



Department of Oklahoma  
Veterans of Foreign Wars



P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101-1126  
580 515-0567/ [www.vfwoklahoma.org](http://www.vfwoklahoma.org)

September 2024 2024-2025 Series

***“Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”***  
***~Winston Churchill***

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

**General Orders No. 03 2024-2025 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. ***Trustee’s Report of Audit:*** Posts & Districts are reminded to forward their Trustees’ reports at the end of each quarter of the current year: June 30th, Sep 30th, Dec 31st and March 31st. Send these audit reports to VFW-OK, P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK 73101 or emailed to [vfwhqokqm@outlook.com](mailto:vfwhqokqm@outlook.com)

3. ***Attention of Post & District Commanders & Quartermasters:*** Commanders & Quartermaster 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.

4. ***Department Directory/Roster:*** Commanders & Adjutants are asked to send all corrections, changes etc. of the Department Roster to [vwokadj@outlook.com](mailto:vwokadj@outlook.com) for changes.

**5. *District Meetings Dates & Changes:*** District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at [vfwokadj@outlook.com](mailto: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*

Comrades,

I will open with a tremendous Thank you, The Training team and to the instructors for a very successful Officer Training in OKC and the Aug SOI at Post 5263. Comrade R. Traxler did amazing work in the set-up and execution of the training. I appreciate Post 5263's work in hosting this event. I was able to visit the historical Lawton Post 1193 and had a great tour by Past ST. Commander D. Mayberry and had a wonderful time meeting the members.

OMS is down for a few days as we wait for the Life Members to be rolled in to our membership percentage, I know that we can make our mission of 102% PLUS.

On That note VFW National has now changed the policy for Reinstated Member recruiting and the VFW Member that recruits the reinstated member will now receive credit on the Recruiter Report. SEE attachment.

The Department Service Officer, State line Officers and the CoA are working to continue supporting Veterans with their Service Officer needs within the new VFW National directives.

I hope that everyone had a good Labor Day. Congratulations to my home Post 577 for their participation in the Great Raft Race on the Arkansas River, 9 miles and 5 hours later they made it to the finish line.

Post Commanders please continue to provide your upcoming events to your District Commanders, so the Department is aware of your great work. I encourage you to stay up on your reporting of all the community service work and Americanism events you conduct.

Fall Fest is Oct. 25-27 please attend if you are able.

I plan to see many of you at the OKC and Tulsa State Fairs.

Remember the 3 Rs Recruit, Retain and Reinstatement.

Wear your own kind of hat,

*Dan Fuller*

State Commander  
Department of Oklahoma

## *National Council Member*

### *Curt Watts*

Fellow Oklahoma VFW Members, well summer is almost over and now we are headed into Fall. I know many of you are up and running at your Posts and District along with State Commander Dan Fuller and our new Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt. Al was Oklahoma's pick for Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief designee when we voted at the Southern Conference during Jim Bassett's year as State Commander. Al is very serious about getting business of the VFW accomplished and for us all to strive for 102% in membership allowing our organization to grow.

During our National Council of Administration meeting in Louisville, KY at the start of our National Convention, Quartermaster General Marc Garduno briefed the National Council where we were financially. He was happy to report that the VFW investments over the first 3 quarters of the year had gained back approximately \$10.3 million of the \$15million we had lost in our investment the previous year and that National Headquarters and most of the departments/sections were currently within budget. However, travel costs continue to cause some areas to be over budget. Overall, he felt we are financially in a strong position.

#### NOW ON TO THE HOT TOPIC!

Now, I know many of you are curious and/or furious about the letter, Subject: Post Service Officer Duty Changes, dated 8/12/24 from National Veteran Service Director Mike Figlioli. Now, before we go into the content of that letter, let me first say, yes, the National Council of Administration did vote on a motion to approve the changes. This was a heated subject of debate, but the motion did pass. Now, I have heard rumblings as to why as your National Council Member I did not come to the membership in Oklahoma to discuss this topic and get your thoughts. I can only say that had I known that this subject was coming before the NCOA, I would have asked for your thoughts, and I would have happily shared them in the meeting. However, there had not been any previous notice and/or discussion from National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli or anyone else about this being a topic of discussion and/or changes to PSO (Post Service Officer) duties. Therefore, it surprised many of us on the Council.

Some History concerning PSOs. Over the last 10 years that I am aware of, and I believe our State Service Officer will agree, the National Veteran Service Office has been pushing and taking away and restricting what a PSO is allowed to do. Now, there are many reasons for this, but quality assurance and protection of our organization from lawsuits are two major driving forces. In a fluid environment such as the VA claims process, things are constantly changing. This is why our Department accredited personnel train every year on new laws, procedures, and updates in general. Therefore, at the present time and with the limited training opportunities and

resources that departments have, many PSOs cannot be fully trained in what is required for the task at hand and furthermore some PSOs are unwilling to attend the training. Hence leaving the PSOs, the department, and the VFW as a whole at risk of lawsuits and/or a bad reputation from the overall veteran community within our state and nation.

I had a personal conversation with Adjutant General Dan West, and he told me that prior to PACT Act's approval, but especially since the PACT Act became law, VFW National Headquarters has been continually flooded with complaints from veterans around the country concerning PSOs. Some examples of complaints have been: PSOs trying to and/or charging veterans to do their claims, PSO saying they don't know how, and some saying I don't have time, and/or I cannot help you. Based upon this continual flood of complaints, Dan West said that they assessed that the PSO program was a broken cog in the wheel within our organization, and that something had to be done for the betterment of the VFW.

Where do we go from here? Now, that should be what we all need to ask. Again, in talking with Adjutant General West, he stated he has no issue with PSO. However, they need to become accredited! So now comrades, how do we go about getting the Department of Oklahoma with more fully accredited service officers? This is a question I plan on bringing into discussion during our National Council of Administration workshop and meeting this September 4-7th in Kansas City. I have talked with Alabama NCOA member Scott Gedling, and we are both in agreement that we must push this issue. New ideas put into practice need to be implemented quickly. Ways of streamlined accreditation need to be explored allowing us to quickly put more accredited service officers in the field. At this point, we are in a MUST status where new innovative ways of getting personnel accredited is at an utmost priority for the enhancement of our Veteran Service operations throughout our organization. If you asked me to give you a status report at this time, I would have to say that it is amber at best, but mostly red. So please be patient, let's work on this issue together and move our organization in a positive direction.

Comrades, I will continually state that as your National Council Member, it is my duty, privilege, and desire to represent Oklahoma VFW and its members. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email address or my cell number below if you desire. I am always willing to listen to your comments and/or share information from the National side.

Respectfully,  
Curt Watts  
National Council of Administration 2022-26  
Oklahoma [yfwokncm@outlook.com](mailto:yfwokncm@outlook.com)  
405.590.8577

*Senior Vice Commander  
Jeff Harris*

Comrades,

First, I would like to thank the members that supported me as the next State Sr. Vice Commander for the State of Oklahoma. Again, thank you so much.

The Schools of Instruction and the Officer Training were very rewarding. We had members from the state of Texas as well as a National Membership member at the Officer Training, it was very rewarding. Now we need to get out and put this knowledge to use.

The National COA changed some duties of the post service officer, that will affect the post service officers in the State of Oklahoma. The state COA will be meeting for this.

At the 125th National Convention, I talked to Raymond Queen with the Student Veterans Association and we will ask him to come to a state meeting to talk on the Student Veterans in the state of Oklahoma. This was one of my strong points in my campaign.

The state fair is coming up and I would like to ask everyone if they could help at one of the fairs. This is a membership event, so any help is appreciated. And just to say if and post or district needs help with membership please let us know. Thank you for all you do to help the VFW!

Jeff Harris  
State Sr. Vice Commander

*Junior Vice Commander  
Tony McGrew*

Comrades,

Another year will come to an end much too quickly for most of us. I have often asked myself, did I or am I making a difference. These can be difficult questions to answer and quantify individually. In order for any business or organization to be successful each member must accept and believe in the mission, ideals and beliefs of the organization. An organization solely depends on the individual contributions and efforts of its members to be successful.

So, each member of our great organization is a vital part and has a role to play in order to sustain and accomplish the mission and Make a Difference.

Making a difference doesn't have to be a grandiose gesture. It can be a simple smile or

“Hello how are you doing today” or asking what you can do for someone else. Sometimes we just need someone to listen.

Respectfully,  
Tony McGrew  
Candidate: State Senior Vice Commander.

*Past State Commander*  
*Erica Traxler*

Student Veterans of America Liaison  
VFWRG Chairman  
Post Bylaws Committee Chair  
Administrative Committee Chair

Comrades,

I hope this month’s General Orders finds you well. I have been identified for the above positions at the department level this year. I look forward to serving the department in this capacity.

COOTIES: Oklahoma is looking to grow the Cooties. Everything we do reflects positively on the VFW and counts for community service. The Cooties make a significant impact on the veterans living in nursing homes, are homebound, and those in hospitals. Help us bring joy to the lives of our fellow comrades.

Student Veterans of America: Host or support local SVA Chapters events. Build a working relationship with the chapter. Documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

If you have a university or college in your area where there is a significant veteran population, please reach out to them to see if starting Student Veterans of America chapter would be beneficial to them. I am happy to assist in helping to get new chapters off the ground as well as work with current chapters to be successful. If we can get multiple chapters to support across the state, I have a public relations event that could help the chapters get word out about what they do, why they are an organization, and how they help veterans. The National organization has a Student Veteran Support Grant that can be applied for to support events across the state regarding student veteran events. There is also a VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship that they can apply for. Those students go to National Legislative week in the spring for the opportunity to speak with policy-makers/legislators to discuss issues student veterans face.

VFW Riders Group Chairman: Assist chapters with growing their membership, support VFWRG events across the department, address issues with the National Organization, set up meetings at least once a quarter to get together with the members across the state, and be available for members to answer questions, comments, and/or concerns. After attending the national convention, I was unanimously chosen to be the national adjutant for the Riders. We are working on communication as well as growing this into its own suborganization like the Cooties. This is a long process, but a very exciting one. There will be information shared to get feedback to help us grow and make decisions regarding how we move forward, put together our Bylaws, how many representatives at the national level, etc. Your input is important, valued, and necessary moving forward. Keep in mind that nationally it was voted on to design and adopt a single back patch. Currently that patch says VFW Riders with the Cross of Malta on it. Since this will be a national patch it cannot have a state name on the back as some states have rules against that. There has been some talk that nationally we would rather be called a motorcycle group than the VFW Riders. What are your thoughts on either? Also, the position of Conference Chairman is potentially available. If interested, please submit a resume and letters of recommendation to [dwest@vfw.org](mailto:dwest@vfw.org). National CiC Liphardt will make his decisions and notify the parties of his choices. If you are not on the department or national VFWRG SLACK, please reach out so you can be added. This will be a great way to communicate more effectively throughout the state and with other riders groups.

Oklahoma is hosting its first Operation Daily Battle Rally September 13-15, 2024 at VFW Post 5263, Fort Sill. This will be ODB's 4th rally as we rotate between Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. The address is 103 NE 20th St, Lawton, OK 73507. The flyer is attached for you to be able to register. Once registered (you must enter an email address), you will receive an email to follow through with the payment. You can also register through this link.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFjmt2kYmcRBegLjya3aHZBmyPZUhp9VNX5Qq\\_4rIEaLx2eg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFjmt2kYmcRBegLjya3aHZBmyPZUhp9VNX5Qq_4rIEaLx2eg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0).



The purpose of ODB is the following:



## OPERATION DAILY BATTLE

### **VFW RIDERS SUICIDE INTERVENTION OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

UPDATED MAY 2023

*Military Times* reports statistics show that up to 22 veterans a day choose suicide as a means of ending the hell of war and its lingering after effects. Operation Daily Battle (ODB) will be a joint effort between the VFW Riders of Arkansas, VFW Riders of Louisiana, VFW Riders of Oklahoma, and the VFW Motorcycle Group of Texas (hereinafter referred to as the ALOT Riders) to educate and assist any veteran or family member who may be seriously contemplating suicide as an option.

The purpose of ODB will be to educate our members through professional trainers to effectively get the message out to veterans in need of this service. These volunteers will be trained to recognize the signs of a possible problem and take the necessary initial steps to deal with it. Promoting prevention through education and proven techniques will go a long way toward saving lives.

To ensure continuity and long life ODB will create a fund supported by the Texas VFW Foundation. The Fund will be managed by an ALOT Riders Chairman whose duties will include reviewing and approving structured group settings using complimentary trainers, when possible, to preserve the sustainability of the ODB Fund. Members who are unable to utilize complimentary trainers will be given online options for training. Once training is completed, the member will be entitled to reimbursement through the ODB Fund by following request procedures.

The ALOT Riders will work to raise awareness of ODB by promoting the purpose and procedures and encouraging participation in the ODB. Additionally, there will be an annual ODB Rally to raise capital for the ODB Fund and highlight successes of the past year. Monies raised and any individual donations will be deposited into a restrictive fund within the Texas VFW Foundation.

ODB Procedures

Michele Anderson [vfwmgtxsec@gmail.com](mailto:vfwmgtxsec@gmail.com)

We can always use volunteers to ensure that everyone remembers Oklahoma and can't wait to come back the next time. We are in need of silent auction items, raffle items, donated food for Saturday's BBQ cookoff, and more.

If you are overseeing a post suspension or administrative committee, I would like monthly updates so that I can report them to higher. If you need my assistance with any of these please don't hesitate to reach out.

I met with Dallas Rainer from gammaCore.

<https://electrocore.showpad.com/share/qVazbRf7XmAH6I0SFeO6H>

The booth caught my eye while at the national convention due to it being able to assist with migraines. After the meeting I am thrilled to share with you this information so that you may use it and/or share it to help your fellow comrades and ease their migraines. There is scientific research to support other diagnoses this device can assist with as well. They are already approved in Oklahoma, and it is free to veterans. Please reach out if you have any problems with your PCM and I can get you in contact with your representative for your area.

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.

*Erica Traxler*

Past State Commander  
Department of Oklahoma  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
989-239-5999

[ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com](mailto:ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com)

<https://vfwoklahoma.org/>

*Adjutant/Quartermaster  
Heidi Teeter*

Comrades,

Greetings from the western side of the state. It was wonderful to see the attendance of so many at Officer Training and the School of Instruction in Lawton. I hope the information that was put out is helpful and useful.

I have been working on getting the Department dashboard updated. Once I have everything in, I will send an email to the District Commanders who can then follow up with their posts. After that contact if anything is missing, please let me know. Again, wait to hear from your district commanders. We are looking good on audit and bond submissions. I did

receive a few of each after I did my initial dashboard update, so I will get those updated as well as SOI and OTS attendance.

I have received a few 990's. Remember if you have a fiscal tax year (July 1 – June 30) your 990 must file by November 15 but if you have a calendar tax year (January 1 – December 31) it must file by May 15.

