



Department of Oklahoma  
Veterans of Foreign Wars



P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101-1126  
580 515-0567/ [www.vfwoklahoma.org](http://www.vfwoklahoma.org)

November 2024

2024-2025 Series

*“Duty, honor, country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be.”*

*~Douglas MacArthur*

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

General Orders No. 05

2024-2025 Series

1. **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 persons 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](mailto:vfwhqokqm@outlook.com)

2. **Attention of Post & District Commanders & Quartermasters:** Commanders & Quartermaster are reminded at all levels of the annual requirement to complete an IRS 990, IRS 990N, for tax exemption requirements. Failure to complete the required IRS 990 may result in loss of tax-exemption status.

3. **District Meetings Dates & Changes:** District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant at [vfwokadj@outlook.com](mailto:vfwokadj@outlook.com) of any changes to district meetings including new dates for District meetings.

/os/  
DAN FULLER  
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /  
Heidi Teeter  
Adjutant

*Commander  
Dan Fuller*

Comrades,

I want to thank all the VFW members and Auxiliary members that attend Fall Fest. We were able to get a lot of work done.

We have hired two part-time Service Officers, and their training will start after the 1<sup>st</sup>. They will work in the Tulsa metro and in the Lawton area. They will travel to different cities and will work outreach programs as needed.

We all have a very busy month ahead with Veteran's Day and all the events that we do, School programs, Parades and all the other Post activities. Work hard, have fun and take care of each other as sometimes the volume of all this may affect our bother and sisters.

Oklahoma is a very patriotic state, and the public is proud of our service. Take time to acknowledge their support in all that you do.

There will be many opportunities to speak about our Mission and Programs. Recruit those that are eligible and convey the importance of the Local, State and National VFW to continue providing services to our veterans.

There are many Post that are at a 100%, 102% and some have meet the CIC challenge to make 105% in 2025!

Remember the 3 R's Recruit, Retain and Reinstate.

Wear your own kind of hat,

*Dan Fuller*

State Commander  
Department of Oklahoma

*Senior Vice Commander  
Jeff Harris*

Comrades,

November is here but it still feels like summertime. That will all change, I am sure.

We had our fall fest. and I am pleased that we had a great time. Our membership is growing, and Oklahoma is leading in the Southern conference. Oklahoma is already over 90% and I am sure Commander Fuller will get his 102%. So, we all need to reach out to our unpaid members.

With the Holidays coming up we need to reach out to our members that may need our help with some as small as a good meal or just a smile to make their day. Maybe to just go and knock on a door and say hi is all that is needed. I am sure that we know what our friends need, and I am sure they will get it.

Our district meetings will be going on this month. I will be at District 4 on Nov 2 and District 5 on Nov. 3. I am trying to get out to as many districts as I can. If I can do anything for anyone, please reach out to me or whoever needs help.

As I put out at our meeting that I am in contact with the SVA in Washington D.C. and we are trying to get him to our Midwinter meeting in February. and I am also getting in touch with VA to see why females do not always receive the same health care as the males.

I will be running for the office of the State Commander, so I thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

*Jeff Harris*

State Sr. Vice Commander

***Junior Vice Commander***

***Tony McGrew***

Comrades,

As you read this, Fall Fest will have more than likely have come and gone bringing us closer to the end of another calendar year, 2024. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years will follow in short order.

This time of year, can be stressful for some of us. If you do find yourself feeling this way, please don't hesitate to reach out to another comrade or friend and do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

I urge all of you to continue to actively support State Commander Fuller's Program. We, each of us, must do our part to make this year a success. This could be just a phone call, a visit or note to someone who needs it.

As your State Junior Vice Commander, I had the privilege of travelling to our National HQ and meeting the people who often provide the information and guidance we request from time to time. It was nice to put a face to the people we talk with on the phone. The training I received will go a long way in helping me be a more productive member of the Oklahoma VFW.

I was given the opportunity to attend the VFWA National President's visit to Oklahoma in Broken Arrow recently. I must say I had a great time and received a valuable education on the Auxiliary.

I have made plans to attend the Sothern Conference in Nashville and consider it an honor to attend and represent you.

Respectfully,

*TONY MCGREW*

Candidate: State Senior Vice Commander.

*Surgeon  
Larry Hurd*

Comrades,

Hello again from the paw-paw patch in southwest Oklahoma. Fall Fest at the Lucky Star Casino in Watonga I think went well. The casino hotel rooms were nice and spacious. The restaurant had good food and large helpings with very nice staff. Overall, a real nice but really wasn't ready for a large group of convention goers. The Department COA authorized the moving of some money in the budget so the department could hire some more service officers to cover the state. At Fall Fest there were some interviews being conducted to fill the new service officer positions.

Trick or treaters were out last Thursday and hope everyone had fun. The weather is starting to change the colors are nice, but weather is changing so everyone should be ready. Has everyone received the new podium book? They are available in the store. VOD, Patriot Pen and teacher of the year are in the judging phase so it will be interesting reading for the judges.

Here is some information from our October VAC meeting. Report from the OKC VAMC Director: Director Vlosich: Provided an email update. Spoke on HHA being turned over to a criminal investigation. All elevators are currently working. He provided an update on the parking garage, the new OR units being built, the updated Chase Auditorium, and the new PT unit set to open in two weeks. The Norman Clinic is now in the design phase. The new location for the Yukon Clinic is in the bidding process. They are currently reviewing the location for the Stillwater Clinic. They are exploring expansion in Ardmore and Enid. The south OKC Dental clinic is opening in December.

**President Signs Veteran Education Bill Into Law:** President Biden has signed VFW-supported [S.656](#), *Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023*, into law. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan provided testimony on this legislation to both the [House](#) and [Senate](#). To address the nationwide shortage of commercial truck drivers, this law will reduce unnecessary red tape and allow veterans to use their GI Bill benefits at more commercial driver license (CDL) schools. Prior to now, certain for-profit CDL schools with programs already approved by VA were restricted from accepting the GI Bill at newly established branches for a period of up to two years. Allowing new branches of VA-approved

schools to receive education benefits will ensure veterans can attend these programs as soon as they are offered.

**In Case You Missed It:** The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933, *TAP Promotion Act*, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the *TAP Promotion Act* in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.

**VA Expands Gravesite Benefit:** An outer burial receptacle (OBR) is typically placed in a gravesite before a casket is lowered. This contributes to safe and well-maintained cemeteries by preventing the sinking of headstones and the surrounding soil. VA already furnishes OBRs for casketed burials in national cemeteries, but beginning on Nov. 9, 2024, it will implement a new authority to provide OBRs in VA grant-funded cemeteries. Eligible beneficiaries may apply for a monetary allowance for OBRs that are privately purchased or provided by a grant-funded cemetery if the OBR is placed at the time of interment.

