



**Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars**



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December 2024

2024-2025 Series

*“Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.”
~Winston Churchill*

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

General Orders No. 06

2024-2025 Series

1. Commanders on all levels are reminded that according to Section 105 of the National Bylaws, a member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They shall not attend meetings or conventions and shall not participate in Post, County Council, District, Department, or National functions.
2. Notice to Commanders and Adjutants: All Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen, and Teacher of the Year Reports **MUST** be submitted via the All-American Dashboard. Post Adjutants must enter their Posts’ report. District Adjutants must approve Post Reports and enter the District Report. Contact Department Adjutant Curt Watts for information and/or questions.
3. ***District Meetings Dates & Changes***: District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at vfwokadj@outlook.com of any changes to district meetings including new dates for District meetings.

/os/
DAN FULLER
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /
Heidi Teeter
Adjutant

Commander Dan Fuller

Greetings Comrades,

I would like to wish everyone a great holiday season! I would like to thank Ponca City VFW post 1201 Commander Miles for allowing me to be in the city Veteran's Day Parade along with Auxiliary President R. Merrit. I know that there was fantasy work done during Veterans Day weekend from all the Posts and Districts.

Many members of the National Guard Army and Air force will have their Christmas parties this and upcoming weekends. You should make every effort to engage with these Units. In addition, please visit any Veterans homes and Assisted living facilities that may have Veterans that resided there.

I am happy to announce that the Dept, of Oklahoma is now 10th in the nation in membership. The State continues to grow with several Posts achieving 102% and 105%plus Aswell!

Recruit, Retain and Reinstate.

"To each officer and soldier ... I wish a Merry Christmas. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We march in our might to complete victory. May God's blessing rest upon each of you on this Christmas Day." General Patton.

Respectfully,

Dan Fuller

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma

Senior Vice Commander Jeff Harris

Comrades,

Hello and greetings. Well winter is coming and then nights are getting colder so be sure and bring your plants inside. And your pets too.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Now it's time to get off the couch and walk those extra pounds off. HE HE

Our mid-winter meeting is planned for Feb. 21, 22, and 23 at the Embassy Suites Oklahoma City NW. I hope everyone is making plans to attend. We are trying to get Raymond Queen from the Student Veterans of America to attend. This was one of my high points while I was campaigning for State Sr. Vice Commander. Let's hope he can attend.

The state membership is on the rise and Commander Fuller is doing a great job with membership. Oklahoma is in first place in the Southern Conference. The state is over 92%, so let's not stop working membership.

Comrades, the holiday season is here and not everyone will be having a good time. If you know anyone who may need a meal or a shoulder to cry on, be that person who makes someone happy and brings cheer to their heart.

In closing comrades, you all know that I will be running for the office of State Commander, so your support is needed. Thank you so much.

Respectfully,

Jeff Harris

State Sr. Vice Commander

***Junior Vice Commander
Tony McGrew***

Comrades,

I hope all had a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving with family and friends. Although we have a big celebration once a year, remember every day should be a Thanksgiving Day for surely, we have much to be thankful for on a daily basis.

Soon, within a few weeks, we will celebrate a truly marvelous occasion and that is the birth of Christ, Savior of the world. I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Don't forget to list your New Year's resolutions, although this may seem a little passé, it can be very useful in determining your direction for the New Year, especially for what you want to accomplish within our beloved VFW. Each of you is vastly important and needed to accomplish our mission. As our bodies need each part to function, so does the VFW need each member.

Looking forward to seeing you all at Winter Fest.

Respectfully,

Tony McGrew

Candidate: State Senior Vice Commander.

***Surgeon
Larry Hurd***

Comrades,

Greetings from the paw-paw patch. November has come and gone and with it was Thanksgiving. I hope everyone in the Department had a good Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends. The weather is changing so start watching for colder temperatures and wind chill. Another item to keep an eye on is the tire pressure on your vehicles. Colder temperatures cause your tires to lose air pressure. This is the season to put up Christmas decorations. Be careful when using ladders and electrical extension cords for your Christmas decorations.

Here is some information from the VFW Action Corp. House Passes Dole Act: The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, H.R. 8371, passed in the House with a bipartisan vote of 389-9. This legislative package, known as the Dole Act, is being slated for a vote in the Senate. If signed into law, it would fund a range of enhancements vital to critical healthcare services for

veterans and caregivers who need help now and cannot wait any longer. See how your members of Congress voted.

