



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



1103 N. Blackwelder Ave. OKC. OK 73106
405 525-2680/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

March 2021

2020-2021 Series

“May your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow. And may trouble avoid you wherever you go.”

Irish Blessing

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

General Orders No. 9

2020-2021 Series

1. INSTALLING OFFICERS:

Installing officers will see that the provisions of Section 216 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure are properly carried out and that all officers are members in good standing and qualified to hold office prior to installing Post officers for the current year. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed.

Post Election Reports must be submitted following Post election of officers in April and no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We highly encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

2. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee.

Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that was mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing that went out in February. Advanced registration for the 122nd National Convention should be mailed with each delegate’s name and address to: Convention Registration, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

3. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, each District shall hold an annual District Convention for the purpose of electing District officers, such convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention. District officers shall not assume the duties of their office until the Department Commander is installed. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed in accordance with Section 416 of the Manual of Procedure.

4. LOYALTY DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE:

Section 223 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure provides that each Post shall make the necessary arrangements for proper observance of Loyalty Day and Memorial Day. Officers should see that suitable grave markers, wreaths and flags of the United States are placed on the graves of deceased veterans.

5. “BUDDY” ® POPPIES DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution of VFW “Buddy” ® Poppies will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in Section 711 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure. Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders should arrange now for the distribution of Buddy Poppies in their respective areas.

In the ongoing effort to provide as much assistance as possible to those serving in the military, we recommend that proceeds or portions from this year’s annual poppy distribution be designated for the purpose of providing VFW support to our military. Posts and Departments now have the opportunity to assist qualified military personnel through the VFW Veterans and Military Support Programs.

In keeping with the intent of Sections 219(a)(c) and 704(a)(c) of the Manual of Procedure “Relief Fund,” this year’s poppy campaign can play a direct role in demonstrating to those who are charged with protecting and defending our way of life that we appreciate and value their sacrifice.

/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,

March 1st 2021

First, I hope this finds all of you and your family healthy and well. If not, I pray for a speedy recovery. Here we are beginning the ninth 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%, but keep after it taking care of those we represent here in Oklahoma. 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.

Membership Update. February end numbers are as follows: Southern Conference, Oklahoma slipped to #4. Nationally, Oklahoma climbed back up #11. We still have 669 to go to that magic 100% before the end of the administrative year. That is down from 866! Keep up the great work. Our highest recruiter to date, NCM PSC Robbie Clark has recruited 110 new members. State Surgeon Stacy Reddig is at 64, State Deputy Chief of Staff Bill Richey at 13, 1 at 9, 2 at 7, 3 at 5, 5 at 4, 10 at 3, 19 at 2, 42 at 1 and 132 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. We now have 33 of 84 Posts and 1 out of 11 Districts at or above 100%. District 15 is the first District with all its Posts at or above 100%. Our overall breakdown is 194 new members, 242 reinstates and 58 new life members. Last year we were at 91.81% and this year we are at 94.23%. We are currently in 3rd in Group B for the Commander-in-Chief's Membership Retention Challenge. Remember, keep working those At Large Lists and the Retention Lists you all have received. Let's make it to 1st! Keep up the great work!

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.

Our Mid-Winter Conference was this past weekend. We had a great turnout despite having to slide it two weeks due to weather. We were visited by Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland as well as Past National President Armithea "Sissy" Borel. We gave out our

outstanding Safety Awards and many Post 75th Anniversary Awards. Additionally, State Surgeon Stacy Reddig received the Governor's Commendation from the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary BGen. (Ret.) Ben Robinson for his life saving heroics last year. We had a lot of vendors who spoke and had tables set up in the atrium. The Cooties were in full force spreading crummy attitudes all around, even having a parade through the hotel Saturday evening! All in all, everyone had a great time. I want to thank the staff at the hotel, State Chief of Staff PSC Darryl Mabry, State QM/ADJ Curt Watts, the Auxiliary staff and Post 5263 for making this weekend a great event.

One small update to our license plate bills. They have been consolidated into one omnibus license plate bill as HB1044. So please keep your eyes on them.

