



Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



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405 850-0815/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

August 2022

2022-2023 Series

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts”
-Winston S. Churchill

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

General Orders No. 2

2022-2023 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

3. **Department Directory/Roster:** Commanders & Adjutants at all levels are asked to send all corrections, changes etc. of the Department Roster to vfwokadj@outlook.com for changes.

/os/

JEREMY OWEN
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /

Andrea Melcher
Adjutant

Commander Jeremy Owen

Comrades,

This year is already on the move, and we're headed in the right direction! First off, I want to tell you all about the National Convention this year. There were many changes this year which you'll see in these GOs. The part I want to talk about is what TEAM OKLAHOMA did for one of our own. We had a comrade and Auxiliary sister attend and our sister had a medical emergency which required her to be admitted into the ICU in Kansas City. Our Department Leaders, including District and Post Officers were able to come together and make sure our Comrade and sister had all they needed for an extended period of time in Kansas City, sadly they are still there. I am extremely proud of our members in both the VFW and Auxiliary for answering the call when they were needed. The list of people who helped is just too large to name, but it wasn't just Oklahoma, several National Officers and multiple other Departments took donations up to help also. I say all of this to let everyone know how proud I am of this great organization and all I know we can accomplish for veterans and their families!

Right now, we are monitoring the situation in Kentucky with the historic flooding and devastation it has caused. I believe we will be coordinating a few drop spots around the state to try to help with items needed. There will be a mass email sent out with details if they aren't in these GOs.

We have Schools of Instructions on 13 Aug at El Reno Post and 27 Aug at Sapulpa Post. The requirement for all state program this year is at least the Commander or Junior Vice or Senior Vice and Quartermaster or Assistant must attend one of the 3 Schools of Instruction. We also have the first Officer Training School at the Airport Wyndham on Oct 1 and 2 that will count as fulfilling the school requirement. There will be an agenda put out for this school. I will say this school will be a more in-depth training of officer positions in our organization and is open to any member to attend. I would love to see everyone attend as we have enlisted the help of subject matter experts to help you be successful at any level of the VFW.

Keep up the good work because together we can do great things! We are TEAM OKLAHOMA!

Jeremy Owen

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
P. O. Box 1126
Oklahoma City Oklahoma 73101
(918)618-2440

Senior Vice Commander

Erica Traxler

Department Convention Chairman

ByLaws Co-Chairman

Women's Mentorship

Student Veterans of America Liaison

Citizenship Education Chair

Comrades,

I hope this month's general orders finds you well. The last couple of months have been extremely busy with state and national conventions. I hope you got the opportunity to go to one or more and learn something new. We have a few people that need some extra prayers so please keep them in your minds and hearts as they are on their road to recovery. Remember that we are an open line of communication at the state level. If you have questions, complaints, concerns... we are here to support the members of this great organization. We serve the membership, not the other way around.

Schools of Instruction & Officer Training School

We have two remaining schools of instruction coming up this month. For us to work well as a team we should be training as a team. It is important that you come to learn, get to know one another as well as our auxiliary counterparts. Network with one another. Regardless of your reasonings for attending I look forward to seeing you as I will be attending all three. The dates are: August 13 @ El Reno post 382, and August 27 @ Sapulpa post 1320.

We will be conducting our very first Officer Training School The end of September at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in OKC. It is crucial that people attend this training because it teaches you things you need to know about your job. Even if you have been in a position for 10 years you can still learn something valuable to the job. I look forward to seeing each of you in attendance.

Oklahoma VFW Foundation

Have you thought about supporting our very own Oklahoma VFW Foundation? There are several ways to do it: Amazon smile is a great way. Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com> once there then find Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation. Post donations & personal donations are another great way to support our Foundation. Donations are tax deductible. Donating to the Oklahoma VFW Foundation is a way of donating back to Posts within our department and our programs. Donors may also designate where they want their donation dollars to go toward, for instance, Veterans Services, Honor Guards, etc. Donations can be sent to Oklahoma VFW Foundation, P.O. Box 1126, Oklahoma City, OK or by visiting the Foundation website at <https://okvfwfoundation.org> and the selecting the donate button.

It is the Senior Vice Commander's job to focus on the Oklahoma VFW Foundation. I will be talking about it often due to the importance of it, but also because of the potential of what it can do for the veterans in this state. Please keep in mind we still have openings for our founding donors for our foundation. We need 25 total and are almost halfway there.

I am still fundraising for my State Commander year. I was originally going to do the drawing during state convention, but needed to extend it until Fall Festival. This is for a ¼ beef with a deep freezer. Tickets are \$10 for one or \$25 for three. You can purchase at any time. The drawing will be on Saturday at Fall Festival. If you live in Oklahoma, I will deliver the beef to you. I appreciate the support from every person so that I can continue these traditions. Thank you for allowing me to serve you as the Oklahoma Senior Vice Commander.