**In just four weeks, on November 22, the Force 50 Foundation will host a truly special evening—Native American Melodies—a unique celebration of Native American composers as performed by the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, benefiting the Project.** You can join by [purchasing individual tickets](#), and/or agreeing to [sponsor the event](#). As a sponsor, you'll not only help make a direct impact on the Native American Warrior Project, but you'll also receive an exclusive invitation to our VIP reception, where you'll have the rare chance to meet the legendary actor **Wes Studi, an Oklahoma native known for his roles in Last of the Mohicans and Dances with Wolves.**

Wreaths Across America Ceremony and Wreath Laying on Saturday, 14 December / 11:00 am

Good morning all, The Marine Corps League, Sooner Detachment (Norman, OK) has been granted authority by Wreaths Across America (National) to perform a ceremony and lay 100 wreaths at the Denver Cemetery, 701 108th Ave SE, Norman, OK 73026. Our ceremony will begin at 11:00 and we will respectfully lay a wreath on every veteran's grave following the ceremony.

You and/or your organization can help support this event by purchasing a wreath or volunteering to lay a wreath (or both). If you agree, please share the above link with your friends and family and consider joining us for this beautiful ceremony. Currently, we have 60 wreaths for the 100 graves - but we hope to have the remainder (40) purchased by volunteers by the end of November. We are looking forward to honoring our fallen service members with a dedicated wreath in December and hope that you'll join us.

**WASHINGTON** — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced it delivered more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before in fiscal year 2024 — including to Veterans, their families, and their survivors in Oklahoma. These outcomes for the nation's Veterans build on continued efforts by VA and the entire Biden-Harris Administration

to expand and improve care and benefits for those who served, much of which has been made possible by the PACT Act — the largest expansion of VA health care and benefits in generations. VA encourages all Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors to learn more about VA and apply for their world-class health care and earned benefits today.

“Veterans deserve the very best from VA and our nation, and we will never settle for anything less,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “We’re honored that more Veterans are getting their earned health care and benefits from VA than ever before but make no mistake: there is still work to do. We will continue to work each and every day to earn the trust of those we serve — and ensure that all Veterans, their families, and their survivors get the care and benefits they so rightly deserve.”

**Key outcomes for Oklahoma Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors from this fiscal year include:**

- **Providing more world-class health care to Veterans:** VA delivered more than 2,234,000 health care appointments to Oklahoma Veterans this year, and 6,048 Oklahoma Veterans enrolled in VA health care.
- **Delivering more earned benefits to more Veterans:** 114,093 Oklahoma Veterans received compensation and 1,835 received pension benefits this year, representing an estimated \$3.149 billion and \$29.9 million in earned benefits, respectively. Additionally, VA processed 45,443 disability benefit claims for Oklahoma Veterans, with an overall grant rate of 60.7%.
- **Earning Veteran Trust:** Nationwide, Veteran trust in VA reached 80.4% this year, an all-time record and an increase of 25% since 2016. Veteran trust in VA health care also reached 92%, another record.
- **Supporting Veterans in crisis:** VA provided no-cost emergency health care this year to more than 980 Oklahoma Veterans in acute suicidal crises.
- **Supporting a record number of survivors of Veterans:** 1,210 Oklahoma survivors received pension benefits this year, representing an estimated \$12.85 million in earned benefits. Additionally, 12,303 spouses and dependents in Oklahoma received Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, representing an estimated \$255.7 million in earned benefits.
- **Supporting a record number of women Veterans:** 12,073 women Veterans in Oklahoma received compensation, representing an estimated \$351.6 million in earned benefits. Additionally, 720 women Veterans in Oklahoma enrolled in VA health care. VA now has more women Veterans enrolled in its health care system than ever before.
- **Giving Veterans final resting places in VA National Cemeteries:** VA interred 1,001 Veterans in VA’s national cemeteries in Oklahoma this year.

**Veterans.** Key actions from this year include: expanding eligibility for VA health care to all toxic exposed Veterans years earlier than called for by the PACT Act; housing nearly 48,000 Veterans and awarding over \$800 million in grants to help Veterans experiencing

homelessness; expanding access to care across the nation through VA's Access Sprints, adding night and weekend clinics, and increasing the number of Veterans scheduled into daily clinic schedules; decreasing new appointment wait times for primary and mental health care by 11% and 7%, respectively; removing copays for the first three outpatient mental health care and substance use disorder visits of each calendar year through 2027; expanding access to VA cancer care through establishing new cancer presumptive conditions, expanding access to genetic, lung, and colorectal cancer screening, and expanding the Close to Me cancer care program; expanding access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for eligible unmarried Veterans and eligible Veterans in same-sex marriages; calling for the implementation of a targeted moratorium on foreclosures for Veterans with VA-guaranteed loans through 2024; expanding access to VA care and benefits for some former service members discharged under other than honorable conditions; launching tele-emergency care for Veterans nationwide; and launching VSAFE.gov, a new government-wide website and associated call center to protect Veterans from fraud and scams.

As your State Surgeon and a member of the Veterans Affairs Council, I hope this information is helpful to all of the Department of Oklahoma members and their families.

Respectfully,

*Larry Hurd*

State Surgeon

Department of Oklahoma

*Adjutant/Quartermaster  
Heidi Teeter*

Comrades,

Whew, what a month. I enjoyed seeing everyone that was able to attend Fall Fest in Watonga, but I, for one, am glad it's over. We have a Department inspection coming in December, so over the next few weeks I will be preparing for that. Commander Fuller, SVC Harris, JVC McGrew, and I will be meeting with an inspection team from National and going through a similar process that Posts and Districts do, ours will be in more depth and detail.

Once the inspection is completed, the inspection team will give us a report. That report will be shared with the Council of Administration, so please feel free to ask your District Commanders how we did.

The IRS 990 deadline is approaching. Remember if you have a fiscal tax year (July 1 – June 30) your 990 must file by November 15 but if you have a calendar tax year (January 1 – December 31) it must file by May 15. If you have to file an extension, please let me know, so that I can track that as well.

We have several District meetings happening in the next couple of weeks. District Commanders or Adjutants, after your meeting please send me an email, text message, or call me and let me know the date, time, and location of your next meeting.

Also, District Commanders and Adjutants, please be reaching out to your posts to find out what they have going on. Over the last few months, I have only had a couple of Districts that let me know so I could publish them. I need to apologize to District 15, in last month's GOs I forgot to change District 5 to District 15 in the "District Happenings."

Committee Chairman, thank you for getting reports to me. I would like to get them after there has been any meetings or action, but I will ask for them again in January so that I can get them in the Council packets for Mid-Winter.

