



Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



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

September 2020

2020-2021 Series

*“Good Character is Property. It is the Noblest of all Possessions.”
Samuel Smiles*

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

General Orders No. 3

2020-2021 Series

1. **Gangs:** Gangs including any Motorcycle groups/units/gangs not officially affiliated with the VFW or other Veterans Service Organizations are not allowed to wear or display their vests or “colors” at any Oklahoma VFW Post or business operation operated by or on the behalf of the Post unless voted upon by the Post membership at a regular or special meeting called for such purpose. Specifically, any gang including motorcycle group/unit/gang or its individual members that is identified as a 1% organization or is listed in the FBI Gang Threat Assessment is prohibited from wearing their vests or “Colors” at any Oklahoma VFW Post or business operated by or on behalf of the Post regardless of Post membership approval. This includes the group or unit hosting or attending an event or fundraiser even if it is for another organization on VFW property. <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/2011-national-gang-threat-assessment#Appendix-A:%20Gangs%20by%20State>

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

3. **Section 1001:** The attention of all members is directed to the Manual of Procedure, Section 1001, paragraph 25 that states “The presence, dispensation, and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are prohibited.”

Reported violations of this order will be severely dealt with under the punitive provisions of the VFW National By-Laws. This practice by some Posts and Districts not only violates the ritual but also discredits the honored memory of our fallen comrades and is contrary to moral ethics based upon long and distinguished records of this organization. District Commanders are hereby charged with the responsibility of enforcement of this order and the duty of reporting violations thereof to the State Commander.

4. Pursuant to National By-Laws & MOP, Article X, Rules of Order, "The following Rules of Order shall govern all meetings. Any procedural matter not provided for by the Rules or Convention Rules shall be governed by the current Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised."

/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,

September 1st 2020

First of all, I hope this finds all of you and your family healthy and well. If not, I pray for a speedy recovery. Hey! Here we are beginning our third month of the year. I hope everyone that is able has gotten their year into 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 have to throw the book out and think outside of the box as was stated at the past two Schools of Instruction. Speak with each other and share what works for you. During this time we must help each other out to accomplish our mission. Remember, we are TEAM OKLAHOMA! Therefore, we must work together as one.

For those who did not receive the email from Adjutant General Kevin Jones, National is currently experiencing a severe shortage of Buddy Poppies due to the pandemic affecting their production facilities. Because of this, Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch has waived the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All American program. We currently have about 4k of Buddy Poppies at the State Headquarters, but most of them are already spoken for. At this time, I am going to wait out the situation to see if production will be able to resume. At the first of the year, I will reexamine whether I will waive our All State requirement for them. So, please stand by on that.

As some of you may know, our Oklahoma VFW Foundation generously donated \$5k to our Service Office program. We also received another \$5k donation from the Vietnam Veterans Association Chapter 216 of Tulsa for it. On behalf of the Department, I want to say a very big THANK YOU for the donations. With that being said, we are looking to hire a part time Service Officer to work at our Muskogee office. In order to do that, per our Department Bylaws, I am standing up the Veterans Service Committee again to ensure fair hiring practices are followed. This Committee will consist of PDC Darryl Mabry, Past National Surgeon General Curtis "Doc" Bohlman, NCM Robbie Clark, State Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler and myself. So, if you or someone you know who is interested in applying for the position, please contact the State headquarters. More information on the job description will be forthcoming.

If you were able to attend one of the Schools of Instruction this past month, you heard from our hard charging Youth Activities Chair Erica Wilson-Traxler. She has worked hard to put

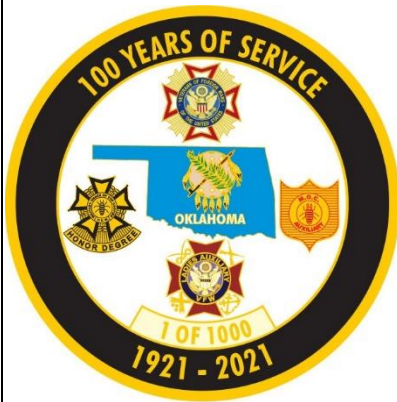
forward a strong program for you when it comes to VOD/PP/TOY/SVA. If you were not able to attend and would like her briefing, please contact her. Right now is when we need to be out there promoting these programs. I know everything is different right now due to school scheduling and the online aspect. However, again, think outside of the box. Get with your local papers, radio and TV to help promote these programs. Understanding the current situation and if you do not receive any entries, I will grant credit for a one of these programs provided you submit substantial evidence show you made every effort to promote the program. Remember, this is the future of our country we are reaching out to. They deserved all the help we can give them.

