

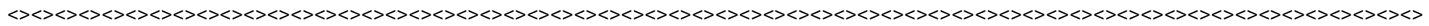


Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101

405 850-0815/ www.vfwoklahoma.org



November 2022

2022-2023 Series

"It's about how we treat our veterans every single day of the year. It's about making sure they have the care they need and the benefits that they've earned when they come home. It's about serving all of you as well as you've served the United States of America"

Barack Obama



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

General Orders No. 05 2022-2023 Series

1. Department Directory/Roster: Department Directory has been updated to reflect new State Officers. The updated directory can be found in the "members only" section of the Department website at www.vfwoklahoma.org. Please inform the State Adjutant of any errors at vfwokadj@outlook.com.

2. Trustee's Report of Audit: Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure, "Duty of Trustees." Trustees Report of Audit must be completed in detail at the close of each quarter, one of which ends Dec 31, 2022. Commanders are reminded that accurate and complete records shall be kept by all person handling Post funds, including the Club Manager, Bingo Chairman and VFW Riders Groups. These records shall be audited by Post Trustees in the same manner as Post Quartermaster and Adjutant. 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 email to vfwhqokqm@outlook.com

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JEREMY OWEN
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /

Andrea Melcher
Adjutant

*Commander
Jeremy Owen*

Comrades,

Another month has come and gone! I really enjoyed seeing the support and participation with our first ever Officer Training School and then Fall Fest. We now have a base to really make OTS a great training yearly. I just came back from North Carolina after attending the Southern Conference this year. To say that I am pumped for Oklahoma to host next year is an understatement. If you are interested in helping to coordinate or help, get ready for it, please don't hesitate to email anyone at state or the chairman Mike Merit.

As of October 31, 2022, our department is 14th in the nation and 1st in Southern Conference in membership! This is outstanding! We need to keep pushing! Right now, is the time to really step it up and not slow down. Please look for NCM Watts' and my, recruiting incentive that is going to be published with this month's general orders. Together there is \$1500 worth of incentives coming from us personally! So, I would encourage all of you to try to recruit at least one member.

Remember that we have many dates of remembrance coming up this month along with several District meetings. I hope to see many of you at these events and meetings.

Please remember that as one we may achieve things, but together we can achieve greatness!

We are TEAM OKLAHOMA.

Jeremy J Owen
Dept of Oklahoma
State Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Senior Vice Commander

Erica Traxler

Department Convention Chairman

ByLaws Co-Chairman

Women's Mentorship Chair

Student Veterans of America Liaison

Citizenship Education Chair

Comrades,

I hope this month's general orders finds you well. Fall Festival is complete and now I want to gather information from you about how your stay was. Please send me information if your room was not clean and what your preferences are. I will be working with the hotel to fix any and all issues that happened at Fall Festival. I had a great time overall and hope you did also. It is always great spending time with everyone that attends.

Southern Conference was great. I met new people, had fun with friends, and learned many things. We have a Southern Conference website: vfwoklahoma.org. There is a fillable registration form, a link to reserve your hotel space, and the sponsorship/vendor packet. Please go out into your community and help us get sponsors and vendors for this event. I would like for people to remember their time in Oklahoma as positive and wonderful experience. I also want them to come back, to tell others about how Oklahoma held Southern Conference. I hope we can count on you and your support in this opportunity. If you have any questions about how you can help please reach out to Mike Merit or anyone on the committee and ask your questions.

I would like to continue this challenge for every person to check out other meetings within your district and across the state. I learned more about what I could be doing and what I should not be doing by visiting other meetings. Maybe something that is happening at their meeting would be largely beneficial to the members of your post and community. There are many opportunities to learn, this is just one way.

Our second Women's Mentorship meeting was great. We had a much-needed conversation about not being alone in the world and how we have each other for support. This is not only important for women, but also for all comrades. If you need something, please reach out, even if it is just to talk to someone. I will make time for you as will others.

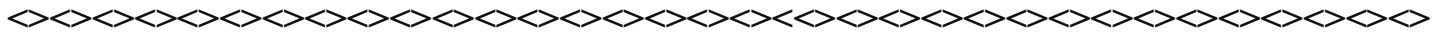
Oklahoma VFW Foundation

I got an opportunity to discuss our foundation while at Southern Conference and it was great. I am reaching out to a couple different people for assistance in writing grants and helping our foundation be the best it can be for Oklahoma.