As always, if anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Charlie Mike,

*Heidi Teeter*

State Adjutant/Quartermaster  
Department of Oklahoma

*Assistant Chaplain  
Marcus King*

Comrades,

For those that have not met me yet, my name is Marcus King. I have been Post 382's Chaplain since 2022, District 13 Chaplain since 2023, and this year's Assistant State Chaplain.

I'm excited to invite all interested Chaplains in the department to a new program we're beginning in the Chaplain services. Every Tuesday at 1900 (excluding holidays) I will be facilitating a chaplain's call on Microsoft teams. We're inviting all VFW and Auxiliary chaplains to take part in this. This is intended to be a time of sharing, camaraderie, and encouragement with an emphasis on Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens Iron, so one person sharpens another."

If interested, please contact me at 405-651-5509 or at [reconsarge1975@att.net](mailto:reconsarge1975@att.net) and I will get you into these calls.

In HIS Service,

*Marcus King*

[reconsarge1975@att.net](mailto:reconsarge1975@att.net)

405-651-5509

Post 382 Chaplain

District 13 Chaplain

Assistant State Chaplain



## *Judge Advocate Randy Traxler*

Comrades,

During a recent work trip, I stumbled upon a fascinating book about navigating challenging organizations. The VFW, with its diverse responsibilities, presents a unique set of challenges. As I delved into the book, I took notes on valuable insights to share with my colleagues. One chapter that particularly stood out was about conducting highly effective meetings, specifically focusing on the importance of agendas. Here's a key excerpt: "Creating an Agenda An agenda should sequence the activities and topics that need to be addressed to achieve the meeting's objectives. It should be sent out in advance with all the supporting materials for each item. This preparation helps participants grasp the meeting's purpose and allows presenters enough time to get ready. It also enables others to prepare, so they can contribute meaningfully."

Think about it: how often have you found yourself in a meeting where someone throws out a new idea and immediately asks for feedback? While that can happen, it shouldn't be the norm. When participants aren't given time to digest new information, they're expected to provide thoughtful feedback while still forming their opinions. If everyone is prepared and has previewed the information, they arrive at the meeting with well-developed ideas and responses. A well-crafted agenda can significantly boost your meeting's productivity.

Now, picture a meeting like the Oklahoma City Comets gearing up for a championship game. Just as the team reviews their playbook and practices their moves ahead of time, a solid agenda equips participants with the strategies they need to engage effectively. Without a clear game plan, players may flounder on the court, missing crucial opportunities and making errors. But with a detailed agenda outlining everyone's roles, the team can collaborate seamlessly. In this way, a thoughtful agenda serves as your playbook for a successful meeting.

That said, there's some nuance to our business. Commanders may choose to leave certain items off a published agenda—like award presentations, disciplinary actions, or other sensitive topics. While the Order of Business in our Bylaws provides some structure, it can be adapted through practice to ensure our meetings run smoothly and efficiently.

For those eager to enhance meeting efficiency, you can join the VFW Oklahoma Discord Server for quick, engaging PowerPoint classes. Access it here: [Discord Server Link](#).

*Randy Traxler*

Judge Advocate Department of Oklahoma

989-482-3876

[randytraxler@icloud.com](mailto:randytraxler@icloud.com)

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

Voice of Democracy:

***"Is America Today Our Forefathers Vision?"***

Patriots Pen:

***"My Voice in America's Democracy?"***

October 31 has come. Do you have your judges set up? The Scholar's App is working, it shows that there have been 68 people logged in, 44 applied with everything they need and 24 currently in progress. This is only students applying.

The deadlines haven't changed, they are still due to the posts by October 31st. Judged and sent to District by 15 November.

You can, and should, still receive some the old-fashioned way. Upload them for the judges. Easy.

*Jim Bassett*

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

**VMS**  
*Jim Bassett*

SportClips Help-A-Hero fundraising is continuing until the 11th of this month. Go out and support them. This is a great program that actually helps recruitment.

So far Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve forces in Oklahoma have been granted \$187,500 so far.

I keep talking about using MAP grants to help fund events with units. Oklahoma has received \$57,289.90 so far in grants to host unit functions. Christmas time is coming, and we will be helping with food baskets for military families in Oklahoma.

VFW National does require an After-Action Report after an event. National has the online report here: <https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support/mapgrantreport>. If the unit has already been adopted, please use this form: <https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support/adoptaunitreport>. These are mandatory reports from National. In the near future we will

be sending out the Oklahoma report form. If you complete this form, we will submit the required VMS forms for you.

*Jim Bassett*

State VMS Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

## *Training and Development*

### *Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett*

#### How is your Post?

How to Destroy a Post in 22 easy steps

Many posts have issues. Some are easy to fix, while others may take time. A post is a living organization, it needs its members to stay viable and healthy. It needs members to hold offices, manage programs, seek new members, and keep the ones that have joined. It needs members to become involved. A post is so much more than an organization. It is a refuge, a haven, a place where a combat vet can meet and talk to others with the same experience. This is expressively why it is important to have post-military outlets life like the VFW.

It is important to have a place where you feel comfortable sharing your feelings and can allow for healing. Your post can provide that type of sanctuary; however, to do so, your post must provide an open and welcoming atmosphere. Here are 22 ways to destroy your post.

1. Don't ever attend the Post meetings.
2. If you do come, don't get there on time and don't pay attention.
3. Don't support the work being done by the officers and other members.
4. Don't accept an office and don't congratulate others on their good work.
5. Don't attend committee meetings if you get appointed to a work group.
6. Don't give your opinions on matters, then disagree with everything after the meeting.
7. Don't join in when others roll up their sleeves to hold events and membership outreach.
8. Don't pay your dues early so your comrades have to chase you down.
9. Don't bother about getting new members. Let the Commander or Adjutant do it.
10. Don't take corrective actions when your home association tries to run the Post.
11. Don't remind others that only regular VFW members can serve on the association's board.
12. Don't give anything back to the Post while enjoying membership benefits.
13. Don't cooperate with other members and officers but expect them to cooperate with you.
14. Don't pitch in when volunteers are needed; just blame the officers for failed programs.
15. Don't reach out to invite younger members to join your Post.
16. Don't call or visit members who have not renewed their dues.
17. Don't welcome new members and don't invite them into your family of veterans.

18. Don't make changes to your post that will make your facilities and events family friendly.

19. Don't ask new and younger members to take on a leadership role in you Post.

20. Don't support the efforts of the leadership appointed to lead the Post.

21. Don't point out mistakes but never offer a solution that will benefit the Post.

22. Don't ever point the finger at yourself.

One issue that we must confront in our organization is to accept that a barrier that blocks our progress to attract and retain new members can be directed to prior behaviors, attitudes, and actions that contaminate our Post and relationships within the organization.