I have again included the letter and questionnaire for the VFW Accountable Officer Bond as well as the Canteen/Clubroom, Bingo Employee Bond. The accountable officer bond is for September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025, and the Employee bond is October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025. The rates for both 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

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. If you are getting your bond from somewhere other than the Department or if you are a post that has a multi-year bond, please send me a copy of the certificate.

District Commanders or Adjutants, after your meeting please send me the date, time, and location of your next meeting so that we can keep the membership informed and so that we can start planning the next round of Department Rep attendance.

National has published the digital copy of the 2025 Podium books. This can be found by logging in to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) scrolling down to “Member/Post Resources” and selecting “Bylaws: Training, Forms, & Templates”. There are a lot of other great resources available there as well. The Department has also purchased some to sell, we currently have 36 that are available. If you, your post or your district wants any please email the request to [vfwHQokqm@outlook.com](mailto:vfwHQokqm@outlook.com).

Fall Fest will be held October 25-27 at the Lucky Star Hotel and Conference Center, 1407 S Clarence Nash Blvd Suite B, Watonga, OK 73772. The room rates are \$89 plus tax. To make reservations please call 580-265-5001 and ask for “Reservations”, to get this rate you will have to tell them you are with the VFW.

September 12 – 15 I will be attending Department Adjutant and Quartermaster training in Kansas City, hosted by National. If you have any questions, you would like me to ask them, send those to me via email and I will ask for you. While I am there, I will have limited

availability to take phone calls but will be fully available for text or email. If you have something you need right away Assistant Adjutant-Quartermaster Curt Watts will be available.

I have attached the Buddy Poppy order form to these GO's as well. When you are ordering please note if you would like the original Poppies or the tin tab Poppies. The cost is the same whether it is the original or tin tab. If you are ordering the tin tab, I have 350 on hand and will be bringing an additional 2,000 back from KC with me. Of those 2,000, I only have 1,000 available, so if I get additional orders that exceed those 1,000, I will notify you of the delay due to having to order more from National. Poppy Boards have been ordered but I do not have ship date on them as of these GO's. You can go ahead and order them, and I send them once I receive them. This year's theme is The Battle of The Bulge, December 16 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

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

*Chaplain*  
*Jason Burns*

Comrades,

It has been a busy past few months so far. As most of you know I asked Comrade Marcus King from Post 382 to be the Assistant State Chaplain. He has been Appointed by the State Commander. We are lucky to have him helping and I believe will make a great State Chaplain in the Future.

I would like to ask you all to take my phone number and the Chaplains email and whenever a comrade or their family member is in the hospital or in need please call or email us. I have been getting word after the fact. Also, if you would like one of us to attend a Memorial service, or anything please email us so we can see what our calendar looks like and try to get it done. If we are needed to go do a visit at the Hospital or a home, we will do everything we can to get there asap.

District and Post Chaplains: please send us your contact information so we can send you all some dates on some chaplain training and we are looking at doing a Chaplains retreat before

the end of the 2024-2025 year. Also please try to attend Fall Fest as we have something planned for the Chaplains.

Thank you all and God Bless,  
Chaplain Burns  
(580)439-4627  
[Vfwokchaplain@outlook.com](mailto:Vfwokchaplain@outlook.com)

## *Judge Advocate Randy Traxler*

Comrades,

**TACOM property is an area that is sometimes overlooked in post-level property accountability. TACOM oversees these programs, which is why they are not explicitly listed on the inspection forms. However, both the static display and ceremonial rifle programs play important roles and can contribute to the success of your posts. They provide opportunities to engage with the community, whether through ceremonies held in front of cannons or tanks, or the solemnity of a rifle salute at a memorial service**

### **TACOM: Sustaining History and Service**

#### **Static Property: A Symbolic Legacy**

Static displays, those stoic sentinels of history, stand as silent witnesses to valor and sacrifice. Managed by TACOM (U.S. Army Tank-automotive & Armaments Command), these decommissioned military artifacts—ranging from tanks to artillery pieces—remind us of battles fought and camaraderie forged.

#### **Reporting Static Displays: The Annual Certification**

When a static display is set up, TACOM requires an Annual Certification form. This meticulous process ensures that the display remains accurate, well-maintained, and aligned with its historical context. Whether it's a vintage tank or a howitzer, TACOM's attention to detail ensures that these artifacts continue to inspire and educate generations to come.

Static Display Chair is Randy Traxler. Verification of your certification should be sent to [randytraxler@icloud.com](mailto:randytraxler@icloud.com). A full report will be given at Fall-Fest.

#### **Ceremonial Rifles: Precision and Tradition**

Ceremonial rifles hold a special place in military tradition. Polished to a gleaming shine, they are used during formal events, parades, and ceremonies. TACOM oversees their management, ensuring proper handling, storage, and reporting.

## **Ceremonial Rifle Inventory: A Triennial Ritual**

Upon issuance, a Ceremonial Rifle Inventory form must be submitted. This inventory process occurs every three years, ensuring that ceremonial rifles are accounted for and maintained. These rifles represent honor, discipline, and respect.

Ceremonial Rifle Chair is Michael Schafer. Verification of your certification should be sent to [michaelashafer@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelashafer@yahoo.com). A full report will be given at Fall-Fest.

## **TACOM and the VFW: A Shared Commitment**

TACOM collaborates with the VFW by providing surplus military equipment. This support allows the VFW to embody its charter, ensuring that veterans' contributions are remembered, celebrated, and advocated for. Together, they weave a tapestry of service, sacrifice, and patriotism across generations.

Remember, behind each artifact lies a story of courage and service.

Randy Traxler  
Judge Advocate Department of Oklahoma  
989-482-3876  
[randytraxler@icloud.com](mailto:randytraxler@icloud.com)

*State Inspector  
Deric Duncan*

Comrades,

This year as a Cost saving measure VFW National has moved away from the carbon copy forms. The printable inspection form to be used is attached to these GO's. District inspectors, when you complete an inspection make three copies of the form or scan it with your phone so that the post, the department and the district can each get copies.

As a reminder to everyone we are not attempting to fail or discourage posts. Inspections are when we find what we are doing wrong and attempt to correct those deficiencies going forward. I encourage District Inspectors to get out there to their posts and help find the deficiencies and help get them corrected. Please email me the completed form for any inspections you complete. The goal should be to have all inspections done before we roll into 2025.

If you would like to be inspected by the Department Inspection team, or you know that you have deficiencies I encourage you to bring all of your materials to fall fest. We will have a team there to do inspections and help fix any issues so that the post or district can make things

previously marked as hits corrected going forward. We look forward to making this a productive year of inspections. To steal a line from another Department Officer “we are here to teach, coach and mentor” please feel free to reach out.

***State Fair***  
***Deric Duncan***

Comrades,

It is time again for the State fair and Tulsa fair. This is the department’s largest recruiting event of the year, and we need your support. This year we are hoping to get auxiliaries and posts to work each of the blocks because together we can reach more people. We will have information, applications, freebies for those that choose to join, and a great time. We need posts, auxiliaries, districts, pup tents, rider groups, officers of all levels to sign up take a shift and help us make the 2024 fair a success.

If you want to sign up for yourself or post or district, please reach out for the OKC fair or Frank Whitlock for Tulsa. If you are an Auxiliary that wants to sign up, please reach out to Amy Stout. We are looking forward to working with you all to make this the best fair in Oklahoma history. Here is a link to be able to sign up for the OKC State Fair  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AA5A623A2F4C52-51066219-oklahoma#/>.

Very Respectfully,  
Deric Duncan  
405-250-4887  
[dericduncan@gmail.com](mailto:dericduncan@gmail.com)

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

Voice of Democracy:  
***“Is America Today Our Forefathers Vision?”***  
Patriots Pen:  
***“My Voice in America’s Democracy?”***

We all should be in touch with the local schools to encourage them to participate in Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen. With so many health threats, I know that getting into schools can become difficult, or even more so. The deadlines haven't changed, they are still due to the posts by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Judged and sent to District by 15 November.

There is a way to make it easier to access schools and garner more applications. That is through the Scholars App (<https://scholarsapp.com>). It makes the entire process easier. How? By enrolling in the program, you will get an QR code (Quick Response) that allows students to upload their application and documents. The system tells you that they started the process and when they finished. From there you send a link to your judges who then perform a blind evaluation and rate the essays. The system automatically identifies your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners.

You can, and should, still receive some the old-fashioned way. Upload them for the judges. Easy.

If you are interested in joining the Scholars App, contact me and let me know which post, chair name, and email. In return I will send you a poster with your post's individual QR code. I can be reached at: [Bassetj15@yahoo.com](mailto:Bassetj15@yahoo.com) or by phone/text 405.664.3929.

**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
2024-2025 COMPETITION  
**PATRIOT'S PEN  
AND VOICE OF  
DEMOCRACY**

"VFW made it possible for me to go to college."  
Rachel 2020 Price Winner

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**  
**OCTOBER 31, 2024**

**ELIGIBILITY**  
Students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents who have applied for permanent residence or for which the application has not been denied and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity.

**PATRIOT'S PEN**

- Open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31st deadline
- Submit a 300 - 400-word Essay
- National Prize is currently \$5,000

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY**

- Open to students in grades 9-12 enrolled by Oct. 31st deadline
- Submit a 3-5-minute audio and written essay
- National Prize is currently \$15,000

Scholar's App SCHOLARS APP VERIFIED

*Jim Bassett*

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

**VMS**  
*Jim Bassett*

SportClips Help-A-Hero fundraising time is approaching. If you are lucky enough to have one of their shops near you, stop by and visit. SportClips has provided more than \$13 million in scholarships since they started the program. SportClips has helped 44 members of the military with scholarship grants worth over \$187,000 in Oklahoma alone. And helping them during their fundraising campaign only provides more money to more military members. Let's put this in a different way. Those 44 military members most likely are eligible for membership in our organization. They have friends and family. Those 44 can possibly attract to our



organization close to 100 new members for the VFW and the Auxiliary. Now let's throw in the circle of friends. Most will be in the military.

SportClips has provided us with a great recruiting tool. Use it. When I helped during their fundraising campaign all I did was greet customers and tell them that I'm there supporting SportClips with their campaign. Oh, and by the way, we have walked away with new members doing this.

*Jim Bassett*

State VMS Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

## *Training and Development*

### *Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett*

What is a bylaw? According to Merriam-Webster it is "a rule adopted by an organization chiefly for the government of its members and the regulation of its affairs." According to Dictionary.com bylaws are "a standing rule governing the regulation of a corporation's or society's internal affairs." We should be well versed in the following bylaws. In another time we called them manuals, instructions, and regulations. Very simply, it is a roadmap for us to follow when performing VFW rules. On occasion, you may find one of the bylaws confusing. It is ok to ask for clarification. I ask that you be careful with who. "I don't understand, let's go ask (insert name here), he has been around for 30 plus year." Sounds good except the bylaws are constantly changing. Have they kept up in the changes? I would also like to mention that some people read information into bylaws that just is not there.

So how do we fix this? If in doubt, contact the Department Judge Advocate. You can even reach out to the past Department Judge Advocates. Our current Judge advocate is Randy Traxler, [randytraxler@icloud.com](mailto:randytraxler@icloud.com). Or you can contact James Dockemeyer, [jdock13@yahoo.com](mailto:jdock13@yahoo.com), or Gordon Wheeler, [vfwjudge@cox.net](mailto:vfwjudge@cox.net). And as all ways, you can reach out to National for clarification, 1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387).

*Jim Bassett*

State VMS Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

*Historian*  
*Richard Elsheimer*

I would like for all the post and district commanders to send me a brief history of the posts. Date Of charter, current membership, special post awards, etc. Thanks for your cooperation. We would like to recognize each post so the overall members can become familiar with other posts.

*Richard Elsheimer*  
State Historian

*Safety Chair*  
*Ron Albert*

My name is Ron J, Albert and I'm the Safety Chair for the Dept Ok 2024-2025 year for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Every Year the VFW sends out the Public Servant Award Citations for the Emergency Medical Technicians, Firefighters, Law Enforcement Personnel, 911 Dispatcher and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician. We encourage you to submit as many candidates you believe should be recognized for their outstanding commitments, selfless service and sacrifice they provide and demonstrate to the community. The criteria for those awards are as follows:

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN:**

Any individual/group, who actively gives emergency medical treatment, provides rescue service or civil disaster assistance as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to give emergency medical care, provide rescue service or civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

**FIREFIGHTER:**

Any individual/group, who actively fights fires as a member of any public or volunteer company organized to fight fires and give assistance to our nation's citizens.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

Any individual/group, who actively serves in a municipal, county, states or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility.

Unfortunately, this award does not apply to individuals who are employed by private companies or security services.

**911 DISPATCHER:**

Any individual/group who serves in a municipal, county, state, or federal unit tasked with providing the vital link between callers in distress & emergency response team by obtaining essential information to send the appropriate responders to the right location.

**EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TECHNICIAN:**

Any individual/group, who served in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with the enforcement of the laws & special handling pertaining to disposal of explosive threats to our nation's citizens.

All of these candidates must have demonstrated some if not all of the following:

- 1) Consistent excellence in the performance of their duties
- 2) Consistent dedication to their official responsibilities
- 3) Continuous growth in their skills and responsibilities with their profession
- 4) Recognition by those they serve and their colleagues
- 5) Continuing or previous volunteer work for their community

Please fill out and submit the VFW Public Servant Award Citation (included) for all candidates along with the following:

- 1) A Photograph from the chest up
- 2) One page nomination letter containing the candidate's or group's name, title, address, telephone and identifying the award for which the individual/group should be considered to include justification outlining background in the field, accomplishments and awards.

All packets must be submitted to me by 16 December 2024 for selection. There are two ways you can submit them to:

- 1) Via email at [vfw5263pso@gmail.com](mailto:vfw5263pso@gmail.com) with Public Servant Award Citation from (your department name) in the subject line.
- 2) Postal Mail at VFW Post 5263

Att: 2024-2025 Public Servant Award  
103 NE 20th Street  
Lawton, OK 73507

All candidate packets will be read and judged by an appointed board. One candidate from each category will be chosen and sent up to the VFW National Headquarters by 01 January 2022, where they will be combined with other Oklahoma VFW Public Servant Award Citations. There all candidate packets will be read and judged by an appointed board. One candidate will be chosen from all categories and that candidate will be recognized by the Oklahoma VFW National Headquarters. The candidate will be informed of the recognition date, time and location when they've been notified of their winning.

If you have any further questions, concerns, clarifications, etc. please contact me via email at [vfw5263pso@gmail.com](mailto:vfw5263pso@gmail.com) or call my cell phone number at 580-512-0510. Please leave a

voicemail if I don't answer. Thank you for your continued unwavering support and I look forward to receiving all the packets. May you have a great day.

