



*Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars*



P.O Box 369, Choctaw, OK 73020
580 515-0567/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

February 2026

2025-2026 Series

"K.I.S.S." —Kelly Johnson, Lockheed

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

General Orders No. 08

2025-2026 Series

1. Attention is directed to Section 213 of the National Bylaws concerning any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings; County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

2. Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees. Among the duties of the three (3) elected Post Trustees, they shall:
 - a. At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.

 - b. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant and any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.

 - c. The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.

 - d. Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

3. Proof of Eligibility Requirements for Officers: All Posts, Districts and Departments should be reminded of the provisions of Sections 216, 416, and 516 of the Manual of Procedure that officers, elected and appointed, shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.
4. District Meetings Dates & Changes: District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org of any changes to district meetings including new dates for District meetings.

/os/
Jeff Harris
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /
Heidi Teeter
Adjutant

Commander Jeff Harris

Hello TEAM OKLAHOMA

Well comrades, winter is here and it has been COLD and icy. Please do buddy checks with people that live around you that may need help. Just a little caring goes a long way. A cup of coffee and a hello how are you doing goes a long way.

Membership is going well. We are at the time of year where we want to stay in the house and keep warm. If there is a post that needs help with members that are having rough times, then let us know and their dues will be paid. I am still offering to help a post out with paying for three new members. All a post needs to do is send applications to HQs. If a post or district wants to have a membership drive, let me know so I can be there to help. Sometimes all it takes is to call or visit a member and if everything is ok.

The Mid-Winter meeting is coming up soon and I know a lot of you have seen that the Hotel has had some water coming down from the ceiling. We are talking to the Hotel, and they are working on the damage and say we will still have our meeting there, but if anything changes, we will let everyone know. Our Commander-in-chief Carol Whitmore will be the National Rep., and I hope everyone shows up to show Chief Whitmore that TEAM OKLAHOMA supports her. We will honor the VOD and PP winners along with the teachers.

The Washington meeting is coming up in March. We will be going there to talk to our Senators and Congressmen about what we would want to see them do to help the Veterans in the State of Oklahoma. we will also hear the Commander -in-Chiefs testimony to the President.

T.E.A.M. Oklahoma,

Jeff Harris

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew

“Happy February and a Happy Valentines Day”

Comrades, I am curious, is the Oklahoma VFW headed in the right direction?

As the grass roots of our organization, I believe you are the most qualified to answer this question!

The **Grass Roots** of an organization is where Decisions are made by members closely connected to the issue, often countering top-down, established power structures.

The Grass Roots of an organization are mostly responsible for organizing and building a base of

people (veterans), which is considered essential for long-term, sustained change and growth. As the grass roots we operate on a volunteer basis, **driven by individuals who directly experienced the issues** we aim to solve.

Grass Roots Methods can range from local meetings, petitions, membership drives various community outreach initiatives', using social and local media for broader, local and statewide impact.

If you believe we are not on track, I urge you to get involved in your Post and District activities. Internally and externally support one another as you are led, as you are the change agent we need. Please Be Positive.

Let leadership know any positive recommendations to better serve one another and our Veterans.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Sincerely,

Tony McGrew

State Senior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Candidate for State Commander

Junior Vice Commander Larry Hurd

Hello from the paw-paw patch. I hope everyone made it through the ice and snow with no problems. The majority of the roads are now clear of the ice and snow so the driving should be better.

The District 10 meeting at Post 7192 was great. The District Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen and Teacher of the Year winners were all at the District meeting and were presented with their awards. Gordon Wheeler was also at the District 10 meeting and he is looking well; it was good to see him.

I have been to two district meetings this month and my third district meeting will be Saturday, February 7th at VFW Post 5263, Fort Sill.

As everyone has heard, the Embassy Suites hotel has had a problem with a large water leak. The Department Adjutant Heidi Teeter has been in constant contact with the hotel. She has been assured that all of the work will be completed and the VFW conference will not be affected. Adjutant Teeter will advise the VFW membership of any changes. The answer to February's GO trivia is Alaska.

Remember the Mid-Winter conference will be February 21st through 23rd. The National Commander, Carol Whitmore, will be the National Representative and National Adjutant General, Dan West, will also be at our conference. The schedule will be posted so if you haven't been to a Department of Oklahoma Conference or Convention try and make plans to be at one day of the three-day event even if it is just to meet some old comrades and meet new ones.

Also, I am a candidate for the Department of Oklahoma Senior Vice Commander position.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Junior Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

*State Surgeon
Deric Duncan*

To All Posts, Districts, Officers, and Members:

As we move through the winter months and prepare for our upcoming Midwinter Conference, I want to take a moment to address the health, safety, and strength of our organization.