Another issue is not looking towards the future. Statements like "We have always done it that way" or not wanting to change creates stagnation. Complaining that a veteran from today has not paid their dues also does nothing but create resentment. It chases younger members into other organizations.

So how do we fix it? Let's allow time for creative dialogue amongst the membership both seasoned and new, inviting others to ask questions and share emotions, experiences, and insights will lead to success. Running a Post takes involvement from all members and working together will add to Post unity.

Heading In the Right Direction

Staying Informed and communicate:

It's important to understand that your individual efforts as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are generally driven by a need to make a difference. You have likely chosen to volunteer your services based upon your desire to help those who cannot help themselves. In our organization, we have a saying "Still Serving", and it is absolutely true; however, your ability to fulfill that statement is based upon the knowledge of information shared amongst the membership.

It is important to be provided with the most current and updated information regarding the organization as having those tools will help you support the overall goal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and most importantly how to make a difference in our community. The best way to getting to that information is to attend Post meetings. In post meetings the Commander will share communications given to him from District, Department and National which will govern the organizations future.

As the largest and oldest war veterans service organization, we have a long history of supporting service members, veterans, and their families. We must get and stay organized to achieve the success we need to complete tasks and stay on top of things to be done, such as attending local events, townhalls, etc. in order to truly make a difference within our communities.

We can also help veterans in our community by:

1. Welcoming our younger veterans, they have answered the call, same as us.
2. Volunteering at a shelter.
3. Being a mentor or legal aid.
4. Organizing a Stand Down program.
5. Developing a veteran burial program in your area.

6. Helping Veterans get to and from medical appointments.
7. Providing a stand in lifeline for Vets whose families live far away.
8. Help with Veteran Outreach Programs that assist Homeless Veterans and those with PTSD.
9. Recruiting and retaining Women Veterans and giving insight to their views of the VFW.
10. Being active in your post, think outside the box of ways to help veterans, families, and communities.

Remember, of all these things we can do to help others, we need to apply them to ourselves in order to be our own savior. Trust in your brotherhood and don't be afraid to ask for help. Moving forward is not possible without you and communication cannot, nor should it ever be a one-way street.

By Bob Houchins and Reggie Russell, VFW California  
Italicized added by Oklahoma.

*Jim Bassett*

State Education Co-Chair  
Department of Oklahoma

## *District 5*

### *Frank Whitlock*

The Tulsa State fair was a success, we talked to around 150 Veterans, we sent around six or seven to the VSO, around 10 auxiliaries came by to talk to us, and we put around 30 new people in the VFW. We had around 395-man hours. Also, District 5 is having a gun raffle, you have a chance to win two pistols, if you're the first name to be drawn, you have your first choice, then your name goes back in to be possibly re-drawn again. Tickets are \$10, you can get your tickets at any of the post in District 5. And the next district meeting will be November 3 at 14:00 (2pm) at Claremore VFW.

Respectfully,

*Frank Whitlock*

Sgt. USMC (Ret)  
Purple Heart Recipient  
Oklahoma VFW District 5 Commander

# ***District Happenings***

## ***District 4:***

Atoka Post 4859 Atoka will be decorating the town with flags on Sat the 9th for Veterans Day and will have their usual 3rd Saturday of the month breakfast fundraiser.

Hugo Post 8316 will also be sponsoring and participating in a Veterans Day parade in the city of Hugo on Sat the 9th of Nov.

Durant Post 3916 is sponsoring the Veterans Day parade in Durant on 11 Nov, start time is 0930, with a ceremony afterwards at the post. Then Post members will visit the shut in veterans at the nursing homes in Bryan County.

Antlers Post 3658 is hosting a community breakfast on the 9th of Nov that is free to all who attend, all you can eat! And of course, we have our district 4 meeting at Antlers Post 3658 on the 2nd of Nov at 11 am.

## ***District 8:***

Ponca City Veterans Day Parade November 9<sup>th</sup>

## ***District 13:***

Clinton Post 4465 is leading the Veterans Day Parade November 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION**

- District 1
  - November 2<sup>nd</sup> 11 am
  - Stilwell, 8 West Olive (American Legion Building)
  - Dept JVC Tony McGrew
- District 3
  - November 2<sup>nd</sup> 11 am
  - Muldrow, 112324 S 4740 RD
  - Dept Inspector Deric Duncan
- District 4
  - November 2<sup>nd</sup> 11 am
  - Antlers, 101 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Dept SVC Jeff Harris
- District 5
  - November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2 pm
  - Claremore, 1717 W DuPont
  - Dept SVC Jeff Harris

- District 7
  - November 2<sup>nd</sup> 11 am
  - Muskogee, 3811 W Okmulgee
  - Dept Judge Advocate Randy Traxler
- District 8
  - November 9<sup>th</sup> 11 am
  - Bristow, 37033 Veterans Memorial Dr.
  - Dept SVC Jeff Harris
- District 9
  - November 9<sup>th</sup> 10 am
  - Crescent, 8701 N State Highway 74
  - Dept Surgeon Larry Hurd
- District 10
  - January 18<sup>th</sup> 10 am
  - Midwest City, 9500 NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Dept Commander Dan Fuller
- District 13
  - November 16<sup>th</sup> 11 am
  - Weatherford, 201 N Custer Street
  - Dept Commander Dan Fuller
- District 14
  - November 23<sup>rd</sup> 10 am
  - Ardmore, 529 South Washington
  - Dept Commander Dan Fuller
- District 15
  - February 8<sup>th</sup> 11 am
  - Altus, 500 N Veterans Drive
  - Dept Commander Dan Fuller

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

**Election Day** >> November 5<sup>th</sup>

**Southern Conference** >> Nashville, TN, November 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

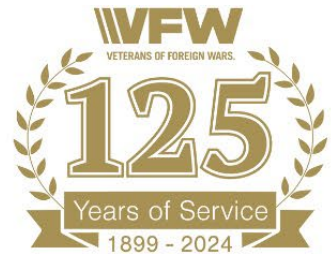
**Marine Corps Birthday** >> November 10<sup>th</sup> (249)