*Respectfully,*

Ron J. Albert  
District 14 Commander  
Safety Chair 2024-2025  
District & Post Service Officer  
Past two-time All-State CMR & All America CMR  
Past two-time OK All -Star Grand Commander  
580-512-0510  
Ron200656@yahoo.com  
[Vfw5263pso@gmail.com](mailto:Vfw5263pso@gmail.com)

*Women Veteran's Chair*  
*Chriss Chavez*

Please share and ask posts to advertise on social media and at their posts.

Perfect opportunity for civic engagement at a new level to support women veterans.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Eastern OK VA Health System will be offering two drive thru baby showers for expectant veteran mothers receiving VA Healthcare as follows:

Friday September 20, 2024, 1100-1300 hours  
Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center -1011 Honor Heights Dr, Muskogee, OK 74401

Friday September 27, 2024, 1100-1300 hours  
Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic  
8921 S Mingo Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133

If you know any of our veteran sisters that fit that category, please refer them to their VA healthcare team, so they can be included in the event.

If you wish to donate to the program, you may contact Zareta at the CDCE (Center for Development and Civic Engagement), or make purchases at the online registries listed below.

Zareta Necole Travis  
Voluntary Services Specialist  
VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement

<https://www.walmart.com/registry/BR/f45ec603-c1fd-4376-98e3-8495510ef5a7>  
[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3810Q2JODIYTV?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3810Q2JODIYTV?ref_=wl_share)

Best regards,  
Chriss Chavez  
2024 VFW OK Women Veteran Chair

***District 5 Commander***  
***Frank Whitlock***

District 5, has school of instruction taught by Jim Bassett on September 7 from 10 AM to noon on September 7 at Claremore VFW and they will be serving brunch or lunch for anybody that attends, please let me know if you want to attend so I can get a headcount for the food, the Tulsa State fair will be here soon, I have September 29, October 4 and October 6 open if anybody would like to come and sign up.

Respectfully,  
Frank Whitlock  
Sgt. USMC (Ret)  
Purple Heart Recipient  
Oklahoma VFW District 5 Commander  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
Chapter 589 Commander  
Oklahoma Department  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
Jr Vice Commander

## *District Happenings*

### ***District 4:***

Coalgate Post 1198 has a pool tournament fundraiser on September 14, contact the Post Sr Vice David Street for details.

Atoka Post 4859 will have their monthly breakfast fundraiser on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 8-12.

Hugo Post 8316 is recruiting at the Choctaw county fair September 5-7.

Durant post 3916 is doing a buddy poppy fundraiser and membership drive at the Bryan County fairgrounds September 6 & 7.

Antlers post 3658 is sponsoring a gun show at the Antlers fair barn on September 14 & 15.

### **DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION**

**D-1** > November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Stilwell, 1100

**D-3** > TBA

**D-4** > TBA

**D-5** > TBA

**D-7** > TBA

**D-8** > TBA

**D-9** > September 7<sup>th</sup>, Chandler, 1000

**D-10** > September 28<sup>th</sup>, Shawnee, 1000

**D-13** > September 7<sup>th</sup>, Clinton 1100

**D-14** > TBA

**D-15** > October 12<sup>th</sup>, Woodward, 1100

### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

**Dept Adjutant/QM Training** >> September 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, Kansas City, MO

**Accredited SO Training** >> September 22<sup>nd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, Annapolis, MD

**Dept Junior Vice Training** >> October 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, Kansas City, MO

**Fall Fest** >> Lucky Star Hotel and Conference Center, Watonga, October 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>

**Southern Conference** >> Nashville, TN, November 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>



## General Orders No. 2

2024-25 Series

1. The following National appointments are hereby announced:

### **NATIONAL DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF:**

Shaun Canfield, Post 5850, Eufaula, AL  
Carolyn Kacal, Post 10029, North Pole, AK  
John Keene, Post 1, Denver, CO  
David Diefenderfer, Post 7447, Rehoboth Beach, DE  
Chris Gates, Post 3282, Port Orange, FL  
Ronald Mills, Post 4256, Madeira Beach, FL  
Michael Ricci Jr, Post 7721, Golden Gate, FL  
Antonio Salvo, Post 8205, Parker, FL  
Kevin Stripling, Post 10539, Okeechobee, FL  
Allan Di Siena, Post 2953, Evansville, IN  
Judy King, Post 1282, New Castle, IN  
James Loy, Post 6246, Noblesville, IN  
Tony Adams, Post 5829, Whitesburg, KY  
Charles Purchner Jr, Post 2539, Gulfport, MS  
Michael Kunce, Post 131, Lincoln, NE  
Scott Seddon, Post 6060, Elizabeth City, NC  
Roberta Sheets, Post 6365, Locust, NC  
James Cooper, Post 637, Hopewell, VA  
Robert Lunn, Post 9835, Warrenton, VA  
Sheri Moore, Post 3103, Fredericksburg, VA  
George Armstrong, Post 9666, Sugar Grove, WV

### **ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL:**

Matthew Dryer, Post 4765, Athens, AL  
Melvin Sheppard, Post 3836, Talkeetna, AK  
Leonard Ladue, Post 3981, Grand Junction, CO  
Robert MacLees, Post 6984, Milton, DE  
Stephen Blackwell, Post 7674, Fort Walton Beach, FL  
Ronnie Holladay, Post 4407, Gulf Breeze, FL  
John Keith, Post 8189, Homosassa, FL  
Lonnie Loff, Post 4141, Delray Beach, FL  
Frank Roberts, Post 7721, Golden Gate, FL  
Neil Brown, Post 1127, Brazil, IN  
Michael Gonterman, Post 1111, Mooresville, IN

### **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org

Keith Rohloff, Post 9297, Crane, IN  
Stephen Kanfield, Post 1181, Valley Station, KY  
Bryan Simmons, Post 4976, Fulton, MS  
John Baum, Post 8221, Tecumseh, NE  
Nathaniel Drisker, Post 1160, Charlotte, NC  
Jeffrey Sherman, Post 7383, Cary, NC  
Ashley Gurley, Post 12202, King George, VA  
Michael Indyck, Post 4639, Williamsburg, VA  
Christopher Smith, Post 1264, Roanoke, VA  
David George, Post 1212, Parkersburg, WV

2. Organizations exempt from income tax under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code are generally required to file Form 990 by the 15th day of the fifth month following the close of their accounting fiscal year. For the current IRS requirements, if the organization's annual gross receipts are normally more than \$50,000, the organization must file Form 990 or 990-EZ. Small tax-exempt organizations whose annual gross receipts are normally \$50,000 or less are required to submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard. There is no penalty assessment for late filling the e-Postcard, but an organization that fails to file required information returns for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-exempt status. The revocation of the organization's tax-exempt status will not take place until the filing due date of the third year.

Gross receipts are considered to be normally less than \$50,000 if the organization:

1. Has been in existence for 1 year or less and received, or donors have pledged to give, \$75,000 or less during its first taxable year.
2. Has been in existence between 1 and 3 years and averaged \$60,000 or less in gross receipts during each of its first two tax years; and
3. Is at least 3 years old and averaged \$50,000 or less in gross receipts for the immediately preceding 3 consecutive tax filing years (including the year for which the calculations are being made).

If annual gross receipts are normally more than \$50,000, the organization must file Form 990 or 990-EZ. For the current IRS requirements, if an organization has gross receipts less than \$200,000 and total assets less than \$500,000, it may file form 990-EZ. However, if either gross receipts or total assets are above those limits, Form 990 must be filed.

For purposes of filing requirements, gross receipts include: total contributions; gifts and grants; program service revenue; membership dues and assessments; gross investment income (including interest, dividends, gross rents, and other investment income); gross income from the sale of assets other than inventory; gross income from special fundraising events; gross sales net of return allowances; and any other revenue.

IRS regulations require that all tax-exempt organizations make both their Application for Exemption and 990's for the last three years available for public inspection at their principal office and provide copies in response to written requests, subject to the payment of reasonable fees. There are substantial penalties for violation of these regulations.



# NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

VOLUME 49, NO. 2

SEPT. 2024

## Membership

### COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

The monthly Commander's Challenge is rolling along as we see our Posts making great strides in recruiting and upgrading members to Life membership! To remind everyone, every month during the 2024-25 membership year, we will reward our Posts who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. 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

Every month a different award will be given out to the Posts that lead their divisions, and at the end of the year at our National Convention, each Post will be recognized for their achievement on a video display at the Membership booth.

Let's continue to prove just how NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

### ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

Members of an All-American Post may submit their cap order through the VFW Store.

### 2024-25 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM – UPDATED!

The 2024-25 Membership Program has updates, the newest version dated Aug. 26, 2024, is available online at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2024-25 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

### MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As we continue through the membership year, we want everyone to remember the requirements that the Commander-in-Chief has set out in his 2024-25 Membership Program:

- 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

## NEW POST DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GRANT

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership Department.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org) or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

## UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Sept. 9, 2024, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Awe will cover how to understand the numbers when it comes to reading membership statistics and reports. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to [vfw.org](http://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 offer 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?*

## VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation received extremely positive feedback from the VFW National Convention with strong commitments to support future initiatives and corporate partnerships. We are actively working on securing sponsorships for the upcoming September NVS Training Conference, the 2025 Washington Conference and initiatives in support of National Day of Service.

The VFW is expanding its Unmet Needs program to be more than just a request for financial assistance as it currently exists. The expansion will allow for the inclusion of all programs that veterans have unmet needs in such as our National Veterans Service that is provided in every state to assist veterans file disability claims that can dramatically change veterans' lives as well as their families. Last year VFW service officers recouped \$11.2 billion for veterans.

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, [RFreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:RFreiburghouse@vfw.org).

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.*

**VFW Christmas Cards** – This month we are mailing VFW Christmas Cards as our way of saying “Thank You” for your generosity in helping provide much-needed services to fellow veterans and service members. With the holidays quickly approaching, your support is urgently needed! Please help our fellow veterans and service members by sending a special donation when you receive this package. Your donations support the programs right in *your* Department. And take the time to visit a hospitalized or homebound veteran or current service member this holiday season. Your best wishes and thanks for their service mean more than you can imagine. You can visit [heroes.vfw.org/Volunteer](https://heroes.vfw.org/Volunteer) to find out about volunteering at your local VA facility.

**Feel Secure in Retirement** – Lots of people nearing or in their retirement years think about the future of their assets. Did you know you can support the VFW while you (and/or a loved one) receive a secure annual income? With a charitable gift annuity, you can depend on steady payments that are fixed for life regardless of the changing market, with tax benefits as well! Get financial peace of mind for you and your family while giving back to the VFW. Learn more about donating your assets to the VFW in this article: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/feel-secure-when-retired>. And find out how this plan may be beneficial for you by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](https://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](https://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** – Please watch your email for more information on all new resources to promote your VFW Department fundraising programs to your members.

## Veterans & Military Support Programs

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 for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

**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 Department 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** is now open and will run through **Nov. 15, 2024**. The application is available online only at [vfw.org/Scholarship](http://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](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

**PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD)** Please encourage Posts to read the 2024-25 Membership program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

**2024-25 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM.** The Veterans of Foreign Wars wants to recognize the nation’s top elementary, junior high and high school teachers (teaching at least half of the school day in a classroom environment) who teach citizenship education topics regularly and promote America’s history, traditions, and institutions effectively through this program.

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for the next competition. All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

All post-level nominees should provide 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.

VFW Post Teacher Award chairpersons may submit one candidate, in each grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), to their District by Nov. 15. If a department does not have a District judging, then the Post entries would be submitted to the Department Headquarters and/or Department Chairperson by Jan. 1. The Department may select a single candidate, in each grade level, and submit them to VFW National Headquarters through Formstack by Feb. 1 for National judging. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. To submit their winners, the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” should be completed, and the winning entry documentation downloaded.

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

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 their school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

**Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. have the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2024-25 program year. The teacher entry form, information page, and Chairpersons Guide are available on the VFW website.**

Simply visit [vfw.org/#login](https://vfw.org/#login), 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 **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals and on the same page are all other program materials.

**PATRIOT DAY, SEPTEMBER 11.** Per Presidential Proclamation, September 11, is designated as “Patriot Day.” The President requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) and a moment of silence observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day due to terrorist attacks on the United States. For flags and other patriotic items, click here [vfwstore.org/category/patriotic/miscpatriotic](https://vfwstore.org/category/patriotic/miscpatriotic).

**NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, SEPT. 20.** Posts should conduct an appropriate ceremony. Information on conducting a ceremony can be found in the current VFW Manual of Procedure. For POW/MIA merchandise, click [vfwstore.org/category/memorial/pow-mia](https://vfwstore.org/category/memorial/pow-mia).

**IT’S SCHOLARSHIP TIME!** It is the perfect time to contact schools, youth groups, parent organizations and others with information about Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen. Schools are making curriculum decisions now and parents are thinking about scholarships.

Please remember that Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen are VFW programs supported by the VFW Auxiliary. It is inappropriate for a VFW Auxiliary to conduct separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email [Jlinstra@vfw.org](mailto:Jlinstra@vfw.org) or call 816.968.1155.

**NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES.** The 2024–25 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Alfred J. “Al” Lipphardt. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **“Is America Today Our Forefathers’ Vision?”** and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be **“My Voice in America’s Democracy?”**

**NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY FORMS.** The new 2024-25 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: [vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy) for Voice of Democracy and [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen) for Patriot’s Pen.

**NOTE:** Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are available!

**PLEASE REVIEW.** 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.

**VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS.** Departments may submit up to five nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2025. All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW 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](https://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

NOTE: VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form was developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairpersons with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry form along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging, by Oct. 31. Once a winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward the winning entries on to the next level of judging.

Simply visit [vfw.org](https://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](https://vfwstore.org/products/32134).

**VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IN NOVEMBER.** VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home front experiences to students. Invite your local military recruiter to join you to talk about military service today. Additional information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide.

Simply visit [vfw.org/#login](https://vfw.org/#login), 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 **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals, and on the same page are all other program materials.

*Participate in this activity during the week of Veterans Day, which is part of "National Veterans Awareness week," as designated by Congress.* Find Pledge of Allegiance pencils and coloring books, plus other citizenship education tools at the VFW Store [vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation](https://vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation).

**NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM.** This program is designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time to outside organizations. Recognition is in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins which are given to volunteers who have completed the number of hours prescribed for those awards. For more information, see the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

**"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 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag 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](https://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

*The following information is being sent to VFW members by Lockton Affinity, LLC, a licensed insurance producer. Any recommendation or advice provided is based upon the opinion of Lockton Affinity, LLC and not VFW.*

### **A Medicare provider that supports active military and veterans**

In 2012, VFW selected Humana as its national exclusive Medicare Advantage provider.

If you need additional coverage beyond your Medicare Part A Hospital insurance or Medicare Part B Medical insurance, Humana can help. Available through the VFW Insurance Program, you have access to:

#### **Medicare Advantage**

*All-in-one coverage*

Includes prescription drug coverage and offers the security of an annual out-of-pocket maximum. Many plans include routine dental, vision and hearing care, with a \$0 monthly premium in most areas.