Cold weather brings increased risk, including seasonal illness, hazardous travel conditions, and added strain on our members and their families. We are also facing a confirmed measles outbreak, which makes basic preventive measures more important than ever. I strongly encourage all members to practice good hygiene, wash your hands regularly, cover coughs and sneezes, and most importantly, remain home if you are feeling unwell. Protecting one another is not a weakness. It is a responsibility.

Our greatest strength in this organization has always been each other.

In service, we leaned on those beside us regardless of whether we knew them, agreed with them, or even liked them. We relied on one another because survival, success, and mission came first. That same principle must guide us here. This organization is strengthened when veterans stand with veterans, cohesive, united, and committed to one another.

If not for the veterans in this organization, none of us would stand. Our mission is simple and unwavering: to care for, respect, and treat all veterans as brothers and sisters in arms.

At the opening of every meeting, we are reminded to set aside petty jealousies and trivial personalities. Those words matter. If we cannot live by them, then we do not deserve the honor of wearing the Cross of Malta.

Do not be the member who seeks to tear down a comrade in arms.
Be the member who, regardless of differences, lifts up all who serve and have served.

Take care of yourselves. Take care of each other. That is how we remain strong.

Respectfully,

Deric Duncan

State Surgeon
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
"Bring the Spark, Ignite the Flame"

Adjutant/Quartermaster

Heidi Teeter

Comrades,

Welcome to 2026, I hope this year brings peace and harmony to all comrades and within the VFW.

Mid-Winter is February 20-22 at the Norman Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center. I have been in constant contact with the hotel and have been assured that the damage and any ongoing repairs will not affect our event. The safety of our members, both VFW and Auxiliary, is my utmost concern and if at any time I feel that it will be in jeopardy, I will take my concerns to the VFW C of A, and THEY will make a decision. If this happens, I will notify the membership immediately.

The deadline to order banquet tickets is the end of the day, Sunday, February 8th. They can be ordered online [here](#), if you wish to pay by check you can use the order form. The agenda has been included in these GOs.

As Commander Harris stated above, Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore will be our National representative. I hope we can have a good turnout and give CIC Whitmore a warm Oklahoma welcome.

The Department Headquarters is open for business. We do not have it fully furnished yet, but we are working on it. The physical address is 14617 NE 20th St, Choctaw, OK 73020. The **mailing is PO Box 369, Choctaw, OK 73020.**

We are approaching election season, I want to remind all posts, officer and post delegate elections are **to be done in APRIL.** I will have delegate strength out in April; this will include the delegate fees. Next month I will be sending out the delegate worksheets. There will be **two** different ones. I will have one for **state** delegates and National has one for the **National** delegates. It is the post quartermaster's responsibility to ensure the post delegates are registered with National. If you want me to do your post delegate registration for National you **MUST** tell me and send the appropriate National dues.

I will be working on getting my portion of the Department dashboard reporting done in the coming weeks. Again, if you need anything please reach out.

Charlie Mike,

Heidi Teeter

State Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Judge Advocate Randy Traxler

Comrades,

As we approach our upcoming Mid-Winter Conference, I want to extend a warm welcome to each of you. This gathering is an important opportunity for fellowship, shared purpose, and continued commitment to the good governance of our Department and Posts.

One of the most important responsibilities we carry as leaders is ensuring that our work is grounded in clear, fair, and well-understood rules. Our Bylaws are not simply administrative documents; they are the foundation that protects the integrity of our organization, ensures consistency across Posts, and preserves the trust of our membership.

In my role as Department Judge Advocate, I want you to know that I am always available to assist comrades in understanding and applying our governing documents. Whether you have questions about procedure, proposed amendments, committee responsibilities, disciplinary processes, or Post operations, I encourage you to bring those questions forward.

Mid-Winter Conference is the perfect time to have respectful and productive discussions about bylaws and how we can strengthen our organization through clarity, compliance, and shared understanding.

Please do not hesitate to approach me during the conference or reach out in advance. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you, hear your concerns, and help ensure we are all working from the same strong foundation.

Thank you for all you do in service to veterans, your Posts, and the Department.

I look forward to seeing you at Mid-Winter Conference.

Respectfully and fraternally,

Randy Traxler

Judge Advocate
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Chaplain Marcus King

Comrades,

As we move into the new year, I want to thank every Post, Auxiliary, and member who stepped up during the holiday season. Many of you checked on veterans, supported families, delivered meals, and made sure no one was left on their own during a time that can be difficult for many. Your efforts matter, and they reflect the heart of who we are as an organization.

Our Mid-Winter Conference is coming up in February, and I want to encourage you to attend if you're able. These gatherings give us a chance to sit down together, strengthen our connections, and talk face-to-face about the work ahead. We get more done when we're in the same room, but just as important is the time spent listening to one another and supporting each other as comrades and friends.