Our Department Centennial is April 16th – 17th, 2021. Not many Departments get to celebrate 100 years, so this is going to be an amazing experience for all of us. Our Centennial Committee is working diligently on coming up with a schedule of events for the weekend, so be on the lookout for updates. We have sold out of our Centennial Coins. That's awesome! But, if you did not get a chance to purchase a coin, we will have Centennial Pins available starting at the event and throughout the rest of the year. The pins are 1.5 inches with dual attachments on the back and are similar in design to the coins. They will be \$5 each and all proceeds raised between April 16th and June 30th, 2021 will go to purchasing a bench at the Mission 22 War at Home Memorial in Broken Arrow.



Finally, we have made it through three quarters of a very tough year dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Arctic Circle trying to invade Oklahoma. 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!

*****Commander-in-Chief's Membership Challenge*****

For this month's Commander's Challenge, the top Post in each division with the highest total of new members (Annual, Life or Installment Life) will receive a \$1,000 award deposited into their Post account. In addition, if the top Post also shares this challenge on your Post's Facebook page, they will receive an additional \$250 award! Get the word out and let's increase our Life membership!

Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch is focusing on bringing lapsed members back into the fold in 2021. To this end, we're issuing a three-month challenge to every VFW Department. From Feb. 1 through April 30, we want you, as Department leaders, to get your Posts working those lapsed member lists and bringing former members back into the VFW. For this contest, we're going to be focusing on members whose dues lapsed prior to Jan. 1, 2021. We want to see how many of those lapsed members can be recovered by your Posts over these three months, either as dues-paying annual or Life members. We've split the Departments into two groups:

Group A for those Departments who had over 20,000 members at the end of the last membership year.

Group B for the Departments who had fewer than 20,000 members. After close of business on April 30, we'll look at how many members each Department has recovered; the top finisher in each group will receive a \$5,000 award, the second-place finisher will receive \$3,000, and the third-place finisher will receive \$2,000.

Three-Month Lapsed Member Challenge: From Feb. 1 to April 30, the Commander-in-Chief has tasked all VFW Departments to work their lapsed member lists and bring members back into the fold. The Departments who recover the most members over the next three months will receive a monetary award into the Department account, but in addition to that every Department who recovers at least three lapsed members for every Post in their Department will be entered into a drawing for a .30-30 Henry Rifle!

FROM THE STATE SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

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

Jim Bassett

Oklahoma is 4th out of 14 Departments within the Southern Conference.
Oklahoma is 11th out of 52 Departments within the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As of 1 March, 2021

Mid-Winter Conference was a success, even though Old Man Winter tried to ruin it. We pressed on and made it happen. That's a trait learned in the military. Plan, adapt, and make the mission happen. Successfully. I want to thank your vendors for braving the cold and supporting us. Humana, T-Mobile, American Red Cross, Caption Call, J & L Wood Worx (the newest VFW/Auxiliary licensed vendor), as well as the craft vendors, and the Oklahoma Blood Institute for showing and managing the Blood Drive. I also want to thank the Oklahoma Grand, Military Order of the Cootie for sponsoring the blood drive.

Over the last several months, I have been reading and rereading awards programs and programs responsibilities. I have seen the need for some changes but also see the need for others to continue. One of the items that I have noticed is that there is a feeling among the VFW and Auxiliary members is that program recognition is only for the VFW or the Auxiliary. Yes, National for both organizations only recognize only the Departments, Districts, and Posts for which they are they are responsible. The thought that we are separate organizations, in my opinion, reduces our effectiveness. When a Post receives recognition for All American, All State, VOD program, Scouting Program, and so on, it is for the hard work of the team to make it happen. Was it only the post that did they work? No, if there is an Auxiliary, they helped with the program. It was a team effort to earn the recognition. The team made it happen. The same for the Auxiliary, if your post Auxiliary is recognized, the post members help in the recognition. The team. Celebrate the recognition of the team effort. The team. Your post team, our team. Team Oklahoma.

RETAIN, RETAIN, RETAIN!!! What is your post's retention rate? Recruiting is half of the battle on our membership, but this part of the problem. If you lose one member for everyone you bring in, you remain the same. That is not growth. We need to keep the members that we currently have as well as bring in new members. Now to answer the question. Each post has its own retention rate. The state AVERAGE is 62.38%. That means that the Department brings in 100 new members, 62 are leaving. I understand that as our organization ages, members will

be leaving without wanting to. However, those numbers are factored in the equation. We need to recruit the current crop of veterans, but we need to retain the ones we have as mentors to keep the vision of our Department founding member's vision alive. To help Oklahoma veterans and their families.