#### **Medicare Part D**

*Rx coverage*

Closes the gap in your coverage with a stand-alone prescription drug plan.

#### **Medicare Supplement**

*Medigap options*

Helps pay some of the out-of-pocket costs that standard Medicare doesn't, like copayments and deductibles.

Learn more today at [VFWInsurance.com/Medicare](http://VFWInsurance.com/Medicare).

The VFW Insurance Program is administered by Lockton Affinity, LLC d/b/a Lockton Affinity Insurance Brokers, LLC in California.

## "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](http://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

#### HUMANA SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

For the third consecutive year, VFW was able to offer scholarships to cross-accredited state or county service officers/claims representatives to attend VFW accredited representative skill training being held September 22-26, in Annapolis, MD. Each scholarship covers hotel, transportation, conference fees and per diem for the recipient.

These scholarships are made possible thanks to a donation from Humana Inc. and the VFW has chosen to dedicate these resources to help provide quality training to VFW-accredited representatives who do not usually have an opportunity to train with the organization, thus allowing the VFW to reach deeper into communities to provide high-quality, free claims assistance to veterans. All scholarship recipients are currently accredited with the VFW through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of benefit claims before VA on behalf of VFW claimants.

VFW's accredited representative training is one of the ways the VFW satisfies VA Office of the General Counsel's continuing education requirements for its global network of accredited representatives and is subject to periodic audit from OGC.

We thank our Humana Partners for such an incredibly generous donation to further the goals and objectives of the National Veterans Service in providing world class representation on behalf of our veterans, claimants, their families, and survivors.

## National Legislative Service/Action Corps

### VA Dashboard Shows PACT Act Performance

In recognition of the second anniversary of the passage of the PACT Act (Public Law 117-168), VA has published a special issue of the [VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#) that shows statistics compiled over the past two years. Highlights include one million related claims VA has approved totaling \$6.8 billion, more than five million toxic exposure screenings, and an increase of nearly 186,000 new enrollees in VA health care. [Read more](#) about the expanded VA health care and benefits or find an [accredited representative](#) for claims assistance.

## Administrative Operations

**REQUESTING CEREMONIAL RIFLES, AMMUNITION & MILITARY EQUIPMENT** – Department Adjutants and Quartermasters are asked to remind all Post officers to refer to the revised information located at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) where they will need to log in to the “My VFW” page and select the “VFW Training and Support” link, then “Member & Officer Training, Forms and Templates” where you’ll have access to “Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures” and then click on “Ceremonial Rifles, Ammunition & Military Equipment” when requesting a “conditional” donation of any government military equipment, ceremonial rifles or ammunition.

Before contacting the governmental agency, a formal written request is to be addressed and mailed to the Adjutant General at VFW National Headquarters and must be completed and signed by the current *Post Commander, Post Adjutant* or *Post Quartermaster*, one of whom needs to be the contact person.

Also to be included is that contact person's email, mailing addresses and phone number. Address the request to the Adjutant General, VFW National Headquarters, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

Include the proper information as outlined in the “Ceremonial Rifles, Ammunition & Military Equipment” pages in the website. It is requested that a Post *not* go through their Department Headquarters (but send them a courtesy copy). This only slows down the processing and creates unnecessary paperwork for the Department personnel.

# VFW Store

Check out VFW Store's new items: Apparel, accessories and more! Go to [vfwstore.org/category/more/newitems](https://vfwstore.org/category/more/newitems) to browse, or look for your new catalog in the mail!



3. The National Bylaws provide for only one type of membership: active membership. There are no provisions in the National Bylaws, nor is there any authority or justification for issuance of Club Membership cards, Associate Member cards, Honorary Membership cards, Courtesy Membership cards or any other special type of cards. Any Post issuing such unauthorized cards, or conducting club operations open to the general public, endangers its standing with the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit organization. Officers signing outlaw cards admitting non-members to VFW premises are subject to disciplinary action. National and Department officers cannot defend practices that conflict with VFW Bylaws or procedures.

4. VFW Posts should take the necessary steps to incorporate under the laws of the state in which the Post is located. Financial responsibility laws, as interpreted by the courts, may cause members of unincorporated Posts to be at risk. Incorporating under the provisions of Sections 708 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure and the laws of the state will provide protection for Post members. Posts are urged to contact their Department Adjutant to obtain the proper forms for incorporating. The Articles of Incorporation must be reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief prior to forwarding them to the proper state authorities. It shall be the responsibility of the Post Commander to ensure full compliance with both sections and to ensure that all state requirements for annual filing, fees, etc., are met in a timely manner.

5. The attention of Post Commanders, County Council and District Commanders and inspecting officers is directed to Section 703 of the National Bylaws - Bonds. Each accountable officer of this organization shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which he may be accountable. Liquid assets are defined as cash on hand or in the bank and other negotiable instruments readily convertible into cash.

6. All officers should obtain current 2025 copies of the podium edition of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Copies of the revised edition of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual are available through the VFW Store at National Headquarters. The 2025 revised edition reflects the amendments adopted by the 125th National Convention, which became effective on Aug. 28, 2024.

7. All Commanders are reminded that Section 709, Manual of Procedure - Control of Units, requires that any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in behalf of a Post, County Council, District or Department shall be at all times under the direct control of such Post, County Council, District or Department and that all money, property or assets of any kind or nature, must be placed in the care and custody of the respective Quartermaster. All Commanders should ensure that all provisions of Section 709 are enforced.

8. No Post, County Council, District, Department or National officer, or any other member, has authority to reject the application of a person who is eligible for membership. The attention of the Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders is directed to Section 103, Manual of Procedure, which prescribes the manner in which applications for membership will be handled. Applications for membership of new, reinstating or transfer members must be voted on by the members present and voting at a regular or special Post meeting.

9. The attention of all units is called to Section 1101 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides for the formation and jurisdiction of the Auxiliary. This section provides that each unit of the Auxiliary shall be under the jurisdiction of the corresponding unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars but shall be permitted to function in accordance with the National Ritual, Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary. In addition to provisions of Auxiliary Bylaws, solicitation of funds or donations by Auxiliary units, including contracts with fund-raising organizations for greeting cards, calendars and/or label programs shall be subject to approval and ratification by the governing body of the corresponding unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

10. Sections 219 and 704 of the Manual of Procedure outline the various things for which the Post Relief Fund can be used. Several years ago, the phrase, "To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs," was added to this section. This allows the Post to use the relief funds for the Voice of Democracy program or other Americanism programs that are educational. This does not include Post building projects, hall remodeling, color guard uniforms or any other expenditure that does not follow these guidelines.

11. On August 24, 2019, the National Council of Administration passed a motion extending the authorization of the wear of the VFW logo to those who are not members of the VFW for the limited purpose of demonstrating public support of the VFW. This authorization is only applicable to the VFW logo reflected below:



This authorization does not include the Cross of Malta or any other trademark and service mark of the VFW, including its name, emblems, or insignia. The use of other trademarks and service marks, including the Cross of Malta, is still limited to VFW members in good standing unless such written consent has been obtained pursuant to Section 803 of the National Bylaws.

Only the VFW Store, its Licensed Vendors and those properly authorized pursuant to the National Bylaws may manufacture or sell merchandise bearing the VFW logo. Additionally, no person shall wear the VFW logo while engaged in any commercial or political activity in such a manner as likely to falsely convey that such activity is approved or endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Non-members desiring to wear the VFW logo should not knowingly harm, misuse or bring into disrepute the name or logos of the VFW. Authorization for non-members to wear the VFW logo is subject to revocation by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

12. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Posts:

Post Nos. 8297 and 7999 consolidated as Post No. 8297, Reidsville, North Carolina

Post Nos. 10078 and 2916 consolidated as Post No. 10078, Baltimore, Maryland

Post Nos. 7343 and 6070 consolidated as Post No. 7343, Mt. Holly Springs, Pennsylvania

Post Nos. 8393 and 8270 consolidated as Post No. 8393, Milton, New Hampshire

Post Nos. 3368 and 7781 consolidated as Post No. 3368, Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania

BY COMMAND OF  
ALFRED J. LIPPARDT  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

OFFICIAL:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan West". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dan West  
Adjutant General



## PLANNING CALENDAR

### SCHEDULE OF VFW MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Rev. September 2024

#### **2024**

September 5	National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting Kansas City, MO
September 6 - 7	National Council of Administration Meeting Kansas City, MO
September 9 - 12	Fall Legislative Committee Meeting Washington, DC
September 12 – 15	Department Adjutant/Quartermasters Training Kansas City, MO
September 22 - 26	Accredited Service Officer Skill Level Training Annapolis, MD
September 22 - 27	Accredited Service Officer BASIC Training Annapolis, MD
October 10 - 13	Junior Vice Commanders Training Kansas City, MO
October 18 - 20	Big Ten Conference Indianapolis, IN
October 31 - November 3	Western Conference Honolulu, HI
November 1 - 3	Eastern Conference Burlington, VT
November 7 - 9	Southern Conference Nashville, TN

#### **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

#### **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

#### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org

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 24 – 26	Eastern Conference Wilmington, DE

**2026**

February 28 – March 5	Washington Conference Washington, DC (Tentative)
April 16 -19	Senior Vice Training Kansas City, MO (Tentative)
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)
August 15 - 19	National Convention Salt Lake City, UT
October 22 - 25	Southern Conference Mobile, AL



**2027**

July 31 - August 4

National Convention  
Milwaukee, WI

**2028**

August 5 - 10

National Convention  
San Antonio, TX

# OPERATION: ALL IN



VFW National Membership Program

2024-2025

Al Lipphardt

Commander-in-Chief

*“Believe in what you do, do what you believe in.”*

VERSION DATE: August 26, 2024

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## **I: SITUATION:**

### **Commander's Introduction:**

Alfred J. "Al" Lipphardt was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Al served in the United States Army from 1965 to 1979, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, and from 1970 to 1971. In recognition of his heroic service in combat, he received the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Bronze Star with "V" device, Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service, Purple Heart Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Silver Star and two Bronze Stars, among many others.

He joined the VFW in 2002 at Post 12002 in North Fulton, Georgia, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. Al is also a Triple Crown Commander, having been named as an All-American Post Commander in 2006, District Commander in 2010, and Department Commander in 2015.

### **Membership Mission:**

To recruit, retain and mentor a stable membership base including all generations of veterans. To cultivate a membership that is well versed in institutional knowledge and actively involved at all levels of the organization and in the local community. To establish Posts with an established vision of service, leadership, and community outreach.

### **Specific Membership Numbers:**

Our requirement this year is to continue growth and achieve at least 102% in membership. In the simplest of terms, we look at the prior year's total (which is how many individual members paid membership dues last year) and want to see a 2 percent increase. If a member has been lost due to passing away or not renewing their dues, then that means we must fill that gap in addition to recruiting new members to meet the 102% goal. This should serve as an example to prove that we must maintain our focus on retaining and mentoring our existing members as well as bringing in new members to the organization. Bring in the members we need, keep the members we have.

## **II: MISSION:**

### **Membership:**

1. Build a strong organization through recruiting new members while retaining our current membership, creating a solid baseline for the future.
2. Work together to achieve VFW's goals. The VFW National Headquarters staff is available to assist in coordinating programs, developing membership initiatives, and building awareness among our membership and the entire veteran community.

### **Membership Requirements:**

- 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

**WHO:** All VFW Members, including Post, District, Department, and National leadership.

**WHAT:** To meet the goals of increasing membership through recruiting, retention, and mentorship. To develop a spirit of camaraderie and service to all veterans. To strengthen the Veterans of Foreign Wars through a solid membership base.

**WHERE:** Across the globe with Posts in all 50 states and in overseas countries and territories.

**WHEN:** Beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and continuing through the end of the membership year on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**WHY:** To serve our comrades and their families, to remember and honor those who have come before us, and to live the words of our motto, that ***NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.***

## COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S STATEMENT

Comrades of Team Tribe 24-25,

You elected me to lead this organization in accordance with the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Ritual to which I was installed. **LEAD I SHALL.**

### D-Day

*Operation ALL IN* will commence August 1, 2024 @ 1200 Hours

**THIS IS NOT A DRILL,**

**THIS IS NOT AN EXERCISE**

The Alert Order was issued when you were Department and State Junior Vice Commanders, and the Warning Order as Senior Vice Commanders, in order to prepare for *Operation All In*, our All-American Program for Departments, Districts and Posts.

We proudly stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us; the founders from the Spanish American War followed by World War I. World War II, Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf War, along with our continuing Global War on Terrorism and those deployments to many other places under the orders of the President of the United States. We have been preparing for this moment for three years. In 2022-2023 we focused on *Commitment* under the leadership of CIC Tim Borland and "Every Veteran Counts" and we successfully achieved those goals because you came together. You realized how critical the force (membership) is to mission accomplishment. In 2023-2024 we focused on *Credibility* under the leadership of CIC Duane Sarmiento and "Meet the Challenge". Again, you supported the sitting commanders realizing how critical it is for this nation's veterans to know we speak the truth. The principles we were founded upon 125 years ago remain our foundation.

Team Tribe 24-25 Commanders at all levels will focus on *Courage*. Your courage is undeniable. The day you raised your hand and took the oath of enlistment you said four words that sealed your pledge to the people of this nation, "So help me God". When you were ordered to deploy, putting yourself in harm's way, you knew full well the dangers you would face. With changing geo-social-economic conditions and frankly, partisan politics, we have forgotten the most important asset we have. Our nation can never replace the sons and daughters lost in war. Failing to have a clear plan to achieve victory has been our strategy over these last four decades. Our warriors are deployed to be merely pieces on a game board to be used repeatedly without consideration for the toll taken on the warrior and

families at home. The material costs of war and the lifetime of grief and tragedy both physically and mentally to our warriors and their families are quickly forgotten by our nation's leaders.

More dangerous to this nation is the failure by its leaders to keep the promises made to those who have borne the battle. Slowness to grant healthcare and service-connected disabilities is only one part of this failure. We depend on a volunteer military. Recruiting is an issue across all branches of service. Veterans who have deployed to combat have very long memories. The memories I am referring to are those of 1975 and the evacuation of Saigon and when we saw the debacle in Afghanistan at Bagram Air Base as our equipment was left behind but more tragically was witnessing our troops, that is our families (who serve knowing we will never be left behind) and allies abandoned on the ground. Our Warrior Ethos says I will never leave a comrade behind. Our nation's leaders failed to keep that promise.