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.

I really appreciate each and every one of you. I always look forward to seeing you and spending time together. I feel blessed to be able to represent Oklahoma in this position and hope to find your support next year as the State Commander. 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
989-239-5999
ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com



***State Surgeon
Jeff Harris***

Comrades,

Please remember to get your hospital reports in. You may send those to the hospital Chairman, George Keck @ George.keck@yahoo.com. I would like to wish all of you a happy Veteran's Day!

Jeff Harris
State Surgeon
VFW OK
Vfw_1098@yahoo.com

National Council Member
Curt Watts

Fellow Oklahoma VFW Members, upon the writing of this article many of our VFW and Auxiliary members attended the Southern Conference in Ashville, N.C. All three of our National Chair Officers were there, Chief Tim Borland, Sr. Vice Chief Duane Sarmiento, and Jr. Vice Chief Al Lipphardt. Adjutant General Dan West and Quartermaster General Marc Garduno were also present.

During Chief Borland's message to us during the banquet his emphasis continued to be membership. I must agree with the Chief that we as an organization MUST continue to push membership. We must stay strong if we want to continue to have a solid voice on Capitol Hill. State Commander Jeremy Owen and I will be announcing our own membership incentive for November and December. If you or your post has yet to recruit a member, please do not hesitate to ask for help with brochures, etc. then get out there and RECRUIT. Over half of our Posts within Oklahoma have yet to recruit one member into their Post.

Miss Sharon and I want to wish each and every one of you a Happy Thanksgiving. It is this time of the year that we should reflect on the blessings we have. We both consider our VFW/VFW Auxiliary family as a blessing to us.

Current VFW National Topics and Issues:

Admin Operations:

- There are currently 62 Posts under suspension; one of which is new with four suspensions lifted since last week. We have instituted two and are working to institute two new Posts; we have completed one and are working one Post consolidation; we are working one charter surrender; we are working six and have completed two charter revocations pursuant to Sections 201, 209, 210 and 212 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,787 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 17 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 23 administrative actions and eight membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 48 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review. Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately two weeks.

VFW Foundation

- As a reminder, from now until Nov. 11, 2022, BURGER KING® franchise restaurants are raising funds in support of the VFW's Unmet Needs program. Now in its 16th year, the annual campaign encourages BURGER KING® customers to donate

at the drive through by rounding up to the nearest dollar or donate \$1 or more in the inside dining room. Since 2007, BURGER KING® franchisees have raised more than \$6.9 million in support of the program. 700+ BURGER KING® franchisee locations are participating in this year's campaign. [Find a participating BURGER KING® restaurant near you.](#)

National Legislative Service

- President Biden signed into law two VFW-supported bills. The [Solid Start Act](#) requires the VA to reach out to newly separated veterans three times within their first year of separation to check in and help connect them to VA programs and benefits. It is open to all newly separated veterans regardless the type or characterization of service. Finally, [Supporting Families of the Fallen Act](#) will increase the automatic maximum coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance from \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00.
- The VA will now allow certain survivors of LGBTQ+ veterans to apply for survivor benefits, such as Survivors Pension or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Due to past bans on same-sex marriages and previous VA marriage requirements, many survivors of LGBTQ+ veterans were not eligible for survivor benefits. Surviving spouses can now establish they had a "marriage-type" relationship by providing documents such as joint banking statements, joint purchase of a house, tax returns, insurance forms, lay statements, and more. These benefits are not retroactive, but those eligible who apply in the next year will receive benefits backdated to Oct.11, 2022. Contact a [VFW Service Officer](#) for assistance filing for benefits. [Learn more.](#)
- The VFW currently [supports 175 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, PMurray@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Bliss, Texas, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, Fort Hood, Texas, Joint Base Myer, Virginia, Naval Support Activity Annapolis, Maryland, and Joint Based Anacostia Bolling, D.C.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge Joint Base Lewis McChord representatives conducted evening outreach at a special evening career expo.

- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives participated in the Marine Corps Base Quantico Career/Education/Transition event for transitioning service members and FBI Academy personnel.
- NVS health leadership met with the VA Program executive for the Electronic Health Records Modernization Integration Office and discussed concerns and way ahead for the program.
- VFW's National Capitol Regions Benefits Office staff conducted an initial outreach and claims service event in conjunction with the Alexandria, Virginia based CBOC. Which will be a normal monthly activity.
- VFW's National Service Office staff (Kansas City) conducted outreach and benefits assistance at an event for first responders and veterans at DuckHorn Outdoor Adventures.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci, RGallucci@vfw.org.