A recruiting and retention tool is to talk about the fight to stop the eradication of veteran's benefits continues. We all need to learn what is occurring in the state and federal governments. Facebook, Twitter, or other Social Media sites do not always tell the truth. Almost any post on them will be convoluted truth or bold face lies posted to the site. So do not get wrapped up on hearsay or social media so called truths. Seek your information out on websites you can trust. One way 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://voterve.net/VFW/register>.

By now, you should have noticed that I want of the VFW involved in our communities. When we are out there working in our communities, people notice. In addition, they remember. When the time comes for them to think about support of a veteran organization or a veteran, they send them to the VFW. When you have a relative that calls and asks what veterans organization should they donate money to, and then mention several prominent ones from TV. I was stunned to say the least. I told them to donate to the VFW. The post near them was not active and they were not sure if the VFW as a whole still existed.

The American Red Cross has supported the military for years. Founded in 1881, the American Red Cross has been helping and supporting the military and their families. Now we can help the American Red Cross. During this pandemic, their food pantry and clothing locker are still operating and helping those in need. Their main offices have closed or moved to minimal staff. 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.

The Special Olympics needs volunteers. Below is a letter that I have received from the Special Olympics Oklahoma Volunteer Coordinator. Individually or as a Post, you can sponsor or volunteer,



go to <https://www.sook.org/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>. When you volunteer as a member of 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. Like our cause, this is also a great cause to support.



The Oklahoma VFW Foundation has need of volunteers! We are looking for people that enjoy engaging with businesses or other entities that donate money to worthy causes. The board feels that helping the veterans of Oklahoma is the greatest cause of all. We need help reaching out to businesses. Help us help the foundation grow so that it can support us in our mission to help veterans.

Like any organization, vacancies occur. If you are interested in serving your fellow veterans, please submit a letter with your fund raising and non-profit experience for consideration. The board, at their next scheduled meeting will consider and interview applicants. Please send your experience letter to Jim Bassett, bassettj15@yahoo.com. I will ensure the board reviews all letters.

Be Visible!

By now, you should have noticed that I want of the VFW involved in our communities. When we are out there working in our communities, people notice. In addition, they remember. When the time comes for them to think about support of a veteran organization or a veteran, they send them to the VFW. I had a relative that call and asks what veterans organization should they donate money to, and mentioned several prominent ones from TV. I was stunned to say the least. I told them to donate to the VFW. The post near them was not that active and they were not sure if the VFW as a whole still existed.

Being out and active in your community helps people know that the VFW is alive and kicking in their 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. The Department offers VFW and Auxiliary shirts as part of an ongoing fundraiser. We also have a licensed VFW and Auxiliary vendor that does custom work with plaques or other items.

Be Visible!

Jim Bassett

State Sr Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
405.664.3929
Bassettj15@yahoo.com

Special Olympics
Oklahoma



A message from the Special Olympics Oklahoma

Hello Volunteers!

First off, you are SO missed! Here at Special Olympics Oklahoma we are searching for ways to stay connected and active during these times and want you to know we have not forgotten about you!

I actually need some volunteers for a few upcoming events & then I want to share an at-home volunteer opportunity that you can be a part of.

The Tulsa & OKC Polar Plunges are both happening on February 27th from 8:45am to 11:30am. If you are in one of those areas and wanting to support Special Olympics (and not get wet) check out the sign ups here:

Tulsa Polar Plunge-- <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4EA4AC2BA6F58-polar2>

OKC Polar Plunge-- <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4EA4AC2BA6F58-polar1>

The 49th annual **St. Patrick's Day Run** is coming up on March 13th and will be fun as always! We need volunteers to help make this event "run" smoothly (pun intended)! Here is the link to check out all the spots available: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4EA4AC2BA6F58-stpatricks1>

Finally, for the last few months an at-home opportunity has been available and has been very successful for reaching our athletes in an encouraging way! This opportunity is called **Volunteer From Home** and allows you to make homemade posters, letters, videos, and photos encouraging our athletes across Oklahoma. More information regarding this event is available through the link here to sign-up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4EA4AC2BA6F58-volunteer>

If you have any questions regarding any of the above opportunities or have suggestions as well, please reply to this email and I will do my best in communicating back with you as soon as possible. Thank you again for all that you have done and will continue to do for Special Olympics Oklahoma and our incredible 12,100 athletes!

