

SERVING AMERICA'S *Heroes*





2026-2027

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY NATIONAL OFFICERS



PRESIDENT Donna K. Mills (center)

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT Kim Harney (upper left, then counterclockwise)

JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT Sandra Uzell

CONDUCTOR Cynthia Davis

CHIEF OF STAFF Bette Jean Biedrzycki

CHAPLAIN Janey Feher

SECRETARY-TREASURER Ann Panteleakos



Dear Sisters and Brothers –

I am so honored to serve all of you for the 2026-2027 year and I am thrilled to roll out my theme, ***Serving America's Heroes.***

I chose a very straightforward and streamlined concept to guide us this year. We are all united by our heroes, our veterans who have sacrificed so much for us to enjoy the privileges and freedoms we are so accustomed to. In that way we are all the same. We are all connected to a veteran, and that veteran makes us eligible to join this amazing organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of our heroes.

Sometimes, like in my case, we come from a family of service. My relatives have fought for our country from almost every branch of the military. Among them are my grandfather Neal and husband Frank.

For my special project, I've teamed up with VFW Commander-in-Chief Cory L. Geisler for Operation Bring Them Home. It is about returning all of our heroes home to their families and bringing them home with honor by partnering with the DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency). They work tirelessly around the globe - from the depths of the ocean to dense jungles to mountaintops – to recover and repatriate service members who were Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. It is so important that we bring them home.

As you turn through the pages of this book, you will notice a few changes: Auxiliary Outreach is no longer a Program, and "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home are now two separate Programs. What won't change, I know, is your enthusiasm for educating existing and prospective members about our Programs; do continue to share your ideas about new projects and activities. I can't wait to see how you promote our National Programs this year.

In closing, I want you to know that you, our members, are the shining stars that brighten the lives of our veterans, service members and their families. That is what the stars on the cover of this book (also on my pin) symbolize. I believe in your talent for supporting and advocating for our heroes. I want to thank you for everything you have done and will do for our organization. I don't think we can say this enough.

- Donna K. Mills
National President

2026-2027 JOINT SPECIAL PROJECT

OPERATION BRING THEM HOME

RETURNING **ALL** OF OUR HEROES TO
THEIR FAMILIES AND BRINGING
THEM HOME WITH HONOR

VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT

DONNA K. MILLS

& VFW NATIONAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

CORY L. GEISLER



The **DPAA** (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) is a Department of Defense agency that works to account for and repatriate U.S. service members who are or were Prisoners of War (**POW**) or Missing in Action (**MIA**) from past conflicts. Its mission is to provide families and the nation with the most complete record of these missing personnel. The DPAA uses a combination of historical research, recovery operations and forensic science including analyzing DNA to identify remains and **bring them home**.

To support this project, select the “**Make a Gift**” tab and then “**National President’s 2026-2027 Special Project**” in MALTA. Or mail a check to National Headquarters earmarked “National President’s/Commander-in-Chief’s 2026-2027 Special Project.” Members may also mail gifts earmarked for the special project to the VFW Foundation.

Members can report this under the **Veterans & Family Support Program**. Also reportable under Veterans & Family Support and integral to DPAA’s efforts is what is called a Family Resource Sample (**FRS**). DNA from surviving family members is key to identifying missing loved ones. It is technology that did not exist when these troops were lost.

Helping this organization means helping families find peace. Your contributions will help fund the DPAA’s efforts. To learn more about DPAA, visit www.dpaa.mil.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Circle of Excellence Criteria & Awards	1
Outstanding Performance Awards	5
National Program Ambassadors & National Program Awards	6
Americanism Ambassador / Patriotic Instructor	7
Americanism Program & Awards	11
"Buddy"® Poppy Ambassador	12
"Buddy"® Poppy Program & Awards	16
Extension & Revitalization Ambassador	17
Extension & Revitalization Program & Awards	21
Historian & Media Relations Ambassador	22
Historian & Media Relations Program & Awards	25
Hospital Ambassador	26
Hospital Program & Awards	30
Legislative Ambassador	31
Legislative Program & Awards	35
Membership Ambassador	36
Membership Program & Awards	40
VFW Auxiliary Eligibility Wheel	42
Membership Application	43
Scholarships Ambassador	44
Scholarships Program & Awards	48
Veterans & Family Support Ambassador	49
Veterans & Family Support Program & Awards	54
VFW National Home Ambassador	56
VFW National Home Program & Awards	60
Youth Activities Ambassador	61
Youth Activities Program & Awards	66
Year-End Report Worksheets	68

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

Every Department has the opportunity to join the Circle of Excellence. The criteria are listed below. National Headquarters will track this information. Consider this a checklist for the Program Year of important items and deadlines that must be met. Membership is an important factor and will be encouraged by the Conference Membership Coaches, who will be working with Department Membership Chairmen to achieve the membership portion of the Circle of Excellence criteria. Log into your MALTA Profile, Duties, Circle of Excellence to complete your criteria form. **Your Department MUST achieve 250 points or more to enter the Circle of Excellence. Must be submitted by May 15.**

Criteria for entering the Circle of Excellence:

1. Growth in Membership (Points continue to calculate after submission):

Membership Standings by June 30, 2027 based on June 30, 2026 final membership statistics.

Membership will be based on figures listed on the CMR - Paid, Canceled & Deceased report in MALTA.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
110		Over 101% in membership, not including deaths (current percent)
100		100% Plus in membership, not including deaths (current percent)
90		100% Plus in membership, including paid deaths (paid percent)
80		97-100% in membership, including paid deaths (paid percent)

2. Comply with Bylaws/Administrative Follow-Through:

A) All installation reports MUST be received at National Headquarters by July 31. If not, the Department MUST submit a request for a suspension by that date for time to mentor and rejuvenate the Auxiliary.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Installation reports received at National Headquarters by July 15.
5		Installation reports received at National Headquarters by July 31.
5		Suspension reports received at National Headquarters by July 31.

B) All Auxiliaries MUST be bonded by August 31. If not, the Department MUST submit a request for a suspension by that date to allow time to mentor and rejuvenate the Auxiliary.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
5		All Auxiliaries bonded or suspension report received at National Headquarters by August 31.

C) The Department MUST have submitted a Council-approved audit and budget by October 1 or request an extension on or before that date. Once extension is met, points will be awarded.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
15		Council-approved audit and budget by October 1 or request an extension.

D) Department, District and Auxiliary Officers (Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers) dues MUST be paid by December 31 or submit an email or letter to relieve any non-paid Officers to National Headquarters by January 5.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Dues of Officers at all levels paid by December 31 or email or letter to relieve non-paid Officers to Headquarters by January 5.

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

Criteria for entering the Circle of Excellence (continued):

- E) The Department MUST have submitted the names of their VAVS Representatives to National or request an extension on or before July 31.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Submit VAVS documentation to National Headquarters by July 31.

- F) Auxiliaries must have 10 paid members by February 1.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
5		Departments MUST notify National by February 4 of their plan to handle Auxiliaries with less than 10 members.

3. Department Communication:

- A) The Department MUST communicate with every Auxiliary at least quarterly in one or more of the following ways: email, mail, phone, website, newsletter, E-Newsletter or General Orders.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Communicate with Auxiliaries throughout the year.

- B) The Department Chairman of each National Program MUST send at least four (4) promotionals and/or communications to their National Ambassador by April 30. 10 points for submitting four (4), 20 points for submitting six (6).

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
20		Six (6) or more promotions of National Programs.
10		Four (4) or five (5) promotions of National Programs.

4. Training:

The Department MUST hold at least one training session* on each of the following:

**Training session can take place at a Department School of Instruction, meeting, Convention or other organized training events. These trainings can be combined into one session.*

- A) How to Identify an Unhealthy Auxiliary

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Department to host training session on how to identify an unhealthy Auxiliary by November 30.

- B) National Programs and Organizational Knowledge (e.g. Bylaws, Ritual, & MALTA)

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Department to host training session on National Programs and Organizational knowledge by November 30.

- C) Hold a training (for items not listed in 4 A & B) to benefit members (e.g., invite an accredited Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to speak at your meeting, etc.).

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Hold a training to benefit members by April 30.

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

Criteria for entering the Circle of Excellence (continued):

5. Programs Participation and Working Together on a Common Goal:

A) The Department MUST complete and submit the online Year-End Report.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
25		Department MUST submit the online Year-End Report by May 10.

B) What did your Department do to engage every Auxiliary in the work of the organization?

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Department President MUST describe what the Department did to engage every Auxiliary in the working of the organization on the Circle of Excellence Report by May 10.

C) All Auxiliaries MUST complete at least one project, activity or donation that benefits veterans by April 30.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		All Auxiliaries MUST complete at least one project, activity or donation that benefits veterans by April 30. If not, the Department MUST contact the Auxiliary by that date for explanation.

D) The Department must hold a joint VFW and VFW Auxiliary Department-level project in addition to current National Scholarships programs. Project must be completed by April 30.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		The Department must hold a joint VFW and VFW Auxiliary Department-level project in addition to current National Scholarships Programs. Project must be completed by April 30. Project to be described in the Circle of Excellence Report by May 10.

