



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



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January 2021

2020-2021 Series

*"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."
C.S. Lewis*

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

General Orders No. 7

2020-2021 Series

1. Attention is drawn to Section 709 of the National Bylaws. "In addition to other legal requirements under existing local laws or Department Bylaws, no Post, County Council, District or any holding company or corporation subordinate thereto, shall purchase, sell or otherwise transfer title or any interest in any real estate unless written notice is given to each member of said unit ten (10) days prior to such regular or special meeting at which the proposal is to be considered, and then only by two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval of those members present and voting at such regular or special meeting. In addition, at least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting, notice shall be provided to the Department Commander who shall review any sale, purchase, transfer or encumbrance to determine whether such transaction serves the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as prescribed in the Congressional Charter. Failure to comply with these provisions shall nullify said transaction.

When properly approved by the members of the Post, the Commander and Quartermaster shall be authorized to sign such legal documents required to sell or purchase real property.

/os/

MICHAEL L. MERIT
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /

Curtis A. Watts
Adjutant



FROM THE COMMANDER



**Michael L. Merit
State Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Oklahoma**

Comrades,

January 1st 2021

First, I hope this finds all of you and your family healthy and well. If not, I pray for a speedy recovery. Happy New Year everyone! Let us hope this new year brings better tomorrows and a brighter future for not only our military, veterans, and their families, but also our organization and the world at large.

Here we are beginning our seventh month of the year. I hope everyone that is able has continued their year in full swing. I know that the ongoing COVID pandemic is still limiting our ability to do our jobs 100%, so now is the time that we must throw the book out and think outside of the box. Speak with each other and share what works for you. During this time, we must help each other accomplish our mission. Remember, we are TEAM OKLAHOMA! Therefore, we must work together as one.

The Veterans Service Committee is still waiting on applications for an assistant service officer in Muskogee. The Committee is in the final stages of approving the job description and we hope to have that out to everyone very soon. As we continue to climb in the number of claims being submitted, we need assistant state service officers now, more than ever! So, if you or someone you know is interested in applying for the position, please contact the State Service Officer PSC James Dockemeyer.

Membership Update. December end numbers are as follows: Southern Conference, Oklahoma slipped to #2. Nationally, Oklahoma is #13. We still have 1,075 to go to that magic 100% before the end of the administrative year. That is approaching fast! Remember, keep working those At Large Lists and the Retention Lists you all have received. Our highest recruiter to date, NCM PSC Robbie Clark has recruited 72 new members. State Surgeon Stacy Reddig is at 37, 1 at 8, 1 at 7, 1 at 5, 4 at 4, 8 at 3, 18 at 2, 35 at 1 and 94 with no recruiter. Quartermasters, please ensure you are entering a recruiter number when putting in new members, so the right person gets the credit for them. Our overall breakdown is 141 new members and 148 reinstates. **Remember 110% by June 30th, 2021!** The results for the Commander's Challenge for the first half of this year are as follows: Post 7740 will receive the \$100. Posts 1048, 1193, 1843, 3689, 4465, 4876, 5914, 8676, and 9969 will receive \$50 each. Also, congratulations to Posts 3689, 7740, 8679 for surpassing 110%! Speaking of these Posts, 7 of them are in the Top 25 of their

respective division: 1193 #8, 1843 #11, 3689 #20, 4465 #10, 7740 #19, 8679 #9, and 9969 #11. They are all in the running for All American. Great job! Additionally, congratulations to District 15 being the first District to pass 100%! So, get out there and bring these new members in.

Concerning working with your town to make it a Purple Heart City, I remind everyone that you **must contact Mitch Reed with the Military Order of the Purple Heart prior to any action being taken!** His contact information is in the packet attached to these General Orders.

As we inch closer and closer to the Mid-Winter Conference, we will be releasing more information concerning it. Our Convention Chair, PSC Darryl Mabry is working diligently with the hotel to finalize all the details. I know some of you have already tried to make reservations, so I ask that you be patient and we will get that information to you just as soon as we have it. We have not heard yet who our National Representative will be, but I am sure am looking forward to seeing all of you again in OKC for what looks to be a great conference.

Our Department Centennial is April 16th, 2021. Not many get to celebrate 100 years, so this is going to be an amazing experience for all of us. We currently have 70 coins remaining at the State Headquarters. They are two inches wide and the price per coin is \$20. Let's get the last of the coins sold. Please contact State Quartermaster Curt Watts to get yours today!