Membership. Yup, here we go. So as of this writing, the Department is currently at 13 of 14 in the Southern Conference and 32 out of 52 nationally when it comes to membership. Our highest recruiter to date has recruited 15 new members. We have 1 recruiter at 3, 6 at 2 and 19 at 1. Everyone should now be in possession of the At Large Roster for your area and the Retention Roster for your Post. If you have not received them yet, please contact your District Commander. These are amazing tools to use to increase you membership. Please, work every person on these rosters. **Remember 100% by December 31st, 2020 and 110% by June 30th, 2021!** We also have my Commander's Challenge for the first half of this year. The first Post to 100% by December 31st, 2020 will receive \$100. Every Post after the first, but before the deadline, will receive \$50. So, get out there and bring these new members in.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Commander-in-Chief's Challenge for September. The top Post in each membership category at the end of the month will receive \$500. In addition, each Department that has a Post win will receive \$500. If the Department has more than one Post win, it will receive \$500 for every winning Post! So, again, work those rosters and let's bring in some bog dough for the Posts and the Department!

Our Department Centennial is April 16th, 2021. By this point, all of you should have received a card in the mail asking you to update your information and submit your picture and story to be added to our Centennial Memory book. I hope all of you have participated and have purchased a book. It is a great memento to have. Not many get to celebrate 100 years, so this is going to be an amazing experience for all of us. Speaking of mementos, our Centennial Coin design was released at the State Convention. District 1 Commander Matt Ward had the winning design. There was a manufacturing error in the first set, so the coins are currently being made and should be available with in the first week of the month. All the State Officers and District Commanders have preorder forms. They are two inches wide and the price per coin is \$20. Each coin will be individually numbered, and the current set is 500 coins. We would love to have to order another 500! So, get in contact with one of the state officers to reserve yours today!

Take care of yourselves out there TEAM OKLAHOMA! I wish you the best. Please continue what you are doing. I could not have asked for a better Department to command. Each of you are the tip of the spear and that is why we are "FIRST TO FIGHT FOR VETERANS!"



Michael L. Merit
State Commander



FROM THE STATE SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

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

There are 14 Departments within the Southern Conference. We are currently 13th. There are 52 Departments within the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are currently 32nd. Are you doing your best to recruit? We have some great recruiting opportunities planned down the road and we are always looking for more events. Well, if Covid-19 lets us. If you have a recruiting membership drive, please let us know. We have a lot of talented recruiters willing to assist you with your drives.

Recruit and Retain. You may have noticed that I talk a lot about retention. Bringing in a new member is good. But when you lose one or two out the back door, you are just spinning your wheels. You need to develop a plan to keep post members engaged. Have someone work as a greeter. They greet new and old members, talk to them, let them know that someone cares. This is a great way to find out about new members. The greeter can introduce them to the group and tell a little about them. Have you thought about your home or bed bound members? Is someone talking to them, helping them stay informed about what their organization is doing? Have you considered a blended meeting? Post members physically present and home bound members virtually present.

I've mentioned Covid-19 before, and it does not appear to be leaving anytime soon. So please! Please! Keep the social distancing up, keep wearing the mask, and keep washing your hands! Stay away from places that do not seem to keep to the cleaning protocols. We have VFW members that have compromised systems that are susceptible to Covid-19 or other illnesses. Remember, this will help you and also help those around you.

In case you missed it, this is an election year. Things are getting heated up when people discuss politics. Please don't get dragged into a discussion of politics if you are wearing VFW items. I attended a fundraiser and recruiting drive in August. I was floored because a middle-aged lady came up to me and asked how the VFW was leaning politically. I explained to her that we encourage our

members to register and vote how they see fit. I further explained that our politics concentrate solely on legislation that impacts veterans, regardless of the political party. She was happy with that answer and actually donated to us. Please remember, we do not support a party or candidate. You are encouraged to register, and to vote for any candidate or party you desire. The VFW's concern is the erosion of benefits that veterans receive. Please keep an eye on legislation that impacts your benefits. One way to do that is through knowledge and not hearsay. 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>.