VFW Speaks at Women Veteran Caucus Event on Transition: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan spoke at the final event of the Servicewomen and Women Veterans Caucus of the 118th Congress, led by Reps. Chrissy Houlahan, Jen Kiggans, Derrick Van Orden, and Brad Wenstrup, all of whom are veterans. The discussion centered around the unique challenges that women face when transitioning out of the military such as service-connected injuries that affect fertility, mental health effects of military sexual trauma, and barriers to accessing benefits due to childcare constraints. Keenan explained that it is critical that all transitioning service members have access to a service officer to file their pre-discharge VA disability claims. "We know that veterans are vulnerable to suicide during the first year after separation from the military. We also know that veterans who use their VA benefits and health care have a lower risk of suicide. Eliminating the gap between service and access to VA is incredibly important and our service officers can facilitate that transition." She cited VFW-supported legislation — H.R.3933, TAP Promotion Act, and H.R.4157, Not Just a Number Act — that would improve the transition process and gather data regarding women veterans and suicide risks.

Annual Report on Military Suicide: The Department of Defense has released its Calendar Year 2023 Annual Report on Suicide in the Military which provides data on suicide rates among service members and their dependents, along with details of ongoing prevention efforts. The report indicates a total force rate increase in 2023 of 9% in suicide deaths per 100,000 service members compared to 2022, primarily involving young, enlisted men and the use of firearms. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin launched a suicide prevention campaign in September 2023 that focuses on five key areas: fostering a supportive environment, improving mental health care, addressing stigma, revising training, and promoting lethal means of safety.

Our October VAC meeting was informal as there was not a quorum present so there were no reports. Our next VAC is on 12-2-24 so I hope to have some more information for the Department. Until then stay warm, get ready for Christmas, and have good times with your family, friends, and as always, your VFW Comrades.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Surgeon
Department of Oklahoma

*Adjutant/Quartermaster
Heidi Teeter*

Comrades,

Where has the time gone!?! In a few short weeks, we will be halfway through the year! I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving full of tasty food and quality family time. I was able to take my son to visit family that we hadn't been able to see in over three years, so it was a wonderful time for my family. Christmas time is here. This is the time of year that can be hard for veterans and service members, so be sure to reach out to anyone you may know who struggles both mentally and emotionally around this time.

This month I only have a few Quartermaster/Adjutant housekeeping items. First, if you have not sent in your quarterly audits for the periods ending June 30, 2024, and September 30, 2024, please do so as soon as possible. The next audits will be due by January 31, 2025. Second, tax returns were due to the IRS by November 15, 2024, for all posts and districts with a tax year ending June 30. If you have filed and have not

sent the confirmation to me yet, please get those in. If you had to file an extension, please notify me of that as well. Lastly, District Adjutants or Commanders, if your district meeting has passed, please send me the date, time, and location of your next meeting, so that we can plan out the Department Rep schedule.

Mid-winter has been scheduled!! It will be held at the Embassy Suites-NW in Oklahoma City. The dates are February 21-23, 2025. The room rates are \$129 for a single king studio suite and \$144 for a king or queen suite, these are the two-room suites. This rate includes a hot made-to-order breakfast and happy hour. Keep in mind this rate does not include taxes or the incidental deposit. To receive these rates rooms will have to be booked no later than January 31, 2025. To book a room, you can call 405-842-6633 and telling them rooms are for the VFW event or use this link; [2025 MID-WINTER VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS MEETING](#). If a post wants to host a hospitality room, per the hotel management "It is fine for the guest to serve food and beverages in their suites. The guests must keep their alcohol and food in their suites where they are providing the Food and Beverage."

I thought it might be helpful to know important HQ and Muskogee Service Officer office closings. Under the Important Dates to Remember section, I will start listing closings for National, Department, and Muskogee office closings.