Finally, we have made it through the first half of a very tough year dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We still have a long way to go to get back to a normal life. But I have faith in each and every one of you that we will continue pressing forward in doing what we do best: being the voice and action for every military member, veteran and their families here in Oklahoma. When you are feeling like it is getting too tough out there, remember the phrase that got Winston Churchill through the toughest times of World War II, "K.B.O. Keep Buggering On." Thank you for all that you have done so far this year and thank you in advance for all I know you are going to do for the rest of this year. Remember, we are TEAM OKLAHOMA, and we are always First to Fight for Veterans!

****Changes to All State Requirements****

1. The Buddy Poppy Requirement has been removed due lack of Buddy Poppies.
2. The donation to the Oklahoma VFW Foundation has been removed due to financial constraints of Posts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FROM THE STATE SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

State Senior Vice Commander
National and State Legislative Chair
Bylaws/Resolutions Chair

Jim Bassett

Oklahoma is 2nd out of 14 Departments within the Southern Conference.
Oklahoma is 14th out of 52 Departments within the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As of 14 December, 2020

Happy New Year to all!!



I hope everyone has had a joyous Christmas and a wonderful New Year. I also hope everyone has stayed healthy. This is the start of a new year, it cannot be worse than the one that we just survived. A fresh start for us to move forward. Personally, I am looking forward to the year, tackling the challenges that come our way and growing the VFW. Letting the communities know that, not only is the VFW of Oklahoma here but that we are the ones taking care of our states Veterans and families. Since we take care of veterans and families, let us reach out to the National Guard units near you. We have adopted them and have been working with them. In other words, they are our family. If you need help getting in touch with one, let Tony McGrew or myself and we can help. Offer to sponsor events; a MAP grant will handle many of them. Again, talk to Tony or myself and we are more than willing to help.

The election is over but the fight for veteran's issues and benefits continues. One way to do this is by keeping an eye on legislation that affects your benefits. Stay current and knowledgeable on issues. Do not get wrapped up on hearsay or social media. To do this, simply register to receive the Action Corps newsletter. This is a simple and easy way to stay informed. You can register at <https://votervoice.net/VFW/register>.

RETAIN, RETAIN, RETAIN!!! What are you doing to help retain post members?

Since I started moving through the chairs, National has been sending daily updates to our membership numbers. One thing that I have noticed is that the retention numbers have been averaging around 50%. Some posts are doing an outstanding job at 100%, keep up the good

work! Remember, each person that leaves the post requires you to recruit two to increase the post. Think outside the box on this. What does it take to retain your members? Talk to them and find out. Get to know them, encourage them to get involved. Ask them for ideas that they may want to manage or get involved with. Is there interest in education? Veteran's service? Helping other veterans? Community recognition? Aiding the community? Something special that they think the VFW should be doing? One never knows of what golden idea can come out of someone that feels engaged. Oh yeah, you might even find out how to keep them in the post.

We are working with organizations for next year. We have already committed to the Oklahoma State and Tulsa Fairs. We are waiting on the announcement of schedule dates for the OKC Dodgers and OKC Energy. If you have contact info for any organization that will put the VFW in front of the public, let me know and I can help. If you do hear of a major event that we can highlight the VFW and Auxiliary, please let me know.

Founded in 1881, the American Red Cross has been helping and supporting the military and their families. They received their congressional charter in 1900, which officially listed their support of the military. Now the American Red Cross needs our help. Their food pantry and clothing locker are still operating and helping those in need. Their main offices have closed due to Covid. They need food and clothing donations so they can continue to help.



DONATE!! DONATE!! Our first blood drive will be February 13th at our Mid-Winter conference. If you have an event that would benefit from a Blood Drive, let me know.

This is another way that we can help our veterans, families, and communities. In the meantime, the American Red Cross and Oklahoma Blood Institute are running low. If you have recovered from Covid, your blood may actually help others. Donate some blood if able, help our community. The Supreme Military Order of the Cooties has set up an online report of blood donated. They will send you a certificate of recognition if you donate, please submit the information at <http://vampire.puptent1.org/>. The blood drives are being sponsored by the Military order of the Cooties Grand of Oklahoma.