E) Any Auxiliary that is below 100% in membership on January 31st MUST be contacted by a Department Officer to determine a need for mentoring and/or other assistance. The Department Officer must contact the Auxiliary on or before April 15th. The Department Officer must then report to the Department President by April 30th. The Department President will describe what was done to assist them in the box below.

(If all Auxiliaries and Districts in your Department are at 100% on January 31, you will automatically receive 10 points.)

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		A Department Officer is to contact any Auxiliary below 100% in membership on January 31, on or before April 15. Department Officer is to report to the Department President by April 30. Outcomes are to be described in the Circle of Excellence Report by May 10.

Circle of Excellence Awards:

AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS

1. \$500 to the Department for meeting all of the criteria listed on pages 1-3 and entering the Circle of Excellence information.
2. Circle of Excellence Year Patch for Department Banner Ribbon.

AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENT PRESIDENTS

1. Circle of Excellence medallion.
2. Circle of Excellence tie or scarf.
3. Circle of Excellence pin.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN 2026-2027

The Outstanding Performance Awards are given each year to recognize hardworking Departments and Department Chairmen who have given an extra amount of effort.

The Outstanding Performance Award:

- \$200 goes to the one Outstanding Department in each of the 10 Program Divisions*.
- A keepsake goes to the Department Chairman of the one Outstanding Department in each of the 10 Program Divisions*.

Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award:

- \$100 goes to the one Second-Place Outstanding Department in each of the 10 Program Divisions*.
- A Citation goes to the Department Chairman of the one Second-Place Outstanding Department in each of the 10 Program Divisions*.

11 Programs Judged:

- Americanism
- "Buddy"® Poppy
- Extension & Revitalization
- Historian & Media Relations
- Hospital
- Legislative
- Membership
- Scholarships
- Veterans & Family Support
- VFW National Home
- Youth Activities

The Selection:

The National Program Ambassadors of each Program listed will select the recipients. Department Chairmen will be judged on quality, creativity and originality of all communications, promotions and events. When a Department Chairman does anything to promote or publicize the Program to the members and the community, they should send a copy of the item or communication or a description of the event or presentation to the National Program Ambassador.

Required to qualify:

A minimum of four (4) mailed and/or emailed promotions to the members in their Department and must send copies to the National Ambassador by April 30, 2027.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. If neither the winner nor Department leadership are in attendance, awards will be mailed to recipients from National Headquarters upon return from the VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

**Program Divisions will be announced at the start of the Program Year.*

2026-2027

NATIONAL PROGRAM AMBASSADORS AND NATIONAL PROGRAM AWARDS

***Please note: The Program Book is printed prior to the National Convention. Depending on the Bylaw decisions made at Convention, section numbers may be different from the printed version.**

AMERICANISM AMBASSADOR / PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR



JESSICA GARDNER

4611 Tall Oaks Drive
Dayton, OH 45432-3240
(937) 245-2897
jessiauxreport@gmail.com

As Rosie the Riveter told America in 1942, “We can do it.” The VFW Auxiliary can do it and can spread that spirit of Americanism today. For this Program Year the VFW Auxiliary is sharing this message in a way that “POPs.”

Americanism POP Signs

We have all seen posters from World War II which depict icons like Uncle Sam and Rosie the Riveter, asking you to join the military and do your part. Today people’s attention spans are even shorter than they were in the ‘40s. So, let’s try a technique that worked in the past.

Use a POP Sign to get people’s attention. POP stands for a Point-of-Purchase display, a marketing tool used to promote products and inspire people to act. America is our product and by incorporating symbols like the American Flag, bald eagles, the Statue of Liberty and other patriotic imagery we can use the POP Sign to promote Americanism. It can be a physical sign or a post on social media. The goal is to catch people’s attention within a few seconds because most won’t take the time to read a brochure or listen to our pitches. Make them fun. Enjoy making your signs and be creative!

Think of this like picking a book by the cover or which movie to watch by the poster. Make them bright and keep the wording short. As Uncle Sam said during World War II, “I want you for the U.S. Army,” we want to be sure to ask our audience for help. Let everyone know what we do and what

they can do to promote patriotism. Let them know about the Flag and holidays.

See the Americanism awards on page 11 for more information on how creating POP Signs can be reported for awards.

Flag Education

Organize efforts to educate people on the importance of Flag etiquette. Topics you should cover include folding the Flag, respectful disposal of the Flag and displaying the Flag. Organize classes on the importance of the history and meaning of the Flag.

Promote Patriotism

Educate people on the meaning and history of national symbols and traditions. People are not being taught the history of why our symbols are important. I was always taught that when we forget our history we are bound to repeat it. Promote holidays. Provide information on ways to celebrate the holiday but don’t forget the reason why. Focus on the reason, meaning and significance of the holiday over the food and festivities.

Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Remembrance

September 18, 2026 is National POW/MIA Day, a solemn remembrance of the sacrifices, honor and bravery of those who served and were unable to return home, are still missing or suffered at the hands of our enemies. This day shows our unwavering commitment to finding them and remembering the sacrifices of those who are lost to us. It is a day to honor the fallen, pray for those who endure(d) hardships during combat and to support the families through their grief and in the relentless hope that their loved one will return. National President Donna K. Mills’ 2026-2027 special joint project with VFW National Commander-in-Chief Cory L. Geisler is Operation

Bring Them Home, which supports the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). See the special joint project page at the front of the book. Operation Bring Them Home is reportable under Veterans & Family Support.

Until they are all home we will remember.

History of Americanism in the Auxiliary

The VFW Auxiliary has promoted Americanism since its founding in 1914, establishing it as one of the foundations of the organization. From the beginning, this core mission of promoting patriotism and national pride has been a driving force for several milestones within the Auxiliary. A key moment in the Program's history occurred in the 1921 when the VFW created "Americanization Day" on May 1 as a patriotic response to the perceived communist influence of the May Day celebrations at the time. The holiday was officially renamed Loyalty Day and made a permanent fixture on the national calendar by Congress in 1958, following decades of promotion by the VFW and its Auxiliary.

For the Patriotic Instructors

The Patriotic Instructor is responsible for educating members about the history, symbolism and proper etiquette related to the organization and the American Flag. It is your job to instruct and demonstrate the proper way to stand and salute the Flag. Be prepared to educate members on standing at attention, parade rest, how to salute and what the gavel raps mean. Take the initiative to plan and demonstrate proper observances of patriotic holidays through celebrations and events.





AMERICANISM PROGRAM

Flag Education • POW/MIA Recognition • Star Family Recognition

The following definition of “Americanism” was originated by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Commanders of the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans of the World War at a conference held in Washington, D.C., in February 1927:

“Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.”

Patriotic Instructors/Americanism Chairman

The Patriotic Instructor educates members about the proper salute to the U.S. Flag as well as the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. They also take the time to understand the VFW Auxiliary Ritual and the Federal Flag Code. They help members to understand the traditions and ceremonies of the Organization. The Understanding Auxiliary Traditions help sheet and video are available in MALTA Member Resources.

For detailed information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals and patriotic ceremonies, reference the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual.

Flag Education

A large part of demonstrating Americanism and patriotic spirit is respecting and properly caring for the U.S. Flag. Flag etiquette covers everything from proper display of our Flag to acceptable conduct around this symbol of our nation.

For more information about Flag etiquette, the history of our Flag and to read the U.S. Flag Code, visit vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette.

Respect for the Flag - Engaging the Community

- **Flag Education in Schools** – Educating our youth about patriotism is an important step on the path to good citizenship. Encourage members of your Auxiliary to volunteer in schools and educate youth about the importance of respecting our Flag. Volunteers can visit individual classrooms or give a presentation at a school assembly. For more resources, see MALTA Member Resources.
- **Recognition of Outstanding Community Flag Display** – When a community member, business or organization takes the care and time to display our “Stars and Stripes,” it reinforces patriotism to the entire community. You may recognize this display of patriotism by presenting a certificate of appreciation from your Auxiliary.
- **Flag Retirement Ceremonies** – These ceremonies honoring our Flag serve as one of the most beautiful forms of respect for our country. This is the perfect way to involve the whole family of Auxiliary and VFW members. Flag retirement ceremonies can also serve as an event involving the entire community.
- **Promote Patriotism** – Celebrating Patriotic Holidays. Patriotic holidays are an opportune time to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. Patriotic holidays and days of note can serve as the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism, veterans and their families as a top priority. A list of these dates can be found in MALTA.

For more information and guidance on Americanism and Patriotism, including Patriotic Instructor duties, patriotic days, Americanism Helpful Hints, branches of service birth dates, military flags order of precedence and Star Family recognition, see MALTA Member Resources.

Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase through the VFW Store at 1-833-VFW-VETS or online at vfwstore.org.

Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher award Program

Each year the VFW recognizes three exceptional teachers - one each from the elementary, junior high and high school levels - for their outstanding commitment to teach Americanism and instill patriotism in their students.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year>

VFW National Public Servant Award Citations.