As always, if anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Charlie Mike,

Heidi Teeter

State Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma

VFW FOUNDATION

Jim Bassett

Merry Christmas and Happy New Years to all from your foundation. We are going through some changes and are looking to you for ideas. Some of the events going on with the foundation are that we have all board seats filled. A big welcome to Beth West for joining our foundation. We are looking forward to your advice and counsel. Some other changes coming up will be a streamlined method to request support from the foundation. We will also be looking for fundraising ideas. The Oklahoma VFW Foundation was created to help the VFW and Auxiliary of Oklahoma, its members, families, veterans, and their communities. To do this the Foundation needs funds. We are not asking for mandatory donations but would rather have our members reach out to their community and find businesses that would like to support the VFW and Auxiliary with their mission. And again, we are looking for fundraising ideas. We want your foundation to be a success.

Respectfully,

Jim Bassett

President
Oklahoma VFW Foundation
<https://okvfwfoundation.org>



Training and Development

Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett

****Finding Connection: Navigating the Holidays as a Veteran****

The holiday season can be a challenging time for many of us who've served in the military. It's a season filled with traditions, reunions, and joy, but it can also bring up feelings of isolation, grief, or even disconnection. Memories of deployments, lost comrades, or the differences between military and civilian life often linger, making this time of year emotionally complex. While the holidays are meant to be a time of togetherness, it can sometimes feel like the world around us moves forward without fully understanding our experiences.

One of the most important things we can do during the holidays is communicate our boundaries and needs with those who haven't shared our journey. Loved ones might not fully grasp what we've been through, but that doesn't mean we can't guide them on how to best support us. Setting boundaries—whether that's asking to step away from certain conversations, skipping crowded gatherings, or taking time to recharge—is a form of self-care. At the same time, being open about what we **do** need, like understanding, patience, or time to share meaningful stories, helps bridge the gap between our world and theirs.

Technology can also play a key role in staying connected and supported. For those of us who can't be with family, video calls, social media, and virtual holiday events can bring familiar faces and voices to us, no matter where we are. Beyond family, veteran-focused organizations often host online meetups, support groups, or events tailored for our community during the season. Reaching out to fellow veterans, whether online or in person, can provide the camaraderie and mutual understanding that we often crave. These tools remind us that, while our journey may feel unique, we're never truly alone.

The holidays can be complicated, but they're also an opportunity for connection and growth. By advocating for our needs, setting healthy boundaries, and leaning on the tools and communities available to us, we can navigate this season with resilience and find moments of joy and belonging.

Respectfully,

Randy Traxler

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Jim Bassett

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

- District 1
 - TBD
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- District 3
 - TBD
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- District 4
 - TBD
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- District 5
 - TBD
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- District 7
 - TBD
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- District 8
 - TBD
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- District 9
 - TBD
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- District 10
 - January 18th 10 am
 - Midwest City, 9500 NE 10th Street
 - Dept Commander Dan Fuller
- District 13
 - January 11th 11 am
 - El Reno, 1515 S Rock Island Ave
 -

- District 14
 - TBD
 -
 -
- District 15
 - February 8th 11 am
 - Altus, 500 N Veterans Drive
 - Dept Commander Dan Fuller

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Pearl Harbor Day >> December 7th

National Guard >> December 13th (388)

Space Force Birthday >> December 20th (4)

Christmas Eve >> December 24th

Christmas Day >> December 25th

New Year's Eve >> December 31st

New Year's Day >> January 1st

OFFICE CLOSINGS:

National Headquarters >> December 24th through January 1st

Department Headquarters >> December 24th through December 26th and December 31st through January 1st

Muskogee Office >> December 24th through December 27th and December 31st through January 3rd

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

VOLUME 49, NO. 5

DEC. 2024

Membership

WINTER WILL NOT STOP US FROM GROWING MEMBERSHIP!

As we head into the winter months, we encourage all our Posts, Districts, and Departments to continue our focus on membership growth. Even if your Post isn't holding specific recruiting events, remember that every comrade is a recruiter, and we need to take every opportunity to talk to fellow veterans about the benefits of VFW membership. In addition, there is no better time than the present to contact your existing members whose dues may be coming up for renewal and make sure they know how important it is to continue their membership. With diligence and hard work, we will meet the Commander-in-Chief's requirement of 102% membership this year!

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

To encourage growth, Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt has instituted a monthly Commander's Challenge. Every month, we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a new Annual member into the Post: 1 point
- An annual or lapsed member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a new Life Member into the Post: 10 points

For the month of December, the Post that leads each division will receive a 3' x 5' VFW outdoor flag to fly proudly at the Post, or at parades and events. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Keep it up and we will show everyone how NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from Dec. 1 through Dec. 31, 2024. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into vfw.org and go to <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As the membership year has begun keep in mind the membership requirements set out by the Commander-in-Chief:

- Achieve 102% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you get started in the new membership year, we have made it easier for you to get all the recruiting brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It's as easy as one two three!

