ensure the VFW remains strong for the next generation of veterans.

v/r,

Randy Traxler

Judge Advocate
Department of Oklahoma

Chaplain Marcus King

Comrades,

July brings us into **Patriotism & Community Month**, and this year's Independence Day carries special meaning as our nation celebrates **America's 250th birthday**. It's a moment to reflect on the ideals that shaped our country and the service that continues to protect them.

I want to again encourage all Post and District Chaplains to make use of the **Post Chaplain PASS Book**, available at lotcs.org/vfw_chaplain.html. The PASS Book is a **practical, month-by-month operational guide and SOP** designed specifically for VFW Chaplains. It lays out duties, reminders, observances, outreach tasks, and meeting preparation in a clear, structured format. Chaplains are encouraged to review the upcoming month, print the pages, personalize them, and use the PASS Book as a working tool throughout the year.

The introduction reminds us that chaplaincy is often carried out through **small, unseen acts of presence**—a visit, a prayer, a phone call, a Buddy Check, or simply standing with a grieving family. The PASS Book helps Chaplains stay **organized, consistent, and attentive** to those moments of care that matter most.

As we approach the Fourth of July, I also want to highlight **general safety**. With Oklahoma's recent passage of the **Rockets' Red Glare Bill**, bottle rockets are once again legal for sale. That means more fireworks in our neighborhoods and more opportunities for accidents. Please encourage your Posts and communities to celebrate responsibly. Let's enjoy the holiday, honor our nation's milestone, and aim to **keep all our fingers** while we do it.

Continue promoting Post visibility, conducting Buddy Checks, and being present for veterans and families who may need encouragement this summer. Your ministry—both seen and unseen—makes a real difference across our Department.

In HIS Service,

Marcus King

State Chaplain
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Oklahoma

Training and Development

Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett

Training & Development Committee Welcomes New Officers

Congratulations to all newly elected and appointed officers across the Department of Oklahoma. Thank you for stepping forward to lead your Posts, Districts, and Department during the coming year.

One of the most common things we hear from new officers is, “I don’t know what I don’t know.” The good news is that you are not expected to figure everything out on your own.

Sometimes training and mentorship can feel like a self-service station. Resources exist, manuals are available, and information is out there—but knowing where to start or who to ask can be the hardest part. If you find yourself in that position, please reach out.

The Department Training & Development Committee exists to support you. Whether you have questions about officer responsibilities, meetings, reports, bylaws, membership, finances, or simply need help finding the right answer, we are here to assist. Be sure to leave a voicemail or send a text. Modern call screening may make it, so we don’t see your call without you leaving a voicemail.

Our committee members are:

- Randy Traxler, Chair
 - 989-482-3876
 - Randytraxler@icloud.com
- Jim Bassett, Co-Chair
 - 405-664-3929
 - bassettj15@yahoo.com
- Frank Whitlock
 - 918-645-9117
 - fwusmc@yahoo.com
- Melvin Horne
 - 405-541-0148
- Marc Fisher
 - 815-530-7115
 - fats1408@gmail.com

We have several ways to provide support:

- One-on-one mentoring and guidance
- Virtual meetings through Zoom

- Customized online training sessions for Posts or Districts
- Resource development and reference materials
- In-person visits to Posts if approved through the Department budget process

No question is too small, and asking for help is not a sign of weakness—it is a sign of leadership. Strong organizations are built when leaders learn from one another and share their experiences.

As you begin your term, remember that you are not alone. The Training & Development Committee stands ready to help you succeed so that together we can better serve our veterans, their families, and our communities.

If you need assistance, reach out to any member of the committee. We are only a phone call, email, text message, or Zoom session away.

Be sure to follow our Facebook and enjoy the weekly quizzes and polls designed to help us all grow.

Learn. Lead. Mentor. Repeat.

Respectfully,

Randy Traxler

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Jim Bassett

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

***Voice of Democracy
Patriot's Pen
Teacher of the Year
Jim Bassett***

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

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

I need ALL chair positions for each post and district submitted so that we can assign them in the program. Remember, Auxiliary members can be utilized as chairs.

Scholars App is an online program that students can enter, upload their application and essay. It also is a portal for parents, teachers, and school counselors with information about other scholarships, thousands of them, that students can apply for. This is a win/win for the students. Because of this, I really encourage all posts and districts to use the portal. It creates less work for the chair! Get the QR codes out in public, monitor the Scholars App dashboard. When judging time arrives, select your judges. 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.

Jim Bassett

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services *Tony McGrew and Jim Bassett*

The Military Order of the Cooties visited the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center on the 5th of June. They went around and greeted residents and staff. We found a professional artist going through rehabilitation there. I know the Cooties plan on many more visits in the upcoming years. All VFW and Auxiliary members are encouraged to do the same. Residents at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City are anticipating visits. Get a group together, VFW, Auxiliary, or both. Cooties are visiting, why not the VFW and Auxiliary? The same for Military Order of the Cooties Auxiliary and VFW Riders Group.

As always, the VA is always looking for volunteers. They are needing from highly skilled to handing out popcorn and books. 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.

Tony McGrew

Jim Bassett

State VAWS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Veterans and Military Support *Jim Bassett*

Units have deployed. Are you working with them to make sure that they have what they need? What can we do for the deployed or their families? Please don’t forget their loved ones while they are gone. We all have been in their place, remember how you felt. They feel the same.

We presented the 137th Special Operations Wing with over 100 pounds of food as well as a check for \$1,341. This is what our members have done, the pantry at the 137th supplies Tinker AFB including the 507th Air Refueling Wing, in addition to the entire Air National Guard and Army Guard of Oklahoma. We are going to do it again. No contest, just helping our fellow veterans that may need support.

SportClips Help-A-Hero fundraising starts in October. This is an annual event. Visit your local store, talk to them. Talk to the patrons and tell them you're supporting SportClips with their fundraising. Funny thing is that this simple thing increases their fundraising. Also generates people's interest in the VFW, the Auxiliary, and new members. The downside is it also generates veterans' interest in working a VA claim. But hey, that is what we do!

Jim Bassett

State VMS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

- D-1** > August 1st, Tahlequah, 1100
- D-4** > August 1st, Hugo, 1100
- D-5** > August 2nd, Dewey, 1400
- D-7** > August 1st, TBD, 1100
- D-8** > August 8th, Sapulpa, 1000
- D-9** > September 12th, Edmond, 1030
- D-10** > September 12th, Shawnee, 1000
- D-13** > August 22nd, Clinton, 1100
- D-15** > September 29th, Lawton, 1100

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Independence Day** Observed Federal Holiday (National and Dept) Closed>>July 3
- Independence Day**>>July 4, 1776 (250 Years)
- School of Instruction/OTS** >> July 18th>> Altus, OK
- National Convention** >> July 25th-29th, Reno, NV
- Coast Guard Birthday** >> August 4th >> 236 years young.
- Labor Day** >> September 7th >> HQ (National and Dept) Closed
- AQ Training**>>September 10-13, Kansas City (HQ closed)
- Fall Legislative Conference** >> September 14th – 17th, Washington DC
- Patriot Day** >> September 11th
- Air Force Birthday** >> September 18th >> 79 years young
- Officer Training**>>September 19th-20th>>Guthrie/Edmond