Normally, this is where I begin to let you know about our upcoming events. Everything except for the Tinker AFB 9/11/POW/MIA Memorial Run has been canceled. Tinker AFB will be holding their 24 hour vigil in September and is looking for volunteers. Our VMS Chairman should have details soon. By the way, we are sponsoring the memorial run and vigil again this year. The Tinker AFB run is going to be done virtually. In the meantime, we are working on rescheduling all of these events, as well as others, for the upcoming year. If you do hear of a major event, please let me know.



DONATE!! DONATE!! We will be getting blood drives scheduled as soon as large events can be scheduled. 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. 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.

Be Visible!

The VFW and the Auxiliary used to be very active within their communities. What are you doing in your community? When you're out volunteering for the VFW or Auxiliary, please wear something that identifies you as a VFW or Auxiliary member; it helps increase public awareness. 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!

Jim Bassett

State Sr Vice Commander
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FROM THE STATE JUNIOR. VICE COMMANDER

Comrades, August was a busy month. I enjoyed seeing such large participation with the schools of instruction. I have been making my way around the state visiting posts and districts and love what we are doing as a VFW. Remember to fill out the forms for community service so you are getting the credit deserved for the work you are doing. We need to focus on recruiting and retention, CIC Roesch has issued a challenge this month for all VFW Posts, the post in each membership category that recruits, renews, or reinstates the most members will receive a \$500 stipend deposited directly into the post account. For every post that wins, the Department will receive \$500 also and there is no limit to the amount of posts in a state that can win! If you have a recruiting event scheduled please don't hesitate to contact the Department so our recruiting and retention chairs can help! I hope to see many more of my comrades this upcoming month. Good luck and keep moving forward.

Jeremy J. Owen
State JR Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma

FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER

MINUTES FOR VFW DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA CONVENTION HELD 20 JUNE 2020 AT THE EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OK.

On, 20 June 2020, at 9:30am/0930hrs State Commander Darryl Mabry opened the VFW Department of Oklahoma's 99th Convention observing the Rituals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in accordance with the 2020 By-laws and Manual of Procedure.

Commander Mabry immediately verified that a minimum of 10 posts were present for the purpose of establishing a convention quorum.

Introductions of National Officers, VIPs and Past State Commanders was conducted. National Council member Al Lipphardt from Georgia, candidate for Junior Vice Commander in Chief spoke to the convention delegates. National Council Member Robbie Clark also spoke to the convention delegates on behalf of Comrade Lipphardt.

Department Adjutant Curt Watts read the proposed Rules of Convention. Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler moved to accept the proposed rules. Motion seconded; motion carried.

Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit read the VFW Life Saving Award to Surgeon Stacy Reddig. Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler spoke about the VFW Life-Saving Award and how Posts, Districts and the Department should submit more of them.

State Commander Darryl Mabry presented the “PSC Troy Hensch Top Recruiter Award” 2020 to National Council member Robbie Clark from Post 4876.

State Commander Darryl Mabry presented the “Service Officer of the Year Award” 2020 to William (Bill) Hinds, Post 2027, Assistant State Veteran Service Officer. State Service Officer James Dockemeyer was also recognized for all his hard work and efforts.

State Commander Darryl Mabry presented “Comrade of the Year” presentations to Larry Hill, Post 7977, Dist# 5, John Paine, Post 2027, Dist# 8 and Mike Eaton, Post 8706, Dist#10.

Comrades PSC Bob McGill & Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler presented the “Mr. VFW” 2020 award to PSC Ron Slowik, Post 2270, Dist# 9.

PSC Bob Mason presented a service branch coffee cup to the oldest veterans of each service branch present at the convention.

State Commander Mabry recessed at 1033hrs and called the convention attendees back to order at 1045hrs.

Commander Mabry spoke about our State Raffle and allowed convention attendees to purchase tickets. Commander Mabry had a ticket drawn and presented Comrade Vern Babcock the \$250.00 winner award.