I also want to remind everyone about the **Chaplain of the Year Award**, which was established to recognize one chaplain whose service stands out in an exceptional way. This award honors a chaplain who consistently fulfills their duties, maintains a professional and respectful presence, and provides meaningful support to comrades and their families. Nominations open at Mid-Winter, and District and Post Commanders are encouraged to submit the name of a chaplain whose service deserves recognition. Nominations must be submitted to the State Chaplain by **April 1st** and should be no more than one typed page explaining why the nominee's service stands out. The selected recipient will be honored at the Annual State Convention in June.

As we continue forward, I want to offer a reminder that sits at the center of everything we do: our first responsibility is to our families. The work we do in our Posts and communities is important, but it cannot replace the people who rely on us at home. When our families are steady, we are steady—and the rest of our work follows from that.

I encourage every member to keep looking after one another. A phone call, a visit, or a simple check-in can make a real difference. Stay connected, stay present, and continue being a positive force in your communities.

In service and support,

Marcus King

State Chaplain
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

 vfwokchaplain@outlook.com

 405.651.5509

Training and Development *Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett*

Subject: Budget Line Justification – Tiger Training Teams (Travel & Training Support)

FY: 26-27

Proposed Motion

I move that the Department of Oklahoma establish and fund a dedicated budget line titled 'Tiger Training Teams – Travel & Training Support' in the amount of \$7,000 annually, with mileage reimbursement not to exceed \$0.40 per mile per traveling officer, that Course Of Action A instruction be delivered by validated District leaders or designated Department representatives, that Course Of Action B and Course Of Action C instruction be delivered by Department Training & Development

Committee members or Committee-validated Subject Matter Experts, and that deployments follow the approved COA framework under oversight of the Training & Development Committee.

Definition – Tiger Training Teams

Tiger Training Teams are small, experienced groups of VFW officers assembled on a temporary basis to deliver targeted training, mentorship, and corrective support to Posts based on identified needs. The term Tiger Team is used in its widely recognized military and professional sense. It is not an acronym and does not represent a standing committee or inspection authority.

Key Clarifications

- Does not replace School of Instruction or Officer Training
- Supportive, not punitive
- Needs-based deployment, not routine
- Training, guidance, and best practices only
- No discipline, enforcement, inspection, or audit authority
- Does not supersede Post, District, or Department authority
- All command authority remains with elected leadership
- Observations are advisory only

Purpose

To establish and fund a dedicated budget line supporting Tiger Training Teams for statewide officer training, leadership development, compliance remediation, and operational support while maintaining fiscal discipline.

Background

Oklahoma VFW Posts are geographically dispersed and vary widely in leadership experience, operational complexity, and risk exposure. Training requirements extend across governance, finance, canteen operations, membership systems, ritual, leadership transitions, and compliance.

Historically, training delivery relied on informal travel and ad hoc requests, resulting in inconsistent guidance, preventable deficiencies, and inefficient use of Department resources. The Tiger Training Team model formalizes training delivery by aligning who delivers training, how it is delivered, and when travel is justified.

Courses of Action (COAs) – Training-Agnostic Framework

COA A – District-Centered Engagement

Purpose: Routine training, mentorship, and leadership development delivered locally.

Delivery: In-person instruction at District meetings or District-hosted events, supported by digital materials.

Authorized Instructors: Validated District leaders or designated Department representatives traveling to District meetings.

Best used for: New officer orientation, meeting operations, ritual, committees, leadership transitions, membership systems, and baseline compliance refreshers.

COA B – Regional Focused Training

Purpose: Standardized delivery of complex, high-risk, or policy-sensitive topics.

Delivery: Regional hub events with required digital prerequisites; sessions may be recorded for reuse.

Authorized Instructors: Department Training & Development Committee members or Committee-validated Subject Matter Experts.

Best used for: Advanced financial management, canteen and house operations, governance and bylaws, trustee audits, employment issues, and conflict resolution.

COA C – Digital-First with Targeted On-Site Support

Purpose: Risk-driven, corrective, or commander-requested assistance.

Delivery: Digital instruction by default; on-site engagement only when justified by audit findings, operational risk, or leadership request.

Authorized Instructors: Department Training & Development Committee members or Committee-validated Subject Matter Experts.

Best used for: Audit remediation, incident response, high-risk or failing Posts, and Judge Advocate or Commander-directed support.

Digital Delivery – Definition and Scope

Digital delivery refers to the use of approved online platforms to provide structured training, reinforcement, and follow-up without requiring in-person travel. Digital delivery may include live or recorded sessions conducted via platforms such as **Zoom** or equivalent video-conferencing tools; asynchronous training and knowledge checks delivered through **Google Forms quizzes**, surveys, and worksheets; and ongoing discussion, file sharing, and announcements conducted through **Department-approved Discord servers or similar collaboration platforms**.