1. Go to vfw.org and click the login link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.
2. Under "Membership Quick Links," select Membership Online Order Form.
3. Use the dropdown list to indicate items you need. The form will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Follow these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the Membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at membership@vfw.org.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Our next Membership Monday training webinar will be on December 2, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: "**The Importance of Buddy Checks**". This time of year, we need to be diligent about checking in on our comrades and strengthening those bonds that hold the VFW together. Join us for this online training and learn how to reach out and make sure we're all taking care of each other. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership> to learn how to attend this online training.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to vfw.org, click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life Members and is now available in memoriam for past Life Members. There are three levels of membership; each offers their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

| <u>Levels</u> | <u>Posts</u> | <u>Departments</u> | <u>National</u> |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Gold- \$1,200.00 | \$18.00 | \$18.00 | \$18.00 |
| Silver- \$800.00 | \$12.00 | \$12.00 | \$12.00 |
| Bronze- \$400.00 | \$6.00 | \$6.00 | \$6.00 |

What will your Legacy be?

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters

Timothy M. Borland – 426
VFW Post 9972, Dept of AZ

Ed Stefanak, Jr. – 215
VFW Post 9539, Dept of SC

Steven L. Woodward – 159
VFW Post 2224, Dept of WA

These comrades are leading the charge for membership growth – will you take up the challenge and see your name on this list?

Marketing Communications

In the next few days, you may receive an invitation to participate in a survey conducted by Radius, an independent market research company, on behalf of our friends at USAA. We encourage you to take 15 minutes out of your day to complete the survey. Your opinions and experience as members are very important to us, and we want your voice to be heard.

Please be assured your responses will be kept anonymous and results will only be used on an aggregate level.

Thank you for your consideration.

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 17% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

MATCHING GIFT OFFER! – Look out for a special notice coming to your mailbox this month! Friends of the VFW have generously pledged to triple your donation for the next 30 days, kickstarting our 2024 Annual Challenge with a commitment of \$50,000 from their own pockets. They recognize that the cost of war extends far beyond the battlefield and believe that there are many others who share this understanding. Proud VFW members like you are being called upon to support our newest veterans, especially those returning home disabled by war. Your contribution to the VFW today will not only be matched but tripled. To make sure every dollar counts toward the 2024 Annual Challenge, please ensure that all gifts are postmarked within the next 30 days. Your generosity will make a significant difference in the lives of our veterans. Thank you for your ongoing support!

VFW Kicked Off the 2024 Year-End Campaign with the Friends of Freedom Online Community – November 26th was the start of the VFW's 2024 Year-End Campaign, running until December 31st! Keep an eye on your inbox for an email from the VFW and consider making a generous, tax-deductible year-end contribution.

We also encourage you to spread the word about the campaign across your social media networks. Given the rapidly increasing demand for VFW programs, your support for this year's 2024 Year-End Campaign is more vital than ever. Your contribution will directly impact veterans of all generations by enabling VFW Accredited Service Officers to provide essential assistance in applying for and securing their hard-earned VA benefits. It will also support military families with assistance to cover basic needs in times of crisis, such as utilities and groceries. Furthermore, your generosity ensures that all veterans are effectively represented on Capitol Hill, safeguarding their rights and benefits. Your generosity creates life-changing opportunities for our nation's heroes when they need it most.

Celebrate the Holiday Season by Helping Fellow Veterans – Your support of the VFW this holiday season – and throughout the year – is extremely important in helping the VFW's efforts to serve and assist veterans of all generations who are sick, unemployed, homeless or suffering from combat wounds received long ago. We recently mailed a special edition of the 2025 VFW "Fly the Flag" Calendar, and we also included a bonus gift – a beautiful VFW "American Songbirds" Calendar. The 2025 VFW Veterans Service Annual Campaign will be mailing early in January. By supporting these programs, you help veterans and their families in need throughout the year in *your Department* and across the country. And please display the U.S. flag – especially on patriotic holidays, which are marked in your new 2025 VFW Calendars. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag and print a free flag poster to display.