Curt Watts
National Council of Administration 2022-26
Oklahoma
vfwokncm@outlook.com
405.590.8577

Training and Development
Bylaws and Resolution Committee

Jim Bassett

All of the members of a post are important to its success. It does not matter if you are a member of a post officer. Having on understanding of what a post is supposed to do helps you understand how to make the post successful. Article II has so much information in it! Article II for the bylaws start on page 13, while the Manual of Procedures starts on 67. Article II covers the officers needed and what they their duties are. It also breaks down the meeting types and what can be discussed. It further explains who can speak or vote.

Article II of Our Bylaws and Manual of Procedures state:

Section. 201 - Formation, Institution and Chartering.

Section. 202 - Bylaws. Posts *shall*, by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting adopt Bylaws provided each member has been notified at least twenty days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed Bylaws.

Section. 203- Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Section. 204

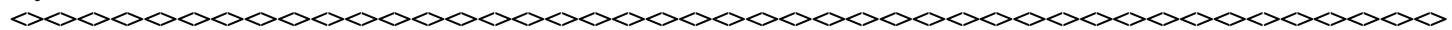
Section. 205 - Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day, or Time.

- Section. 206 - Post Admission Fees and Dues.**
- Section. 207**
- Section. 208 - Change of Name.**
- Section. 209 - Consolidation of Posts.**
- Section. 210 - Surrender of Charter.**
- Section. 211 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter.**
- Section. 212 - Defunct Posts.**
- Section. 213 - Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions.**
- Section. 214 - Solicitation of Funds.**
- Section. 215 - Eligibility to Office.**
- Section. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**
- Section. 217 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**
- Section. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.**
- Section. 219 - Relief Fund.** A relief fund will be established and maintained by the Posts.
- Section. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**
- Section. 221 - Voting.**
- Section. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.**
- Section. 223 - Commemorative Dates.**

Mentoring:

Did you know that other people watch what you do? They observe and learn both good and bad traits. Negative attitudes grow faster than positive ones. Are you being a positive mentor with you fellow comrades?

Jim Bassett
 Chairman
 Training & Development
 Bylaws & Resolution



***Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen & Teacher of the Year Chairman
 Mike Devenitch***

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS: The deadline for essay was October 31st, 2022.

Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen - Deadlines

- October 31, Student entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging

Work with your district commander and district essay chairman to ensure timely judging.
 2022-2023 topics are: **Voice of Democracy (VOD)** audio-essay program theme is - “**Why Is The Veteran Important?**”

Patriot’s Pen (PP) youth essay “**My Pledge to Our Veterans.**”

If you have any questions or need help, please contact me! *(No cell phone coverage November 10-25, 2022)* I will still be up on email. Don't forget to get your auxiliary involved.

See [Youth Scholarships](#)

Voice of Democracy Judging Criteria

Contestants are judged on the following criteria:

Originality (possible 30 pts.) Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content (possible 35 pts.) Ideas are expressed clearly and in an organized manner.

Delivery (possible 35 pts.) Speaking voice is clear and credible.

Patriot's Pen (PP) Judging: How Am I Judged?

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points: You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 35 points: Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points: Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

Remember: Essay Entries for Post to District (for both Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen)

1-15 essays – One (1) entry to District

16-30 essays – Two (2) entries

31-45 essays – Three (3) entries

TEACHER OF THE YEAR (ToY): 2022-2023 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship

Education Teacher Award: The deadline October 31st, but we have lots of flexibility on this award. Please email me if you plan to submit an entry. Every school has a special teacher that is doing something extra so built a team (school/town/post) to work on the package! We are back to 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 was by midnight, Oct. 31. Submit all nominations to me. Remember: Help make your teacher, your post, district and the state shine with a win!

Michael H. Devenitch

VOD/PP/ToY Chairman

(405) 819-9914. 4224

Manhattan Dr. Moore, OK, 73160

sentrymike@yahoo.com

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
- SVA Students Veterans of America

* 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 hand out.

* 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 on line at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

Posts, Please report all MAP Grant Applications and Acceptance, any VFW Program and Community 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.