Digital delivery is used to reduce travel costs, increase access for geographically dispersed Posts, provide consistent messaging, and create a documented training record. Digital methods may be used

independently or in conjunction with in-person training and are prioritized whenever they meet the training objective effectively.

Respectfully,

Randy Traxler

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Jim Bassett

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year *Jim Bassett*

2025 Oklahoma VFW State Essay winners:

Voice of Democracy Winners:

<u>1st Place</u>	<u>2nd Place</u>	<u>3rd Place</u>
Ehimen Umobuarie District 13 Post 4465 Arapaho Butler HS	Lydia Bullard District 4 Post 3916 Durant HS	Jack Groeneveld District 5 Post 7977 Skiatook HS

Patriot Pen Winners:

<u>1st Place</u>	<u>2nd Place</u>	<u>3rd Place</u>
Cora Peden District 10 Post 1202 Stratford Middle School	Lylith Quesenberry District 4 Post 3916 Durant Middle School	Hartly Howry District 10 Post 9969 Stratford Middle School

Teachers of the Year:

<u>Grade K to 5 – 1st Place</u>	<u>Runner-Up</u>
Lindsey Jones District 5 Post 10099	Jamie Brandt District 7 Post 539

<u>Grade 6 to 8 – 1st Place</u>	<u>Runner-Up</u>
Michael Seales District 8 Post 1201	Tresa Walker District 4 Post 4859

<u>Grades 9 to 12 – 1st Place</u>	<u>Runner-Up</u>
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Justin Wright
District 10
Post 1202

Michael Olvera
District 10
Post 4890

Congratulations to all the winners! First-place winners will now compete at the National Level.

I also want to thank the other committee members, Frank Whitlock, and Mike Devenitch, as well as all of the chair individuals at post and district level for their hard work. This is a great program and recruiting tool.

Jim Bassett

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair
Yours in service,
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Redistricting Deric Duncan

To All Posts, Districts, Officers, and Members:

As Chair of the Redistricting Committee, I want to inform the membership that a new and revised version of the Department redistricting plan is currently being finalized.

This updated plan reflects continued work, feedback, and careful consideration. The revised district map will be released in the upcoming weeks for review.

The purpose of this redistricting effort is straightforward. This map is designed to grow each district and strengthen its ability to function effectively. Stronger districts mean more volunteers, more engaged members, and more veterans willing to step forward to hold office and lead. Most importantly, it means more members standing shoulder to shoulder, building one another up, and ensuring no veteran is left isolated or unheard.

Redistricting is not about lines on a map. It is about creating districts that are sustainable, active, and capable of supporting the mission of this organization now and into the future.

I appreciate the patience and professionalism of the membership as this work continues. Additional information will be shared as the revised plan is released.

Thank you for your continued service and commitment to one another.

Yours in service,

Deric Duncan

MIA/POW Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
"Bring the Spark, Ignite the Flame"

Veterans and Military Support

Jim Bassett

With the holidays behind us, let's look forward to the remainder of our year.

So far this year, we sponsored the 45th Fallen Heroes Memorial Run, Tinker AFB 9/11-POW-MIA Memorial Run, food baskets for Guard member families in need, and at least seven unit Christmas Parties. We also are briefing at the separation/retirement events for the Guard. And we still have more to go.

SportClips will be doing their annual VFW Help-A-Hero Scholarship fundraiser in October. You can use this as major talking point with potential members in uniform. This program has awarded \$195,900 to 47 military recipients in Oklahoma. They have awarded more than \$15 million since 2010. Support this worthy program.

It is our best interest to work with the local units to help them with their events. Support them only if you are willing to put in the effort. VMS can open the door for you, it's up to you to take advantage of it. If you are unsure how to contact a local unit, let me know and I can make the introductions.

Jim Bassett

State VMS Chair
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services

Tony McGrew and Jim Bassett

The VA as well as ODVA have been asking for help. The list below is from the VA Center in Oklahoma City. I'd imagine that the list would be almost identical for the Tulsa area VA as well as the ODVA homes throughout the state.