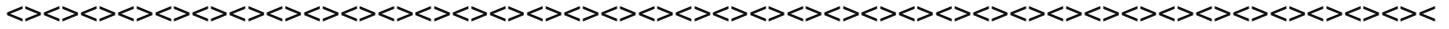
Covid has created many issues for sports programs. The Special Olympics has modified their schedule. They are always looking for volunteers. They are in need of coaches, assistants, chaperons, and cheering sections. If you, or your post, are interested in volunteering with the Special Olympic, go to <https://www.sook.org/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>. When you are out volunteering for the VFW, please wear something that identifies you as a VFW or Auxiliary member; it helps increase public awareness. I have spent time with some of the Special Olympians. They are some great people and a lot of fun to be around.



Be Visible!

We are already active in our communities. What are you doing to make sure they know you are with the VFW or Auxiliary? Wear something that identifies you! Any time you help a veteran is also a good time to wear something that identifies you as a member of the VFW or Auxiliary. There are some exceptions if you are working with other entities, check with them to find out if you can wear VFW or Auxiliary items.

Be Visible!



All Call!

Have you been interested in managing a program for the Department? I am looking for volunteers, new people, and new ideas. If you are interested in managing a program, holding the chair position, please let me know. Some chair positions have already been assigned, but I will consider each request. If not selected as the chair, you will be asked to be on the committee and support the program. My expectations are simple, someone who wants to work the program and make it a success.

- Buddy Poppy Chair
- Budget & Finance Committee, this is a three-year commitment, elected at Convention
- Bylaws/Resolution Chair
- Citizenship Education Chair
- Community Service Chair
- Credentials Chair
- Department Convention Chair
- Homeless Veterans Chair
- Hospital Chair
- Loyalty Day Chairs, normally assigned to District Commanders. If someone wants to plan and implement one large event for the state, let me know.
- Legacy Life Membership Chair
- Life Membership Chair
- Life Membership Vice Chair
- Membership Chair
- Membership Retention Chair
- National Home for Children
- National Legislative Representative
- Native American Chair
- Oklahoma Veterans Council

- Patriots Pen Chair
- POW/MIA Chair
- Public Relations Officer
- Safety Chair
- Scouting Chair
- Student Veterans Association Liaison
- State Legislative Chair
- State Service Officer
- Training and Development Chair
- Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service OKC
- Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service Muskogee
- Veterans and Military Support Committee Representative
- Veterans Service Chair
- Voice of Democracy Chair
- Women Veterans Chair
- Youth Activities Chair

For those that I discussed chair positions, do not worry, I am seeking volunteers.

Jim Bassett

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FROM THE STATE JUNIOR. VICE COMMANDER

Comrades, I hope this message finds you well, hopefully we all had a good Christmas and a happy New Year. With the new year comes more challenges for our year in the VFW. I want to first say that we're doing great things for this great organization in the face of adversity and I want you to continue facing these challenges head on! We almost hit the 92% mark for December 31st, just keep recruiting and retaining. We can get 100 percent plus this year. As always, keep doing what you're doing and stay healthy. I hope to see many of you this month.

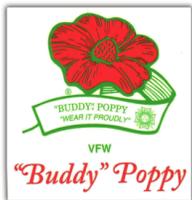
Jeremy J. Owen
 State JR Vice Commander
 Department of Oklahoma

FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER

Fellow Oklahoma VFW Members,

Hey, Are you and your fellow members and Auxiliary members doing anything at your Post or in the community? **Well of course you are!** So why not give your post credit? It is easy, just a few computer clicks away. You can record Post/Auxiliary member activities in our VFW-OK on-line reporting portal. Just go to <https://vfwoklahoma.org> The VFW-OK On-line Reporting Tutorial can be downloaded on our website in the “Resources” drop down menu. Once there click on VFW-OK On-Line Reporting option. From there you can download the tutorial. Remember, if you need help with anything, please do not hesitate to call me at 405.590.8577

BUDDY POPPIES & POPPY BOARDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS. PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW!



Curt Watts



FROM THE STATE SURGEON

**STACY REDDIG: VFW OKLAHOMA STATE SURGEON
GENERAL ORDERS: JANUARY**

State Surgeons General Orders Input January 2021

Hello Comrades, Sisters and Brothers. Well, it has been a busy time for every one of us with the recent holidays taking place. Please remember to continue reaching out to all VA Centers and our members as much as possible as staying in touch during this time of the year is particularly important! Here are a few things that our office accomplished during December: We contacted the Soldier & Family Readiness program; completed numerous phone calls to Post Homes to find out if they need wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, or other medical equipment; attended the District 1 meeting held in Salina and addressed members to stay focused and continue making holiday calls to Veterans; expressed the critical importance of membership and staying in contact with their members. By the way, do not forget about members that have not renewed and the importance of doing “buddy checks”! We also contacted the Norman VA Center to