**Veterans Day** >> November 11<sup>th</sup>

**Thanksgiving** >> November 28<sup>th</sup>

**Native American Heritage Day** >> November 29<sup>th</sup>

**Space Force Birthday** >> December 20<sup>th</sup> (4)



## General Orders No. 4

2024-25 Series

1. The following National appointments are hereby announced:

**NATIONAL DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF:**

Terry Hartman, Post 8433, Cairo, GA  
Kelli Kelley, Post 2667, Newnan, GA  
Rodney Boucher, Post 12138, Ewa Beach, HI  
Royce Kelb, Post 5925, Lincoln, MO  
Lynette Lewis, Post 5077, O'Fallon, MO  
E. Buddy McEachern, Post 5077, O'Fallon, MO  
Philip Rippee, Post 4101, Marshfield, MO  
Charlie Fielder, Post 3396, Sparks, NV  
Charles Wells, Post 10886, Swedesboro, NJ  
Barbara Hagemann, Post 6063, Toms River, NJ  
Harry Weimar, Post 5343, Villas, NJ  
Mary Sweezy, Post 3473, Cottage Grove, OR  
Julie Hoover, Post 5265, Spring Grove, PA  
Dwayne MacKenzie, Post 3376, Ephrata, PA  
James Rice, Post 1532, Sunbury, PA  
Richard Stefanick, Post 9197, Etna, PA  
David Swanson, Post 1132, Kane, PA  
Larry Helms, Post 1289, Chattanooga, TN  
Terry Thomas, Post 1289, Chattanooga, TN  
Edwin Grantham, Post 8790, Houston, TX  
Darrell Moyer II, Post 12061, Payson, UT  
Cindy Brown, Post 771, Springfield, VT

**ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL:**

Charles Fillyaw, Post 660, Savannah, GA  
William Alford, Post 2667, Newnan, GA  
Clifford Branch, Post 10350, Lake St. Louis, MO  
Paul Frampton, Post 1667, Ridgedale, MO  
Anthony Mann, Post 6660, Centerville, MO  
Randal Wansing, Post 2866, Saint Charles, MO  
Jaime Espinoza, Post 9211, Reno, NV  
Kenneth Cruz, Post 7508, Old Bridge, NJ  
Earl Courter Jr, Post 3620, Gloucester, NJ  
Spyros Spyropoulos, Post 6257, Belleplain, NJ  
John Dobbs, Post 3973, Molalla, OR

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**ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL: (cont.)**

Richard Cassem II, Post 1532, Sunbury, PA

Robert Depew, Post 470, Erie, PA

Kathryn Hewitt, Post 15, Gettysburg, PA

Jeffery Puckett, Post 7530, Mechanicsburg, PA

David Seymore, Post 2076, Punxsutawney, PA

Bryan Hardy, Post 1697, Ooltewah, TN

Johnny Titlow, Post 10855, Alcoa, TN

Brent College, Post 9413, Tooele, UT

Rodger Brassard, Post 6689, Essex Junction, VT

2. Members are reminded that their annual membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been changed to a 12-month dues structure that started July 1, 2018. The changes to subscription dues to a “DMV” model now allows anyone who becomes a member or renews membership to postpone expiration until the last day of their 12th month. For example, if a new member joins or an existing member renews on July 5, 2024, their dues now expire on July 31, 2025. The annual membership card (effective July 1, 2024) reflects the month and year dues expire.

Current members that are in good standing as of July 1, 2024, have been extended in OMS through the last day of the month when their dues are scheduled to expire. Regardless of the month they renewed, as long as they were in good standing as of July 1, 2024, they now have until the end of the expiration month to renew their dues.

Members that are in good standing but have not renewed for the 202-25 membership year will see the changes on their digital ID card reflecting the updated month and year when their dues expire. They will have the option to request an updated annual membership card with the change reflecting the expiration month and year.

The purpose of the changes to subscription dues to a “DMV” model was to streamline the process for both the Post and Department Quartermasters to track expiring annual members. No longer will Posts and Departments have to chase annual members’ dues on a daily basis; instead they can see a block of members during a specific month (one, two and three months out), allowing them to formulate a plan to collect dues at one time. This also makes it easier for the Department/District/Post Sergeant-at-Arms to quickly see if a member is in good standing prior to a meeting.

3. Section 220 of the National Bylaws, “Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members” states, "Any elected Post officer or committee member removed, by reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible to serve in any Post office or committee in the same administrative year in which the officer or committee member is removed."

4. For the purpose of establishing continuous membership, a member may reimburse Department and National dues for all delinquent years, provided he was a member in good standing for five (5) consecutive years prior to the delinquency.

5. 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, 2024. Commanders are reminded that accurate and complete records shall be kept by all persons 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 records.

6. A thorough program of Post inspection is necessary to ensure compliance with National and Department

Bylaws and directives. District and Department Inspectors to include Assistant Inspectors shall make every effort to inspect every Post under their cognizance on an annual basis and correct such discrepancies as may be disclosed.

7. The distribution of VFW "Buddy"<sup>®</sup> Poppies will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in Sections 711 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders should arrange now for the distribution of Buddy Poppies for the Memorial Day campaign in their respective areas. All profits accruing from the distribution of Buddy Poppies shall be used in accordance with Sections 219 and 704 of the Manual of Procedure.

8. The VFW National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual establish that *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority on procedural matters not governed by VFW Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. Newly revised *Robert's Rules of Order* is readily available at local bookstores and online retailers such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

9. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Post(s):

Post Nos. 9116 and 10349 consolidated as Post No. 9116, Columbus, North Carolina  
Post Nos. 67 and 8358 consolidated as Post No. 67, Sacramento, California  
Post Nos. 494 and 7051 consolidated as Post No. 494, Crystal Minnesota  
Post Nos. 7 and 323 consolidated as Post No. 7, Minneapolis, Minnesota

10. Announcement is made of the authorization of the charter for the following Post(s):

Post No. 12237 – Elizabethtown, Kentucky  
Post No. 12238 – Berea, Kentucky

BY COMMAND OF  
ALFRED J. LIPPHARDT  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

OFFICIAL:



Dan West  
Adjutant General

# NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

VOLUME 49, NO. 4

NOV. 2024

## Membership

### **VETERANS DAY IS AROUND THE CORNER!**

November 11 is Veterans Day, and presents an ideal opportunity for our Posts, Districts, and Departments to hold recruiting events, Buddy Poppy drives, calling campaigns, and other activities to help build and strengthen our membership. We encourage all levels of VFW leadership to go forth and motivate our Posts to be visible in our communities at this time when our nation turns its thoughts to those who have served.

### **COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE**

To encourage growth, Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt has instituted a monthly Commander's Challenge. Every month, we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a New Annual Member into the Post: 1 point
- An Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a New Life Member into the Post: 10 points

For the month of November 2024, the Post that leads each division will receive a customized 7' x 3' vinyl banner to display at the Post, during parades, or at events to recognize their achievement. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Keep it up and we will show everyone how NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from Nov. 1, 2024, through Nov. 30, 2024. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

### **MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:**

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org) and go to <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

## MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As the membership year has begun keep in mind the membership requirements set out by the Commander-in-Chief:

- Achieve 102% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

## NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you get started in the new membership year, we have made it easier for you to get all the recruiting brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It's as easy as one two three!