Personal Care Items:

- Deodorant (men & women)
- Body Wash 3 in 1 (men)
- Body Wash (women)
- Shampoo/Condition or 2 in 1
- Shaving Cream & multi-blade razors
- Hairbrushes and combs
- Denture grip
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes
- Lip Balm
- Lotion
- Beard trimmers/electric razors

Men's Clothing: (NEW ONLY)

- Men's sweatpants (S-4XL)
- Men's T-shirts (S-4XL)
- Men's underwear (M-3XL)
- Men's pajama pants (M-4XL)
- Men's slippers (S-XXL)
- Men's shoes (8-14)
- Belts (all sizes)

Women's Clothing: (NEW ONLY)

- Women's sweatpants (S-XXL)
- Women's underwear (S-XXL)
- Women's sports bra (no wire or clasps) (M-XXXL)
- Women's shirts (preferably loose fitting) (S-XXL)
- Women's slippers (M-XXL)
- Women's shoes (7-10)

Other Miscellaneous items (NEW ONLY)

- Coffee (large cans for coffee program)
- Puzzle Books, Craft Kits, Models
- Adult Coloring Books, Colored pencils
- Adult backpacks
- Packaged snacks/bottles of individual water
- Quilts (used for pinning ceremonies)
- Afghans (given to cancer patients)

SEASONAL ITEMS (NEW ONLY):

- Coats (Men & Women – sizes M-3XL)
- Gloves (preferably warm heavy-duty)
- Stocking cap/beanie
- Face masks/gators
- Hand and Feet warmers
- Tent (1-2 person)
- Thermal underwear (Long-johns)
- Blankets
- Off or bug repellent (summer)

Please ship or drop off items to:
 Oklahoma City VA Health Care System
 CDCE (Voluntary Service) Room GB121
 921 NE 13th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73104
 Questions? 405-456-5162

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans!

We encourage you to volunteer at homes or hospitals. If you are interested in the VA hospital, let us know. Contact Tony McGrew, tony.vfw8706@gmail.com. Or Jim Bassett, bassettj15@yahoo.com.

Tony McGrew

Jim Bassett

State VAVS Chair
 Department of Oklahoma
 Veterans of Foreign Wars

Grant Committee

Deric Duncan

To All Posts, Districts, Officers, and Members:

As Chair of the Grant Writing Committee, I am pleased to share an update on the continued work being done to strengthen our organization through grants and outside funding.

We are fortunate to have a highly capable and dedicated grant writer supporting this effort. Their work, combined with the collaboration of the committee, has allowed us to actively pursue multiple grants that support programs, outreach, and long-term sustainability across the Department.

At this time, we are engaged in several grant applications and development efforts. This work takes time, diligence, and coordination, but it is already positioning us well for continued growth and opportunity.

We look forward to seeing everyone at Midwinter, where the Grant Writing Committee will present a full report on current efforts, progress, and future direction. We are excited about the year ahead and confident in our ability to secure many more grants in the coming year to benefit our Posts, Districts, and the veterans we serve.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to strengthening this organization.

Yours in service,

Deric Duncan

Grant Committee
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
"Bring the Spark, Ignite the Flame"

Veterans Affairs Council

Deric Duncan & Larry Hurd

This information is from the veteran's affairs council meeting on January 5th and other emails from the council secretary. Some information might be a little late do to the national convention.

January 31, 2026

Meeting Minutes,

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lewis at 10:02, Chaplain Howell lead us in the invocation and Sgt. at Arms Jones led us in the pledge of allegiance.

Call of the House: A quorum was present. Member organizations absent: Military Officers Association of America, and Military Order of the Purple Heart. Excused: Air Force Association.

MOTION: was made by Comanche County Veterans Council and seconded by Grady Council Veterans Council to accept the agenda. Motion passed by voice vote.

MOTION: was made by Grady County Veterans Council and seconded by Commanche Council Veterans Council to accept the December 2025, minutes. Motion passed by voice vote.

Recognition of Visitors: Eric Zoelner, State AG's Office

Guest Speaker: Robert Marks, Cedar Ridge. Walley Hubbard, Veterans Honor Flights.

Congressional Liaisons:

Sen. Mark Wayne Mullin: William Barnes: Absent.

Sen. Lankford: Maggie Sharum: Tracy Ferlicka-Provided an email report. Lankford Secures Major Oklahoma Priorities in Final Defense Bill Headed to President Trump's Desk

WASHINGTON, DC — US Senator James Lankford (R-OK), today applauded final Senate passage of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (FY26 NDAA), sending the annual defense bill to President Trump's desk. The legislation strengthens America's national defense, protects critical military missions, and delivers major wins for Oklahoma's service members, defense workforce, and installations.

"The United States military is the most powerful and moral fighting force in the world," said Lankford.

"This year's National Defense Authorization Act not only strengthens Oklahoma's role in national security, but also makes sure our military remains a force no one in the world would ever want to challenge, ever."