ascertain what the VFW could do for them and donated hygiene products, sweatpants/sweatshirts in all sizes by contributing \$480 to purchase these supplies. Contacted “Warriors for Freedom” and three children were adopted for Christmas; \$600 in gifts were purchased making these children’s Christmas brighter. Communicated Soldier & Family Readiness to ask how we can help them. Visited the Department of Louisiana, Shreveport, and assisted with the Shrine Hospital for Children donating 20 hours of assistance. It is noted that the military Soldier & Family Readiness programs have many volunteering events that Posts may assist with. They also offer programs not just to Military but to Veterans and their families also. Soldier & Family Readiness Groups (SFRGs) are a military command-sponsored organization established to provide information, activities and support that enhance the resiliency of unit Soldiers, Civilians, and their Family members. SFRGs provide resources and practical tools that facilitate self-reliance during military deployments, separations and transitions. Contact information for the SFRGs Specialist (Family Program) for Oklahoma is available by calling 405-228-5389. Reach out to them, offer to assist them if possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call, text, or email me. My sincerest hope for all our members is that they had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Stacy Reddig, 405-421-1990, stacyreddig32@gmail.com

Stacy Reddig
State Surgeon VFW Oklahoma
405-421-1990
stacyreddig32@gmail.com

FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

General Orders January 2021 National Council Member

Development: Dec 8 Appeal: Year-end campaign email #5 to all Friends of Freedom, Dec. 9 Appeal: Cooler tote package to lapsed nonmember donors. **General Counsel:** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled on *NOVA v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs* this week. The judges concluded that the Court *does* have section 502 jurisdiction to review interpretive rules promulgated in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Adjudication Procedures Manual M21. As the result of the positive ruling in the above case, the VFW will now be proceeding with its complaint against the VA for unilaterally removing the 48-hour rule from the Adjudication Procedure Manual M21. The 48-hour rule provided veterans service organizations notice of draft benefits decisions in their clients’ cases and two business days to review and comment on the drafts before final decisions were promulgated. Without it, the VFW is impaired in effectively representing veterans because it denies the VFW a procedure for correcting agency errors, which the VFW has used for decades to prevent mistakes that delay

and deny benefits for veterans as well as consume agency resources on avoidable appeals. The U.S. Supreme Court published an opinion in *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo*. The issue at hand was whether local governments could specifically restrict religious congregations from gathering during COVID. While the Court did not seem to have a problem with imposing local gathering restrictions in general, they did take issue with targeting religious institutions. The moral of the story seems to be that a local government can impose regulations on citizens and entities in its jurisdiction (i.e., VFW Posts), if it does not target religious entities specifically.

Communications: During the holidays we spend more time scrolling on our phones than we would like to admit, but that makes it a good opportunity to share the VFW's mission with our friends, family, and social media communities. Whether it is PSAs and videos, or creative imagery, the VFW has developed many different resources for you to share.

Member Service Center. Please be advised that the Online Membership System (OMS) will be shutting down at 4:00 p.m. CST on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020. Any transactions that are submitted through OMS on Dec. 31, up to the closing time, will be posted to MEMSTATS and Post Query later that evening and available for viewing the morning of Jan. 4, 2021. Mail received at the National Headquarters prior to Dec. 30, 2020, will be processed, and counted in the December total. Mail received after that date, regardless of the postmark date, will not be counted in the December total. We suggest you have your Posts mail in their membership as early as possible or take advantage of the Online Membership System tools. The OMS system will be back online for the submittal of transactions by noon CST, Monday, Jan. 4, 2021.

Ongoing Meetings and Events: Participation in weekly conversations with Baltimore to stay up to date on the city status. On Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020, a site visit viewed two new hotels in downtown Kansas City that will be part of the 2022 National Convention room block – Loews (opened 2020) adjacent to convention center and Hotel Kansas City (formerly Kansas City Club). Kansas City sales contacts to add additional hotels for 2022 “block rooms” needs to meet our total block requirements. Noting that one of the previously used hotels is now closed permanently and the loss of that block diminished the overall total room block. Working with the Baltimore housing manager to update housing reservation forms for 2021 convention. Completed. Contact with Six String Soldiers coordinator to inquire about them doing the national anthem (prerecord) for the Virtual (yes, virtual) Voice of Democracy Parade. Completed request paperwork and returned to them for review and a decision.