Josie Stephens

Volunteer Manager

.....

Special Olympics Oklahoma

Tel +1 918-481-1234

Facebook [Special Olympics Oklahoma](#)

Volunteer Facebook [Special Olympics Oklahoma Volunteers](#)

Instagram [@SOOKlahoma](#)

Twitter [@SOOKlahoma](#)



American Red Cross

We are with you, wherever you are, 24
hours a day, everyday.

1-877-272-7337 or redcross.org/military

American Red Cross Needs YOU!

Please join us as a Red Cross Volunteer Mental Health Facilitator!

We are looking for volunteers interested in facilitating virtual, interactive, engaging, psychoeducational, small-group workshops for military service members, Veterans, their family-member's and caregivers.

Our Goals:

Provide a safe educational space for participants to discuss challenges and concerns and learn the tools to build upon their natural resilience.

Ready To Join The Team? Need more information?

Please contact Samantha Hand at Samantha.hand@redcross.org or call 405-245-6467.

What is needed?

- Master's level or higher mental health professional with independent, clinical, and unencumbered license.
- Interest in facilitating 2 or more workshops:

What is required?

- Facilitate a minimum of two times a year
- Able to facilitate virtually and/or in person
- Actively participate in short virtual training course
- Provide copy of current license with visible expiration date

Red Cross provides:

- All training and materials
- CEs for completion of facilitator training
- Tech hosts for virtual and in person workshops

Current workshops

- Creating Calm
- Stress Solutions Reconnections--Adult / Child Family Laugh and Learn
- Calm and Connected Virtual Chat for teens Mind/Body workshops

Volunteer Opportunities with Service to the Armed Forces

- Virtual Briefing Facilitators
- Virtual Workshop Tech Hosts
- Casework
- Youth Action Campaign (Ages 13-24)
- MTF Pharmacy Teams
- Remote Office Support
- Pharmacy
- Dental/Medical Assisting
- Sewing Auxiliary

We are with you, wherever you are, 24 hours a day, everyday. 1-877-272-7337 or redcross.org/military

Virtual Resiliency Workshops

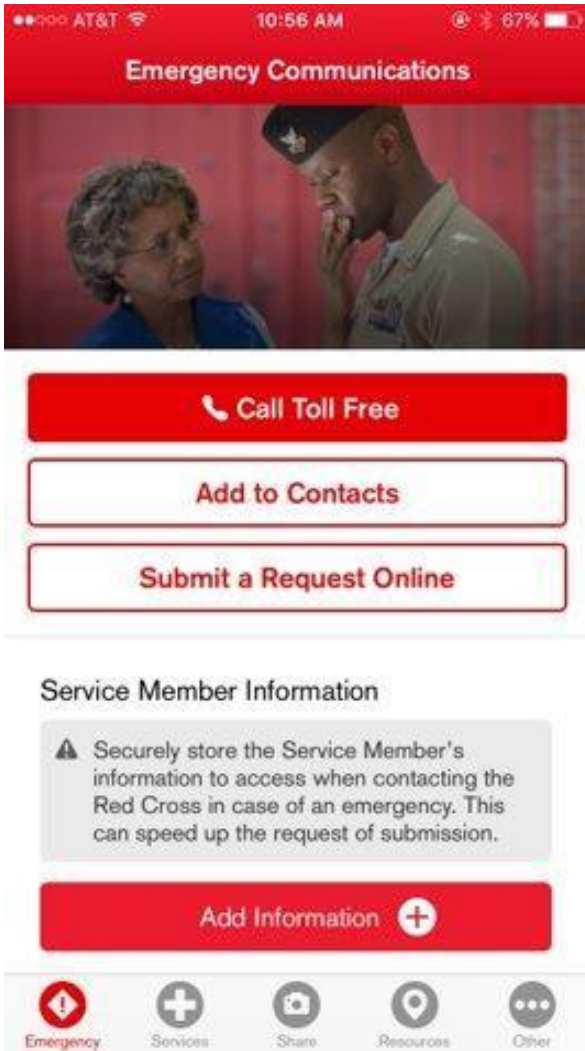
- Live, interactive, virtual workshops.
- Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard, Veterans, Family Members, Family Readiness, Ombudsmen, Key Spouses, and Caregivers of Military/Veterans.
- Topics Include
 - Stress Solutions
 - Effective Communication
 - Reconnection Workshops
- Ready to schedule a workshop for your command, group, or family?