Commander Mabry opened the nominations for State officer positions.

Adjutant Curt Watts read National Surgeon General Curtis (Doc) Bohlman’s nomination letter of Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit for the position of State Commander 2020-21. National Council Member Robbie Clark seconded the nomination with a speech of his endorsement.

PSC James Dockemeyer nominated Jr. Vice Commander James Bassett for the position of Sr. Vice Commander 2020-21. National Council Member Robbie Clark seconded the nomination with a speech of his endorsement.

Adjutant Curt Watts read National Surgeon General Curtis (Doc) Bohlman’s nomination letter of Comrade Larry Jordan for the position of Jr. Vice Commander 2020-21.

PSC Bob Mason nominated Comrade Jeremy Owen for Jr. Vice Commander 2020-21. PSC Coral Porch seconded the nomination.

District # 1 Commander Matt Ward nominated himself for Jr. Vice Commander 2020-21.

PSC Jay Bjorgo nominated Surgeon Stacy Reddig for State Surgeon 2020-21. District # 1 Commander Matt Ward seconded the nomination.

District # 7 Commander, Jeff Harris nominated himself for State Surgeon 2020-21.

Comrade Tony McGrew nominated Past State Chaplain Gary Walker for State Chaplain.

PSC Bob McGill nominated Past State Chaplain Rick Willey for State Chaplain. PSC Bob Mason seconded the nomination.

Comrade Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler nominated State Quartermaster Curt Watts for State Quartermaster 2020-21. PSC Bob Mason seconded the nomination.

State Quartermaster Curt Watts nominated Comrade Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler for State Judge Advocate 2020-21.

Comrade Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler nominated Comrade John Fischer for 3-year Budget & Finance Committee member 2020-21. State Quartermaster Curt Watts seconded the nomination.

State Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit nominated State Commander Darryl Mabry for Immediate PSC. 2020-21. PSC Bob Mason seconded the nomination.

State Commander Mabry recessed the convention at 1126hrs for lunch.

State Commander Mabry re-convened the convention at 1330 hr.

State Commander Mabry conducted the second State Raffle drawing and third drawing. Post # 2027 Commander Bill Jones won the \$1,000 grand prize.

Department Credentials Committee Curtis (Doc) Bohlman conducted a roll call of Posts. Credentials were calculated.

Department By-Laws Amendment: Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit moved that the convention delegates approve the department By-Law amendment that had been published in previous notice. Motion seconded by District #3 Commander Dannie Bates. Motion carried.

Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler moved that the Department dues continue at \$9.50. Motion seconded; motion carried.

Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit moved that the VFW Department Oklahoma endorse National Council Member (Georgia) Al Lipphardt, for National Jr. Vice Commander-in Chief. Motion carried.

Commander Darryl Mabry asked for any other nominations for State officer positions. No nominations were submitted. Commander Mabry declared nominations closed.

Voting of State Officers:

District # 15 Commander PSC Ken Pike moved that a Roll Call vote be used for elections. Seconded by PSC Jay Bjorgo.

State Commander 2020-21: Sr. Vice Commander Mike Merit was elected to the position of State Commander.

Sr. Vice Commander 2020-21: Jr. Vice Commander Jim Bassett was elected to the position of State Sr. Vice Commander.

Commander Mabry recessed for 5 minutes; Commander Mabry called convention to order.

Jr. Vice Commander 2020-21: Roll call vote was conducted, and Comrade Jeremy Owen was elected as State Jr. Vice Commander.

State Surgeon 2020-21: Comrade Jeff Harris removed his name from the elections for State Surgeon. State Adjutant Curt Watts cast one vote of acclamation for Stacy Reddig for State Surgeon.

Commander Mabry recessed for 5 minutes at 1445hrs; Commander Mabry called convention to order at 1450hrs.

State Chaplain 2020-21: Roll call vote was conducted, and Comrade Rick Willey was elected as State Chaplain.

State Quartermaster 2020-21: State Judge Advocate Gordon Wheeler cast one vote of acclamation for Curt Watts for State Quartermaster.

State Judge Advocate 2020-21: State Adjutant Curt Watts cast one vote of acclamation for Gordon Wheeler for Judge Advocate.