Erica Traxler

Senior Vice Commander

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

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<https://vfwoklahoma.org/>

*Junior Vice Commander
Mike M. Irons*

Comrades,

School of instruction in Lawton was great! Thanks to everyone who made it successful. I look forward to seeing everyone in El Reno on August 13th. I apologize but I will not be attending Sapulpa due to a fundraiser/ recruiting event in Waukomis during the Sooner Celebration.

National Convention was very informative, got a lot of ideas from other departments and auxiliaries. I made numerous contacts with members from outside our departments.

Al Lipphardt, now the Jr. Vice CIC, has a book out those of you who want a copy may contact me. The name of the book is "ABC's of Membership". It is an introduction and monitoring series for now VFW members and emerging leaders. His moto is "Believe what you do, do what you believe in".

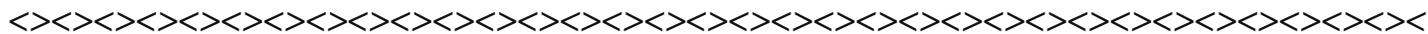
I want to thank you for all the support for Ron and Ruby Slowick. It still looks like she will be in the hospital for at least two more weeks in Kansas City. The support that was given shows that Oklahoma is a team, and we truly take care of each other. A special thanks goes out to our comrades in Texas and the national line officers for their support.

Team Oklahoma Second to None!

Respectfully,

Michael M. Irons

Junior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
580-977-4936



*National Council Member
Curt Watts*

Comrades, our 123rd National Convention in Kansas City, MO is over, and we successfully conducted the business of our national organization as needed. For those of you who attended, it was great to see so many delegates from all the departments. I would like to say congratulations to our very own Gondles-Butler VFW Post 7977 in Skiatook, Glenpool VFW Post 9126 in Glenpool, and the Eugene L. Farthing Post 7192 in Midwest City for being selected as All-American Posts for the 2021-22 year.

Timothy (Tim) Borland from Post 9972 in Benson Arizona was elected and installed as our National Commander-in-Chief for the VFW 2022-2023. Chief Tim's theme is "Every Veteran Counts" and that no matter their differences from us, we should work to help them. In Tim's speech, he alluded to the fact of how many Posts throughout last year had not recruited a single new member, signed up a new life member, or re-instated a former member. He is challenging every member to recruit at least one new member and/or re-instate a former member. He asked us to just imagine the growth the VFW would experience if every member recruited just one new member.

The National Council of Administration met on Saturday prior to the convention. The Budget & Finance Committee along with Quartermaster General Marc Garduno shared the current financial status of the organization. Please note that I will be sending out a separate email discussing the national organizations' 3rd Quarter financials. During the Convention, all 14 newly elected National Council members from the Southern Conference were sworn in along with the other newly elected National Officers.

I would like to give a big SHOUT OUT to all Oklahoma delegates who attended the National Convention. I know that for most of you, you had to reach into your own pockets to pay for your attendance, either fully or partially. Please know that others see your commitment to our organization and thank you for this, especially during the current state of inflation in our Republic.

Current VFW National Topics and Issues:

Administrative Operations:

Administrative Operations had broad responsibilities at the National Convention (the Memorial Service, Committee on Appeals, Bylaws Committee meeting, National Council meeting setups, Parliamentary Procedure training sessions, business session coordination, etc.), and thanks to this great team they proudly say we met each challenge.

The Administrative Operations team is busy amending the Podium edition (Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual) to ensure the Council has a hard copy of the 2023 Podium at the August Council meeting. Additionally, they are working to provide a summary of the business conducted at the last two Council meetings, update all relative training, forms, templates affected by National amendments, and upload relative training to the website.

The Parliamentary Procedure training slides and video are available to view and download behind the member login at [VFW.org/ Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/ Parliamentary Training Videos](http://VFW.org/Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/ Parliamentary Training Videos). I would encourage each of you to download these videos. Being knowledgeable in Parliamentary procedures assist greatly in conducting or participating in a meeting.

Administrative Operations is pleased to announce April Ferreira as our new Assistant Coordinator-Unit Records beginning Monday August 1. April is replacing Charles Lawton who retired earlier this year. Charles Lawton was a great asset to the Admin Operations section. I know he help us in Oklahoma on many occasions.