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

The "VFW Department Public Servant Award Citation Request Form" is now available on the VFW website. VFW members can locate this form by logging in to www.vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

VFW Life Saving Award Citation

The VFW Life Saving Award is one of the highest recognitions conferred by both the Department of Washington and the National Veterans of Foreign Wars. It honors those who display remarkable heroism, skill or bravery in saving or attempting to save a human life.

All Life Saving Award Citations must be requested through the VFW Programs Dashboard Tool. VFW members can access the VFW Programs Dashboard Tool by logging in to [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org), on the "My VFW" page under the Membership Quick Links section.

AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique POP sign and/or meme showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Americanism Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the best promotion of POP signs and/or memes showcasing the VFW Auxiliary.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

“BUDDY”® POPPY AMBASSADOR



DONNA MARIE KING

391 Jardinere Walk
Mount Pleasant, SC
29464-7815

(843) 343-8202

donnamarieking1959@
gmail.com

The “Buddy”® Poppy has been part of the VFW since 1922. The history of the “Buddy”® Poppy is a great tool to use when educating the community about what they represent and why we are always seen with the “Buddy”® Poppies.

The “Buddy”® Poppy is a symbol that reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms.

Education

There are many resources in MALTA to help you prepare for any “Buddy”® Poppy event. In MALTA under resources on the left, open “Buddy”® Poppy and you will find a wealth of helpful items. The VFW Store also has “Buddy”® Poppy items as well as a pamphlet called Story of the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy. These items can be used to liven up all your Poppy events.

Through education of the “Buddy”® Poppy, what it represents, who does it, where we have distributions and why, the community will have a better understanding of why we do what we do.

With your VFW, have an event educating your community on the “Buddy”® Poppy. Let’s see who can come up with interesting ideas and let’s make sure we SWAP. SWAP is an Auxiliary initiative started in 2018 that encourages members to Share Wonderful Auxiliary Projects, when you have a great idea for an event or promotion, share it with other Auxiliaries (I also like to call it Sharing With A Purpose). Even if you don’t use an idea, you can still

SWAP it, for example, what doesn’t work on the east coast may work wonderfully on the west coast.

“Buddy”® Poppy Distribution

Distributing Poppies dates back more than a century when it became the VFW’s official memorial flower. When you have a “Buddy”® Poppy distribution you are honoring the dead by helping the living.

Here are some important things to consider when preparing for your “Buddy”® Poppy distribution.

- Identify potential volunteers within your Post and Auxiliary; get together with them for an informational meeting explaining the purpose of the “Buddy”® Poppy campaign. The Auxiliary can do a distribution with or without the comrades. Who can participate in a “Buddy”® Poppy drive? Anyone can promote the “Buddy”® Poppy. It is **not** restricted to VFW comrades or Auxiliary members, nor is there an age restriction.
- Plan to distribute a certain number of Poppies per volunteer.
- Determine how many Poppies you should order based on the number of volunteers. To order your Poppies you need to go through your VFW Post. If not, contact your Department headquarters.
- Choose distribution dates. Memorial Day and Veterans Day, patriotic holidays are always a popular time. However, since every day can be a day to honor veterans, the “Buddy”® Poppy can and should be promoted throughout the year.
- Determine your distribution venues in advance. Choose high traffic areas and make sure you have enough volunteers to do those locations. Make sure you get prior permission from business owners.
- Encourage volunteers to smile and be enthusiastic during the distribution. Friendliness will project a good image for the VFW and Auxiliary.

- It is always best when your volunteers wear their VFW or Auxiliary gear.
- Remind the volunteers that they are not “selling” Poppies but distributing them with the hope of getting donations.
- Donations collected during your “Buddy”® Poppy distribution will be allocated to the Relief Fund per our Bylaws. I encourage you to consult the Booklet of Instructions found within your *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual* on ways to use the funds.
- Poppy Drives can be held by the Auxiliary or in conjunction with the VFW. Be sure to meet with them prior to dates of distribution.



See page 14 for more information about the VFW’s “Buddy”® Poppy contests.

Thank you to everyone for their efforts as we continue ***Serving America’s Heroes*** one “Buddy”® Poppy at a time.



“BUDDY”® POPPY PROGRAM

“Buddy”® Poppy Education and Distribution • VFW National “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

The “Buddy”® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community for over 100 years. As the VFW’s official remembrance flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that we will not forget their sacrifices.

The Poppy movement was inspired by Canadian Army Col. John McCrae’s famous poem, “In Flanders Fields.” Poppies were originally distributed by the Franco-American Children’s League to benefit children in the devastated areas of France and Belgium following World War I.

The VFW conducted its first Poppy distribution before Memorial Day in 1922, becoming the first veterans’ organization to organize nationwide distribution. In February 1924, the VFW registered the name “Buddy”® Poppy with the U.S. Patent Office. A certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of Buddy under the classification of artificial flowers. No other organization, firm or individual can legally use the name “Buddy”® Poppy.

Honor the Dead by Helping the Living

These small but mighty remembrance flowers have raised millions for the welfare of veterans and their dependents. The VFW “Buddy”® Poppy Program also provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home.

How to Order

Contact your VFW Post to order VFW “Buddy”® Poppies. Please request the order at least two to three months (8 to 12 weeks) in advance of your distribution date.

“Buddy”® Poppy Items

“Buddy”® Poppy apparel, distribution supplies and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store.

VFW Store
406 West 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)
vfwstore.org

“Buddy”® Poppy Distribution Tips

“Buddy”® Poppy drives can be hosted at any time during the year – not just Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Try doing one at least once a quarter. If you have enough volunteers, host a monthly “Buddy”® Poppy drive.

- Talk to your VFW Post about joint drives and splitting the proceeds.
- Contact your city/town clerk’s office to see if a permit is required for your distribution event.
- Get permission from the desired distribution location(s) store managers/owners prior to promoting your “Buddy”® Poppy distribution event.
- Make sure all Auxiliary members know the time, day and place of your distribution event.
- Share information about your distribution event with your local paper and on social media. Post flyers in high-traffic areas such as grocery stores, coffee shops, the post office, etc.
- Ask for assistance from youth groups such as VFW and/or Auxiliary youth, JROTC, afterschool, Scouts, Young Marines and faith-based clubs.

- Ask volunteers to wear Auxiliary and/or VFW branded clothing to both promote the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary.
- Remind volunteers they are NOT SELLING “Buddy”® Poppies but DISTRIBUTING them for donations and never refuse someone a “Buddy”® Poppy because they are unable to donate. A “Buddy”® Poppy honors all veterans.
- See the VFW’s “Buddy”® Poppy Chairperson’s Guide for further assistance in setting up a “Buddy”® Poppy drive, as well as other helpful resources. The guide can be found in MALTA Member Resources.
- At the Auxiliary and Post level, all proceeds from Poppy drives are to be placed in the Relief Fund with receipts and expenditures in accordance with the Treasurer’s Guide and the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*.
- Distribution of “Buddy”® Poppies should be included in every Auxiliary, District or Department activity including parades, patriotic events, membership drives, bingo or trivia nights, etc.
- There are many creative ways to distribute the “Buddy”® Poppy including window displays, posters, wreaths, remembrance walls, hats, event centerpieces, etc.

Two Versions of the “Buddy”® Poppy Are Available

- Traditional artificial flower “Buddy”® Poppy
- Tin tab “Buddy”® Poppy

Anniversary “Buddy”® Poppies

Special traditional artificial flower Poppies are available to VFW Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries. The poppies are the same design as traditional poppies but come in silver for the 25th anniversary, gold for the 50th anniversary and diamond (iridescent white) for the 75th anniversary. VFW Posts currently in their 100th anniversary can order any color and as many as they need. Anniversary “Buddy”® Poppies are available from the VFW Store while supplies last. Once they are all sold they are gone.

Official National VFW “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

- Takes place annually at National Convention.
- Displays are judged in three (3) categories.
- This is an official National VFW contest.

Contest rules and judging guidelines are available in MALTA Member Resources. This is a VFW contest and the rules cannot change. If you have further questions after reading the rules and guidelines, please contact Lynn W. Rolf III at lrolf@vfw.org.

Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest & VFW National “Buddy”® Poppy Awards

Find details about the Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest & VFW National “Buddy”® Poppy Awards in MALTA Member Resources.

“BUDDY”® POPPY PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding activity and/or event to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National “Buddy”® Poppy Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of activity and/or event to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador’s Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION AMBASSADOR, NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF



BETTE JEAN
BIEDRZYCKI
National Chief of Staff

319 Cedar Ridge Dr. Apt. 205
Pittsburgh, PA 15205-1144

(412) 600-4990

bettejean1@yahoo.com

So much more is accomplished working together. The National Chief of Staff and Extension & Revitalization Ambassador works to foster teamwork across the VFW Auxiliary. Like a football team moving down field, our focus should be on achieving the same goal. For the Auxiliary, scoring a touchdown is when we help veterans. No one can do this alone. We must work together to help new members and teach them about our Programs to help them better serve our veterans.