Lankford led or secured multiple provisions in this year's defense bill that directly benefit Oklahoma and the nation. As a result of the FY26 NDAA process, the Department of Defense will:

- Support Oklahoma's defense industry and small businesses: Requires the Department of Defense to assess how implementation of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC 2.0) affects small businesses. Lankford has led roundtables bringing DoD officials and Oklahoma defense industry leaders together to ensure accessibility and affordability for small businesses.
- Strengthen US supply chains: Directs the Department of Defense to map and address vulnerabilities in defense supply chains, reducing reliance on adversarial nations like China.
- Advance next-generation air defense technology in Lawton: Supports the Army's investment in high-power microwave (HPM) technologies for drone defense and encourages collaboration with industry at the FISTA innovation park in Lawton near Fort Sill.
- Improve wound care for future combat environments: Requires a strategy for advanced wound management, prevention, and treatment to increase survival rates.
- Expand hiring flexibility for Tinker Air Force Base: Expands Direct Hire Authority to include supporting units at installations, allowing Tinker to fill critical workforce needs across the Air Force Sustainment Center.
- Protect the 552nd Air Control Wing mission at Tinker Air Force Base: Prohibits the Air Force from retiring E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft until additional E-7 Wedgetails are procured or a full plan is in place to close the capability gap and ensure mission readiness.
- Strengthen support for national security chaplains: Builds on Lankford's previous work to ensure the CIA's Chaplain Corps is staffed with cleared, deployable officers and led by a Chief of Chaplains reporting directly to the Director.
- Protect the homeland through border drone threat assessments: Requires the intelligence community and DHS to assess and report on the use of unmanned aircraft systems by malign actors near US borders.
- Counter China's influence in US research institutions: Advances key provisions in Lankford's Countering Adversarial and Malicious Partnerships at Universities and Schools (CAMPUS) Act, which identifies businesses, academic and research institutions, and other entities in the People's Republic of China that provide support to the People's Liberation Army.

- Support innovation and small business partnerships in the Intelligence Community: Authorizes \$75 million for an Intelligence Community Technology Bridge Fund to help small businesses advance promising technologies, strengthen the national security workforce, and maintain US leadership in innovation.

Congressman Hern(1): Madison Johnson: Absent.

Congressman Brecheen(2): Absent.

Congressman Lucas(3): Allison Littrell: Absent.

Congressman Cole(4): Darin McKnight: No report.

Congresswoman Bice(5): Garrett Mason: Absent.

Reports from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:

Report from the OKC VAMC Director: Director Vlosich: Spoke on the VA changing its district location to HSAJ. The new parking garage is ahead of schedule. They received \$50 million in non-recurring maintenance. The Lawton Reynolds clinic space is close to being signed off by all parties.

They are hiring the twelfth PACT Team for Lawton. The new Yukon Clinic has received 28 bids for the new clinic. The Norman Clinic is starting the above groundwork. There are several clinic expansions including the South Clinic and the Shawnee location. There are Dental Clinics going into CBOCs.

Report from Jack C. Montgomery VAMC: Director Denning: Shane Glover was excused.

Report from VARO Muskogee: Heather McKiven: They have reduced the backlog claims to under 100,000. Daily pain medication can now be included in claims.

Secretary John Nash: Was absent.

ODVA Director Jay Bynum: Was absent.

Director of State Accrediting Agency: Dr. Montgomery: Was absent.

Oklahoma Veterans United: Ron Gosdin spoke on their FY started October 1st, they have added staff in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Eagle Ops: Johnathon Shepard was excused. Ryan Nelson was absent.

Dale Graham Veterans Foundation: Taylor Poindexter: Spoke on the Code Veterans Network for Post 911 veterans. They assisted 146 surviving spouses last year.

Volunteers of America; Oklahoma: Dawn Stacy was absent.

American Red Cross: Rebeca McGary: They had a busy December with the troops going home for Christmas.

Veterans Upward Bound: Randy Reynolds: The Oklahoma Veteran Upward Bound programs (RCC, ECU, UCO), in coordination with VR & E has provided Oklahoma Veterans services statewide to 94 Veterans. Due to the Government closure and the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays the VUB programs are down 45% in VUB Veteran assistance. (The Redlands Community College VUB program, YTD [Sept.] provided some form of veteran services for 109 Veterans). The services VUB provides range from career/education assessments and counseling, along with outside referrals such as filing/appealing disability claims or medical/mental health. The VUB goal is to provide critical education support—strengthening our Oklahoma veteran's future and the workforce of Oklahoma.

Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic: James Bidwell was absent

Oklahoma Military Department: 1st Sgt. Riggins: Excused

Reports from the Legislative Committees:

FEDERAL ISSUES: Scott Ellis: written report:

STATE ISSUES: Chairman Lewis: Bill filling has started.

Break: 11:19am. Return: 11:32am.

Call of the House: A quorum was present. Member organizations absent: Military Officers Association of America, and Military Order of the Purple Heart. Excused: Air Force Association.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Executive Committee: No meeting last month.