National Legislative Service

The VFW is pushing Congress to include the *Major Richard Star Act* as an amendment in the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023*. The VFW firmly believes that DOD retired pay and VA service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, earned for different reasons. Purple Heart recipients deserve to receive all the benefits they earned. Now is the time to move this legislation forward. Contact

your members of Congress and demand they include the *Major Richard Star Act* as an amendment in the FY23 NDAA. [TAKE ACTION!](#)

VA announced veterans now have the option to **Dial 988 then Press 1** to connect with caring, qualified responders for 24/7 crisis assistance. “During a crisis, every second counts,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This new, shorter number makes it easier for veterans and those who care about them to reach lifesaving support without having to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care.” While [Dial 988 then Press 1](#) is a new option for contacting the Veterans Crisis Line, the original number, 1.800.273.8255 and press 1, remains available, and individuals can make contact via chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#) or by texting 838255.

Many individuals need help navigating their benefits when they leave the military, either immediately or years later. Veterans, family members, and caregivers can access online DOD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) materials and courses at any time following separation from service. With topics including managing transition, financial planning, and VA benefits for spouses and children, veterans can access the broad TAP curriculum as their needs and goals change over time. [Read more.](#)

The VFW currently [supports 177 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation is proud to announce that \$468,000 in sponsorships were raised for the 2022 VFW National Convention. Special recognition for this incredible effort should go to Brooke Brown Assistant Director, Corporate Relations, and Ben Vargas Assistant Director.

Bridgestone Firestone was a large new corporate sponsor at this year’s convention and the company verbally expressed interest in additional VFW relationships including those with the Departments.

Grants & External Relations Coordinator Jason Couch conducted a highly successful Grants & Fundraising Workshop for VFW Posts at the convention which was attended by over 200 VFW and Auxiliary members.

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

vfwokncm@outlook.com

405.590.8577

Training and Development Bylaws and Resolution Committee

Jim Bassett

What is mentoring? I thought I would start with a basic description.

Mentoring
noun

the **act** or **process** of **helping** and **giving advice** to a **younger** or less **experienced person**, especially in a **job** or at **school**:

- *The students chances can be improved with more studying, mentoring, and intensive review.*
- *She volunteers in the school mentoring program.*

Mentoring | BUSINESS ENGLISH
noun

HR,WORKPLACE

The **activity** of **supporting** and **advising** someone with less **experience** to **help** them **develop** in their **work**:

- *We train people through one-on-one mentoring.*
- *Mentoring programs are a way to increase the company's competitive advantage.*

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/mentoring>

What are you doing to mentor? Are you talking to others? Are you sharing your old National Bylaws books so they can learn?

Jim Bassett

Past State Commander
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*If not you, then who?
If not now, then when?
Hillel the Elder*

Membership Retention Chairman

Aaron Smith

Greetings Comrades!

I am the Department retention chairperson. What that means to me is that it makes me responsible for ensuring that we are keeping the people that we recruit. I cannot do this alone, merely visiting every post 1 time would keep me too busy to do anything else, so I am asking for help to make plans by discussing various ideas VIA zoom or telephone. If I could get at least 1 committee member from each district that would be greatly appreciated. So far, I have someone from District 4 and 14. If you can't be on a committee at this time that is fine; there are other ways you can help. The biggest thing an individual member can do is to treat all members, especially new or prospective, with respect. Don't forget that just because you know our customs, doesn't mean that the new members do.

When you see someone in your post, don't make assumptions on whether they are a member, or even if they qualify to become one. Treat them like you want to be treated and be inviting to them. After all, if they wanted someone to be mean to them, they would have stayed at work. Next month I will tell my story on why it took me over a decade to become active in the VFW.

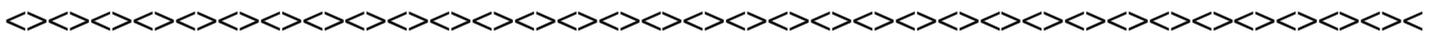
Thanks,

Aaron Smith

Membership Retention Chairman

Dept of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars



Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen & Teacher of the Year Chairman

Mike Devenitch

Comrades,

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS: Now is the time to get ready, print applications and get the word out in the community. Shoot for October 1st to start hitting the schools. Successful essay programs: Email, call and visit the schools. Find your belly-button teacher, Speech Teacher, English, Counselors or Administrators that will help you. For the 2022-2023 school year the following topics have been released: Voice of Democracy (VOD) audio-essay program theme is - "Why Is the Veteran Important?" and the Patriot's Pen (PP) youth essay "My Pledge to Our Veterans." Both are due to the local VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. This is our signature programs so get out and make us proud! See <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships> for more info.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR (TOY): 2022-2023 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award: Every school has a special teacher that is doing something extra so built a team (school/town/post) to work on the package! VFW has 3 different categories annually: Elementary, Junior High and High School teachers who teach citizenship education topics and promote America's history and traditions. Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are great candidates for this award. Call the school principal and ask, which teacher fits this bill? Nominations can be submitted by fellow teachers, supervisors, you or other interested individuals. They are to the local VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. Submit all nomination to me. Remember: Help make your teacher, your post, district and the state shine with a win!