However, we always need to add these new teammates. The most important part of any nonprofit organization is to boost its membership.

How can we effectively do this? The Membership Program offers ideas and incentives to help with this. What can I, as the Extension & Revitalization Ambassador and National Chief of Staff do?

Chief of Staff Duties

When you are tasked with being a Chief of Staff you are an important part of an organization.

This is a position that fosters the ideas of service to our military, our retired and families of those who have served or are serving. How you manage this mission gives a public image of who we are and what we hope to accomplish. If you are ready to be a part of this organization, you should encourage others to follow. Your actions and words play a huge part in recruitment.

How do you speak to others about what do we do?

How do you outwardly treat potential members?
You are the key to recruitment.

As Chief of Staff, you should be aware of how recruitment takes place. Your head should be on a swivel! If ill will or poor treatment of others is brought to your attention, you need to be ready to enter the picture. How you manage these situations can affect the outcome.

There are many ways to carry out the goal of revitalization. The MALTA database offers the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). This document is found under Duties/Officers Resources. Please pay close attention to how this vital tool is used. All the resources available for Extension & Revitalization and Chief of Staff duties found in MALTA Member Resources will be an integral component in making your Programs successful.

It is reasonable to hope that some issues can be resolved before other measures have to be used.

For a Chief of Staff, your main duty is to observe the issues surrounding troubled Auxiliaries and keep the Department President apprised of the issues. This is your specific task. Chief of Staff is a misunderstood appointment. We need to change the misconceptions.

The goal is to bring any yellow or red flags to green. Everyone should have a green flag indicating a healthy auxiliary. Should you meet an Auxiliary with some fixable issues, it will be indicated by a yellow flag.

The red flag indicates serious issues including a possible suspension. This is by no means a final action. With the proper course of action and a little effort, it may be possible to revitalize the Auxiliary and return it to active status.

This is a lot to digest, but with knowledge of the resources available to you, and putting them to effective use, you will be successful in maintaining healthy Auxiliaries and fostering the goals of the organization.

This year we want to use all our tools and resources to accomplish our goals and even help establish some new Auxiliaries. Strong teamwork will be acknowledged with awards for assisting the Chief of Staff. Learn more about this in the Extension and Revitalization awards descriptions on page 21.





EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Maintain and Strengthen Current Auxiliaries • Present to Unaffiliated Posts Establish New Auxiliaries

The Chief of Staff has a critical leadership role in our organization. One of the responsibilities of the Chief of Staff is to provide guidance and resources to the VFW Auxiliaries so they can ensure that they are healthy and successful.

Chiefs of Staff work with District Presidents and the Department President to maintain current VFW Auxiliaries. Chiefs of Staff also work closely with their Department President and organizers to establish new VFW Auxiliaries.

5 Essentials of a VFW Auxiliary

The National Organization requires only five (5) things of an Auxiliary:

1. Auxiliaries should have at least ten (10) business meetings per year. Five (5) members in good standing (of that Auxiliary) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
2. Dues should be paid by at least ten (10) members on or before February 1 of the current year.
3. Quarterly audits by Trustees must be submitted.
4. Officers elected, installed and reported to National Headquarters no later than June 30. This generates the bond application via email.
5. The offices of President and Treasurer MUST be bonded by August 31.

Establishing New VFW Auxiliaries

Whether a VFW Post decides on its own it wants a VFW Auxiliary or whether a VFW Auxiliary member or nonmember sees the potential for a new one, the steps for creating a VFW Auxiliary are the same.

1. A VFW Post must vote by 2/3 majority to have a VFW Auxiliary. (A VFW Auxiliary can never exist on its own without a Post and can never be started without that VFW Post's permission.)

2. The Department President appoints the official organizer of that VFW Auxiliary, and the organizer must be a member of the VFW Auxiliary.

- It would help to allow two others who are knowledgeable about VFW Auxiliary business and work well with others to be on an organizing team. They can answer questions and assist with training, educating and mentoring the new VFW Auxiliary once it is instituted. It is recommended that the organizer, the organizing team or someone else approved by the Department President work with the VFW Auxiliary and its members for at least a year, or until they are ready to proceed as a VFW Auxiliary in good standing.

3. A minimum of 15 eligible applicants must be on the Charter application. Transfers are accepted at the closure of the institution and just prior to the installation of the newly formed VFW Auxiliary.

The Department Chief of Staff could assist by providing the following tools for the organizer and organizing team:

- Talking points for the first meeting.
- A procedure for membership applications.
- When and how to collect dues.
- Assist in securing and filling out official and proper paperwork.
- See that deadlines and filings are met in a timely manner.

Recognize new VFW Auxiliaries

Recognize new VFW Auxiliaries at District and Department functions to help them feel welcome and important.

Maintaining Current VFW Auxiliaries

The National Organization has developed many resources for members to use, including tools available in MALTA Member Resources. These resources have proven to be valuable tools in helping VFW Auxiliaries be more productive.

1. The Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit includes seven (7) resources to assist VFW Auxiliaries in identifying and solving issues including the Healthy Auxiliary Checklist, Auxiliary Meeting Clinic and more.

2. *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation* makes every effort to educate members on all aspects of the duties of Officers at all levels, how to be a Chairman, the why of reporting and more.

3. Saving a VFW Auxiliary may be achieved by recruiting new members. Work with your Membership Chairman to help a VFW Auxiliary become Healthy.
(No new members = a true Red Flag)

Remember to use our additional Member Resources:

- “Understanding Auxiliary Traditions” video
- PowerPoint and PDF entitled “Why Having an Auxiliary Can Boost your Post”
- Top 10 Reasons for your Post to Have an Auxiliary Handout
- Good Job Certificates

Mentoring and Encouraging Members

- Mentoring helps broaden leadership skills and leadership provides guidance for mentoring members; they work hand in hand.
- A stronger membership on every level of our organization will be accomplished through mentoring.
- Through the mentoring process, extending the hand of friendship to a new member

or even a tenured member who has been inactive for a while can create a strong and vibrant organization. Providing a positive and organized meeting experience will leave members wanting to come back, especially when effective communication and respect for each other is demonstrated.

- Over time, a member may express interest in holding an office or chairmanship. Work with them to help them succeed. This will only make the VFW Auxiliary and the organization better. Choose the mentor carefully.
- The real goal here is to train your replacement and give them the tools they need to succeed.

EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION AWARDS

Awards for Members:

1. Citation to one member in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best assistance to the Chief of Staff in establishing a new VFW Auxiliary with the approval of the VFW Auxiliary Department President.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff must sign and send a copy of the completed Department nomination form to the VFW Auxiliary National Chief of Staff by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliary members from National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for District Presidents:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary District President or Official Representative in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best assistance to the VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff with a struggling VFW Auxiliary by mentoring and maintaining a close relationship until the VFW Auxiliary becomes healthy, with the approval of the VFW Auxiliary Department President. Use of MALTA Healthy Auxiliary tools and mentor training is required.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff must sign and send a copy of the completed Department nomination form to the VFW Auxiliary National Chief of Staff by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winners from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary District President or official representative.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most unique promotion educating members about how to maintain healthy VFW Auxiliaries and to promote Extension while utilizing MALTA Member Resources.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chief of Staff.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS AMBASSADOR



TERESA PRICE

509 Woodland St.
Eufaula, OK 74432-3609
(918) 429-2418
tmstevenson@outlook.com

The National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador enjoys a unique perspective on the members of this amazing organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliaries, as we document our work together. I am honored to assist you all for the 2026-2027 Program Year and help guide you with the knowledge and resources our organization has in preserving your Auxiliary's memories.

A Framework of History

The Historian & Media Relations Program keeps the Auxiliary's history alive. We have been taught throughout the years when recording Auxiliary history we must include the five W's: who, what, where, when and why. Answering these questions is crucial because they provide a structured framework to gather, organize and report information comprehensively and clearly. This will ensure all key details are covered, provide context and give an understandable narrative that goes beyond just the basic facts.

Your Auxiliary Historian, along with members, compiles and places in chronological order the memories and events of your year in several formats, including photographs, memorabilia, newspaper articles, videos and more. The Historian also assists with promoting events and projects that your Auxiliary is participating in to show your communities the unwavering support for veterans, service members, their families and your communities.

New Technology

For years, we have all been learning about modern technology. It has become our way of life. Today there are myriad ways to make social media content including reels, videos and digital slideshows to chronicle your Auxiliary's history for years to come. With all these technological advancements we can archive more events than ever before. This means you can become a detective and go back in time to learn about the origins of your Auxiliary.

Have you thought about past years' history? Do you know who your first Auxiliary President was, the second, the third and so forth? Since the VFW National Auxiliary launched MALTA, it records who your past Presidents and Officers were, starting less than 10 years ago. Use this platform. Do you know when/how your Auxiliary got started? How have past members shaped the culture in your Auxiliary? So many Auxiliaries throughout the states have decades of history. It is time to start thinking about preserving the past for all the future generation members. This will give them an understanding of why the Auxiliary has been in existence for so long.