1. Go to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and click the login link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.
2. Under "Membership Quick Links," select Membership Online Order Form.
3. Use the dropdown list to indicate items you need. The form will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Follow these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## UPCOMING TRAINING

Our next Membership Monday training webinar will be on November 4th, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: "**How To Set Up A Recruiting Booth**". We will provide examples of successful booths at various types of events, as well as how to stock and display recruiting materials, interact with potential members, and other ways to make your recruiting event successful. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership> to learn how to attend this online training.

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life members and is now available in memoriam for past Life members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

### Enrollment Cost:

### Annual Payouts:

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Posts</u>	<u>Departments</u>	<u>National</u>
Gold- \$1,200.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Silver- \$800.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Bronze- \$400.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00

*What will your Legacy be?*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP RECRUITERS!**

## Top Three Recruiters (as of October 25, 2024)

**Timothy M. Borland – 370**  
VFW Post 9972, Dept of AZ

**Ed Stefanak, Jr. – 181**  
VFW Post 9539, Dept of SC

**Steven L. Woodward – 142**  
VFW Post 2224, Dept of WA

These comrades are leading the charge for membership growth – will you take up the challenge and see your name on this list?

## VFW Foundation

The Sport Clips Help A Hero fundraiser continues until November 16 and participating stores will offer free haircuts for Veterans & Active Duty Service Members on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Since 2013, Sport Clips has been the primary supporter of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program, which provides scholarships for service members and veterans for use at post-secondary and trade schools. To date, the program has awarded more than 2,720 scholarships totaling \$12.3 million. We ask that during the fundraiser, you visit our great friends at your local Sport Clips, get a haircut and donate to the campaign!

Contact: VFW Director of Donor Relations, Richard Freiburghouse, [RFreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:RFreiburghouse@vfw.org)

## Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 17% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

**VFW National Veterans Service Quarterly Supporter Newsletter** – This month's edition is on its way! In this quarterly update, we'll keep you informed about the impactful work being done by the VFW National Veterans Service for our veterans. You will see stories of how the VFW in D.C. is fighting for veterans' rights and legislation affecting veterans. We'll also share heartwarming stories about VFW Accredited Service Officers actively aiding veterans in securing their well-deserved VA benefits, all made possible through your invaluable support of this essential program. If you, or a fellow veteran, are in need of assistance in filing a VA claim, please visit [vfw.org/NVS](http://vfw.org/NVS). The service is 100% free of charge.

**VFW 2025 "Fly the Flag"** – We are delighted to inform you that you will soon be receiving the VFW's 2025 "Fly the Flag" Calendar. This distinctive patriotic calendar is our way of expressing gratitude for your unwavering membership and generous support of the VFW.

As an added token of appreciation, we've included a bonus gift – the VFW 2025 "American Songbirds" Calendar. Our intention is for these special gifts to inspire you to proudly display the American flag, particularly on the dates highlighted in your calendar, demonstrating your unwavering support for all the veterans who have valiantly preserved our freedom.

To further fuel your patriotic spirit, visit [heroes.vfw.org/Flag](https://heroes.vfw.org/Flag), where you can access a complimentary flag poster to print for display. *Your donations* will help *your VFW Department* serve veterans in need throughout the year. Veterans in your Department are counting on you!

**2024 Veterans Day Matching Gift Campaign to Friends of Freedom Online Community** – Last month Friends of Freedom members received an email with exciting news! A generous supporter of the VFW has graciously pledged to match all donations, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000, until Veterans Day, November 11, 2024! This represents an extraordinary opportunity for your contribution to have twice the impact in paying tribute to the courageous men and women who have selflessly dedicated themselves to our nation.

No matter the amount, your act of generosity will carry double the weight, directly benefiting veterans, service members and their families. Watch your inbox for this incredible email so that your gift can go twice as far! If you have not received this offer by email, you can [click here](#) to make a donation online!

**Transform Obligation into Inspiration** – Required minimum distributions (RMD), after we hit the age of 73, are dollars that must be withdrawn from retirement plan accounts each year. Did you know that you can fulfill all or a portion of your RMD and, at the same time, help support veterans? When you make a gift to the VFW as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), you won't be taxed on it. You can start making QCD contributions when you reach age 70 ½. Learn more: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/rmd>. The VFW Planned Giving Office is happy to talk with you about your options for making estate plans that can benefit you and America's heroes. Reach out at 816.968.1119 or [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org).

**Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism?** – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at [partners@vfw.org](mailto:partners@vfw.org) with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

**VFW Friends of Freedom** – If you are not already a member of the VFW's online community, please visit [vfw.org](https://vfw.org) and look for the gold banner that says "**Find Out What's Happening**" to sign up. As a member of the VFW's Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation's veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit [vfw.org/VFWatWork](https://vfw.org/VFWatWork) and click on "**Read VFW success stories**" to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans' rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

**VFW Department Resource Page** – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives relies on the participation and backing of your Department’s members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting [heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools](https://heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools).

## Veterans & Military Support Programs

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2025**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the “**VMS Donation**” tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is 125 or more. The **\$** and **.00** are **not required** in the donation amount box.

**Do not use the red donate link** in the upper right-hand corner of this webpage. This is for general donation purposes only.

### VMS Lapel Pin Payment

If your Department ordered and received the 2024-25 VMS Lapel Pins, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may utilize the “**VMS Donation**” link on the upper right-hand corner of the **Dashboard**.

### VMS Program Tools

The Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Program Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/VMSPTools>

### VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2025 Spring Semester** is still open and will close **Nov. 15, 2024**. The application is available online only at [vfw.org/Scholarship](https://vfw.org/Scholarship).

**Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your support!**

## VFW Programs

**DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS.** Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag](https://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

**PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD)** Please encourage Posts to read the 2024-25 Membership program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs



to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

**VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE POST PROGRAM SIGN UP.** We encourage as many of our VFW posts to get signed up to become a 125th Anniversary community service Post. To date, we have forty-three. Please help us spread the word. Our birthday was a couple of days ago, but our celebration will last the rest of the year and conclude at the National Convention in Columbus.

The VFW National Commander invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during the VFW 125th Anniversary year. In addition, it is hoped you will encourage your community to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Have our posts click this link <https://vfw125.org/get-involved/> and click on the **red** Accept Invitation icon for further information.

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ESSAY CONTEST DEADLINE REMINDER.** The deadline for the annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay contests is quickly approaching. The students must have their completed entry form with the (audio and/or written) essay submitted to a participating VFW Post by **Oct. 31, 2024**. Each corresponding deadline for Post, District and Department to have their entries to the next level are Nov. 15, 2024, for completion of Post judging; Dec. 15, 2024, for completion of District judging; Jan. 10, 2024, for completion of Department judging and the Department winners are due to National Headquarters by **Jan. 15, 2025**.