"NEW" 2022-23 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. This year, 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.

Teacher Award Chairman must submit one candidate, in each category (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12), for these awards to their Department Headquarters by Jan. 1. The Department must select a single candidate, in each category, for the awards and submit the winners to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" which is available on the VFW website. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section. All Post-level nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available. These items will be forwarded on to the District, if applicable, then to the Department with the completed entry forms.

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

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. has the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2022-23 program year. The teacher entry form is on the VFW website. The dates are Oct. 31 for entries to the Post, Nov. 15 for completion of Post judging, Dec. 15 completion of District judging, Jan. 1 for entries to Department, Feb. 1 for completion of Department judging and their winner, in each category, are due to National Headquarters.

Simply visit 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.

V/R,
Mike Devenitch
VOD/PP/TOY Chairman
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Veterans and Military Services Committee Chair

Tony McGrew

Hello Comrades,

VMS Programs are an integral part of the VFW's never-ending obligation to assist members of the active-duty military, National Guard and reserves, as well as their families. VMS is broken down into 3 distinct stand-alone programs.

- Unmet Needs
- Military Assistance Program (MAP)
- VFW "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" program

* Unmet Needs provides financial assistance to service members, veterans, and their families experiencing a financial hardship directly related to their military service.

* Assistance, not a handout.

* The financial assistance is in the form of a one-time grant in an amount up to \$2,500. All grants are paid directly to the "creditor" companies (such as the electric company, mortgage company, landlord, etc.) and not to the individual.

* Funds can be used for rent, car repairs, medical expenses, infant-care items and many other necessities.

* Each case is reviewed individually, and acceptance determined by a committee.

* Applied for online at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

Posts, please report all MAP Grant Applications and Acceptance, any VFW Program Activities your Post has completed or planned each month. We need this to report to National.

Adopt a Unit

Did you know a Post can adopt a Military Unit and provide support for Family Days, Yellow Ribbons, Deployments, Holiday Events, Meeting and Support Seminars, Direct Assistance and more?

This is an excellent way to locate and enlist new members into your Post. If you need more information on Adopting a Unit, please get in touch with me.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

Concert for Veterans Homes:

We are looking at having a band go to each of the Veterans Homes and putting on a concert for the residents sometime in the middle of September. In order to do this, we will need to do fund raisers to help with the cost for the band. I am asking each Post to hold one or maybe two fund raisers in August to raise money to support this event. We are still in the planning phase and will send out details as they are available. Comments and suggestions welcomed.

Oklahoma Army National Guard Crossroads Events:

Location: 3535 NE Military Circle, OKC 73111

Dates:

16-Jul 6-Aug, and 17-Sep

Times: 0800 Until

** Crossroads Events are sponsored by the OKANG and provides information to troops on transitioning to civilian life and their VA Benefits.

All for One; One for All

Tony McGrew

VMS Chair

Department of Oklahoma

405-820-6467

Tony.vfw8706@gmail.com

<https://www.vfwoklahoma.org>



Safety Chairman

Ron Albert

Comrades,

I'm looking forward to the new year and I hope all the posts submit a Public Servant award.

PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS



FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS, LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AND FIREFIGHTERS:

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects emergency medical technicians, law enforcement and firefighter personnel to receive VFW Public Servant Awards.

Deadlines:

Post entries 15 Nov to Post

Post entries to **District by December 1st**

District entries to **Department by January 1st**

The Department will select a single candidate for each of the three awards and submit those to VFW National Headquarters by February 1st.

Eligible candidates for each award are as follows:

VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation:

Any individual, 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 and civil disaster assistance to our nation's citizens.

VFW National Law Enforcement / 911 Operator Citation:

Any individual who serves in a municipal, county, state or federal unit tasked with enforcement of the laws pertaining to their area of responsibility. This award does not apply to individual employed by private companies or security services.

VFW National Firefighters Public Servant Citation:

Any individual 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.

Criteria for these awards – Candidates must have demonstrated:

- 1) Recognition by their colleagues or those they serve.
- 2) Consistent excellence in the performance of their duties
- 3) Consistent dedication to their official responsibilities over a period of years and continuous growth in responsibilities and skills within their profession.

Documentation required for all Candidates

- 1) *Entry Form*
- 2) Nomination letter containing the candidate's name, title, address, telephone
 - A) include justification outlining background in field, accomplishments and awards

Nomination –

District Safety Chairmen should send nominations by mail with ALL CRITERIA to Department Headquarters to arrive no later than January 1st.

Respectfully,

Ron J. Albert

Safety Chairman

VFW Dept of Oklahoma

580-512-0510

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