Contact us by phone or email to set up your workshop today!
 katrina.velarde@redcross.org 785-477-1751
 samantha.hand@redcross.org 405-245-6467

Hero Care APP

Easy to use free smart phone application.

The fastest way to
send an emergency
message
Text
'GETHEROCARE'
' to 90999.



Contact Information:

If you would like more information on the American Red Cross, it's programs, or volunteering or helping, please contact Samantha Hand at Samantha.hand@redcross.org or call 405-245-6467 or

Rebecca McGary, rebecca.mcgary@redcross.org or call 405-228-9547, VFW Post 8706.

FROM THE STATE JUNIOR. VICE COMMANDER

Comrades, I wanna start off and thank everyone for their attendance at Mid Winter. Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland extends his gratitude to our department membership from the VFW and Auxiliary. Tim left with insight from many of you and appreciated it. With this milestone of the year behind us, we need to focus on our programs that are left and keep pushing forward with membership. As always, I hope to see many more of you before the end of this year. Remember in April we will be having the centennial celebration and hopefully even more of you will come out and support it. Let's keep going and finish this year out on a really strong and positive note.

Jeremy J. Owen
State JR Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma

FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Programs: Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Parade of Winners: This year, the VFW will be hosting its first-ever, virtual Parade of Winners on April 1 at 7 p.m. CDT, live on Facebook. Please plan on joining us for this amazing event. **All-American Dashboard:** Updates to Post rankings based on divisional standings and membership percentages launched on Monday. Six Departments have not submitted their Department program participation reports. **Walgreens and VFW COVID** Vaccination Site Sign Up: The VFW and Walgreens are engaged in exploratory discussions regarding the opportunity to enlist VFW Posts nationwide in this important vaccination effort. Qualified Posts must have: **1.** The freezer capacity to store an appropriate number of vials of the vaccine. This is roughly the size of a large pizza box; limited shelf life of 5-10 days. **2.** Adequate space for administer stations and social Distancing. **3.** Wi-Fi connectivity. **4.** Adequate parking. Should your Post qualify to act as a vaccine distribution site, Walgreens' would provide the professional staff and materials needed to properly administer the vaccines. Only Posts in the United States qualify, and we are asking that no one contacts Walgreens directly currently. If you believe your Post qualifies, please contact State Headquarters. **Development:** Feb. 16 Appeal: Telemarketing Campaign #3 to nonmember responsive and nonresponsive donors. Feb. 20 Appeals: February newsletter to member and nonmember donors. Label certificate reminder with bookmark to member donors. **Administrative Operations:** There are currently 47 Posts under suspension. The organization currently has 6,026 active chartered Posts. Administrative Operations is engaged in 26 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, six administrative actions and seven pending membership eligibility challenges. This past week we received six new Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review. We also

reviewed and approved 10 total Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions and currently have eight submissions pending review and approval. Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 14 days. Administrative Operations is prepared to represent the Commander-in-Chief in four appeals to the Council of Administration to be heard by the Committee on Appeals on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. The Committee's report and recommendation will be presented to the body on March 6, 2021. **Meetings and Events:** Conducted 2025, 2026 convention city bid presentations via ZOOM on Feb. 12. Six cities were presented. Semi-finalists will be presented to the Time and Place Committee on March 3, 2021, to make a final decision of which city for each year will be presented to the NCOA for approval on March 7, 2021. Ongoing - weekly ZOOM call with various meeting planners and supplier's discussions on state of the industry, ideas exchange and overall encouragement during this time. Periodically there are guest speakers providing information as it relates to meetings and events. Ongoing - weekly ZOOM call with ALHI hotels and presentations of the current state of the meetings industry provided by CEO/President, Michael Dominguez. The presentation includes updates on status of COVID-19. Sources include, but not limited to Johns Hopkins and CDC. Updates also provided on venues who have successfully hosted virtual/hybrid meetings. Preparing Baltimore convention housing assignments. Housing to open 3/19/21. Updated tentative Baltimore National Convention web agenda, forwarded to communications to begin input of information on convention website. Semiweekly conversations with Baltimore to stay up to date on the city status as it pertains to the July 2021 National Convention. Site visit of KC/Loews hotel with Auxiliary NST. Loews opened in June 2020 and will be a part of the KC/2022 housing package. Continuing review of 2022 Kansas City Convention contracts - hotels and convention center. **National Legislative Service:**