Administrative Operations: There are currently 50 Posts under suspension, four of which are new. We have one pending and one completed with two Post consolidations pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization currently has 6,042 active chartered Posts. Administrative Operations is engaged in 20 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 14 administrative actions and five pending membership eligibility challenges. This past week we received 12 new Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review. Also reviewed and approved were 11 total Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions and currently have 23 submissions pending review and approval. Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 14 days. **VFW Foundation Special** thanks to all VFW and Auxiliary members for participation in the VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Virtual Walk. Through your efforts along with the generosity of Sport Clips customers and partners, we have

surpassed our fundraising goal! The final dollar amount will be announced on Jan. 25, 2021, at a special check presentation with VFW National Commander Hal Roesch and Sport Clips Founder/VFW Foundation Board Member Gordon Logan in Georgetown, Texas. **National Legislative Service** Last week, the final text of S. 4049, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA) was released, which includes a VFW-supported provision to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism to the list of conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Last week, VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs regarding proposed legislation. Murray reaffirmed the VFW's support of VA eligibility expansion, but stated the VFW disagrees with the intent of the specific proposal to establish an eligibility commission and voiced concerns regarding the open-ended nature and lack of defined direction of the proposed commission. The VFW currently supports 160 pieces of legislation pending before the 116th Congress. **Communications and Public Affairs** Recorded podcast interviews with R&B artist and Navy veteran B. Taylor, 18th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth Wright and VA Home Loan Guaranty Executive Director Jeff London completed. **Veterans Jobs Operations** Department of Labor Reported that the unemployment rate for veterans (overall) rose to 6.3% for the month of November. This equates to approximately 552,000 veterans that are without jobs. The rate is even higher for Post 9/11 vets (6.9%) and Vietnam vets (6.4%). This week, the SBA announced their participation in the Department of Defense's Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP). The SBA is one of 85 new partners joining MSEP. For more information, go to the Military One Source Facebook page, and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities page. **National Security & Foreign Affairs.** Hqs was invited to sit in on a briefing this week from Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Jonathan Hoffman; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Thomas McCaffery; and Director of the Defense Health Agency Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, to discuss the Department's phased, standardized, and coordinated strategy for distributing and administering COVID-19 vaccines. NSFA will attend a briefing from James McPherson, the Under Secretary of the Army, who will discuss the findings and recommendations contained in the Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee. The House of Representatives voted to approve the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act conference report to accompany the bill that would authorize \$731.6 billion in national defense spending. The Senate is scheduled to take up the measure shortly and, if approved, forward the bill to the president for signature or veto. NSFA will continue to monitor. The spending bill would also include support for Military Families: The NDAA includes several reform efforts to better support military families. These include efforts to address the childcare shortage for military families, military health care improvements, reforms to programs that support military families with children with special needs, and improved voting access and support for overseas service members and families; Improvements to Military Family Housing; Overdue improvements include improved identification and remediation of severe environmental hazards, support for families displaced for mold and other hazards, and liaisons for families with special needs children; Addressing Agent Orange Issues: NDAA will include Agent Orange issues with hypothyroidism, bladder cancer or Parkinsonism as conditions now eligible for access to disability compensation and

health care services ; Mental Health Care: Considering high rates of military suicide, the NDAA initiates mental health care reforms for service members, family members and retirees, and seeks to improve the effectiveness of suicide prevention programs in the Department of Defense ; Preventing Sexual Assault and Harassment: Sexual assault and harassment continue to be a persistent issue in the military. The NDAA includes additional reforms designed to improve reporting, improve, and protect the rights of victims, and provide for more effective responses for sex-related offenses; Assisting Veterans: The NDAA expands eligibility for the HUD-VA Housing Assistance Program to include veterans who were previously excluded. The NDAA also expands the ability for the VA to provide legal assistance for veterans and dependents, and health care via telemedicine - a vital resource for veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic. NSFA is keeping tabs on the negotiations for the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Unfortunately, those negotiations hit a snag as President Donald Trump again threatened to veto this year's defense spending plan, this time if lawmakers will not meet his last-minute demand to include language to overhaul the tech industry's prized liability shield: Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act. Trump's veto threat adds pressure to closed-door talks between the House, Senate and White House, which were close to finalizing the sweeping 2021 NDAA. On Wednesday, NSFA Director Bob Jackson took part in a DOD virtual event to discuss the results of the Department's 2019 Survey of Active-Duty Spouses. The Department uses this biannual survey to measure overall spouse satisfaction with military life, identify and track trends within the spouse community, and inform DOD programs and policies that support our military families. NSFA was also invited to a webinar hosted by the Brookings Institution featuring a discussion with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley.