Avoid These Errors When You Give – 'Tis the season for giving! It's not too late to donate to the VFW to help support veterans. But how do you make sure your gifts are beneficial for you and your cause? Here are 7 common mistakes people make around charitable giving and how to avoid them: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/avoid-these-errors>. To learn more, contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at partners@vfw.org with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

VFW Friends of Freedom – If you are not already a member of the VFW's online community, please visit vfw.org and look for the gold banner that says "**Find Out What's Happening**" to sign up. As a member of the VFW's Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation's veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit vfw.org/VFWatWork and click on "**Read VFW success stories**" to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans' rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

VFW Department Resource Page – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives relies on the participation and backing of your department's members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools.

VFW Foundation

On Nov. 1, VFW Foundation representatives Tony Lowe, Consultant, and Chris Johnson, Grants Manager, joined Sport Clips CEO and VFW Foundation Board member Gordon Logan at Providence Country Club in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the largest golf fundraiser yet in support of the Sport Clips Help-A-Hero Scholarship program.

Hosted by Army veteran Darin Bailey, the event brought together veterans, supporters, and golf enthusiasts, all rallying to help student veterans achieve their educational dreams. With last year's total reaching nearly \$90,000, Darin and the team aim to surpass that milestone this year. A special thanks to VFW Department of North Carolina Commander Annie Cummings and her dedicated team, who took time away from disaster relief efforts to support this event!

Contact: VFW Director of Donor Relations, Richard Freiburghouse, RFreiburghouse@vfw.org.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

Military Assistance Program (MAP) Grant Funds

Be advised that the VFW MAP Grant is now closed for the 2024-25 program year. The 2024-25 MAP Grant funds have been depleted. Any events held after the closure of the MAP grant will not be reimbursed with the 2025-26 funds.

All American Eligibility

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2025**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the “**VMS Donation**” tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate to the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is 125 or more. The **\$** and **.00** are **not required** in the donation amount box.

Do not use the red donate link in the upper right-hand corner of this webpage. This is for general donation purposes only.

VMS Lapel Pin Payment

If your VFW Department headquarters ordered and received the 2024-25 VMS Lapel Pins, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may utilize the “**VMS Donation**” link on the upper right-hand corner of the **Dashboard**.

VMS Program Tools

The Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Program Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/VMSPTools>

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2025 Spring Semester** closed Nov. 15, 2024. The Fall 2025 application will be available early January 2024 and close April. 30, 2025. The application will be available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your support!

VFW Programs

DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS. Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag.

VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE POST PROGRAM SIGN UP. We encourage as many of our VFW posts to get signed up to become a 125th Anniversary community service Post. To date, we have forty-three. Please help us spread the word. Our birthday was a couple of days ago, but our celebration will last the rest of the year and conclude at the National Convention in Columbus.

The VFW National Commander invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during the VFW 125th Anniversary year. In addition, it is hoped you will encourage your community to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Have our posts click this link <https://vfw125.org/get-involved/> and click on the **red** Accept Invitation icon for further information.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM DEADLINE REMINDER. Post level judging should be completed at this time and their winners' nominations forwarded on to the next level of judging, District, if applicable, or on to their VFW Department Headquarters. A completed nomination should consist of a completed official entry form with a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five-pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available at the time.

The corresponding deadlines for the next level of judging are as follows: Dec. 15, 2024, for completion of District judging, if applicable, and their winners forwarded to their Department Headquarters prior to Jan. 1, 2025; and Feb. 1, 2025, for completion of Department judging and their winners forwarded to National Headquarter. Each level may submit one candidate, in each grade category, on to the next level.

NOTE: The VFW National Programs Department requires the Department Headquarters to submit their winners via Formstack, using the link the Department Adjutants/Quartermasters recently received. For each Department winner, they will need to complete a “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” located on Formstack, then download the winners’ entry documentation. Once they hit submit, it will arrive at National Headquarters.

The VFW’s Department Citizenship Education Teacher Award includes a citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

The VFW’s National Citizenship Education Teacher Awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher’s school; plaques for both the winning teacher and school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email tbeauchamp@vfw.org or call 816.756.3390 and ask for extension 6287 or Tammy Beauchamp.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Judging at Post level should have been completed at this time or the near future. VFW Post Safety Chairperson’s may submit up to five winning nominees’ documentation (one for each career area) to their Department Headquarters for judging no later than Jan. 1.