Commander Mabry recessed for 5 minutes at 1500hrs; Commander Mabry called convention to order at 1505hrs.

State Budget & Finance Committee Member 2020-21: Roll call vote was conducted, and Comrade John Fischer was elected as 3-year Budget & Finance Committee Member.

Immediate Past State Commander 2020-21: State Adjutant Curt Watts cast one vote of acclamation for Darryl Mabry for Past State Commander.

Installation of Department Officers was conducted at 1515hrs by National Surgeon General Curtis (Doc) Bohlman.

State Commander (Elect) Mike Merit was installed at 1535 hours by National Surgeon General Curtis (Doc) Bohlman. All officers were declared duly installed at 1539 hours.

State Commander Mike Merit spoke to the convention delegates and briefly discussed his plans for VFW year 2020-21.

Closing Ceremonies were conducted pursuant to National By-Laws, Manual of Procedures & Rituals.

programs (VOD, Patriot Pen, and Teacher of the Year.), I am with a humble heart glad to be in an organization such as our VFW. Some of our posts still need a little more work, but with a little time and yes more comrades, we can get our mission done. I know the age-old problem of getting members and having the same eight or ten comrades every time of DOING, and yes, some either won't or can't because they work full time jobs, or yes we get older and our health is not as good as it used to be. That is why we have sent out the "Member at Large" lists to try and help in making our mission tremendously easier to do. I know first-hand that with COVID 19 still hindering it is making our mission tremendously hard to accomplish. With a "CAN DO" attitude and the pride that we all have, we can get this done. We have the greatest Auxiliary in the world! The Auxiliary members help make the VFW in Oklahoma shine. Without them, our mission would be much harder to obtain.

I would also like to congratulate Al Lipphardt, for obtaining Oklahoma VFW's endorsement for Jr. Vice Commander in Chief. We made a choice, the right choice, and the only choice of fulfilling the VFW mission. Comrades, I ask all of you to please join with us in getting our mission accomplished for our veterans and their families.

FROM THE STATE CHAPLAIN

Chaplain's Note

As Fall approaches, I am reminded each year is divided into the four seasons based on the two equinoxes and the two solstices. The summer and winter solstices, which typically land around June 21 and December 22, mark the longest and the shortest days of the year, respectively. The autumnal and vernal equinoxes, which fall around September 23 and March 21, mark the points in the year when the day and the night are equal lengths. The word equinox is ultimately derived from the Latin word *aequinoctium* meaning "equal days and nights."

As we come upon one of the two "equal" days of the year, take a minute and think about what EQUAL means to you. As we go through life, it is easy to become guarded and only look out for yourself. Is this what the Bible says? Remember the Golden Rule, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"*

Matthew 7:12, NIV

The VFW is an organization founded by, and for, Veterans. That is what we do, and we claim "Nobody does more for Veterans". At a recent convention, a friend of mine asked fellow Vets "What have you done for a Veteran lately?" While somewhat aggressive at the time, he really was on point. If we are not asking ourselves that question before, during and after each meeting of comrades, maybe we should.

I will admit, I myself am guilty of not looking for "unfairness" in the VFW organization. Websters dictionary defines unfair as *"not based on or behaving according to the principles of equality and justice"*. When we served our country there was no time to see the color of someone's skin or a person's gender. We didn't care about such trivial things. There was a mission and you had a job to do, if you didn't do it right, somebody could very well be killed.

The leadership (National) of the VFW recently released a memo stating the need for equality for all Vets. There is ZERO tolerance for racism or sexism in the VFW. Much like when we served our country, we have a job to do. People could die if we don't do it befittingly. Think about the people we represent, the Veterans. They need us to do our job right. Regardless of gender, race or creed. By being a part of this great organization, you are still serving your country and its citizens. In the VFW we serve all Veterans, EQUALLY!

On that note, two of our best membership drive opportunities have been cancelled; The Oklahoma State Fairs. The larger our membership, the more votes we represent, the more attention we have of our lawmakers in Washington D.C. Let's get out there and get ALL of the people we represent. Please actively seek out membership to help grow our numbers. The VFW has room for everybody! NOBODY DOES MORE FOR VETERANS! Let's prove that, equally, day and night.