National Veterans Service: National Veterans Service participated in a meeting with Veterans Benefits Administration leadership regarding the operating status of VA Regional Offices around the country. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many VAROs have been left to determine their individual operating status, based on local directives. The VFW offered to work with VBA and fellow VSOs to better track the operating status of each office so that veterans better understand the ways to navigate their benefits during this unprecedented time. NVS participated in a series of virtual benefit briefings and seminars this week to explain VA benefits to transitioning service members and veterans. NVS Pre-Discharge staff hosted virtual benefits briefings for transitioning service members at the Washington Navy Yard and U.S. Naval Academy. NVS Assistant Director Brad Hazell also joined student Veterans from George Mason University for a virtual briefing alongside campus leaders to explain how to navigate federal and state benefit programs. VFW Assistant Director for Health Policy James Moss participated in the meeting of the VA Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. The three-day virtual meeting was designed to help the committee make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the needs of minority veterans and included briefings from business lines across VA to include each VA Administration as well the Center for Minority Veterans, the Veterans Experience Office, and the Center for Women Veterans, among others. National Veterans Service recently closed out its Virtual Intermediate Skill Level training conference, where more than 100 VFW-accredited service officers participated. NVS staff have been able to complete grading the exam, with an average score of 91%. This virtual conference concludes

the fall series of NVS skill level training, where more than 200 VFW-accredited service officers received critical training to provide the best possible advocacy for their clients. Department leadership will be receiving scores for their participants soon. NVS VFW's Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives continued to provide virtual benefits briefings to transitioning service members, hosting briefings for service members on Joint Base Andrews and the U.S. Naval Academy. NVS Assistant Director for Compensation and Pension Policy Brad Hazell participated in a meeting of the VA Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation. Hazell was recently reappointed as the VFW's representative to the committee, which advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on VA compensation issues. **Special Note:** On behalf of the Commander in Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I want to thank the Department of Oklahoma for providing outstanding service this past year to not only the national organization but to the thousands of veterans within the department and for the assistance provided to the local communities. I can think of no place else I would prefer to be representing the National Hqs as a National Council Member than in Oklahoma. Well done to all Robbie Clark

Robbie Clark
National Council Member
Department of Oklahoma

FROM THE STATE VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

Per Ryan Gallucci National Veterans Service "I am excited to announce that the latest version of the VFW Guide for Post Service Officers is now available. For the first time we are making this guide available for free in an online format on the VFW National Veterans Service web page, www.vfw.org/NVS. You can easily find the Guide in PDF format on the right-hand side, under the "VFW Guide for Post Service Officers" heading. As of today, the Guide includes four sections discussing critical facets of VA benefits:

- Part 1: Foreword and Benefits Overview
- Part 2: Service-Connected Disability and Pension
- Part 3: Health Care
- Part 4: Memorial Benefits

From the Veteran & Military Support Committee Chair



Veterans and Military Services Committee Chair *Tony McGrew*

Hi Comrades, as 2020 comes to a close I would like to encourage each and every one of you to concentrate on making 2021 a truly remarkable year for our Posts, Districts and Department. We all know the Mission of the VFW is to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans and I can think of no better way to do this than to be actively involved in the VMS Programs. We have started a Department VMS Committee and we would like one member from each District to participate. See below for this month's highlighted program.



VFW "SportClips Help A Hero Scholarship" Program:

- Scholarship will help service members get the education and training needed to begin the next chapter of their life.
- Each scholarship will provide recipients with up to \$5,000 for tuition and fees to apply toward their education at an accredited post-secondary institution, including universities, colleges, trade schools and apprenticeship and certification programs.
- The scholarship application is only available on-line at www.vfw.org and must also be submitted online using the form at the same website.
- Applications submitted by U.S. mail, email and fax will not be accepted. They'll need to go to <http://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

None at this time. However, I would like to re-cap this past years Yellow Ribbon and MAPS activities.

The Department participated in 2 Yellow Ribbon events with the Army National Guard. There were over 200 service members, 150 family members and 36 vendors, including the VFW Department of Oklahoma at these events.

We also participated in the Army National Guard's Trunk or Treat Program where we handed out Halloween candy to Guard Children.