Not long ago, I was shopping in a small town in the southeastern part of Oklahoma. While there I went into an antique store and to my surprise I came across plaques and memorabilia for sale that had a VFW Auxiliary listed on them. This same Auxiliary is still in existence. Why would they do this? Come to find out, this Auxiliary lost their Post home due to extensive repairs that needed to be made. They did not have enough funds to get the repairs done and had to relocate. When moving, these boxes of items were accidentally taken to this antique shop. Auxiliaries that have been in existence for many years may have gone through a comparable situation. Auxiliaries run out of room keeping all of the past years' history items or they have thrown them out or fires/natural disasters have destroyed keepsakes. Has this been an experience your Auxiliary has had? With the risk of past items being lost or destroyed it makes it clear the importance of preserving your Auxiliary's history

digitally. Having access to this history is convenient and also a beneficial talking point when recruiting new members.

It is up to the members of the Auxiliaries to do the physical research, digitization, use proper storage and promote your history to the community. This will all be worth it in the long run. Preserving your Auxiliary history helps preserve the traditions and values within your Auxiliary.

Research

For the Auxiliaries that have been established prior to MALTA, it will take some investigation to find information. There are places to do research to gain this information. Here are several ways:

- Ask your Auxiliary members: interview them about when they joined the Auxiliary to obtain information to record about their years of membership.
- Connect with your Department, they may have archives and records.
- Your local newspaper: most have archived news articles from years ago.

Digital Platforms and Proper Storage

When an Auxiliary has been established for 20-plus years, displaying or storage becomes an issue. A digital platform such as a computer or tablet will condense materials and save space.

When choosing a storage platform, consider factors such as storage capacity, accessibility, security features and integration with other tools. Each platform has unique advantages tailored to different user needs, ensuring there's likely an option that fits your requirements perfectly. It is always a smart idea to have more than one storage platform. Here are a few ideas:

- Storage platforms: iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive
- Flash Drives
- External hard drives

Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in the younger generation today. Social media is used to communicate through feeds, profiles, groups and different forms of content such as photos, text and videos. By creating a Facebook account, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube channel or TikTok you can share your Auxiliary experiences, stories, events and programs. It even helps you to retain and gain members.

If you are still learning about media platforms, continue learning, as they are adding different platforms every year. Ask your children and grandchildren how to start using these if you are not sure how to use them. This is the way of the world today to keep history for the future generations to come.

For more information see the Historian & Media Relations Program Awards on page 25.





HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

Historian Duties • Media Relations

The Historian & Media Relations Chairmen is a memory keeper and collector of the five W's: the who-what-where-when-and-why of your VFW Auxiliary. These individuals compile and chronicle memories and events in written and digital formats, including photographs, memorabilia, print news, audio and/or video clips and social media posts. The Historian & Media Relations Chairman captures the narrative of the Program Year.

The Historian & Media Chairman is also the member who gets the word out about the VFW Auxiliary to our communities. They inform the public about activities, events and our valuable National Programs.

VFW Auxiliary and District Historian & Media Relations Chairmen

This member keeps a written report of the history of their VFW Auxiliary or District and submits this to their respective President at the end of the year. Supplemental material can include photographs and newspaper clippings that document special VFW Auxiliary events.

Department Historian & Media Relations Chairmen

This member keeps a comprehensive record of the Department President's activities, and should include travels, Official Visits and other official functions. Collect material in written form to capture your Department's history, in chronological order. As with the VFW Auxiliary Historian & Media Relations Chairman, this position also compiles photographs and newspaper and/or video clips of VFW Auxiliary news.

The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman also documents and photographs the National President's visit and may reach out to local media outlets to organize interviews and news opportunities for the National President.

National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador

This National Ambassador documents the travels and activities of the National President. Department-level reports and photos are essential for this job.

What's newsworthy?

Consider these questions: Does it involve local people? Does it interest non-members? Is it timely? Does it help the community? Is it unique and new? If the answer is yes, this is a chance for you to pitch a story with an "angle" that will showcase your VFW Auxiliary's hard work and accomplishments. Let's show our communities, and our nation, everything we do to improve the lives of veterans, service members and their families.

Who Should you Contact About VFW Auxiliary News?

Learn the names of reporters who cover stories most similar to yours and tailor your own list of media contacts. Send information directly to these contacts rather than the editor. News staff who specialize in relevant areas, like society and calendar page editors, are more likely to be receptive to including VFW Auxiliary events. Feel free to send a reporter or editor a personal email and be sure to include your contact information.

Historian & Media Relations Resources

MALTA Member Resources is a great place to find valuable information including:

- The VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide
- Local and National talking points
- Adult & youth photo releases
- Sample speeches
- Website and social media/Facebook information
- Emblem Branding Center information
- Sample press releases
- PowerPoint and letter templates
- Photography tips

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique digital record of their VFW Auxiliary history since being established and publishes it to a digital platform for future members of their VFW Auxiliary.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best training and/or education promoting how to preserve the history of their VFW Auxiliary.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

HOSPITAL AMBASSADOR



DEBBIE STURGIS

3630 Cinnamon Ln.
Linkwood, MD 21835-1107
(443) 521-7441
deborahsturgis1@gmail.com

Hospital is one of the oldest Programs in our organization. Some of our veterans have been medical patients for many years. Hospital volunteers have a special knack of putting a smile on a veteran's face. We have been doing this for over 100 years. We get busy in our lives and sometimes we forget about our hospitalized veterans. If you could just take a few hours a week to devote to your local veterans who are hospitalized, it would make the biggest difference in their lives. It is just as rewarding for us as it is for the veterans.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The mission of the Veterans Health Administration is to "Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and wellbeing." In support of this mission VA hospitals, nursing homes and clinics need volunteers to perform a wide range of duties. Some work directly with patients, participating in recreational programs and other activities on the wards. Others assist the VA's professional staff or escort patients, serve coffee or simply provide companionship to veteran patients.

We want to remember to honor and celebrate veterans on traditional holidays as well as non-traditional ones. There are activities to plan that fit every holiday.

Traditional Holidays

Valentines Day – make homemade cards and visit VA facilities

National Salute to Veterans Day - make cards saluting veterans' service

Easter – make baskets or treats

Memorial Day – plan an activity such as a barbecue

Flag Day – onsite Flag-raising ceremony (hand out small handheld Flags)

4th of July – have a picnic with patriotic decorations

Patriot Day – hold a remembrance ceremony

Thanksgiving – send cards of thanks and holiday treats

Christmas – plan an event with Santa and give gifts the veterans may need

Non-Traditional Holidays

Some lesser-known holidays still provide the perfect opportunity to connect with veterans or simply remind them you are thinking of them.

National Popcorn Day - January 19

National Hug a G.I. Day - March 4

National Donut Day - June 2

World Chocolate Day – July 7

Left Handers Day – August 7

Final Salute

A Final Salute or Final Escort for a veteran refers to one of two things:

- A dignified procession within a hospital or nursing home where staff and veterans line the halls and stand at attention as a deceased veteran's body is moved, or
- A ceremonial funeral provided by organizations like Last Salute. These ceremonies include traditions like a Flag presentation and the playing of Taps.

Women Veterans

Ensuring women veterans receive veterans' benefits and services that honor their brave military service is important. Currently, women comprise 15% of the active-duty military and 18% of the Guard and Reserve. With the steady increase of women wearing our nation's uniform and their increased role in military operations, it has never been more important that we ensure women veterans have a VA that is ready and able to care for them when they transition back to civilian life.

Women veterans may be eligible for a wide variety of benefits available to all U.S. military veterans. VA benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment and burial. More information is available on the Women Veterans Benefits website: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/persona/veteran-women.asp>

Did You Know. . .

...that Abraham Lincoln is represented in the Department of Veterans Affairs, including plaques at the Washington, D.C. Headquarters? One plaque is adorned with Lincoln's quote, "To Care For Him Who Shall Have Borne The Battle and For His Widow and His Orphan." This quote from President Lincoln would form the basis of the VA's mission to care for those who have served.

...that all our voices were instrumental in establishing Programs that would fight for our veterans' rights and benefits throughout our nation?

...volunteering and our voices are particularly important? Have an Auxiliary Hospital Volunteer Recruitment Month. This is not only for membership, but to get into the senior centers, libraries, high schools, churches, YMCAs and businesses. You can ask a representative from your local VA to attend.

...more than 100 years ago, we, as an organization committed ourselves to caring for veterans' health by supporting the VFW in lobbying for military and veterans' benefits and aid and the creation of the Veterans Bureau in 1921 and later the VA in 1930. While the Hospital Program started in 1928, our members had already been volunteering in

hospitals for a number of years. Some Auxiliaries would "adopt" a hospital unit, wing, ward or even the entire hospital and bring all veteran patients homecooked meals, host holiday parties or have fundraisers to donate for emergency needs in poorly funded/equipped hospitals. The Auxiliary has always supported VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service, now known as CDCE - VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement.) Founded in 1946 by the federal government, VAVS/CDCE assists veteran patients through volunteer work in community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, VA medical centers and veteran outreach centers. It is the largest centralized volunteer program of the federal government.