God Bless

Richard Willey
State Chaplain 2020-2021
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
(580) 318-3782
rickwilley@hotmail.com

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

— **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

FROM THE STATE VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

I have started back doing Post Service Officer's Training. District Commander and District Service Officer's please work with me on scheduling a training date that works for your area.

The following times have been set up. Anyone is welcome to attend if any of these times fit into your schedule.

September 12, 2020, 12:30pm, VFW Post 9969, Del City (following District 10 Meeting)

September 14, 2020, 1:00pm, VFW Post 6143, Weatherford

September 16, 2020, 10:00am, VFW Post 8384, Muldrow

September 21, 2020, 5:30pm, VFW Post 1320, Sapulpa

September 23, 2020, 5:30pm, VFW Post 5263, Ft. Sill/Lawton

There have been some issues with mail at the VA Regional Office. To ensure that we are receiving the mail in Muskogee use the following address heading.

VFW
ATTN: Kayla Keck
125 South Main St.
Suite 1B22

Muskogee OK 74401

Several Post Service Officer's along with myself will start doing walk in claims every Tuesday at the state headquarters in OKC. We will provide VA claims assistance starting at 9:30 till around 3:30

1103 N. Blackwelder Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
405 525-2680 ext 401
vfwokdvso@outlook.com

James Dockemeyer
Department Service Officer



FROM THE OKLAHOMA VFW FOUNDATION

OUR MISSION: The Oklahoma VFW Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, assists Oklahoma veterans and their families, promotes patriotic programs, provides relief for veterans and veteran support organizations, and provides educational scholarships. Comrades,

At the August 22nd School of Instruction, the Oklahoma VFW Foundation was honored to receive a \$5,000 donation from the Vietnam Veterans Association Chapter 216 (Tulsa) earmarked to continue our mission of supporting the critical role of the Veteran Service Officer program. In addition, the Midwest City VFW Post 7192 is holding a golf outing on October 10th and has asked the Foundation to be a partner in this event.

However, as things are moving forward for the Foundation, we are looking for a person who can take over the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. The role of the Board of Directors is advisory. However, the day to day operations is the duty of the Executive Director. This is a “staff” position, the Executive Director, although they can be a member of the Board, are not required to be a member of the Board, or even of the VFW. Their main job is to handle the day to day items and act on the overall goals and programs established by the Foundation’s Board. Although this is a staff position, it is a part time position and is 100% volunteer at the current time. There is no wage or compensation in the current Foundation budget.

The success of the Foundation is directly tied to the effort not only put in by the member of the Board, but also the leadership and effort of the Executive Director. I have been honored to be the Executive Director of the Foundation since its founding, but it has come time to pass that torch. If we compare the Foundation to an airplane, we knew that we wanted an airplane, and I was asked to help because I had experience in designing and building airplanes. The airplane is built and in flight, but you still have a builder in the pilot's seat. At this point in time, a pilot is needed.

I will continue to serve as the President of the Foundation's Board of Directors, but if you or someone you know has the skills, abilities, time, patience and the passion to take the Oklahoma VFW Foundation to the next level, please send us an email.

John H. Fischer
President/Executive Director
Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation
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FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Member Services the Member Service Center will be preparing for the VFW fiscal year-end beginning Monday, Aug. 31, 2020, at 11:30 a.m. CST. VFW Store orders, dues payments, installment payments, installment enrollment, magazine subscriptions, member transfers, and member updates will be taken, but will experience a slight delay in processing. National expects to resume normal processing on Friday, Sept. 4, 2020. **Human Resources** New Employee: Please welcome Devon Wilcher to the VFW. Devon is our new National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative at Camp Pendleton, California. **National Legislative Service** NLS is working to secure the inclusion of the Major Richard Star Act in the upcoming National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. Last week, the president signed into law VFW- supported H.R. 3504, the *Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019*. The new law will provide enhancements to VA's Specially Adapted Housing program by increasing the number of