If you have not yet reviewed the report National has sent out on the list of Unit Adoptions. Please do so and let me know if there are any changes, additions or comments.

All for One; One for All

Tony McGrew

VMS Chair

405-820-6467

Tony.vfw8706@gmail.com



John H. Fischer
VFW Oklahoma Foundation
Co-Founder/Secretary-Treasurer

Comrades,

I would like to make you aware of three things as they pertain to the Oklahoma VFW Foundation.

First, did you know that the Oklahoma VFW Foundation will help your Post (or any organization for that matter) who provides Oklahoma military veteran funeral honor guard services? At this time, the assistance is only \$25 per qualifying service. We understand that isn't much, but the amount is based on available funding and let's face it, every little bit helps. Plus, an Honor Guard organization can apply for and receive this grant up to six times during a calendar year, making the total grant up to \$150 per year. Currently, only VFW Post 3649 in Wilburton has taken advantage of this program. If you are interested in ensuring this program continues, when making a donation to the Foundation, indicate you want the funds dedicated for Honor Guard use only.

Second, there is some confusion on the Oklahoma VFW Foundation's ability to do pass through donations. This is something the Foundation is willing to do for Posts, Districts, or even the Department and their Auxiliaries. However, first determine if a pass through is even needed. Donations made to the VFW or its Auxiliary are tax deductible and may not need the 501(c)(3) status of the Foundation. However, if the donor will only allow this donation to go through a 501(c)(3), the Foundation is willing to try to assist. Because the Foundation will ultimately be responsible for any compliance or reporting requirements that come with the donation, the actual application or request should come from the Foundation through one of its authorized officers. We expect that the entity who will be receiving the donation will assist with that application and with any subsequent reporting. However, no one is authorized to apply using the Foundation's information other than an authorized representative. Also, some grants require detailed registration information. If the Foundation does not have the specific information the donor is requesting, we will make a good faith effort to get that information but if we are not able to with our volunteer staff, we apologize. For example, a recent request for a pass through required a SAMS number from sam.gov. The Foundation was unable to meet that requirement.

Finally, remember that there are only a small number of people actively helping the Foundation, and they are doing so between other full time jobs. We are all volunteers doing the best that we can to serve our Brothers and Sisters in arms. The Foundation is truly about service before self, no one gets paid, no one gets reimbursed for personal expenses. Those who have been helping

and volunteering their time, money and abilities have been doing so purely with a “service before self” mentality and we thank every single person who has helped.



John H. Fischer
Co-Founder
Secretary-Treasurer
405-443-7265
okvfwfoundation@outlook.com
www.okvfwfoundation.org

Billy Stone
VFW Riders Chairman

Greeting Comrades and Fellow Riders,

The Oklahoma VFW Riders is starting to grow. I have had several inquiries from individuals interested in starting a Group either at the Post's and District's levels. So hopefully we will continue to grow, which can help the VFW membership. I'd like to welcome Post 577 and Post 8706 Riders Group and looking forward to meeting everyone and hope to get some riding in. There will be a VFW Riders State meeting November 19th at 11:00 am. We will be meeting at the Hill Church 2928 Woodlawn Dr. Moore, Ok. All riders are welcome and anyone wanting more info on starting up a group to sit in.

Oklahoma was represented at this years Operation Daily Battle Rally held this year in Bossier City La. There were Riders from Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas and Colorado. We raised \$12,000.00 to go towards the Unmet Needs and for Suicide Awareness Training. Next years Rally will be in Texas and the following year it will be up to Oklahoma to host it. The ODB Committee which is made up of the State Chairmen from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana would like for each states Department to recommend a VFW or Auxiliary Member to get the Train the Trainer training for Suicide Awareness. Then they can pass their knowledge on and help more people to able to identify the signs of someone in need. This training will be reimbursed by the money raised in the ODB Rally. This can be a good thing and my hope is that we can get more people involved to and be able to reach more people.

Billy Stone
VFW Riders Chairman

Recruiting Banners! Recruiting Tablecloths!

Customizable 7-foot-tall banner. Can order either Oklahoma or city with Post and number. Comes with four-point stand or ground stake. Approximately \$190 plus shipping

Tablecloth, 6-foot black with post number, Auxiliary and VFW logos. \$200 plus shipping.



These items are offered at cost and shipping.

Contact Jim Bassett, bassettj15@yahoo.com