For details about the Hospital Program awards, see page 30.





HOSPITAL PROGRAM

Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition • VAVS (CDCE) • Women Veterans Health Care • Honors Escort

VFW Auxiliary members have been volunteering in hospitals and medical facilities to meet the needs of hospitalized veterans since the organization's inception in 1914. During World War I they rolled bandages, served meals and assisted in any way possible. The VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program continues to serve a very important role as we can provide care and compassion for our veterans helping them feel included, appreciated.

Who Can Volunteer?

Members, non-members, youth and families can volunteer in many different types of facilities under this Program. They include local hospitals, veterans' homes, nursing homes, both VA and non-VA medical facilities and clinics.

What Can We Do?

Volunteer opportunities are based on the facility where you are volunteering. Some facilities will have a volunteer program in place with specific jobs, events and needs. Many facilities will have a variety of opportunities to suit different ages and abilities. Be sure you follow all the guidelines given by that facility and regularly ask how you can assist them.

Volunteer Recruitment and Support

New volunteers are needed every day across the country. Volunteers offset millions of dollars in expenses in health care. They help create a friendly and caring atmosphere no matter where they volunteer. Here are tips for recruiting and keeping volunteers:

- Provide a monthly sign-up sheet for regular events.
- Email and phone call volunteers for special events.
- Offer public recognition of current volunteers.
- Be specific about what volunteers will be doing, including the time commitment.
- Find out how each person communicates best, whether by phone, email, Facebook or texting.
- If someone says "no" to the first invitation, be sure to ask again!

Volunteer Recognition

For volunteer hours, VFW Auxiliary Hospital Volunteer Service Pins and Bars, sponsored hospital Volunteer Pins and Hospital Recruiter Charms are available from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters. A Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Representative or VFW Auxiliary Hospital Chairman must complete the official application form in MALTA Member Resources. For this year's current initiatives and awards, please see the Hospital Programs Awards page.

Additional ideas for volunteering including **Honors Escort, Valentines for Veterans** and **Women Veterans Health Care** can be found in MALTA Member Resources.

VA Voluntary Service:

<https://www.volunteer.va.gov/>

Find your local VA Voluntary Service office at:

<https://www.volunteer.va.gov/directory/index.asp>

HOSPITAL AND VAVS PROGRAMS

The VFW Auxiliary provides volunteers and resources to VA facilities across the country and saves the Department of Veterans Affairs millions of dollars a year.

The table below illustrates how the VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program supports the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)* Program.

HOSPITAL PROGRAM

VFW Auxiliary establishes relationships with:

- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Veterans homes
- VA facilities
- Other medical facilities where veterans are served

PROVIDES NEEDS

How VFW Auxiliary members participate:

- Participate in projects voted on and accepted by the Auxiliary.
- Make items such as lap robes, hats, quilts, cards, etc.
- Fund raise for the Department's Hospital fund.
- Encourage volunteers in ALL medical facilities.
- Promote projects and volunteer opportunities to all members and the community.
- Present Hospital Volunteer Appreciation certificates.
- Order VFW Auxiliary Hospital Pins for total hours earned from all facilities.
- Hours are earned in ALL VA and non-VA facilities.

HOURS earn VFW Auxiliary Awards!

VAVS PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs created the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program for organizations to serve in VA medical facilities:

- Members participate in this VA partnership with Veterans Service Organizations.
- In addition to Auxiliary recognition, the VA National Advisory Council awards a Volunteer of the Year award. For more information, contact either the Voluntary Services personnel or the VAVS National Representative or Deputy Representatives.

COMMUNICATES NEEDS

How VFW Auxiliary members participate:

- Be a Regularly Scheduled (RS) or Occasional volunteer.
- Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers:
 - Comply with VAVS Guidelines.
 - Participate on a regularly scheduled basis.
 - Are supervised by a VA employee.
 - Are appointed by the Department President as VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative.
- Occasional volunteers:
 - Do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers.
 - Volunteer with a group or organization occasionally.

HOURS earn VAVS AND VFW Auxiliary Awards!

**TOTAL HOURS FROM BOTH PROGRAMS
EQUAL OUR REPORTED HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER HOURS.**

For more information on the VFW Auxiliary's participation in Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program, please see the VAVS Participation Guide or contact the Department Hospital Chairman. The VAVS Participation Guide is available behind MALTA login in MALTA Member Resources.

* VAVS is now known as Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE).

HOSPITAL PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Members:

1. Citation to one VFW Auxiliary member in each of the 10 Program Divisions who recruits the most Hospital (VA and non-VA facilities) volunteers from July 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027. Required entry form is available on MALTA Member Resources. Citations to be mailed directly to winners from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.
2. "Hospital Volunteer Recruiter of the Year" plaque awarded to one VFW Auxiliary member in the nation who recruits the most Hospital (VA and non-VA facilities) volunteers from July 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027. Required entry form is available on MALTA Member Resources. Plaque may be mailed directly to winner from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.
3. Citation to the "Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year" in each of the 10 Program Divisions. Required entry form is available on MALTA Member Resources. Citations to be mailed directly to winners from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative/unique activity and/or event to interact with and provide happiness to veterans in hospitals (VA and non-VA facilities).

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Hospital Chairman by April 15, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Hospital Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Hospital Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Hospital Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding promotion of creative/unique activity and/or event to interact with and to provide happiness to veterans in hospitals (VA and non-VA facilities).

Winners will be announced and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

LEGISLATIVE AMBASSADOR



KIM MCWILLIAMS

24625 103rd St.
Salem, WI 53168-9339
(815)999-9214
legislativeMVP@gmail.com

Your role as Most Valuable Player (MVP) for veterans, families and legislators is invaluable while ***Serving America's Heroes.***

As Auxiliary members, we have the capability of making a difference with the VFW's Legislative Priority Goals. As family members, we need to be the voice of our veterans.

We currently have nearly 480,000 members. Let's elevate our town hall meetings. As the voice of our veterans, we need to demonstrate to our legislators the significance of supporting those who have served our country. The priorities of the VFW are crucial for ensuring that our veterans receive the care and recognition they were promised.

Auxiliary Legislative Day

Organize an Auxiliary Legislative Day within your Department to provide Auxiliary members with the ability to discuss how VFW priorities impact not only veterans, but also their families. This event will foster understanding of and the implications of these priorities, ensuring the voices of both veterans and their loved ones are heard and considered.

A terrific way to do this is by arranging a meeting with your legislative representatives at the state capital or even within the Auxiliary Department. Get creative to ensure that your members can easily access their legislators, especially for those who might find it challenging to travel long distances to the capital. This can be accomplished by working closely with your Department Chairman.

It's crucial for lawmakers to hear the stories of the veterans' families as this will help them grasp the significance of our priorities. Standing alongside the VFW and on our own day, speaking to legislators, we can influence how they perceive the needs of our veterans, emphasizing that they deserve improved care and benefits after they serve our country.

For your Auxiliary to host a Legislative Day will take a lot of planning and cooperation. Check with your state's legislation for all the important dates and schedule ample time for your group to make your plan of action.

How to Speak to a Legislator

Understanding how to communicate with your representative about VFW priorities is crucial. Know your VFW priorities, not just the name of the bill. Show your legislators you are invested in your veterans' needs. Share with your Chairman the importance of each bill. It is important to train them on how to effectively communicate with representatives. This support can empower individuals to express their needs and concerns clearly.

When we support the VFW, whether at the state level or in Washington, D.C., it's important to remember that they are the ones taking the lead. That we are then in a supportive role. The turnout at these events is also significant, as it reflects our commitment and solidarity. When speaking, always remember to:

- Be clear.
- Be precise.
- Be courteous.
- Know the talking points.
- Tell your story.
- Make the "ask" - formally request the legislator's support.
- Take notes on their responses.
- Thank them.

Veteran Advocacy Resources

It is important to provide Auxiliaries, Chairman and families with resources to be successful when speaking on veterans' issues. You can conduct a legislative training session during a Department or District meeting or opt for a virtual meeting on a service like Zoom or Teams. Empower them with the skills to be great advocates while engaging with our lawmakers.

Remember to use all your resources including:

- VFW Priority Goals
- Member Resources in MALTA
- House.gov
- Congress.gov
- Local state government websites
- VFW Action Corps Weekly

VFW Action Corps Weekly is an excellent resource for keeping everyone updated on legislative matters. You can easily register community members at your events by using the QR code provided. Whenever you welcome a new member, make sure to sign them up right away.

See the Legislative awards on page 35 for more information.

#Auxlegislative





LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Be An Advocate • Be Informed • Be Engaged

One of the main objectives of the Legislative Program is to improve the lives of our veterans, service members and their families through advocacy. Your efforts, combined with nearly 1.5 million other VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, can influence lawmakers whose decisions affect veterans and their families every day.

Study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals. The VFW focuses on these to strengthen and ensure an adequate VA system for millions of current and future veterans.