grants awarded, raising the dollar amount of the individual grants, and expanding the number of times qualified veterans can use a housing grant. This change will help certain severely disabled veterans purchase adaptive homes or upgrade existing homes to meet their specific needs for daily living activities. The VFW currently supports 157 pieces of legislation pending before the 116th Congress. Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, PMurray@vfw.org. **Communications and Public Affairs** Finalized **production** of *The VFW Podcast* Episode 001; Episode 002 production underway. Planning meetings set with Department of Veterans Affairs officials to discuss efforts to conduct a VFW- VA Facebook Live event centered around "Combatting Veteran Homelessness" scheduled for September. National leadership attended the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Weekly COVID-19 briefing for VSOs. **Operations** VFW representatives met with Department of South Carolina student veteran rep to discuss their support for the upcoming second annual 22Kfor22 Ruck March on Sept. 19, 2020, in Florence, South Carolina. This annual event is held to raise awareness for mental health and addiction issues that affect our veterans, ultimately resulting in us losing 22 of our heroes each day. Also met with **Remington Hotels** who have immediate openings for veterans and spouses at numerous locations across the country. **National Veterans Service** National Veterans Service spoke with the VA Office of Inspector General regarding the implementation of the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act*. During the discussion, NVS raised concerns over losing optics on benefit decisions due to the abrupt elimination of pre-decisional review for VSOs. NVS continued its planning for virtual training conferences in the fall. Students required to attend the virtual Advanced Skill Level Training (VASLT) have started to confirm participation for next month's online training conference. NVS joined the Toyota Veterans Association to brief on veterans' benefits, providing a quality baseline for TVA leadership in advance of a more in-depth briefing to TVA membership this October. NVS continued to provide virtual benefits briefings to transitioning service members, this week participating in events for Washington Navy Yard and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. **National Security & Foreign Affairs** National Security and Foreign Affairs staff is reaching out virtually to the legislative staffs of House and Senate conferees for the *2021 National Defense Authorization Act* to continue advocating for the following amendments and issues: **Concurrent Receipt** - The VFW is disappointed that expansion of concurrent receipt was not included in either version of the NOAA, and will continue to pursue concurrent receipt improvements to ultimately ensure full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

MTF Restructuring/Medical Billet Cuts-The VFW supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 715 and Sec. 716. We understand COVID-19 has forced a delay to MRS reform efforts, but we believe legislation is needed to ensure both MTF restructuring and proposed medical billet cuts allow for transparency, greater DOD reporting requirements, and congressional oversight. **Military Pay Raise** - The VFW is pleased that both the House and Senate are reinforcing the fundamental comparability principle with a 3% raise for FY2021. We will continue to address restoration of 2.6% in accumulated losses from pay raises that lagged Employment Cost Index between 2014 and 2016 in our

recommendations for future budgets. **TRICARE Waiver Authority during National Emergencies** - The VFW supports S. 4049, Sec. 723. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated it is crucial to authorize DOD to waive or modify TRICARE policy or regulation during a declared national emergency. **TRICARE Extended Care Health Option Program-The** VFW supports

H.R. 6395, Sec. 706. It is important to align TRICARE ECHO program coverage with state Medicaid waivers, consistent with recommendations from the 2015 MCRMC report. **Addition of Three Agent Orange Presumptives** -The VFW supports S. 4049, Sec. 1090B. Bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism meet the scientific threshold to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange. These presumptives will extend crucial care and benefits to tens of thousands of veterans. **Last Minutes**

thoughts: First: For District Commanders! Membership Retention packages have all been priority mailed, with tracking, to you. If you did not receive a package, please notify Retention Chairman Robbie Clark immediately. The packages contain files for every post in your district to assist in retaining prior members. Second: What with COVID 19 being a huge topic these days, we all may need to think about planning our time, as best we can, to get jobs done. That includes not only what we do for the VFW, but how we plan other taskings. Ever feel there is never enough time for getting everything done these days? Here is a decent way to generally plan time both at home and helping at VFW Posts, Districts and Department levels or other organizational support work:

1. Regular time (should take about 65% of your available time) i.e. Primary taskings that are NOT delegated. You are the one that does it.
2. Routine time (should take about 10%) i.e., Work that CAN BE delegated ("Son, please mow the lawn")
3. Special time (should take about 10%) i.e., This does not directly support any home or organizational missions i.e., Maybe take a rest break!!
4. Creative time (should take about 15%) i.e., Doing something that results in improvement: at borne, in supporting other issues, in yourself/spouse/children,etc.