Once judging has been completed, Departments may submit their five winning nominees, if available, (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office, by completing the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through Formstack. VFW Programs staff has emailed the form link to Department Adjutants/Quartermasters prior to the deadline of Feb. 1.

VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (E.O.D.T.) Award

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient’s peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant.

Simply visit vfw.org, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Public Servant Program**.

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: vfwstore.org/products/32134.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN DEPARTMENT DEADLINE

REMINDER. The deadline for submitting the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winner packets to National Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2025 (even if they have not been personally notified they are the winner).

The suggested deadline for Departments to have reviewed and approved their District and Post entries in the All-American Dashboard is Jan. 31. This will ensure we have accurate reporting numbers across the organization and allot us the time to remedy errors. If you are unsure how to report your participation in the All-American Dashboard or if you are having login issues to the OMS system, contact John Linstra at jlinstra@vfw.org or 816.968.2787.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS. Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot's Pen National Awards total is \$55,000.

PLEASE REVIEW UPDATE ON O.C.S.P. PROGRAM. VFW National Programs has updated Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

OUTSTANDING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD. Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR. Each Department will have an NCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG ON DEC. 7. Public Law 103-308, passed in 1994, designates Dec. 7 as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day" and requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day. To order a flag, go to vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

"UPDATED" POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Nov. 7, 2019), it is required that the POW/MIA flag, on certain federal properties, be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot's Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

VFW Member Benefits

[According to the National Cancer Institute](#), approximately 40.5% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their lifetimes.

With these odds, it makes sense to be prepared.

The Cancer Care Insurance Plan for VFW members, administered by A.G.I.A., Inc. and underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, helps alleviate the financial burden of cancer care if you are diagnosed with cancer, so you can focus on your health and recovery.

Cash benefits are payable for cancer related events and are yours to use as you see fit, including hospital bills, operations, mortgage, car payments or other expenses.

Help protect your financial future against the costs associated with a cancer diagnosis. For additional information including costs, benefits, limitations, exclusions, and rates of the Cancer Care Insurance Plan for VFW members, click [here](#) or call 1.877.850.0183.

"Buddy"® Poppy

"BUDDY"® POPPY CAMPAIGN. Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as "They Gave, Will You?" is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES. The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory of Anniversary poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 2 years of the Gold, 3 years of Diamond and 50 years of the Silver.

National Veterans Service

Changes Coming to VA's Secure Sign-in

VA will soon discontinue using My HealthVet account sign-in for your VA accounts. Right now, there are four ways to sign-in to your VA accounts: LOGIN.GOV, ID.ME, My HealthVet, and DS Logon. My HealthVet sign-in will be available until **Jan. 31, 2025**. DS Logon will be discontinued after Sept. 30, 2025.

Act now to transition how you sign-in to access these accounts. Read more about the sign-in changes at: https://www.va.gov/initiatives/prepare-for-vas-secure-sign-in-changes/?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=13NOV2024

VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS) NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAC) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Nominations for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer of the Year awards are coming soon! **Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as a Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteer and meet one of the following criteria:**

- Volunteer with hospitalized Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans at Outpatient Clinics
- Volunteer with Veterans in Community Living Centers
- Volunteer with homeless Veterans under a VAVS program
- Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community under VAVS
- Host Veterans functions outside the Post, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment

VFW Department Commanders, Adjutants, Adjutant/Quartermasters, and Hospital Chairmen, please take a look at who you may want to nominate. We will publish deadlines and nomination forms as we receive them. Thank you for supporting your volunteers work under the VAVS program!

If you have questions about the VAVS program, please contact NVS's Assistant Director Health Policy & VFW VAVS National Representative Katherine Cassell at kcassell@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

VFW Action Corps Readership Survey

We want to hear from you! Tell us about yourself and what topics you would like to see covered next year in the *VFW Action Corps Weekly*. Your input as a subscriber is vital to the success of the VFW's legislatively focused digital newsletter to support our advocacy efforts to further improve veterans' benefits, the transition assistance process, and military family quality of life. Please [take our survey](#).

House Passes the Dole Act

The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, [H.R. 8371](#), passed in the House with a bipartisan vote of 389-9. This [legislative package](#), known as the Dole Act, is being slated for a vote in the Senate. If signed into law, it would fund a range of enhancements vital to critical health care services for veterans and caregivers who need help now and cannot wait any longer. See how your member of Congress [voted](#).