The goals are grouped under six areas of concern:

- Budget
- Health Care
- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
- Education, Employment and Transition Assistance
- Military Readiness
- National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA

The legislative goals are released in January of each year by the VFW on the VFW National website:
<https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service>

VFW Action Corps Weekly

To access VFW Action Corps Weekly current and archived editions go to the VFW National website at:
<https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts/vfw-action-corps-weekly>

You can subscribe to VFW Action Corps Weekly here:
<http://votervoice.net/VFW/register>

To identify your congressional representatives, visit the VFW website at:
<https://votervoice.net/VFW/Address>

Step by Step—A Bill

To follow the progress of a specific bill through the stages of the legislative process by its number or by a key word or phrase go to:
<https://www.congress.gov/>

VFW in D.C.

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary advocate for veterans by testifying at hearings, interacting with Congress, and fighting for justice. By testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th Century as well as bills developed in the 21st Century.

One of the most crucial responsibilities of the VFW Washington, D.C. office is to actively lobby Congress and the administration on behalf of veterans. The office monitors all legislation affecting veterans and alerts VFW and VFW Auxiliary members about key legislation under consideration.

The VFW's Washington, D.C. office operates under the National Legislative Service, and you can find information about their advocacy and legislative efforts on the main VFW website, specifically under the Advocacy section at [vfw.org/advocacy](https://www.vfw.org/advocacy).

To contact the D.C. office:
Phone: 202-543-2239
Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship

To continue empowering tomorrow's leaders, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) hosts the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship, providing exemplary student veterans the opportunity to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and in their community. This program has been held annually since 2014.

During the VFW event, they will engage with Congress members, educating them on the challenges faced by today's veterans. Fellows can also join VFW advocates from their respective states and form teams to directly meet with the leadership from the committees responsible for veterans' issues, including the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees.

For rules and eligibility, visit the VFW website at:
<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support/student-fellowship>

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the largest increase in new VFW Action Corps Weekly sign-ups from the community and new VFW Auxiliary members.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The Department Legislative Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Legislative Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one Department Legislative Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the best promotion for educating members on how to talk to legislative representatives.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

MEMBERSHIP AMBASSADOR



KRISTIN DIGIACOMO

418 Edmond St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15224-2012
(412) 867-0021
membership.2627@gmail.com

To succeed at Membership, we must remember to ignite our passion for the VFW Auxiliary. Once others see our passion they will want to join and share in all our good work.

The Three Rs

The three Rs, (*Recruit, Retain, Rejoin*) have been our mantra, our battle cry, for many years as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. This is absolutely true in every sense. Having a strong membership base is extremely important to this organization. It's our lifeblood, our very essence in what keeps us going.

But the question that I pose to each of you is simple. Once we obtain the three Rs, then what? After we have our members recruited, retained or rejoined, what happens to them? How do you find ways to **engage** these members? Do we just get them in and then leave them?

Our Membership Program is strong at its core, but I want each of you to ask yourself this question: What is it that continues to draw me in? Think long and hard about this over the course of this year. Clearly, you've found something in this organization that continues to fuel you and what we do for our veterans and their families. What is it?

How can we take those three Rs, that are tried and true methods to bolster our membership, and then turn them into action and engagement for our members?

Engagement

Membership is something that I am very passionate about, but what I am more avid about is figuring out ways to take our members and get them engaged in our Programs! The Auxiliary offers us a plethora of Programs to work throughout the year. So, let's find out what those newly recruited, retained or rejoined members have a passion for!

Perhaps there's a member who is uber crafty and loves to make things. Help them home in on a specific idea that they can present to your members. Then get your Auxiliary on board to help bring those crafts to life! It could be a simple door decoration or a lap blanket for our hospitalized veterans.

Is there a member that excels at social media? Do you see them snapping photos at all the events you hold? Ask them to help others who aren't so tech savvy and put their skills to use! Perhaps you're talking to your next Historian & Media Relations person for your Auxiliary!

Maybe there's a teacher who recently joined the Auxiliary. Do you think they know about the various scholarship opportunities we have for our high school-aged kids? Oh, they're an elementary school teacher? Then bring them up to speed on our Illustrating America art contest! It's a natural fit to get into the classrooms again.

Resources for Success

Don't forget that we offer a multitude of amazing resources for our members on MALTA under Member Resources, where each Program has its own tab of helpful information. Under Membership we have everything from our Membership Eligibility Wheel to downloadable business card templates to our QR code and even our Membership application. Don't be afraid to use these tools to help you with those three Rs. But then direct your three-R members here so that they can find what sparks their interest and where their passion for our organization may lie!

CONFERENCE COACHES



BIG TEN STATES

DAVE SCOFIELD

Running Backs

59990 279th St.
Litchfield, MN 55355-5129
(320) 894-4246
dave.scofield@outlook.com



EASTERN STATES

DENISE BECKLER

Quarterbacks

12 Wright Ave.
Stratford, NJ 08084-1128
(856) 448-3501
denise.beckler@aol.com



SOUTHERN STATES

AMANDA PIPKIN

Wide Receivers

3504 Highway 13
McRae, AR 72102-8032
(501) 827-0065
k9combat@outlook.com



WESTERN STATES

TAMEE HAVRILLA

Offensive Line

PO BOX 518
Fort Benton, MT 59442-0518
(406) 622-3216
tme1bogie@itstriangle.com

Our Position (Conference) Coaches have the responsibility to ensure our membership continues to prosper from state to state. These individuals have a passion for membership and will be responsible for working with each of their states Membership Chairmen. They will get to know them on a personal level so they can help to Ignite Our Passion in others to achieve our membership goals!

Coaches will work within and provide support to their states to strengthen our overall membership, whether that is through recruited members, retained members or rejoined members. They are here to help in whatever way is needed. Do not hesitate to lean on them.

For more information on awards for the Membership Program see page 40.

Remember, we are all one gigantic team so let's stand as one, united in ***Serving America's Heroes.***



MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Invite New Members • Include Current Members • Invest in the Future of the Organization

The VFW Auxiliary started with a small group of women who wanted to serve veterans; it has grown exponentially and now includes both males and females as members. There is only one way to add members: ask someone to join. And once they join, ask them to participate.

Invite Someone to Join

There are numerous places and times to ask someone if they want to join the VFW Auxiliary. Your approach will look different depending on who your audience is.

In all cases, the potential member should have some knowledge of what the VFW Auxiliary is and what we do before they ever receive an application.

Remember to reach out to your VFW Post members periodically to see if they have family members who may want to join.

What We Do

Our Programs are designed to bring needed services, information and assistance to improve the lives of veterans, service members, their families and our communities.

When someone joins the VFW Auxiliary, they will have the opportunity to:

- Support veterans, service members and their families.
- Develop new skills.
- Network and develop friendships.
- Enjoy member benefits.

Follow Up!

The first time you talk to someone new about the organization, that person may not be ready to commit. It's important to ask for their contact information and then follow up within a week.

Include Them in Meetings and Events

The key to keeping members is getting them involved. Call or email a new member within a week with the next meeting date and time, or the next possible event or project. Offer to pick them up or invite them to get coffee before or after a meeting.

Put a team of members in charge of contacting new members or members who haven't been to a meeting recently. The team should be friendly and knowledgeable about the VFW Auxiliary.

Ways to Encourage Participation

- Provide a monthly sign-up sheet for regular events.
- Send emails and make phone calls for special events.
- Public recognition of current volunteers. (Consider posters at your VFW Post Home, if permitted, that spotlight member involvement.)
- Be specific about what they will be doing, including the time commitment.
- Find out how that person communicates best, whether by phone, email, Facebook or texting.
- Have another member stay with them for the entire length of the activity or event.
- If they say "no" to the first invitation, be sure to ask again!
- Plan family-friendly events! Members with children in the home want opportunities to do things with their family.

Invest in the Future

- New members can bring new life to your VFW Auxiliary.
- New members provide additional volunteers.
- New members bring new ideas!

Have a Plan

Every Department and VFW Auxiliary should have a Membership Plan. This plan should include:

- Contacting current members.
- Reaching out to former members.
- Recruiting events for new members.
- Picking a mentor for a new member.
- Before a membership year begins, set your calendar for these events:
 - o Make it as easy as possible for members to renew their dues. They can renew online in MALTA!
 - o Plan recruiting events in your community each year. This can be done by the Auxiliary or in conjunction with your VFW Post.

Important Tools:

- Fact Sheet, available for free from National Headquarters.
- Business card with contact information/ Auxiliary keychains with Membership QR code. (Order yours from the VFW Store, vfwstore.org.)
- MALTA Member Resources.
- Auxiliary Membership Information QR code:



MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM AWARDS

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES, DEPARTMENTS AND CONFERENCES WILL BE BASED ON THE PAID TOTAL LISTED ON THE CMR-PAID, CANCELED & DECEASED REPORT IN MALTA.