**Please ensure that the entry forms are filled out completely and that the appointed individual at the Post is available to receive the entries and answer questions. As we get closer to the deadline, more students and parents will be reaching out trying to find a participating Post so we want to ensure they can make contact.**

Simply visit [vfw.org/#login](https://vfw.org/#login), log in to My VFW, then click on **VFW Training & Support** under the **Member Resources** heading, then click on Community Service & Youth Programs and Activities, then click on **Chairperson Guides** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all the program materials.

Please remember that Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen are VFW programs supported by the VFW Auxiliary. It is inappropriate for a VFW Auxiliary to conduct separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email [Jlinstra@vfw.org](mailto:Jlinstra@vfw.org) or call 816.968.2787.

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS.** Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen first place Department winner will receive a national scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards being raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot's Pen National Awards total is \$5,000.

Anyone (including students, parents, teachers, and chairpersons) can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen by visiting the below links:

Voice of Democracy: [vfw.org/VOD/](https://vfw.org/VOD/)

Patriot's Pen: [vfw.org/PatriotsPen/](https://vfw.org/PatriotsPen/)



For Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: [vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy) for Voice of Democracy and [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen) for Patriot's Pen.

**VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IN NOVEMBER.** VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home front experiences to students. Invite your local military recruiter to join you to talk about military service today. Additional information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide.

Simply visit [vfw.org/#login](http://vfw.org/#login), log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals, and on the same page are all other program materials.

*Participate in this activity during the week of Veterans Day, which is part of "National Veterans Awareness week," as designated by Congress.* Find Pledge of Allegiance pencils and coloring books, plus other citizenship education tools at the VFW Store [vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation).

**SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM DEADLINE REMINDER.** The deadline for the annual Teacher Award contest has arrived. All post-level nominations should have been completed and submitted to a participating VFW Post by Oct. 31. A completed nomination should consist of a completed entry form with a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five-pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available at the time.

**Please ensure that the nominations received have the required documentation listed above and that the appointed individual at the Post is available to receive the nominations and answer questions. As we get closer to the deadline, more teachers or other nominators will be reaching out trying to find a participating Post so we want to ensure they can make contact.**

VFW Post Teacher Award chairpersons may submit one candidate, in each grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), to their District by Nov. 15. If a department does not have a District judging, then the Post entries would be submitted to the Department Headquarters and/or Department Chairperson by Jan. 1. The Department may select a single candidate, in each grade level, and submit them to VFW National Headquarters through Formstack by Feb. 1 for National judging. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. To submit their winners, the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" should be completed, and the winning entry documentation downloaded. You can locate additional information by logging in to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

VFW's Department Citizenship Education Teacher award includes a citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

VFW's National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and their school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email [tbeauchamp@vfw.org](mailto:tbeauchamp@vfw.org) or call 816.756.3390 extension 6287.

**PLEASE REVIEW UPDATE ON O.C.S.P. PROGRAM.** VFW National Programs has updated Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

**OUTSTANDING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD.** Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

**NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR.** Each Department will have an NCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

**VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS.** All nominations, consisting of a completed Post entry form and the required documentation, should be in the hands of the local Post by Oct. 31, so they may begin their judging. Once their judging has been completed, VFW Post Safety Chairperson's may submit up to five winning nominees (one for each career area) to their Department Headquarters for judging no later than Jan. 1.

Once judging has been completed, Departments may submit their five winning nominees, if available, (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office, by completing the "VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form" through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants/Quartermasters prior to the deadline of Feb. 1.

VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (E.O.D.T.) Award

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient's peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

Simply visit [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Public Servant Program**.

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: [vfwstore.org/products/32134](https://vfwstore.org/products/32134).

**CONDUCT A VETERAN’S DAY PROGRAM ON NOV. 11.** Organize a community event on Veterans Day honoring all veterans. For a ceremonial procedure, refer to the information found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education VFW Chairperson’s Guide. If you should need a Veterans Day speech, please go to: [vfw.org/MY-VFW/Patriotic-Holiday-Speeches](https://vfw.org/MY-VFW/Patriotic-Holiday-Speeches). Click here for Veterans Day merchandise [vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday](https://vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday).

**HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG ON DEC. 7.** Public Law 103-308, passed in 1994, designates Dec. 7 as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day” and requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day. To order a flag, go to [vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags](https://vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags).

**“UPDATED” POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS.** Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Nov. 7, 2019), it is required that the POW/MIA flag, on certain federal properties, be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to [vfwstore.org/products/GP237](https://vfwstore.org/products/GP237).

**IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot’s Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

## VFW Member Benefits

If you are a veteran and have TRICARE insurance coverage, you still may be on the hook for out-of-pocket health care expenses. As of 2024, TRICARE Select now has a YEARLY catastrophic cap of \$4,157 — that can be a lot to pay each year.

VFW’s exclusive provider, SelmanCo, offers members a group rate on a TRICARE Supplement Insurance Plan. The rates are based on age and can cover the health care costs left behind by your TRICARE plan. Those additional savings can really add up!

[Click here](#) to **download the CONFIDENCE OVER CHANCE Info Guide** and discover more.

## “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy

**“BUDDY”<sup>®</sup> POPPY CAMPAIGN.** Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as “They Gave, Will You?” is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

#### BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy) or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

**VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES.** The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory of Anniversary poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 2 years of the Gold, 3 years of Diamond and 50 years of the Silver.

## National Veterans Service

### **VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS) NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAC) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

Nominations for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer of the Year awards are coming soon! **Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as a Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteer and meet one of the following criteria:**

- Volunteer with hospitalized Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans at Outpatient Clinics
- Volunteer with Veterans in Community Living Centers
- Volunteer with homeless Veterans under a VAVS program
- Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community under VAVS
- Host Veterans functions outside the Post, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup> and Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment

VFW Department Commanders, Adjutant/Quartermasters, and Hospital Chairmen, please take a look at who you may want to nominate. We will publish deadlines and nomination forms criteria through the HQ Bulletin, Action Corps and our VFW VA Health Watch website. Thank you for supporting your volunteers work under the VAVS program!

## National Legislative Service/Action Corps

### **Tell Congress to Include VFW Priority**

The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933, *TAP Promotion Act*, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the *TAP Promotion Act* in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.