VFW Store

Shop the VFW Store this winter for hoodies, jackets, knit caps and more, including the 125th Anniversary blanket! Click vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/seasonal to shop now!



Roll Call of Departed Comrades

THOMSON, WILLIAM F. "BILL," National Council of Administration member. 2018-2024, Commander, Department of New Jersey, 2010-2011, Department Adjutant 2007-2008 and 2014-2015, and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Township of Washington Memorial Post No. 6192, Washington Township, New Jersey, November 21, 2024.



General Orders No. 5

2024-25 Series

1. The following National appointments are hereby announced:

NATIONAL DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF:

Robert McGill, Post 4876, Altus, OK

ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL:

Brian Stumpf, Post 7977, Skiatook, OK

2. Commanders on all levels are reminded that according to Section 105 of the National Bylaws, a member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They shall not attend meetings or conventions and shall not participate in Post, County Council, District, Department or National functions.
3. The attention of Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders is directed to Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure, which prescribes the manner in which applications for membership will be handled. Applications for membership of new, reinstated or transfer members must be voted on by the members present at a regular Post meeting.
4. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Posts:

Post No. 1393 and 7037 consolidated as Post No. 1393, West Bend, Wisconsin

Post No. 757 and 4251 consolidated as Post No. 757, Harlow, North Dakota

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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info@vfw.org
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PLANNING CALENDAR

SCHEDULE OF VFW MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Rev. December 2024

2025

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| March 1-5 | Voice of Democracy Washington, DC |
| March 2 - 6 | Washington Conference Washington, DC |
| April 10 – 13 | Senior Vice Commanders Training Kansas City, MO |
| June 28 | VFW National Home 100th Anniversary Celebration Eaton Rapids, MI |
| August 9 - 13 | National Convention Columbus, OH |
| September 8 – 11 | Fall Legislative Committee Washington, DC (Tentative) |
| September 19 | National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting Kansas City, MO |
| September 20 – 21 | National Council of Administration Meeting Kansas City, MO |
| September 25 - 28 | Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming Des Moines, IA |
| October 2 -5 | Department Adjutant/Quartermasters Training Kansas City, MO |
| October 16 – 19 | Junior Vice Commanders Training Kansas City, MO |
| October 17 – 19 | Big Ten Conference Bettendorf, IA |
| October 24 – 26 | Eastern Conference Wilmington, DE |
| November 6 – 9 | Southern Conference Montgomery, TX |

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2026

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| February 28 – March 5 | Washington Conference Washington, DC |
| April 16 -19 | Senior Vice Training Kansas City, MO |
| August 15 - 19 | National Convention Salt Lake City, UT |
| September 11 | National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting Kansas City, MO (Tentative) |
| September 12 – 13 | National Council of Administration Meeting Kansas City, MO (Tentative) |
| September 14 -17 | Fall Legislative Committee Washington, DC (Tentative) |
| September 24 – 27 | Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming Billings, MT |
| October 1 – 4 | Department Adjutant/Quartermasters Training Kansas City, MO (Tentative) |
| October 15 – 18 | Junior Vice Training Kansas City, MO (Tentative) |
| October 22 - 25 | Southern Conference Mobile, AL |

2027

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| February 27 – March 4 | Washington Conference Washington, DC |
| July 31 - August 4 | National Convention Milwaukee, WI |

2028

| | |
|---------------|--|
| August 5 - 10 | National Convention San Antonio, TX |
|---------------|--|

Jason Burns For Department Surgeon 2025-2026



Qualifying Campaign- Bosnia & Iraq
All State & All American District 14 CMDR
All State & All American Post 1192 CMDR
State Chaplain

My goal as your State Surgeon is to promote and put into effect health programs for the benefit of the membership and their families.

Programs I would like to put into effect are Monthly Support & Awareness Groups like: PTSD, MST, Suicide, Family ECT.

I would also like to partner up with Licensed Counselors to offer services to our membership and their families also. I would also like to have Faith Leaders to offer Spiritual Guidance.

I will also be working on setting up a new Surgeon network that will link up the Districts & Post Surgeons so they can send weekly reports.

I look forward to working with the Chaplains on the care of our membership and families that are in the hospital, long or short term care.