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Last week, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs voted 87-7 to confirm Denis R. McDonough for the position of Secretary of Veterans Affairs. **He will be the second non-veteran to lead VA.** While McDonough has not served in the armed forces, he is a public servant with wide-ranging experience including as White House Chief of Staff for former President Obama. Both the House and the Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have announced all their committee members. The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be chaired by Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) with Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) as the ranking member. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be chaired by Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) with Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL) as the ranking member. VFW currently supports **two pieces of legislation** pending before the 117th Congress. **National Veterans Service** National Veterans Service completed its first NVS Update webinar for Department Service Officers and other VFW-accredited field staff. This is the latest concept to promote routine dialogue between NVS and the VFW's global network of accredited advocates using video teleconferencing technology. In the past, NVS would send periodic information updates to service officers via email. Additionally, we continue to work on the virtual PTC training preparation/planning class that will be held in May. The initial interviews for the BVA opening have been completed. We are awaiting Ryan's return to schedule the second

interview. NVS leadership participated in the Project Atlas update meeting, and the quarterly VAVS meeting. NVS VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives continued to host virtual benefits briefings for transitioning service members around the country, this week hosting briefings at Nellis AFB, Navy Yard, Ft. Myer, Norfolk, Camp Pendleton, and Camp Lejeune. **Communications and Public Affairs:** The C&PA director meet with HQ Communications manager to discuss current state of online presences across all Departments, Districts, and Posts. Meeting concluded with a move to update communications/social media briefings during upcoming leadership meetings. The C&PA director worked with other directors and staff to respond to several media queries from national press. The C&PA director is meeting with podcast producers to establish recording process and workflow as he takes over as host. **National Security and Foreign Affairs Director Bob Jackson** attended a hearing by the House Armed Services Committee, which received testimony from Vice Director for Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff Major General Jeff Taliaferro, USAF, and Director of Operations for the National Guard Bureau Major General Steven S. Nordhaus, USAF, regarding the Department's evolving support of the government-wide COVID-19 pandemic response, as well as force protection efforts. Bob Jackson will also participate in the Army VSO Stakeholder's meeting on Friday. The topic of discussion will be continued family support during the pandemic. NOTE from Robbie: As we have progressed two months past the difficulties of "2020", we continue to stand strong and our organization has endeavored to clearly assist with empathy, funding, and material support. We should give thanks for that in the spiritual manner we each choose. Let us also assist to make a respectable path for all individuals and give all personal faiths a call to remove the barriers that prevent everyone from worshipping as they so desire. We have a way to go with COVID, hang in there, we will succeed!

Robbie Clark
National Council Member
Department of Oklahoma

FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER

Comrades, as we approach our Post elections, District & State Conventions please remember that pursuant to National ByLaws & Manual of Procedures, the following will be observed.

MOP, Sec 222 “Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st.”

Comrades, on March 31, I as your Department Quartermaster will access the On-line Membership System and determine the “Members in Good Standing” for each post within our department. Based upon the members in good standing, pursuant to National ByLaws, Sec 222, Delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. Delegates and alternates shall be elected in accordance with the Manual of Procedure. Please note that I am attaching the VFW-OK Delegate Worksheet with these General Orders and will do the same next month.

For those of you who attended the Mid-Winter Conference, thank you for your participation. I hope you enjoyed yourself.