OKLAHOMA VFW RIDERS GROUP





VFW RIDERS OF OKLAHOMA STATE RALLY



A great opportunity to meet Fellow VFW Riders from across the State.



Come and ride some of Oklahoma's most scenic roadway's

Sept 18-20, 2020

Sequoyah State Park

For Reservations contact

Western Hills Lodge

918-772-2545 19808 Park 10

Hulbert OK. 74441

Be sure to mention that you are with the VFW Riders.

FROM THE VETERANS & MILITARY SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

Tony McGrew

Hello Comrades, I know some of you were not able to attend one of the 2 Schools of Instruction that our Department scheduled and presented to our members this month. If you missed these, you missed a great time and a lot good of information. Below is a general outline of the VMS Programs.

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 4 distinct stand-alone programs.

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



We will cover these programs individually and in more detail throughout the year. If you have any questions about any of these programs, please let me know.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

September 10th and 11th - Tinker AFB 24 hour (1100-1100) POW-MIA – 9/11 Vigil Run/ Walk. We need volunteers to stand up for this event and possibly work a booth as needed. We are sponsoring this event and if you want to get in on the action and help please let me know. We also need a Post to step up and volunteer to do a MAP grant. I will send out more information on this as soon as it is made available.

All for One; One for All

Tony McGrew

State VMS Chair

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

1103 N. Blackwelder

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

405-820-6467

Tony.vfw8706@gmail.com

<https://www.vfwoklahoma.org>

District Meetings for 2020: "Any Changes or corrections to Districts meetings, please notify the State Adjutant ASAP."

D-1 > 14 Nov 20 @ 1100 > Post 5307, Salina>
D-3 > 01 Nov 20 @ 1100 > Post 8384, Muldrow
D-4 > 07 Nov 20 @ 1100 > Post 5805, Ft. Towson
D-5 > 01 Nov 20 @ 1000 > Post # 2976, Claremore
D-7 > 07 Nov 20 @ 11 am > Post # 539 Henryetta
D-8 > 01 Nov 20 @ 11am > Post # 2855, Blackwell
D-9 > TBD
D-10 >12 Sep 20 @ 10 am> Post #9969, Del City > Sr. Vice CDR. Bassett/Surgeon Stacy Reddig
D-13 >TBD 20 @
D-14 >14 Nov 20 @11 am > Post #4574, Ardmore>
D-15 >12 Sep 20 @11 am> Post # 4876, Altus > Commander Mike Merit

DATES TO REMEMBER:

02 Sep> V-J Day: Japan signed Formal Surrender (1945)
07 Sep> Labor Day
11 Sep> Patriot Day & National Day of Service and Remembrance
17 Sep> U.S. Constitution Approved (1787)
18 Sep> POW/MIA Recognition Day
18 Sep> U.S. Air Force Established (1947)
23 Sep> Post & District Service Officer Training, Post 5263, Ft. Sill. 1730hrs
29 Sep> VFW Day: VFW Established (1899)

SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING

September 12, 2020, 12:30pm, VFW Post 9969, Del City (following District 10 Meeting)
September 14, 2020, 1:00pm, VFW Post 6143, Weatherford
September 16, 2020, 10:00am, VFW Post 8384, Muldrow
September 21, 2020, 5:30pm, VFW Post 1320, Sapulpa
September 23, 2020, 5:30pm, VFW Post 5263, Ft. Sill/Lawton

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch has laid down a challenge to all VFW Posts for the month of September 2020!

Although many of our VFW Posts are unable to operate in the accustomed manner during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the VFW is not about to stop our mission to assist our nation's veterans, and for that we must focus on membership, namely recruiting and retaining members!

For the month of September 2020, the Post in each membership division that recruits, renews, and reinstates the most Annual members will receive a \$500 stipend deposited into the Post account!

In addition, each Department with a winning Post will receive a matching \$500.00 to be deposited into the Department Fund to be used as needed by the Department. If a Department has more than one winning Post, they can receive this award multiple times!

We know that a strong membership base is how we will move forward as an organization, guided by ***20/20 VISION FOR VETERANS!***



Membership totals will be based on close-of-business totals on August 31st to September 30th.