### **VFW, SVA Announce 2024/2025 Student Veteran Fellowship Class**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) have selected six student veterans for the 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. In its 11th year, the fellowship is an academic experience during which students advocate for a policy proposal that addresses a legislative issue important to both organizations. The issue of focus for this class is parity of GI Bill benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve. The fellows have the opportunity to attend SVA's National Conference in January and VFW's Washington Conference in March. The 2024/2025 legislative fellows are:

- Jose Ayon, Army veteran, University of Southern California
- Jennifer Ross, Air Force veteran, Cornell University
- Noah Sorseth, Army veteran, George Fox University
- Casey Stege, Army veteran, Baylor University
- Terry Traylor, Marine Corps veteran, North Dakota State University
- Polina Washington, Army veteran, The University of Texas at Austin

**Buddy Poppy** items are always available at the VFW Store. New this year: Get a few seed packets and grow your own poppies this spring. Go to [vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy?page=1&size=50](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy?page=1&size=50)

Commemorate the organization's 125 years of service with memorabilia from the VFW Store, including the holiday ornament pictured. [vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/125thanniversary?page=1&size=50](http://vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/125thanniversary?page=1&size=50)

To order, go to [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org) or call 1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)







October 17 – 19           Big Ten Conference  
                                  Bettendorf, IA

October 24 – 26           Eastern Conference  
                                  Wilmington, DE

November 6 – 9           Southern Conference  
                                  Montgomery, TX

**2026**

February 28 – March 5    Washington Conference  
                                  Washington, DC

April 16 -19              Senior Vice Training  
                                  Kansas City, MO (Tentative)

August 15 - 19           National Convention  
                                  Salt Lake City, UT

September 11             National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting  
                                  Kansas City, MO (Tentative)

September 12 – 13       National Council of Administration Meeting  
                                  Kansas City, MO (Tentative)

September 14 -17        Fall Legislative Committee  
                                  Washington, DC (Tentative)

September 24 – 27       Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming  
                                  Billings, MT

October 1 – 4             Department Adjutant/Quartermasters Training  
                                  Kansas City, MO (Tentative)

October 15 – 18          Junior Vice Training  
                                  Kansas City, MO (Tentative)

October 22 - 25          Southern Conference  
                                  Mobile, AL

**2027**

February 27 – March 4    Washington Conference  
                                  Washington, DC

July 31 - August 4        National Convention  
                                  Milwaukee, WI

**2028**

August 5 - 10            National Convention  
                                  San Antonio, TX



# Jason Burns For Department Surgeon 2025-2026



Qualifying Campaign- Bosnia & Iraq  
All State & All American District 14 CMDR  
All State & All American Post 1192 CMDR  
State Chaplain

My goal as your State Surgeon is to promote and put into effect health programs for the benefit of the membership and their families.

Programs I would like to put into effect are Monthly Support & Awareness Groups like: PTSD, MST, Suicide, Family ECT.

I would also like to partner up with Licensed Counselors to offer services to our membership and their families also. I would also like to have Faith Leaders to offer Spiritual Guidance.

I will also be working on setting up a new Surgeon network that will link up the Districts & Post Surgeons so they can send weekly reports.

I look forward to working with the Chaplains on the care of our membership and families that are in the hospital, long or short term care.

Also I will carry out what needs are called upon me by the Commander.

It has been an honor serving the membership of the Dept of Oklahoma over the past few years and I hope you will consider electing me to the office of State Surgeon to continue serving at the state level.



**Dear VFW Members,**

My name is Deric Duncan, and I am running for the position of VFW Department of Oklahoma Surgeon. Currently, I serve as the Department Inspector, MIA/POW Chair, OKC State Fair Chairman, Grant Committee Chair, and Building Committee Chair. Previously, I held the position of District 9 Commander.

I am running for this role because I believe there is much more we can achieve together. My primary goal is to reconnect with our veterans who are in VA homes, shut-ins, and those in hospitals, ensuring they feel part of our vibrant community. I believe in starting this work now, not waiting for election outcomes.

Additionally, I am committed to transparency within our department. It is vital for every officer to keep our membership informed, as you are the driving force behind this department. My aim is to refocus our efforts on how we can best serve you and the posts within Oklahoma.

Leadership is about service, not control. My phone and email are always open for your thoughts and concerns. Last year, I advocated for hiring more service personnel and bringing in grant writers. Although I didn't win the election, I utilized my position on the Council of Administration to push these initiatives forward, and I'm pleased to say they were approved.

I will continue to advocate for measures that benefit our membership and ensure your voices are heard. Together, we can create a stronger, more connected veteran community.

Thank you for your support!

**Sincerely,**

**Deric E. Duncan**

# VOTE MARCUS KING



# STATE CHAPLAIN

2025-2026

Ephesians 6: 10-20

## PROVEN LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION TO SERVICE

★ VFW MEMBER SINCE 2018 ★

★ UNITED STATES ARMY SERVICE ★

- Active Duty: 1996-2004
  - South Korea (1999-2000)
  - Iraq (March-November 2003)

★ LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE ★

- **Post 382 Chaplain**- Serving since 2022
- **District 13 Chaplain**- Serving since 2023
- **Assistant State Chaplain**- 2024-2025

★ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ★

- Active in Post and District community outreach events
- Supporting Department outreach efforts, including homeless veteran stand downs

★ ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP ★

- President/CEO of Point Man International Ministries - Serving since 2020
- Previous Roles: Outpost Leader and Secretary/Treasurer



RECONSARGE1975@ATT.NET



405.651.5509





**Erica Traxler  
for  
Oklahoma National Councilmember  
2026-2030  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**

Erica Traxler was elected to Past State Commander on June 15, 2024, at the Oklahoma State Convention in Claremore, Oklahoma.

She served in the United States Army from 1999 to 2013, earning her eligibility by serving in Iraq in 2003. In recognition of her service, she received the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Gold Recruiter Badge with Three Sapphire Stars, Driver and Mechanic Badge, USA Recruiter Badge, Total Army Instructor Training Identifier, and the Master Resilience Trainer Identifier. She retired in 2013 while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

Erica joined the VFW in 2017 at the Fort Sill Post 5263 in Lawton, Oklahoma, where she maintains her Gold Legacy Life Membership. She has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District, and Department levels, culminating with her election to Junior Vice Commander in September 2021. At the state level she has served as the Student Veterans of America chairwoman 2020 to present, Citizenship Education Chair 2020 to present, Bylaws committee 2022 to 2024, District Commander and has served on multiple committees at the National Convention. Erica was elected to Oklahoma Grand Commander of the Cooties in June 2024 for the ensuing year as well as post 5263 Commander. She is also the OKVFW Riders Group resident/Chairwoman for 2024 and the VFW Riders Adjutant at the national level.

Erica received her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling in December 2022. She currently works for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and is working toward getting her license.

Erica is a life member of the Military order of the Cootie, at LMSFT Pup Tent #16 in Lawton, Oklahoma and a life member of the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

Erica, her husband Randy, and their daughters Makayla and Kaylee reside in Lawton, Oklahoma.