Curt

FROM THE STATE SURGEON



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

Hello Comrades, Sisters and Brothers:

February was not particularly good for many Veterans and their families. Having to cancel Mid-Winter due to extremely cold temperatures and ice/snow. The VA Clinics had to cancel

appointments due to closer. Causing issues with all Veterans not being able to be seen when necessary. A staggering 20 veterans commit suicide every day, and the VFW is committed to lowering this number and changing the stigma surrounding mental health in America. I am saddened to say that a person that I served with in Iraq committed suicide this past month. It is exceedingly difficult times for many Veterans and their families due to the pandemic, weather conditions, loss of jobs, loss of income and so much more. It is our duty to educate ourselves and others and learn how to help combat this critical issue. Please visit



<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net> and click on topics under “Education and Advice” for resources. Learn to recognize red flags. Veterans can experience an emotional or mental health crisis due to a wide range of situations. For some, it might be the end

of a personal relationship, for others, it might be the loss of a job, though the most is heightened by their experiences during military service. It is important to learn the “Five Signs” that may mean someone is in emotional pain and might need help. You can find this information at <https://www.changedirection.org/#five-signs>. Many Veterans may not show any signs of intent



to harm themselves before doing so, but some actions can be a sign that a person needs help. Veterans in crisis may show behaviors that indicate a risk of self-harm.

The following can all be warning signs:

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Hopelessness; feeling like there’s no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling as if there is no reason to live
- Feeling excessive guilt, shame, or sense of failure
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, or school
- Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
- Neglecting personal welfare; a deteriorating physical appearance
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Showing violent behavior, like punching a hole in the wall or getting into fights
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, typing up loose ends, or writing a will

The following signs require immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.

If you notice any of these in a Veteran, please call the crisis hotline number 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. We must help deplete the numbers.

As you all had been made aware of, Bill Beane, PSC 70-71, the founder of our Mr. VFW in the Department was laid to rest on January 20, 2021 at Fort Gibson National Cemetery. It was an honor to see the support from VFW and Auxiliary members that attended. Also attended another Past Department Auxiliary President funeral on January 29, 2021. Members, we really need to start thinking about our membership. We have lost several members in the past few months. We need to keep this organization growing. Please reach out to me if you need help with membership. I am always here to help. We had great teamwork in helping Danny Medley, Commander at VFW Post 2592 in Bernice. Danny needed help getting a trailer home moved to help a Veteran who lost his home to a fire. Assisted by contacting News 6 via email. It all is a work in progress! Thank you for the ones who stepped up to help this Veteran. Keep reaching out to VA Centers to help where help is needed. Make calls to members, family, and friends to make sure they are doing ok.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call, text, or email me.

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



***FROM THE STATE RIDERS GROUP
PRESIDENT***



Greetings Comrades and Fellow Riders

My name is Billy Stone, I am the President for the Oklahoma VFW Riders and Quartermaster for Post 4574 in Ardmore. I hope everyone is healthy and staying safe considering the year 2020 was, and pray that this year is a better one. I am just wanting to reach out to all the Post and my Comrades to let them know about the VFW Riders and the opportunities that Riders can create. The purpose of the VFW Riders is to support of the VFW by promoting the public visibility of the VFW, and its programs, through community service and participation in veteran's service and Community events, through responsible motorcycling. We promote safe motorcycle riding and veteran's service with an active membership, along with the help from

Supporters within our Communities. By setting a positive example and to help with recruiting in our Post's.

There are currently four Post with a Riders Group and the Department has one. Groups can be established at the Post, District and State levels. If there is not enough Members to start one at your Post or District, but have members who are interested. They can join an already established Group. Which can be with the Department Group or that of another Post, without having to change their Post Membership. While we face new obstacle's every day and with the changing times, we must change too. We have to come up with new ideas of recruiting new members and ways retain our current ones. And we must do so without changing the core of what the VFW represents, Love for our Country, our families and our Brother's and Sister's in Arms.

Here are some of the events we have coming up this year.

There will be a State Riders meeting March 21, 10:30am at the VFW Dept. 1103 Blackwelder Ave. Oklahoma City, Ok.

The VFW Riders Post 4574 is in the process of planning their annual Ride for the Vet's Poker Run in June, along with planning a Car, Bike and Audio Show, date to still be determined.

The VFW Riders State Rally will be held September 17th thru 19th at Sequoyah State. This will be our second one and we hope to build off of the success we had last year.

September Sept 22nd thru 26th will be a Medal of Honor Escort/Parade. This is held in Gainseville Texas to honor the Recipients of the Medal of Honor. There will be a Motorcycle Escort from DFW to Gainseville on the 22nd. There are usually anywhere from 400 to 700 motorcycles escorting the Recipients. On Saturday the 26th is the Parade through downtown. It's four days of events set up that will allow people to meet and mingle with some of our Countries greatest treasures. It's one of the most humbling and unforgettable events you will ever be a part of.