One of my uncles who served in WWII was with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne landing in Anzio on D-Day. He went on to battles in Bastogne and Market Garden. He was highly decorated. Unfortunately, I was not close to him as he seemed to always be deployed overseas. I remember a conversation that confused me at the time. The talk was about what was I going to do with my life. At age 11, in 1957 America, I didn't know what I was going to do the next 15 minutes much less had I considered my life. But, I did not remember what he said until I heard it again from a Vietnam Veteran and fellow Rotarian. My Uncle Eddie's words were "the talent you have is your gift from God, the use of that talent is your gift to God". As I remembered I thought, did I really hear those words from that rock hard chiseled old soldier. But then I also remember he said, I chose to be a soldier. I chose to be a peacemaker, a Warrior of God. Evil exists and it cannot be appeased, reasoned with, or condoned. Evil is, and there is only one way to eliminate it and that is to destroy it wherever it appears. Like many of you we have seen the face of evil. In closing I am asking you to take up the vision of courage, never, ever, compromise your integrity. Your word is your bond. If you want to know where I am, look to the front, that's where I'll be. Follow Me.

I am proud to serve together with you. Put that vision into action. Embrace the suck, stand rigid for righteousness' sake, never compromise your principles, use the beliefs you held when you lowered your hand as you took the oath, and always be the best you can be as you **"Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In"**

### **III: EXECUTION:**

#### **Commander's Intent:**

*"Efforts are to be appreciated. Achievements are to be celebrated."*

To incentivize the necessary tasks of recruiting and retention, which are essential to the continued growth and strength of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a series of award programs will be established and overseen by the Membership Department under the direction of the Adjutant General. These programs will be directly related to membership growth and program participation, and awards will be assigned to those individuals as well as Posts, Districts, and Departments that show excellence above and beyond the standard.

#### **How To Achieve Tasks:**

Focus on the three pillars of membership: *Recruiting, Mentorship, and Retention*

1. Recruiting: We need to bring in new members and recover lapsed members. To do this, we must not only reach out to veterans in our community but also build our VFW Posts into places where veterans can feel at home, find the support and camaraderie they deserve, and be provided with the best service for their family and community.
2. Mentorship: We must engage our membership and keep them active. We must be training the leaders of the future, but also communicating and serving every member of our Posts
3. Retention: We must retain the members currently on our rolls. This means putting an end to cliquishness, welcoming eligible veterans of all generations, backgrounds, and walks of life.



## **IV: SERVICE AND SUPPORT:**

### *Membership Resources:*

In order to assist our Posts, Districts, and Departments in meeting the goals set out by the Commander-in-Chief in this membership program, the National Headquarters has a wealth of resources at your disposal. Many of those are available free of charge to our members.

Membership materials ranging from applications, recruiting brochures, posters, and benefits brochures can be ordered directly from the Membership Department using the Membership Order Form (located under Membership Quick Links once you log into vfw.org )

Resources for Post Development, Membership Campaigns, and Mentorship such as training guides, videos, and webinars are available in the Training & Support section on vfw.org

Promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements, and media kits are all available through the Media Room on vfw.org See the trend? Just about anything you will need is at vfw.org, check it out.

*Department Leadership:* Department officers will provide resources, support, and training where available including Schools of Instruction, Unpaid/Relocated lists, and other tools and incentives to enable membership growth and the mission of recruiting, retention, and mentorship.

*National Headquarters:* The VFW National Headquarters staff is ready and trained to answer any questions you may have concerning membership, VFW programs, or other issues. National Headquarters staff will be available for remote training when necessary, feel free to contact the Membership Department to schedule.

You can contact our Member Service Center directly at [1.833.VFW.VETS](tel:1833VFWVETS) or [msc@vfw.org](mailto:msc@vfw.org), or the Membership Department at [1.888.JOIN.VFW](tel:1888JOINVFW) or [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## **V: COMMAND AND CONTROL:**

*In order to incentivize growth and provide motivation and recognition for those individuals, Posts, Districts, and Departments that go the extra mile to strengthen and grow the organization, the Membership Department will issue membership awards designated by the Commander-in-Chief.*

### **Awards Program Notes:**

- Awards and stipends given to a Post will be transferrable to another member of that Post.
- No more than one stipend will be awarded to an individual for a given event.
- Post/District/Department: Membership must be a minimum of 102% in order to receive any award or stipend. This does not apply to the Early Bird award.
- NOTE: Reimbursement for travel expenses paid by the VFW will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099 if the total of payments made to you during any calendar year equals \$600.00 or more. Travel expenses paid for a guest or spouse for the award will also be reported to the IRS. The reimbursement you receive from the VFW will be deemed by the IRS to be taxable income. Since the circumstances of each individual are different, it is recommended that you consult your tax advisor to determine the effect these payments may have on your personal tax situation. It is your responsibility to keep receipts and other records as you and your accountant and/or tax advisor deem necessary in order to document your expenditures.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends unless otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General.
- Individuals receiving a 5-night hotel stay for either the VFW National Convention or the Legislative Conference must confirm attendance with the VFW Membership Department. Individuals confirmed who do not attend will be invoiced for half the cost of the reserved room.

## **All-American Program:**

The All-American program exists to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork, authentic accomplishment in membership growth and VFW core programs.

### *All-American Post Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%
- Post-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Meet all the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Post can donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Donate to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services, minimum of \$125
- A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-March, and April-June. One of these community service activities must be for the VFW Day of Service. Learn more at <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/>
- Must purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies

### *All-American Post Award*

All Posts that meet the qualifying percentage of 102% and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American Banner, Post Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

The Top 15 Posts in each Division will receive:

- Acknowledgment in VFW Magazine
- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention
- All-American Post citation
- All-American Post streamer
- All-American citation - commander
- All-American name badge – commander
- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster, adjutant, and Post members may purchase cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)

The top five Post commanders in each division will also receive five nights paid hotel stay\* at the VFW National Convention and reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.

*Division Captains and Co-Captains:* The commander of the top Post in each membership division will be designated as the Team Captain, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> place commanders designated as Co-Captains. The All-American caps for these Captains and Co-Captains will bear a special designation.

#### *All-American District Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%
- District-Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters.
- Meet all the following Program Participation criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
  - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)

#### *All-American District Award*

All Districts that meet the qualifying percentage of 102% and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American District Commander Citation, All-American Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.

The Top 10 Districts in each Division will receive:

- All-American District streamer
- All-American District citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap (commander only, quartermaster may purchase cap)
- All-American lapel pin (commander only, quartermaster may purchase pin)
- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention

The top two District commanders in each division will also receive five nights paid hotel stay\* at the VFW National Convention and reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.

*Division Captains and Co-Captain:* The commander of the top District in each membership division will be designated as the Team Captain, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> place commander designated as Co-Captain. The All-American caps for these Captains and Co-Captains will bear a special designation.

#### *All-American Department Criteria*

- Membership must be at least 102%.
- Department must submit Department legislative chairman reports monthly through the Program dashboard tool.
- Meet all the following Program Participation criteria by January 31st, 2025:
  - Voice of Democracy - An entry advanced to National judging
  - Patriot's Pen - An entry advanced to National judging
  - Veterans & Military Support Programs – Must complete State/Department fundraiser and proceeds donated to Veterans & Military Support Programs, Kansas City, Mo.

#### *All-American Department Award*

- Acknowledgement during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention
- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department citation - commander
- All-American name badge - commander
- All-American cap - commander – quartermaster, and adjutant may purchase cap.
- All-American lapel pin - commander - quartermaster may purchase pin.
- Five nights paid hotel stay\* for the 2024-2025 Commander attending the VFW National Convention.
- Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention Joint Opening Session

## **All-American Notes:**

- Any member in a Post that achieves All-American status can purchase a “Post Member” cap. Those members must be in the Post during the membership year. Adjutants may purchase a cap. Quartermasters may purchase a cap and/or Quartermaster Pin. Commanders who were not in the top 15 in their Division may purchase a cap, Commander’s Pin, and/or Post Commander Citation.
- Donations made to replace Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen by eligible overseas Posts, Districts, or Departments must be made through the All-American Dashboard, not through any other means.
- Veterans & Military Support Programs Services Donations for Post/District/Department as listed above will only be accepted only through the All-American Dashboard.

## **MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS AND AWARDS:**

### **Individual Recruiting Awards:**

1/5/10/15 members recruited: recruiting pin

25 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief’s Coin

50 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief backpack

75 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief’s Medallion Set

100 members recruited: Century Cap or \$50 VFW Store credit & citation

Recruiting Awards will be sent out five times during the year to the Post, to be given out at a Post meeting to those members who have recruited new **and reinstated** members. Mailings will take place near the end of October, January, March, May, and then after the end of the membership year.

### **Early Bird Award:**

The top two Posts in each division on Jan. 1, 2025, will each be awarded a 5-night hotel stay for the VFW Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. One room will be booked per award/Post.

### **New Member Award:**

Each Post that brings in a total of 15 New members will each be awarded a travel charger with the official VFW Commander-in-Chief logo. A Post may receive this award up to *five times* during the year!

### **“Operation: All In” Award:**

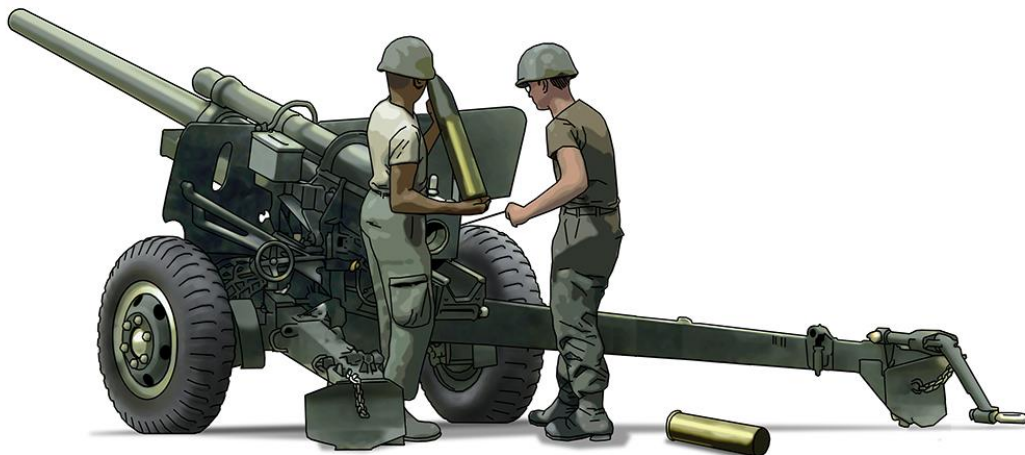
The top two Post commanders and the top two District commanders in each division who achieve 102% membership by June 30th, 2025, will each be awarded a five-night hotel accommodation at the National Convention.

### **102% Post, District & Department:**

A distinctive streamer will be awarded to every Post, District and State/Department that achieves 102% or greater in membership by June 30th, 2025.

### **105% “Above And Beyond” Drawing:**

Each Post and District commander that meets or exceeds 105% in membership by June 30, 2025, will receive an entry in this drawing. Twenty Post commanders and Twelve District commanders will receive a \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.



### **Post Division Recruiting Challenge:**

For every 10 new members recruited between July 1, 2024, and June 30th, 2025, Posts will earn one entry to be entered into a drawing. One Post per division will receive a \$1,000 membership grant deposited into the Post account.

### **Legacy Life Membership Acquisition:**

Each Post that achieves the cumulative benchmarks of 25, 50 and 75 Legacy Life Members will be awarded a Legacy Society Post Proclamation.

Each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100, 250, or 500 Legacy Life members by June 30th, 2025, commander or Post representative will receive a 5-night hotel accommodation at the VFW National Convention, reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session and a Legacy Society Post Proclamation.

### **Top Department Recruiter:**

The top Recruiter in every Department by June 30th, 2025, will receive an engraved Cavalry Saber. Note: Minimum of 25 new members required to win this award.

### **Elite Recruiter:**

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new **and/or reinstated** members by June 30th, 2025, will receive a 5-night hotel accommodation at the VFW National Convention and a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge. In the event that an Elite Recruiter has already received a 5-night hotel accommodation from another award, a \$1,000 stipend will be issued at the National Convention.

### **Recruiter of the Year:**

The Elite Recruiter who signs up the greatest number of new **and/or reinstated** members greater than 250 by June 30th, 2025, will receive an additional \$1,000 stipend, reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session, a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge, and the Commander-in-Chief's Crystal Eagle trophy.



### **Life Member Recruiter Award:**

Any VFW member who recruits at least 75 New **and/or Reinstated** Life members by June 30th, 2025 will receive a special citation from the Commander-in-Chief and a Recruiter Satchel with the Commander-in-Chief's logo.

### **New Post Development Department Grant:**

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership Department.

### **Commander-in-Chief's Challenge:**

To emphasize the importance of Life Membership as the backbone of our membership strength, the Commander-in-Chief is issuing the following challenge to all VFW Posts. Each month through the year, Posts will accumulate points as follows:

- New Annual Member: 1 point
- Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life Member: 5 points
- New Life Member: 10 points

Each month, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. 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.

### **Triple Crown:**

The Triple Crown is one of the most prestigious membership awards that an individual can achieve. It requires being named as an All-American Commander at Post, District, and Department level. Leaders who attain this level of excellence will be recognized at an Awards Banquet at the National Convention with a special Triple Crown pin.

**Post Division Breakdown:**

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	951+	
2	750	950
3	356	749
4	246	355
5	185	245
6	143	184
7	112	142
8	88	111
9	68	87
10	51	67
11	10	50

**District Division Breakdown:**

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	5000+	
2	3,282	4,999
3	2,172	3,281
4	1,447	2,171
5	906	1,446
6	10	905

**Department Division Breakdown:**

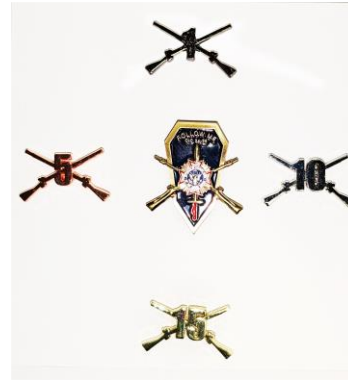
Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	29,000	above
2	15,750	28,999
3	12,000	15,749
4	7,000	11,999
5	2000	6,999

## FRAGO: Items and Materials

Below you will see examples of some of the awards and items mentioned in this program. For more information, contact the VFW Membership Department.