Chairperson Lewis: Working on getting the Joint Session scheduled.

Vice Chairman Albert: Try to have town hall meetings in your area.

Treasurer Howell: Savings-\$668.95 Checking-\$1229.85

Secretary Ellis: Updates are needed if you have a change in leadership.

Awards Committee: Ron Albert is the new chair of the committee.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Ethics: No report.

Memorial Ceremonies & Events: Memorial Day is hosted by the Fleet Reserve and PVAMA has the Veterans Day program. Fleet Reserve has the Pearl Harbor Day ceremony, December 7, at 0800.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Motion: Commanche County Veterans Council to write a letter of support for the Steven A Cohen Center. Second: PVAMA. Motion passes.

GOOD OF THE ORDER: The VFW and Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will be bringing the traveling memorial to Oklahoma on May14-16, 2026 at Mitch Park.

CLOSING CEREMONIES: Chaplain Howell gave the benediction and Sgt. at Arms Jones led us in the flag salute.

Next Meeting Date: February 2, 2026. Meeting adjourned at 11:58am.

Dear VA & Community Partners,

Most of you may know me already, but for those who don't, I'm Randall Medina, the Veteran Outreach Specialist at the Tulsa Vet Center.

The reason for this email is to introduce you to the new Veteran Outreach Specialist at the Oklahoma City Vet Center, Matt Wolfram (CC'd on this email). Matt has taken over for Andre West, who recently retired. I know many of you have worked with Andre in the past at events you've hosted or coordinated.

Please save Matt's email for future reference:

matthew.wolfram@va.gov

405-456-5184

If you'd like the Vet Center to attend an event you're hosting or to assist with Veteran outreach. Both Matt and I attend many community events, and I can also bring along our Mobile Vet Center (MVC), which serves as a great visual presence and helps attract passerby attention to your event.

Additionally, if you know of any other Veteran organizations or resources in the OKC area that you think Matt should connect with, please let us know. I'm not as familiar with all the great resources in OKC since I spend most of my time in Tulsa, so your recommendations would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or would like to coordinate something, please don't hesitate to reply to this email with both Matt and me included.

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans!

VFW Meets with Acting Undersecretary of Benefits: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli met with Acting Undersecretary of Benefits Margarita Devlin along with partner veterans service organizations to hear updates on Veterans Benefits Administration operations and programs. Topics discussed were VA automation efforts, rating schedule changes still in review and benefits such as education and adaptive housing. VA staffing and claims quality were among other topics addressed. Figlioli reiterated that positive outcomes for veterans and their families are a top priority, and the VFW is willing to collaborate with partners and VA leadership to ensure this.

Upcoming VFW Washington Conference: The VFW conference in Washington, D.C., will take place March 1-4. Hundreds of attendees will make sure veterans' voices are heard on Capitol Hill. Our National Legislative Committee members will lead their delegations, some including the 2025/2026 VFW-SVA

Fellows, in meetings with their members of Congress and staffers. VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore will testify before a joint hearing of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Tuesday, March 3, at 10:00 a.m. EST, to present our legislative priorities.

Defense Authorization Improves Transition Data Sharing: The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 that is now Public Law 119-60 includes a VFW-supported provision to improve information sharing between the Department of Defense and state veteran agencies for separating and retiring service members. Section 573, championed by Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, updates existing law to make the transfer of contact information an opt-out process, ensuring veterans are automatically connected to state veteran agencies unless they choose otherwise. The shared information may be used only to connect veterans with benefits or services and strengthens privacy and cybersecurity safeguards. This change supports a smoother transition to civilian life and access to earned benefits.

Access Vet Center Mental Health Counseling: Vet Centers offer free and confidential mental health and readjustment counseling in communities across the United States and its territories. While widely known as a resource for veterans, they also assist eligible service members and families. Available services include individual and group therapy, family and bereavement counseling, and referral assistance.

I hope that all readers find this information useful.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

Veterans Affairs Council Member

Deric Duncan

Veterans Affairs Council Member

MIA/POW ***Deric Duncan***

To All Posts, Districts, Officers, and Members:

As part of the continued work of the MIA/POW Committee, I want to share an update on the ongoing efforts to bring our missing service members home.

We are currently working on multiple cases involving the repatriation of Missing in Action service members, as well as coordinating the distribution of DNA testing kits to several families so that remains can be properly identified. This work is sacred, deliberate, and often slow, but it is essential.

Oklahoma has been leading the charge in this mission, and we will continue to do so as we move into the new year. Over the coming months, members should expect several updates regarding repatriations and identifications as progress is made.