If would like more information contact myself at 580-465-7077 or email commochief345@yahoo.com or you can contact the State Adjutant/QM Curt Watts at 405-590-8577.

Thank You
Billy Stone

VFW Riders State President

VFW Post 4574

D-1 > 24 Apr 21 11am>Post 5307, Salina> St. Cdr. Merit
D-3 > 02 May 21 11am, Post 3649 Wilburton>
D-4 > 01 May 21 11am>Post 3916 Durant>
D-5 > 02 May 21 10am>Post 577, Tulsa>
D-7 > 01 May 21 11am>Post 8798, Eufaula>
D-8 > 02 May 21 11am>Post 3656, Bristow>
D-9 > 02 May 21 10am>Post 1719, Chandler>
D-10 >24 Apr 21 10 am>Post #8706, Moore, New Hope Church, 12323 S. Penn, OKC >
D-13 >01 May 21 12:30pm>Post # 6143, Weatherford>
D-14 > 06 Mar 21 11am> Post 5263 Lawton> St. Cdr. Merit
D-15 >08 May 21 @11 am> Post # 4876 Altus > St. Surgeon Reddig

DATES TO REMEMBER:

03 Mar> Star-Spangled Banner Made U.S. National Anthem (1931)
14 Mar> Daylight Saving Time Begins (set clock ahead one hour)
17 Mar> St. Patrick's Day
19 Mar> Iraq War Began (2003)
24 Mar> Kosovo Campaign Began (1999)
29 Mar > National Vietnam War Veterans Day (2017)
31 Mar > Somalia Campaign Ended (1995)

Stay Healthy with free Sanitizer!!!

In this time of Covid-19, we are all at risk. You never know who has been infected at any time. I voted this year, and the odds are high that at least one person there was infected by the virus. The worst part is they may not have even known it. Because most of our members are in the high risk category, we must protect ourselves and others. Wear a mask to protect yourself. Stay the approved social distance of 6 feet. Try to go to businesses that clean properly and allow the social distancing.



One of the tools to fight this virus is disinfectant. I want to extend a congratulations to the Claremore Post, J. R. Hooper Memorial Post 2976. They are receiving 55 gallon barrels of disinfectant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This post is willing to share a 55 gallon drum at the cost of time and money to go get it.

They want us to distribute the sanitizer to local schools or nursing homes. If you are interested in helping to distribute the sanitizer, please contact the post.

I failed to find out who the contact is for this program but if you call William Richey, 918.829.9610, he can put you in touch with their individual.

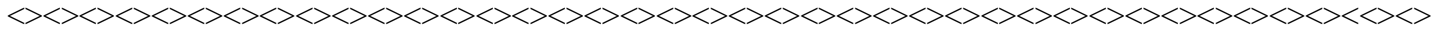


POST # _____ DISTRICT # _____ VFW YEAR _____

Delegates and Alternates for District, Department & National Conventions

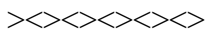
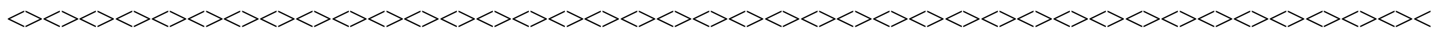
Please complete this form and return to Department Quartermaster once the election of delegates and alternates are elected. Form can be mailed to VFW Dept of Oklahoma, 1103 N. Blackwelder Ave. Oklahoma City, OK 73106 or can be emailed to vfwhqok@outlook.com

National By-Laws & Manual of Procedure, **By-Laws, Sec 222**, provides that delegates and alternates for the District Convention and meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Posts are entitled to one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post as of March 31. Pursuant to **MOP, Sec 222**, Delegates and alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided, they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.



Please type or print names of Delegates and/or Alternates: Please place a checkmark to indicate delegate or alternate.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| 1. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 5. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 6. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 7. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 8. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 9. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 10. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 11. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |
| 12. _____ | Delegate: _____ | Alt: _____ |



Pursuant to Article V, Sec 5 of the Department of Oklahoma, Veterans of Foreign Wars By-Laws,
(b) The list of Post Delegates and Post Alternates to be honored must bear signatures of both the Post Commander and Post Adjutant.

Post Commander Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Post Adjutant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____