Commander-in-Chief  
Medallion and Coin



Commander-in-Chief Pin  
and Recruiting Pins



Travel Charger



Cavalry Saber



Recruiter Satchel



# 2024 – 2025 Recognition Program



## **Wear Your Own Kind of Hat**

Dan Mack Fuller  
Commander

Jeff Harris  
Senior Vice Commander

Tony McGrew  
Junior Vice Commander

Heidi Teeter  
Quartermaster

Heidi Teeter  
Adjutant



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### ***DEPARTMENT GOAL:***

***98% BY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2024***

***102% BY JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2025***



## **DEPARTMENT CHAIRS**

Aide-de-Camp: Pat Eagan,  
At-Large Chair: Pat Eagan (Chair), John Sherrill (Co-Chair)  
Buddy Poppy: Heidi Teeter  
Bylaws/Resolutions: Curt Watts  
Community Service: Gordon Wheeler  
Credentials: Curtis "Doc" Bohlman  
Conference and Convention: Curt Watts  
Historian: Richard Elsheimer  
Homeless Veterans: Rick Musgrove  
Loyalty Day: District Commanders  
State Legislative: Josh Starks  
Membership & Retention: Aaron Smith  
National Home: Danny Medley  
National Legislative: Joshua Starks  
Native American: Ed Beesley  
OK Veterans Commission: TBD  
OK Veterans Council: Gary Secor, Rebecca McGary, Larry Hurd, Ron Albert  
Parliamentarian: Curt Watts  
Patriots Pen: Jim Bassett  
POW/MIA: Deric Duncan  
Public Relations: Randy Traxler  
Safety: Ron Albert  
Scouting: Michael Schaffer  
State Fair: Deric Duncan (OKC), Frank Whitlock (Tulsa)  
Student Veterans Association Liaison: Erica Traxler  
Teacher of the Year: Jim Bassett  
Training and Development: Randy Traxler, Jim Bassett Vice Chair  
VFW Riders: Erica Traxler  
Veterans and Military Support: Jim Bassett  
Veterans Service Committee: Dan Fuller, Erica Traxler, James Dockemeyer, Gordon Wheeler,  
Voice of Democracy: Jim Bassett  
Women Veterans: Chris Chavez

## **DEPARTMENT MISSION**

First, congratulations to this year's Post, District, and State officers on your elections and appointments. You are assuming duties of great responsibility and leadership. I am honored to serve with you as your State Commander; together we will move the VFW of Oklahoma forward. Together, all of us can keep the VFW as the premier veteran's organization. Working together with our partners, the Auxiliary, we can do great things. Collaborating with other organizations will also



help get word out, the VFW is here to stay and here to help. Shared recruiting drives with other Veterans Service Organizations or other community organizations will also help.

Let us get out in the public, make sure that they know we are here, we are taking care of veterans.

The Department's mission is to foster camaraderie among United States Veterans of overseas conflicts living within the state of Oklahoma. To serve and assist our veterans, the military and foster good citizenship within the communities in which they live. To advocate on behalf of all veterans in the state of Oklahoma and nationwide. It is an amazingly simple mission and easy to do, take care of veterans. Earning the All-State Award is recognition of the posts and districts that live the mission of the VFW. The VFW can be the heartbeat of the communities that we live in. Members just need to go out and talk about the VFW, the rest falls in place.

## **ALL STATE AWARD**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The VFW is the premier veteran's organization that fights for veteran's rights and benefits. The posts within the VFW are the tip of the spear. They lead the fight for veteran's rights and benefits. The way they do this is twofold. First is getting out and recruiting. The second way is the hardest. Managing the programs, being proactive on getting the word out about the programs. The VFW has some fantastic programs. People become interested in them when they learn that they exist. Supporting the programs and getting the word out helps by informing the communities that we are there and continuing the mission. This in turn generates the communities' interest in helping us fulfill our mission. Wear VFW items when you go out in public. Freely answer questions when asked. It is not hard, but for some reason a lot of members do not do it. The posts that do deserve recognition. Pay close attention to the Department's Dashboard.

### **ALL STATE POST**

The Post is the heart and soul of the VFW. The prestigious title of "All State Post" demonstrates that the membership of a post has been dedicated and involved in the VFW programs and their community. The All-State Verification form will be attached to the March 2025 and April 2025 General Orders for completion, submission, and arrival at the Department HQs no later than **May 24, 2025**. Cut-off for all criteria reporting will be the close of business on **May 30, 2025**, unless stated otherwise. All outstanding documentation and/or reports must be sent to the Department Adjutant by that date. This allows the Awards Committee to meet, select, and prepare the awards for State Convention. The prestigious cap will be presented to the Post Commander and Post Quartermaster for their efforts of guidance, tracking, and submission of the requirements. The post will receive a mounted certificate for their achievements. All State Team caps should be available for purchase at the VFW Store.

**Membership requirements**, each post must:

- 102% in membership.
- Commander and Quartermaster must each recruit one NEW member.



- Senior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commanders must each recruit one NEW member.

**Submission requirements**, each post must:

- Voice of Democracy – submit a minimum of one entry to their district for judging.
- Patriots Pen – submit a minimum of one entry to their district for judging.
- Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year – submit a minimum of one entry to their district for judging.
- Safety Award (Law Enforcement, Fireman, and Emergency Medical Technician) or Scout of the Year; submit one entry for either the Safety Award or Scout of the Year entry to their district for judging. Duplicate entries to the department program will not be accepted.
- Community Service Reports – submit a minimum of nine reports.
- Community Events; submit a minimum of two reports per quarter (July- Mar) and at least one in the fourth quarter (Apr-May). Reports must be submitted 30 days after an event to the online reporting system. Only reports submitted through the online reporting will be accepted. Only reports tabulated prior to May 29, 2025, will be used for judging purposes.
- Quartermaster Bond – submit before September 1, 2024. If the bond is not through the VFW, proof needs to be submitted to the Department Quartermaster before September 1, 2024.
- Post-Election Reports – submit accurate and complete Post election reports. Reports MUST be received by the State Quartermaster through OMS or hardcopy before May 17, 2025.
- Recruiting Events – submit by write-up and provide proof of a minimum of two recruiting events conducted by your post for the year to the State Adjutant by May 24, 2025. OK State Fair and Tulsa State Fair participation will only count if a post covers the booth for the entire day.
- Post Inspection Reports – submit a complete and accurate post inspection report to the Department Quartermaster by December 20, 2024.
- Submit quarterly audits within 30 days after each quarter has ended.
- Proof of 990 filing must be filed with the Department Quartermaster by December 31, 2024.
- Delegate Registration – submit proof of delegate registering for the 2025 National Convention before May 17, 2025.
- State Delegate Fees – provide payment of State delegate fees before May 17, 2025.
- Buddy Poppies – purchase from the department. The required number is 500 Buddy Poppies Purchase before 29 May 2025.
- Post Service Officer Appointment – must submit a copy of Post Service Officer Appointment Letter to the Department Adjutant before September 30, 2024.

**Attendance requirements.** Each Post must:

Attend a State conducted School of Instruction. Minimum attendance requirement:

- o Commander, or Sr. Vice, or Jr. Vice and
- o Quartermaster or assistant/representative or Adjutant or assistant/representative  
\*Officer Training School Aug 17-or 18 will be considered instead of SOI
- Participate in a 2025 Loyalty Day Program at either Post, District, or State level.
- Attend at a minimum two of the three Department sanctioned events. Those events are State Convention 2024, Fall Fest 2024, and Mid-Winter 2025.
- Have one of the following command staff (Commander, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, Adjutant or Quartermaster or QM assistant) attend every District meeting within their District.





## **ALL STATE DISTRICT**

The prestigious title of “All-State District” demonstrates that the District, Post level leadership, and post members have been dedicated and involved in the VFW programs and have been shown to be involved all aspects of membership and community to promote and support the Veterans within their communities. The All-State Verification form will be attached to the March 2025 and April 2025 General Orders for completion, submission, and arrival at the Department HQs no later than **May 24, 2025**. Cut-off for all criteria reporting will be the close of business on **May 30, 2025**, unless stated otherwise. All outstanding documentation and/or reports must be sent to the Department Adjutant by that date. This allows the Awards Committee to meet, select, and prepare the awards for the State Convention. The prestigious cap will be presented to the Post Commander and Post Quartermaster for their efforts of guidance, tracking, and submission of the requirements. The post will receive a mounted certificate for their achievements. All State Team caps should be available for purchase at the VFW Store.

**Membership requirements.** Each district must:

- 102% in membership.
- Each Commander and Quartermaster must each recruit one new member. This requirement is waived if they have the same requirement at the post level.
- Each Senior Vice or Junior Vice Commander must recruit one new member. This requirement is waived if they have the same requirement at the post level.

**Submission requirements**, each district must:

- Voice of Democracy – submit a minimum of one entry to the department.
- Patriots Pen – submit a minimum of one Patriot's Pen entry to the department.
- Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year – submit a minimum of one entry to the department.
- Safety Award and Scout of the Year Award – Safety Award (Law Enforcement, Fireman, and Emergency Medical Technician) **or** Scout of the Year; submit one entry for the Safety Award **or** Scout of the Year. Duplicate entries to the department program will not be accepted.
- Program Reports – reports must be submitted by the Commander by the due dates given by the Department Programs Liaison.
- Community Service Reports – at least 2/3 of the posts within the district must complete the All-State Post Community Service requirement.
- Quartermaster Bond – submit no later than September 1, 2024. If the bond is not through the VFW, proof is required before September 1, 2024.
- Election Reports – submit accurate and complete election reports. Reports **MUST** be received by the Quartermaster through OMS or hardcopy before May 17, 2025.
- Recruiting Events – a minimum of two posts in each district must complete the recruiting event requirements as stated above in the All-State Post requirements.
- Post Inspection Reports – successful completion of inspections reports **MUST** be completed by the District Commander or District Inspector before December 20, 2024. Any extensions must be approved by the State Commander.



- District Inspection – successful completion of district inspection MUST be completed by the State Inspector before February 1, 2025. Any extensions must be approved by the State Commander.
- Quarterly Audits – submit all district quarterly audits before 30 days after each meeting.
- Proof of IRS 990 must be submitted to the Department Quartermaster by December 31, 2024.
- Convention Registration – commander registered for State Convention before May 17, 2025.
- Service Officer Appointment Letter – must submit a copy of the appointment letter to the Adjutant before September 30, 2024.

**Attendance requirements.** Each district must:

- Conduct at least three meetings within the VFW year. In case of inclement weather or other emergencies causing a travel hazard preventing a meeting, the commander must coordinate and report to the State Officer representative assigned to attend the meeting as well as notifying the State Commander and State Adjutant. Video/Telephone meetings are authorized and encouraged.
- Attendance by Commanders at all scheduled Council of Administration meetings and any other meeting determined by the State Commander. The Senior Vice Commander or the Junior Vice Commander may represent the Commander at a meeting if unable to attend. Only the State Commander can excuse a commander or their designated representatives due to certain circumstances. The designated representative, other than the Commander, Senior Vice, or Junior Vice Commander, meets the quorum requirement, but NOT the All-State attendance requirement for District Level judging.
- Attend a State conducted School of Instruction. (Dual positions accepted if currently holding an attendance required by Post position) Minimum attendance by:
  - o Commander, or Sr. Vice, or Jr. Vice and
  - o Quartermaster or assistant/representative or Adjutant or assistant/representative*\*Officer Training School Aug 17-or 18 will be considered instead of SOI*
- Loyalty Day Program – take part in a 2025 Loyalty Day program at your own post, another post, district, or state level. Proof of attendance must be submitted by said body conducting the event no later than the end of May 17, 2025.
- Service Officer – appointed Service Officer must attend scheduled Service Officer Training provided by the State Service Officer or by his appointed Instructors within 120 days of appointment.
- Commander post visits – twice during the administrative year to show involvement and aid as needed.

## **STATE PROGRAM RECOGNITION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The VFW is the premier veteran's organization that fights for veteran's rights and benefits. As part of this, the VFW offers many outstanding programs for our communities. Our partners, the VFW



Auxiliary, work with us hand in hand on these programs and projects to help promote that stance. We are one melded organization. As I said in the introduction to the recruiting/retain program, we need to build on this and look to the future. We need to set this organization up to continue the fight. Not for us. Not just for the current generation in uniform. This needs to be done so that the VFW can continue and help those children in grade school who will end up in some unnamed operation at some unknown location at a date in the future. We owe them this. Let us work together and run the programs. Unforeseen benefits come out of managing the programs. Take advantage of these when they present themselves. The VFW, the posts, and the communities are the ones that benefit. We need to focus on the basic tenets of our organization: to take care of our members, their families, and the veteran community, and this includes future generations. Some of these programs, or drives, may be combined with doing joint events with other organizations in your community.

**BUDDY POPPY PROGRAM** - *Chair, Heidi Teeter*

It is a requirement to purchase Buddy Poppies. Each Post must hold at least one Buddy Poppy drive prior to the next convention, documented online in the Departments website. They must also support the Auxiliary with their entry in the Buddy Poppy contest. Donate excess or unneeded Buddy Poppies back to the department for State level events. Document online on the department website.

**CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM** – *Chair,*

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

**HOMELESS VETERANS** - *Chair,*

Documented hours of effort show coordination. Perform clothing/food/equipment drives to support local shelters or take part in Sooner Showdown. Document online on the department website.

**PATRIOTS PEN** - *Chair, Jim Bassett - "My Voice in America's Democracy?"*

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

**POW/MIA PROGRAM** - *Chair, Deric Duncan*

Host or support POW/MIA events in your community. Documented hours of effort show coordination. Document online on the department website.

**SAFETY PROGRAM, FIRST RESPONDER OF THE YEAR** - *Chair, Ron Albert*

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

**SCOUT OF THE YEAR** - *Chair, Michael Schafer*

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.



## **SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR - Chair, Jim Bassett**

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

## **STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION - Chair,**

Host or support local SVA Chapters events. Build a working relationship with the chapter. Documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

## **VETERANS AND MILITARY SERVICE - Chair, Jim Bassett**

Documented hours of effort show coordination with the local military units. Number of events sponsored. Donation more than requirements. Document online on the department website.

## **VFW NATIONAL HOME - Chair, Danny Medley**

Donate more than program requirements, documented hours of effort for events or drives performed is support of the VFW National Home. Work with Department Representative for donations at convention. Document online on the department website.

## **VOICE OF DEMOCRACY - Chair, Jim Bassett, "Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?"**

As evidenced by the quantity of submissions, documented hours of effort show coordination with the local community. Document online on the department website.

## **STATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS**

### **SCOTT P. SQUYRES AWARD**

A plaque was donated to the department in memory of Oklahoma's own past Department Commander (1931 – 1932) and past National Commander-in-Chief (1937 – 1938), Scott P. Squyres. A memorial plaque was contributed and is intended to serve as a traveling memorial recognizing the excellence a post has demonstrated in engaging and supporting their community throughout the administrative year. It will once again be awarded to the post that has been judged the Most Outstanding Community Service Post at the State Convention in June 2025.

### **VFW/AUXILIARY TEAM SPIRIT AWARD**

One post per category will be recognized with this joint award for exhibiting the most spirit, teamwork, cooperation, and working together throughout the year as a VFW and Auxiliary TEAM. Selection of these Posts will be up to the State VFW Commander and the State Auxiliary President. Support of the various VFW and Auxiliary programs, involvement in your local community and working as a VFW/Auxiliary TEAM are key criteria for consideration. Every post will have opportunities to earn the coveted TEAM SPIRIT Award. (All eyes will be out taking notes and supplying recommendations, so always show your great spirit)



## **VFW SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

A VFW post, district, or department level officer may submit a Service Officer for the Post/District Service Officer of the Year and the State Service Officer of the Year Award. The nomination letter at a minimum must include information about the work the service officer has performed, hours volunteered, miles driven to aid other service officers and/or veterans throughout their areas. Additionally, it should include any other pertinent service officer information that makes them stand out against others at their same level. Submissions will be accepted before May 17, 2025. The State Service Officers and the Supervisor of the VFW Veteran Service Office in Muskogee, OK will decide the recipient of these two awards.