I strongly encourage every Post, District, and member to help keep the names of our MIAs alive within your communities. Learn their names. Speak their names. Share their stories. These men and women are not forgotten.

Members are also encouraged to visit the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency website to learn more about the ongoing mission and how families and communities can support identification efforts.

We will not stop. We will not forget. We will continue the work until every possible answer is found.

Yours in service,

Deric Duncan

MIA/POW Chair

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

"Bring the Spark, Ignite the Flame"

State Fair

Deric Duncan

To All Posts, Districts, Officers, and Members:

As we are now several months removed from the conclusion of the 2025 State Fair season, I want to take a moment to again recognize and thank the members who volunteered their time and effort. The work done at both fairs last fall represented our organization well and demonstrated the commitment of our membership to public engagement and service.

With the fair season behind us, it is now time to turn our attention forward.

Planning for the next State Fair season must begin early to ensure success. Please mark your calendars now for the upcoming fairs:

Oklahoma State Fair: September 17–27, 2026

Tulsa State Fair: October 1–11, 2026

Beginning planning now allows Posts and Districts to better coordinate schedules, volunteers, and resources well in advance. Early awareness helps prevent last-minute shortages and avoids unnecessary scrambling in the weeks leading up to the fairs.

After several years serving as State Fair Chairman, I will be stepping down from this role. It has been an honor to serve in this capacity. I would like to thank Jeremy Owen, Erica Traxler, Dan Fuller, and Jeff Harris for honoring me with the opportunity to serve and for their continued support during my tenure.

I am confident in the continued success of this program as Tony McGrew, our incoming Department Commander, supports and guides the State Fair efforts moving forward. As a former State Fair Chairman himself, Tony brings experience and perspective that will help ensure continued growth and strength in this program.

Thank you again to all who have supported the State Fair mission. I look forward to seeing this effort continue to succeed in the year ahead.

Yours in service,

Deric Duncan

State Fair Chair

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

"Bring the Spark, Ignite the Flame"

From the Desks of the Department Adjutant Teeter and Public Relations Chair R. Traxler:

Stay Connected – Update Your Email and Check Your Inbox!

We want every member to receive the Department's *General Orders* and important updates without interruption. Please take a moment today to ensure we can reach you:

1. **Verify your email address** with your Post and on your VFW member record.
2. **Check your spam and junk folders** – if you find any Department emails there, mark them as “Not Spam” so future messages go directly to your inbox.

Your involvement starts with staying informed. Help us strengthen communication across the Department by making sure you and your fellow members are connected and receiving the information you need.

We Want to Feature YOU for Warrior Wednesday!

Every week, we're spotlighting the dedicated veterans and leaders who make our organization stronger — and we want your story to be next. “Warrior Wednesday” is our way of celebrating the service, sacrifice, and continued commitment of VFW members across the Department.

Here's how you can be featured:

- Send us your **name, current position, Post number, and location**
- Share your **branch of service, years served, MOS, and eligibility details**
- Tell us **why you're active in the VFW** and what keeps you engaged
- Add a few **hobbies or interests** that show who you are beyond the uniform
- Include **1–2 high-quality photos** — one from your time in service and one current

Submit your information to okadj@vfw-oklahoma.org or oktraining@vfw-oklahoma.org and join us in highlighting the stories that inspire, connect, and strengthen our VFW family. Let's make every Wednesday a celebration of the warriors among us!

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

- D-1** > February 7th, Tahlequah, 1100, State Commander Jeff Harris
- D-3** > February 7th, Wilburton, 1100, State Judge Advocate Randy Traxler
- D-4** > February 7th, Boswell, 1100, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-5** > May 3rd, Claremore, 1400, State Commander Jeff Harris
- D-7** > February 7th, Okmulgee, 1100, State Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew
- D-8** > February 14th, Stillwater, 1100, State Senior Vice Commander Tony McGrew
- D-9** > February 7th, Crescent, 1000, TBD
- D-10** > May 9th, Del City, 1000, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-13** > April 18th, Clinton, 1100, State Surgeon Deric Duncan
- D-14** > February 7th, Ft. Sill, 1000, State Junior Vice Commander Larry Hurd
- D-15** > May 16th, Woodward, 1100, State A/Q Heidi Teeter

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Presidents' Day** >> February 16th (National & Dept HQ will be closed)
- Mid-Winter Conference** >> February 20th – 22nd >> Embassy Suites, Norman
- Washington Conference** >> February 28th – March 5th >> Washington DC
- National Vietnam War Veterans Day**>> March 29
- Easter** >> April 5
- Easter Monday**>>April 6
- Tax Day**>> April 15
- Department Senior Vice Commanders Training**>>April 16-19>Kansas City, MO
- NVS Accredited Representative Proficiency Training**>> April 26-29> Annapolis, MD