Also I will carry out what needs are called upon me by the Commander.

It has been an honor serving the membership of the Dept of Oklahoma over the past few years and I hope you will consider electing me to the office of State Surgeon to continue serving at the state level.



Dear VFW Members,

My name is Deric Duncan, and I am running for the position of VFW Department of Oklahoma Surgeon. Currently, I serve as the Department Inspector, MIA/POW Chair, OKC State Fair Chairman, Grant Committee Chair, and Building Committee Chair. Previously, I held the position of District 9 Commander.

I am running for this role because I believe there is much more we can achieve together. My primary goal is to reconnect with our veterans who are in VA homes, shut-ins, and those in hospitals, ensuring they feel part of our vibrant community. I believe in starting this work now, not waiting for election outcomes.

Additionally, I am committed to transparency within our department. It is vital for every officer to keep our membership informed, as you are the driving force behind this department. My aim is to refocus our efforts on how we can best serve you and the posts within Oklahoma.

Leadership is about service, not control. My phone and email are always open for your thoughts and concerns. Last year, I advocated for hiring more service personnel and bringing in grant writers. Although I didn't win the election, I utilized my position on the Council of Administration to push these initiatives forward, and I'm pleased to say they were approved.

I will continue to advocate for measures that benefit our membership and ensure your voices are heard. Together, we can create a stronger, more connected veteran community.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Deric E. Duncan

VOTE MARCUS KING



STATE CHAPLAIN

2025-2026

Ephesians 6: 10-20

PROVEN LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION TO SERVICE

★ VFW MEMBER SINCE 2018 ★

★ UNITED STATES ARMY SERVICE ★

- Active Duty: 1996-2004
 - South Korea (1999-2000)
 - Iraq (March-November 2003)

★ LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE ★

- **Post 382 Chaplain**- Serving since 2022
- **District 13 Chaplain**- Serving since 2023
- **Assistant State Chaplain**- 2024-2025

★ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ★

- Active in Post and District community outreach events
- Supporting Department outreach efforts, including homeless veteran stand downs

★ ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP ★

- President/CEO of Point Man International Ministries - Serving since 2020
- Previous Roles: Outpost Leader and Secretary/Treasurer



RECONSARGE1975@ATT.NET



405.651.5509

Mike Farris For State Chaplain



Vietnam Veteran

Retired Army 1970-1976

Lifetime VFW Member since 12/1984

3 Year Trustee - VFW Post 7180

Ordained Minister - 24th July 2012 - Non Denominational

Currently assisting Post 7180 Chaplain

**Life Member of Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association
(Ch Chaplain 26 July 2014 - 22 July 2019)**

*I would like to help our homeless Veterans and continue my
service of our members who need assistance*



**Erica Traxler
for
Oklahoma National Councilmember
2026-2030
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**

Erica Traxler was elected to Past State Commander on June 15, 2024, at the Oklahoma State Convention in Claremore, Oklahoma.

She served in the United States Army from 1999 to 2013, earning her eligibility by serving in Iraq in 2003. In recognition of her service, she received the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Gold Recruiter Badge with Three Sapphire Stars, Driver and Mechanic Badge, USA Recruiter Badge, Total Army Instructor Training Identifier, and the Master Resilience Trainer Identifier. She retired in 2013 while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

Erica joined the VFW in 2017 at the Fort Sill Post 5263 in Lawton, Oklahoma, where she maintains her Gold Legacy Life Membership. She has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District, and Department levels, culminating with her election to Junior Vice Commander in September 2021. At the state level she has served as the Student Veterans of America chairwoman 2020 to present, Citizenship Education Chair 2020 to present, Bylaws committee 2022 to 2024, District Commander and has served on multiple committees at the National Convention. Erica was elected to Oklahoma Grand Commander of the Cooties in June 2024 for the ensuing year as well as post 5263 Commander. She is also the OKVFW Riders Group resident/Chairwoman for 2024 and the VFW Riders Adjutant at the national level.

Erica received her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling in December 2022. She currently works for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and is working toward getting her license.

Erica is a life member of the Military order of the Cootie, at LMSFT Pup Tent #16 in Lawton, Oklahoma and a life member of the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

Erica, her husband Randy, and their daughters Makayla and Kaylee reside in Lawton, Oklahoma.