## **INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

### **Oklahoma VFW Legislator of the Year (Senator James Inhofe Award)**

As part of our continued engagement with our Congressional delegation and our State Legislature, we want to honor those elected officials who have stepped up and fought the fight for our military, veterans, and their families. This award is given to an Oklahoma Member of Congress or State Legislator who has exemplified through their public service a commitment to ensure that every member of the armed services, its veterans, and their families in the State of Oklahoma receive the care and benefits promised to them when they entered service. This award can span the current year or a lifetime of commitment in service to our veterans. Nominations for this award can be made by anyone affiliated with the Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars and its appendant bodies. Nomination letters, proof of accomplishments, and any other pertinent information must be given to the State Legislative Chair before March 1, 2025. The National Legislative and the State Legislative Chairs will appoint an awards committee to review and decide the designee for the year and the award to be given. The award will be presented at the 2025 State Convention.

### **Oklahoma/District VFW Comrade of the Year**

This award is for a VFW Comrade that has shown exemplary dedication, volunteerism, support, hard work, and performed above all others throughout the 2024-2025 year. A District Comrade of the Year will be given to a comrade from each District. There will be one overall Oklahoma VFW Comrade of the Year given. Any fellow comrade who is a member in good standing of the VFW Department of Oklahoma may nominate another comrade. Self-nominations will not be accepted. This award is given at the sole discretion of the State Commander based on the recommendations provided and is not intended to compete with the lifetime achievement status that the Mr./Ms./Mrs. VFW Award holds.

### **Mr./Ms./Mrs. VFW**

This award was established by Past State Commander Bill Beane and will be judged and presented by the past Department of Oklahoma Mr./Ms./Mrs. VFWs. Requirements for this award will be posted in the March – May 2025 General Orders/Newsletters by the Awards Committee of that group. This award considers comrades who have demonstrated a lifetime of outstanding work and service as a member of the VFW Department of Oklahoma. Nominations will be taken in letter format to the said committee. The selection committee will be composed of various Past



Mr./Ms./Mrs. VFW Award winners ONLY. The winner of this prestigious award will receive a plaque provided by the Past Mr./Ms./Mrs. VFW Group in honor of his/her outstanding achievement at the annual June 2025 State Convention Banquet. The Oklahoma Past Commanders Club sponsors this prestigious award.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **MISSION**

To recruit, retain and mentor a stable membership base including all generations of veterans. To cultivate a membership that is well versed in institutional knowledge and actively involved at all levels of the organization and in the local community. To establish posts with a strong tradition of service, leadership, and community outreach.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The VFW is the premier veteran's organization that fights for veteran's rights and benefits. We need to build on this and look to the future. We need to set this organization up to continue the fight. Not just for the current generation in uniform, but for those children in grade school who will end up in some unnamed operation at some unknown location at a date way in the future. We owe them this. So, what do we do? In the past the VFW as a whole has pushed recruit, recruit, and recruit some more. This has had the effect of slowing our decay. We need to change our focus. Yes, recruit. If every member of our department went out and recruited one individual, we would double in size. In reality, we would show an increase but not double. Why? We need to work on retaining the members we recruit. Retain and re-engage those that left. We must improve the way we communicate with our members at all levels of the organization. Posts and districts need to use all methods available to convey information for news and training to our membership; newsletters, emails, social media, and outreach teams are some of the most effective ways to maintain communication with our members. We need to know who our members are and how we can address their needs and concerns. We need to focus on the basic tenets of our organization: to take care of our members, their families, and the veteran community, and this includes future generations.

### **MEMBERSHIP GOALS**

1. Build a strong organization for the future.
2. Work together to achieve the VFW's goals. The VFW Oklahoma Headquarters staff is available to assist in coordinating programs, developing new membership initiatives, and building awareness among our membership and the entire veteran community.

### **MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES**

- Recruit new and recover unpaid members
- Reinstate members in you Post area (contact Dept QM for details)
- Involve members directly in VFW functions at all levels



- Retain and mentor existing membership
- Develop new Posts and revitalize existing Posts **Note: District Commander Priority**
- Increase Life membership
- Increase Legacy Life membership

## **MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES**

To work together and help each other is the main reason that resources are made available. In order to assist our Posts and Districts in meeting the goals set out by the Commander-in-Chief in this membership program, the National Headquarters has a wealth of resources at your disposal. Many of those are available free to our members. Please use them and share them. Veterans helping Veterans!

- Membership materials ranging from applications, recruiting brochures, posters, and benefits brochures can be ordered directly from the Membership Department using the Membership Order Form (located under the Membership Quick Links once you log into [vfw.org](http://vfw.org))
- Resources for Post Development, Membership Campaigns and Mentorship such as training guides and video webinars are available in the Training & Support section on [vfw.org](http://vfw.org)
- Promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements, and media kits are all available through the Media Room on [vfw.org](http://vfw.org).
- The amount of information on the VFW web site is staggering. Use it. Just about anything you will need is at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), check it out.

The VFW National Headquarters staff is ready and trained to answer any questions you may have concerning membership, VFW programs, or other issues. You can contact the **Member Service Center directly at 1-833- VFW-VETS**, or the **Membership Department at 1-888-JOIN-VFW**. They will help you find what you need. Further, the Department has many experienced recruiters that are more than willing to help you achieve your goals.

## **RETENTION**

Retention is half of the battle for growing your post. Retention plays an integral role in accomplishing growth within the post, district, and state membership. Retention is not a prerequisite for All State. The number of paid annual members in your Post on July 1, 2024, is your ensuing year's "prior year total." One more new or reinstated member is required to make up for each prior year annual member the post fails to retain. Your post retention is derived from six types of payment components based upon your prior year total of annual members and our goal will be to ensure:

- A prior year annual member pays their annual membership dues
- A prior year annual member pays the life membership installment fee
- A prior year annual member pays for life membership dues
- A prior year annual member transfers to another Post and pays their annual membership dues to your Post prior to transfer



- A prior year annual member transfers to another Post and pays the life membership installment fee to your Post prior to transfer
- A prior year annual member transfers to another Post and pays life membership dues to your Post prior to transfer

**Note:**

*(Above section information taken directly from the National Commanders Membership Program)*

## **MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

### **Largest Post Membership Increase Award (By Category)**

- Category A: Posts with Membership of 10 to 75
- Category B: Posts with Membership of 76 to 150
- Category C: Posts with Membership of 151 to 250
- Category D: Posts with membership of 251 to 500
- Category E: Posts with Membership of 501 and up

The minimum post membership increase goal for the 2024-2025 membership year will be ten (10) new members for Category A & B. Fifteen (15) new members for Category C. Twenty (20) new members for Categories D & E.

The cut-off for judging the membership increase by Category Award will be May 17, 2025. Each Category winner will receive an award to be presented at the June 2025 State Convention.

### **Legacy Life Membership Award**

The post with the highest increase of Legacy Life Members will be recognized. A minimum of three new Legacy Life Members is needed for Category A through C. Five new Life Legacy Members in Category D and E. The cut-off for entry of this award will be May 17, 2024. The award will be presented at the June 2025 State Convention.

### **State Commander/President's Challenge**

The Auxiliary are our partners. To foster camaraderie between the VFW and Auxiliary, the Auxiliary Department President and VFW State Commander are issuing a challenge to our memberships. The VFW member that recruits the most Auxiliary members, and the Auxiliary member that recruits the most VFW members, will each receive specialty recognition and an award TBD at the 2025 State Convention. To receive credit for recruiting, proof of who was recruited and by whom must be submitted to the respective headquarters. The cutoff for this award is May 17, 2025.





## **Membership Recruiting Awards**

You will receive the appropriate reward total based on award cutoff of May 17, 2025

If you recruit twenty-five new members, you receive:

- One VFW Membership Badge and Ribbon

If you recruit fifty new members, you receive:

- One VFW Membership Badge and Ribbon
- One 20 oz Tumbler

If you recruit seventy-five new members, you receive

- One VFW Membership Badge and Ribbon
- One 20 oz Tumbler
- One State Commander Polo

If you recruit one hundred new members, you receive:

- One VFW Membership Badge and Ribbon
- One 20 oz Tumbler
- One State Commander Polo
- Two Banquet ticket for the June 2025 State Convention

## **Past State Commander Troy Hensch Memorial Top Recruiter Award:**

This prestigious award, named in Honor of Past State Commander Troy Hensch, will be presented to the Top Recruiter in the Department for the year. Commander Hensch served as Department Commander and as a United States Army Recruiter.

- Two banquet tickets at the June 2025 State Convention
- One plaque in honor of their outstanding recruitment efforts

### **\*\*\*\*\*Recruiter Award Disclaimer\*\*\*\*\*:**

The cut-off for the Awards for recruiting will be on close of business on June 1, 2025. On that day, the total amount of N/R that a Comrade has will be the Recruiting Award that Comrade will receive.

## **VFW OKLAHOMA 2024-2025 PROGRAM DUE DATES**

Service Officer Appointment Letter Submission: Sept. 30, 2024

Quartermaster Bond Submission: Sept. 1, 2024

Post Inspections submitted: Dec. 20, 2024



IRS 990 Filed and copy provided to State: Dec. 31, 2024

District Inspections submitted: Feb. 1, 2025

Membership Increase Cut-off: May 17, 2025

Recruiting Events Cut-off: May 17, 2025

Community Service Events Submission: May 17, 2025

Delegate(s) Registered for 2025 State Convention: May 17, 2025

Proof of Loyalty Day Attendance: May 17, 2025

All State Form cut off: May 24, 2025

2024-2025 Post Election Report: May 17, 2025

Delegate(s) Registered for 2025 National Convention: May 17, 2025

100% Membership Streamer: June 30, 2025



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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Oklahoma

**NOTES**



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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Oklahoma

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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Oklahoma

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## Department of Oklahoma Post & District Accountable Officer Bond Rates 2024-2025

To: Commanders, Quartermasters & Trustees

Subject: Accountable Officers Bonds 2024- 2025, coverage from 1 Sept 24 thru 31 Aug 25

“Pursuant to National Bylaws Section 703 Bonds:

“The bond of such accountable officers, in amount and as to surety, shall be approved by their respective units and held by the respective Commanders. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable officer in their unit.”

Comrades, many officers mistake the “Accountable Officer Bond” as being a “Quartermaster Bond”. However, if any other officer, to include but not limited to Commander, Assistant Quartermaster, Sr. Vice Commander, etc. has access to the unit’s funds, then that accountable officer must also be bonded. Furthermore, I know in many cases, Posts and/or districts have bylaws that stipulate that more than one signature is required to be placed on a check. However, most financial institutions will process checks, on-line payments, accept withdrawals with only one or no signature. In these cases, all accountable officers must be bonded.

The rates below apply to each bond, not the accumulated cost of all bonds applications submitted. Questionnaire for VFW Accountable Officers Crime Coverage (Form NO. 2) must be completed for each accountable officer and payment submitted. For instance, if you bond both your Quartermaster and Commander, an application must be completed for both officers. Applications and checks can be sent to: VFW-Oklahoma, P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-1126. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 405.850.0815 or at [vfwhqokqm@outlook.com](mailto:vfwhqokqm@outlook.com) or Asst. State Quartermaster Curt Watts at 405.590.8577 or at [vfwokncm@outlook.com](mailto:vfwokncm@outlook.com)

VFW Department of Oklahoma Bond Rates for 2024-2025 are as follows:

BOND AMOUNT	BOND COST PER THOUSAND
\$3,000 to \$99,000	\$4.50 per thousand
\$100,000 to \$250,000	\$3.50 per thousand
\$251,000 to \$299,000	\$2.50 per thousand
\$300,000 to \$600,000	\$2.00 per thousand

Heidi Teeter  
Quartermaster  
Department of Oklahoma



DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS  
**Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**  
 TRAVELERS CASUALTY AND SURETY COMPANY OF AMERICA



Dear Comrade Commander:

Questionnaire for VFW Accountable Officers Crime Coverage

August 1, 2024

One of the most important communications you will receive during the year concerns the bond of your Unit Quartermaster. Section 703 of our National By-Laws requires that each accountable officer shall be bonded with an Indemnity Company as surety and the By-Laws places the responsibility for adequate bonding upon the Commander of the post. In any business it is customary to bond any officer handling funds. **THE BOOKS AND RECORDS OF THE ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER MUST BE AUDITED AT LEAST QUARTERLY BY THE TRUSTEES. THIS IS TO COMPLY WITH SECTION 218 OF THE NATIONAL MANUAL OF PROCEDURES.**

The Department Headquarters carries a Crime Policy for the bonding of Department and Post Accountable Officers. This Policy runs for a year – from September 1 to August 31 – premium payments are made on that basis. Coverage for all accountable officers expires on August 31 and premium for the New Year is due on September 1.

Any unit may decide whether it prefers to take out a Policy with some other surety company or have its funds protected by the Department Headquarters Crime Policy. But the matter should be given prompt attention because if your Accountable Officer had previously been covered through the National Headquarters, **a new premium payment is required by September 1, 2024 and delinquent after this date.**

**IF THE POLICY IS NOT RENEWED, TERMINATED, OR CANCELLED AT EXPIRATION DATE OF 9-1-2023, THE POST HAS ONLY 90 DAYS TO SUBMIT A PROOF OF LOSS FOR PRIOR TERM. AFTER 90 DAYS PRIOR COVERAGE CEASES.**

**COVERAGES OF THE POLICY REQUIRE THAT:**

1. You agree to make/or cause to be made, at least annually, an audit of your books and accounts, including complete verification of all securities and bank balances pertaining to each “employee and/ or volunteer”.

If the above is not complied with, the Insurance Company will refuse to honor claim of missing funds which cannot be proven by records. Monthly audits and reconciliation of bank statements may avoid this denial of claim.

2. The Insurance Company will not pay for loss resulting from any unauthorized advances made by an “employee” to any member for delinquent dues and assessments.

3. “Employee” means any duly elected position, or any appointed officer as listed in the policy schedule.

**4. POST MUST SUBMIT A PROOF OF LOSS FORM WITHIN 120 DAYS FROM THE FIRST DATE OF DISCOVERY OF THE LOSS. Proof of loss resulting from dishonest acts on the part of the bonded officer is required in settlement of claims.**

**THIS POLICY IS ONLY FOR THE YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 TO AUGUST 31, 2025.**

**The funds of your Post are protected only for that year. Premium for the following year will be due September 1, 2025.**

RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WITH YOUR PREMIUM CHECK PAYABLE TO YOUR DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Post # and State

I hereby apply for A1. Employee/Volunteer Theft coverage in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ . For the year from September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2025.

Number of Persons Bonded:   1        Number of Locations:   1        **Post Annual Income:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_      Dated: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Has the post had any Crime Coverage (employee/ volunteer theft of money) losses over the past three years? \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**If yes, provide a description with date & amount of loss on a separate sheet & what changes you have made so this does not happen again.**  
**No Coverage can be extended until Travelers reviews and approves it.**

**DEADLINE FOR COVERAGE IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 – AFTER THIS DATE YOU WILL BE DELIQUENT AND NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE VFW BY-LAWS.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
QM or Commander or Adjutant or Sr.Vice Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address, City and Zip



## VFW Canteen Employees & Bingo Persons Bond Rates 2024-2025

To: Commanders, Quartermasters & Trustees

Subject: VFW Canteen Employees, & Bingo employee, volunteers etc. Bonds 2024- 2025, coverage from 1 Oct 24 thru 30 Sep 25

Comrades, many officers mistake the “Canteen Employee & Bingo Persons Bond” as being the same as an Accountable Officer Bond. Unlike the “Accountable Officer Bond”, which covers the position, not the person, the Canteen Employee & Bingo Persons Bond covers the individual, not the position. Employee bonds should be completed for each **person** to be bonded. I would encourage all posts who have a Canteen and/or Bingo operations to cover each employee or volunteer for at least the minimum amount in which that person handles funds.

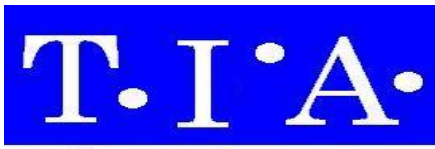
The rates below apply to each bond, not the accumulated cost of all bonds applications submitted. The A1 Employee/Volunteer Theft (Crime Coverage) bond application (Form # 4B) must be completed for each employee/volunteer and payment submitted. For instance, if you bond both your Canteen Manager and a Bingo Manager, bartender, etc. an application must be completed for each person. Applications and checks can be sent to: VFW-Oklahoma, P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-1126. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 580.515.0567 or at [vfwhqokqm@outlook.com](mailto:vfwhqokqm@outlook.com) or Asst. State Quartermaster Curt Watts at 405.590.8577 or at [vwokncm@outlook.com](mailto:vwokncm@outlook.com)

VFW Department of Oklahoma Bond Canteen Employee/Bingo employee/volunteer rates for 2024-2025 are as follows:

BOND AMOUNT	BOND COST PER THOUSAND
\$3,000 to \$99,000	\$4.50 per thousand
\$100,000 to \$250,000	\$3.50 per thousand
\$251,000 to \$299,000	\$2.50 per thousand
\$300,000 to \$600,000	\$2.00 per thousand

Heidi Teeter  
Quartermaster  
Department of Oklahoma





Tallman Insurance

A.1 Employee/Volunteer Theft (Crime Coverage)
VFW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLUB EMPLOYEES &
BINGO PERSONS TO, BE COMPLETED BY
COVERED INDIVIDUAL

TRAVELERS CASUALTY AND SURETY COMPANY OF AMERICA

Coverage Term: October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL

1. a) Name of Post \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_

b) Post Address \_\_\_\_\_
Street City State Zip

2. a) Name of Person to be Covered \_\_\_\_\_

3. Position to be Covered \_\_\_\_\_

4. Coverage Amount Requested \$ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Number of Persons Covered \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Number of Locations \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Post - Annual Income \_\_\_\_\_

8. Has the post had any crime losses (Theft of Money by Employees) over the past three years? \_\_\_\_\_
If yes, provide a description along with the date and amount of loss. No Coverage can be extended
until Travelers reviews it.

9. a) Have you ever been convicted of any dishonest or fraudulent employment related act, "for
example" burglary, robbery, theft or embezzlement of funds of any kind. \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

IF COVERAGE IS NOT RENEWED, TERMINATED, OR CANCELLED AT
EXPIRATION DATE OF 10-1-2024, THE POST HAS ONLY 90 DAYS TO SUBMIT A PROOF
OF LOSS FOR PRIOR TERM, AFTER 90 DAYS, PRIOR COVERAGE CEASES.

If this is a replacement for a current position, please advise what person you are replacing

\_\_\_\_\_.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
(Day) (Month) (Year)

Signature: Person to be Covered

Form Must be Signed by Covered Person

# VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES POST INSPECTION FORM

POST NO.	CHARTERED LOCATION (CITY & STATE)	DISTRICT NO.	DEPARTMENT	INSPECTION DATE
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- 1) Has the Post adopted Bylaws in accordance with Section 202 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Date reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Is the Post incorporated in accordance with Section 708 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Date reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Date filed with appropriate state officials: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Name of incorporated unit: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Registered Agent of Record: \_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Are all officer positions filled as prescribed in Section 216 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 4) Are Post delegates elected in accordance with Section 222 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 5) Does the Post Adjutant...
  - a) Maintain books and records in a legible and uniform format?.....  YES  NO
  - b) Maintain a file containing a copy of the original application of every member admitted into the Post?.....  YES  NO
  - c) Maintain a file of meeting minutes after correction and approval?.....  YES  NO
  - d) Maintain a file of current orders or circulars issued from higher authority?.....  YES  NO
  - e) Maintain a correspondence file?.....  YES  NO
  - f) Maintain a file containing proof of eligibility submitted by officers?.....  YES  NO
  - g) Maintain a current copy of Post, District (if applicable), Department and National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 6) Are applicants for membership reviewed, read and voted on at a Post meeting for approval?.....  YES  NO
- 7) Does the Post hold at least one meeting per month with a quorum present?.....  YES  NO
- 8) Are all committees reporting to the membership at Post meetings?.....  YES  NO
- 9) Are Community Service/Program (Activity) reports submitted in accordance with Department Bylaws and guidelines?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Date of last submission: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Does the Post observe commemorative dates as mandated in Section 223 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 11) Does the Post have an Auxiliary?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Is there proper cooperation between the Post and its Auxiliary unit?.....  YES  NO
- 12) Does the Post distribute Buddy Poppies?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Date of last distribution: \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) Does the Post have a membership committee?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Does the Post have a viable recruiting and retention plan?.....  YES  NO
- 14) Do the elected Trustees review the monthly report of receipts and expenditures?.....  YES  NO
- 15) Do the elected Trustees audit quarterly all books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant and any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Date of last quarterly audit: \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) Post funds:
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Balance of all checking accounts \$ _____</li> <li>b) Balance of all savings accounts \$ _____</li> <li>c) Balance of all CD and bond accounts \$ _____</li> <li>d) All other account types \$ _____</li> <li>e) Total of all accounts \$ _____</li> <li>f) Amount of Quartermaster Bond \$ _____</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g) Do all account ledger balances match the balance of reconciled bank statements? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span></li> <li>h) Is the Quartermaster Bond (f) greater than the total of all accounts (e)? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span></li> </ol>
--	--
- 17) Name of bonding company: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date of bond: \_\_\_\_\_
- 18) Are additional officers accountable for funds bonded in accordance with Section 703 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 19) Does the Post Quartermaster...
  - a) Maintain books and records in a legible and uniform format?.....  YES  NO
  - b) Receive and properly transmit membership dues as required?.....  YES  NO
  - c) Maintain a relief fund in accordance with Section 219 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
  - d) Have care and custody of all committee funds?.....  YES  NO
  - e) Report on transactions concerning receipts and expenditures at Post meetings?.....  YES  NO
  - f) File appropriate forms as required by federal, state and local statutes?.....  YES  NO
  - g) Date of last 990 filing: \_\_\_\_\_ h) Is the 990 filing available for public inspection?.....  YES  NO
- 20) Post Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN): \_\_\_\_\_
- 21) Are all expenditures voted on by the Post membership and approved by the Post Commander?.....  YES  NO
- 22) Are expenditures from the relief fund in accordance with Section 219 of the National Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 23) Are signature(s) authorizing the disbursement of funds done in accordance with Post Bylaws?.....  YES  NO
- 24) Are checks pre-signed by any authorized officer?.....  YES  NO
- 25) Does the Post own real property?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Appraised Value: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Owed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Title Holder: \_\_\_\_\_
- 26) Does the Post carry all proper types of insurance?.....  YES  NO
  - a) Are both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Department named as additional insureds?.....  YES  NO
- 27) Does the Post retain documents in accordance with the Department's Document Retention Policy?.....  YES  NO
- 28) Does the Post operate a clubroom/canteen or other state licensed entity?(Department Inspection Form May Be Required).....  YES  NO

INSPECTOR COMMENTS :

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POST COMMANDER: \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT AND SIGN

INSPECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT AND SIGN

The Inspector shall provide a copy of each inspection to the Post Commander, District Inspector, and Department Inspector and set forth therein any constructive criticism and recommendations.  
 MAINTAIN IN POST FILE AS A PERMANENT RECORD

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE POST INSPECTION REPORT

Make every effort to answer each question accurately and completely. Some questions require dollar amounts or dates to be inserted. The purpose of the Inspection Report is to provide the State Commander and the State Inspector with a factual report on the operating condition of the Post. If you don't complete the report carefully and properly, you are denying the State Commander and State Inspector information they need to do their job. Do not limit your comments when reporting deficiencies; it may be necessary to attach an additional comment sheet.

### Question Specific Reminders

1. Bylaws of the organization (all levels) should be readily available to all members. Posts that have adopted Bylaws need to have a copy on file that indicates the Commander-in-Chief has reviewed for compliance. Verify date of review. If out of date, suggest an internal review. If a Post has not adopted Bylaws it should have on file an indexed book of approved resolutions/motions that are in effect.
2. Posts that have adopted Articles of Incorporation need to have a copy on file that indicates the Commander-in-Chief has reviewed for compliance. Verify date of review, date filed with appropriate state agency, the name of the incorporated unit, and that the registered agent and officers (if applicable) have been updated to correspond with the previous election of officers. In some states this must be done annually, in others only when the registered agent changes (this is commonly known as the Annual Report). All Posts must be incorporated under the laws of their state to protect members' personal assets from seizure and sale.
3. Verify the following elected positions are properly filled: Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain and three (3) Trustees, and appointed positions Adjutant and Service Officer.
4. Verify delegates to the District, County Council (if applicable), Department and National Conventions were elected in accordance with Section 222 of the National Bylaws/Manual of Procedure. This can be done by checking the meeting minutes.
5. Any "NO" answer in this section indicates a neglect in duties and responsibilities as prescribed in Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure.
6. Verify, using meeting minutes, that applications for membership are being handled in accordance with Section 103 of the National Bylaws. In addition, ensure proper usage of Sections 106 and 107 of the Manual of Procedure for all former and/or transferring members.
7. The National Bylaws, Section 203, states every Post shall hold at least one regular meeting per month.
8. Verify, using meeting minutes, that committee reports are given, discussed and accepted. This includes activities like the canteen, bingo, honor guard, riders groups, community service, etc.
9. Activity reports assist the Post when their non-profit status is being questioned by the IRS and further indicate whether or not they are upholding Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter, the purposes of our organization.
10. Verify, using meeting minutes, that the Post made arrangements to properly observe Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day and Loyalty Day.
11. Section 1101 of the National Bylaws discusses the formation and governing of the Auxiliary.
12. Distribution of the VFW Buddy Poppy helps raise monies for the Post's relief fund.
13. Although subjective, Posts need to be continually encouraged to develop programs for membership recruiting and retention.
14. Monthly review of Post receipts and expenditures by the Trustees is required in Section 218 the National Manual of Procedure.
15. Quarterly audits are required of all accounts. This item includes any canteen, clubroom, bingo, honor guard, riders groups, etc., Post Trustees must complete this audit not later than the month following the last day of each quarterly period (e.g. August 1, November 1, February 1 and May 1). Failure to conduct the audits, as required, will invalidate the Post Quartermaster bond.
16. Evidence of checking and savings account balances should be verified from the latest statements, copies of CD's, notes, etc. If the bank balances do not coincide with the books, after adjustments for outstanding checks, etc., this should be reported in detail. Discrepancies should immediately be brought to the attention of the Post Commander and Trustees. The Post Quartermaster must be bonded in a sum equal to the liquid assets for which they are accountable, and to which they have access.
17. Verify bonding company and expiration date by viewing a copy of the certificate.
18. Reference Section 703 of the National Bylaws.
19. Verify all questions in this section by examining Quartermaster records, Adjutant records and Bylaws.  
Remember, Section 709 of the National Bylaws further require that the Post Quartermaster have custody of all funds of activity/subordinate unit and subject to the same Rules and Regulation as Post Funds.  
The Internal Revenue Service requires all VFW Posts to file annually a Form 990 "Tax Exempt Organizations Tax Form". A Post may also have to file a Form 990T and pay certain taxes if it has nonrelated business income. Failure to file the forms, when required to do so, can result in severe fines and penalties. Enter the date of the last filing; even if the report for the current year has not yet been completed or is not yet due. Each Post is mandated, by IRS rules, to have their current 990 filing available for public viewing. Verify Tax Exempt Status via [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) "Tax Exempt Organization Search".
20. Every Post is required to have a Federal Employer Identification number.
21. Expenditure of funds requires a vote on the Post floor, and approval by the Post Commander before a Quartermaster can proceed with the disbursement. In some instances, Post Bylaws may allow for certain expenditures to be paid without a vote on the floor, these are usually reoccurring bills. If a Post Commander is not approving all expenditures, it's violating the duties and responsibilities of the office.
22. Buddy Poppy distribution net receipts must be credited to the Post Relief Fund. Section 219 of the National Bylaws mandates that a Relief Fund will be established and maintained. Distribution of these funds are restricted and must only be used for the purposes stated in Section 219 of the Manual of Procedure.
23. The National Bylaws state the Post Quartermaster will disburse funds using acceptable banking practices. The Post Quartermaster may authorize other persons, but they must be bonded in accordance with Section 703 of the National Bylaws. However, if the Post Bylaws require the Commander and Quartermaster signatures on checks, they must adhere to the Post Bylaws.
24. Checks shall never be "pre-signed" by any officer and is not considered an acceptable banking practice.
25. Last appraised value or estimated value shall be entered. Monthly payment and amount owed are necessary; mark "N/A" if the amount is zero. Title holder may be a bank or lender, if the property is totally paid for, enter location and holder of the deed. If the Post does not own real property, please note if they rent.
26. It is desirable that all Posts be covered by adequate liability insurance. If someone suffers an injury on Post property or at a Post sponsored activity, a subsequent lawsuit may subject all the assets of the Post and its members to a judgment. The Post officers should be reminded of this potential problem.  
Any Post owning property and/or operating any facility must maintain general liability insurance, including, if necessary or appropriate, liquor liability insurance. Such insurance must name, as additional insured's, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which the Post is located. Verify by viewing the applicable policy.
27. Each Department must adopt a document retention policy which complies with federal and state law and ensure its use by each Post within its jurisdiction.
28. Departments may require additional forms for inspecting licensed operations (e.g. Clubroom, Gaming, etc.).

# 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.



**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.