Awards for Members:

1. **5 Member Recruiter Pin.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will receive a 5 Member Recruiter Pin. **5 Member Recruiter Pin** will be mailed directly to the recruiter from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters approximately every 2 months after the goal is met.
2. **5 Member Recruiter Drawing.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will be entered into the **5 Member Recruiter Drawing** to receive a \$100 Visa Gift Card.
3. **National Membership Achievement Recruiter Award.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits twenty (20) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will receive a **National Membership Achievement Recruiter Award**. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.
4. **National Membership Achievement Recruiter Drawing.** Each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits twenty (20) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary will be entered in the National Membership Achievement Recruiter Drawing to receive a \$400 Visa Gift Card. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.

New and/or rejoined members must be recruited to the VFW Auxiliary from July 1, 2026, through May 31, 2027. The Department Treasurer must enter membership in MALTA with credit given to the recruiter by June 10, 2027.

VFW recruiters must complete the VFW Members Only recruiter form and submit it to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters by June 10, 2027.

Membership Award winners **No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4** will be announced and the awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. If the award winner is not in attendance, the award will be mailed directly to winner from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. \$50 to each Auxiliary that reaches 100% Plus in Membership by June 30, 2027*.

Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one Department Membership Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for most outstanding activity and/or event training and promoting the Membership Program.

Winners will be announced and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments:

- 1st Down Department Award #1: \$400 to each Department that reaches 95% Plus in paid membership by November 30, 2026*.
- 2nd Down Department Award #2: \$450 to each Department that reaches 98% Plus in paid membership by February 28, 2027*.
- 3rd Down Department Award #3: \$500 to each Department that reaches 100% Plus in paid membership by April 30, 2027*.
- Touchdown Department Award #4: \$600 to each Department that reaches 102% Plus in paid membership by May 31, 2027*.

Departments are eligible to receive all four levels of awards for a combined total of \$1,950 for this Program year. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account the following month after each completed goal.

Awards for Conferences:

1. \$50 to each Department within the Conference with the highest total percentage by June 30, 2027*.

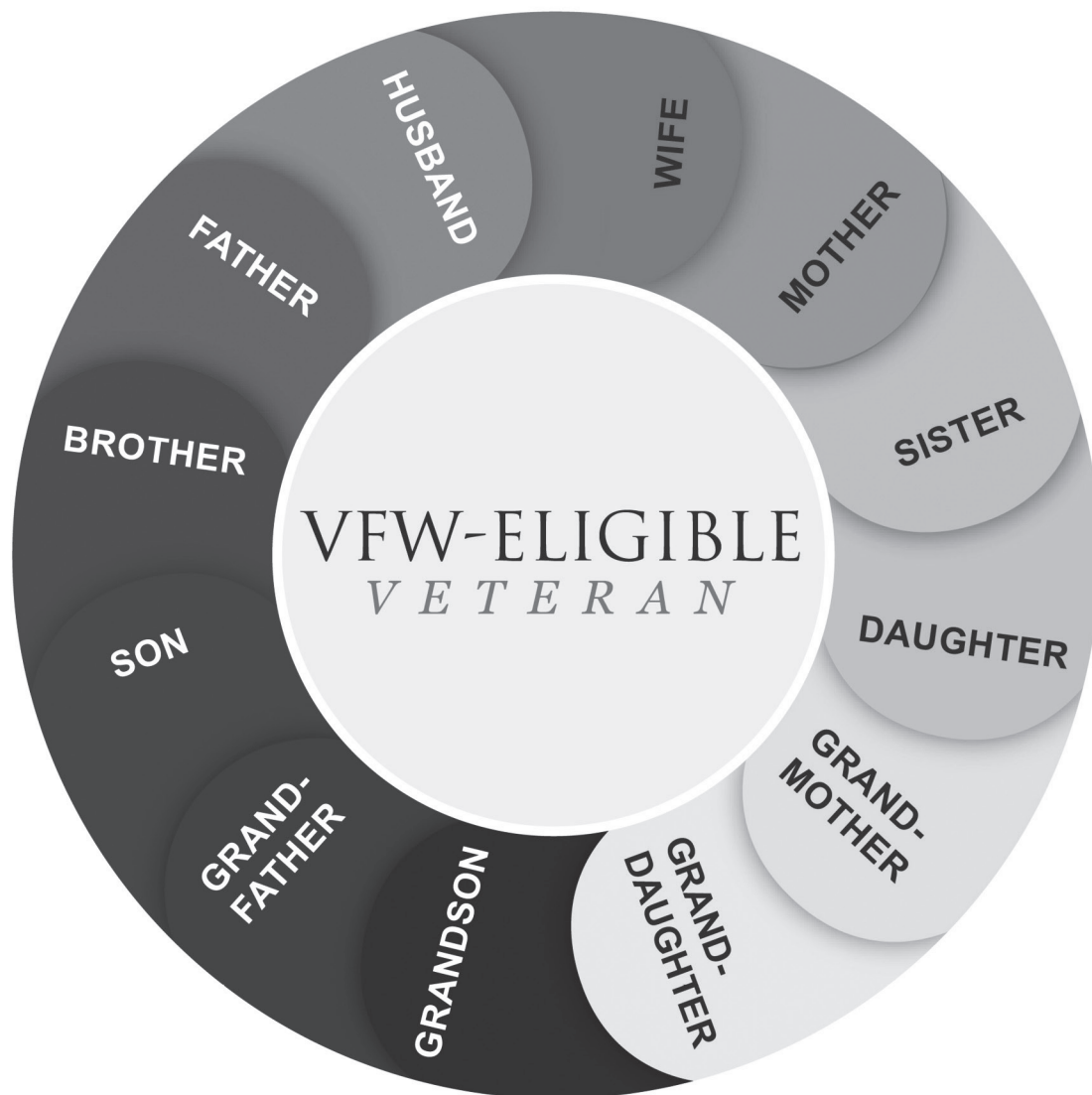
Winning Conference will be announced and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department accounts after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Conference Coaches:

1. Keepsake to each of the four (4) Conference Coaches for their hard work and dedication to this Program.

**Based on June 30, 2026, year-end membership numbers.*

VFW AUXILIARY ELIGIBILITY WHEEL



**Step- and adopted parents, children, siblings (and half-siblings), grandparents and grandchildren are considered the same as biological parents, children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren and may join the VFW Auxiliary under their VFW-eligible veteran.*

VFW AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP / MEMBER TRANSFER APPLICATION

Please print legibly. An incomplete application could delay your membership start date.

Applicant completes sections A, D or E and H,I. Auxiliaries/Departments complete sections B,F,G.

A	APPLICANT INFORMATION		
	Name		☐ Female ☐ Male
	Address		Date of Birth
	City	State	ZIP Phone Email
B	Auxiliary Post No. City State		
	☐ New Member ☐ Transferring Member ☐ Rejoining Member (Prior Member ID Number)		
☐ Member at Large in Department of ☐ Member at Large - VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters			
C	(Transfer only information) ☐ ANNUAL TRANSFER ☐ LIFE MEMBER TRANSFER		
	Member ID Previous Auxiliary ☐ Paying ☐ Nonpaying		
D	☐ POST-AFFILIATED (*Must be a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)		
	I am the (Relationship) to (Eligible Veteran* Name)		
	VFW Membership ID VFW Post (Must be same as B)		
E	☐ NON-AFFILIATED (*Veteran is not a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)		
	I am the (Relationship) to (Eligible Veteran* Name)		
	Name of campaign ribbons or medals:		
	Dates of Service: to Foreign Location:		
F	Recruited/Recommended by: Recruiter Member ID		
	Check one: Aux ☐ VFW ☐		
G	Investigating Committee Signatures		
	1 ☒ 2 ☒ 3 ☒		
	Per Section 102 of the National Bylaws. ☐ Rejected ☐ Accepted Meeting Date Obligated Date		
H	☐ Annual Membership ☐ Life Membership ☐ Check here if this is a gift (Membership card will be sent to Treasurer and not member.)		
	Payment Method and Amount: Cash ☐ _____ Check ☐ _____ Credit Card ☐ _____ ***		
	***If paying by credit card, after this application is processed, an email and/or text message will be sent to the contact information provided above for payment. Instructions in the communication for payment must be completed within 30 days; otherwise the application will be voided. If someone other than the applicant above is paying by credit card for the membership, please list your phone number and email address below to receive payment instructions once the membership application has been processed.		
Phone Email			
I	OBLIGATION In the presence of Almighty God and the members of this organization here assembled, I do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise that I will never wrong or defraud this organization nor a member thereof nor permit either to be wronged if in my power to prevent it. I will never propose for membership any person not eligible, according to our Bylaws. I will be faithful to the United States of America, obedient to the laws and loyal to the Flag. Should my membership with this organization cease in any way, I will consider this obligation as binding outside of the organization as though I had remained a member. I do so promise. I attest that I am at least 16 years of age. I pledge to comply with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary. I attest I am not eligible for membership in the VFW. I further attest that the above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, including my stated relationship to the Veteran.		
	Signature ☒ Date		
	(Must be signed by all members.)		
	By filling out this application and providing your contact information, you agree to receive communications from the VFW Auxiliary. The communications may include updates, promotions, and other information related to our services. Communications may be in the form of emails, SMS text messages, and/or automated calls. You understand that these communications may be sent using an automated telephony dialer system. Standard message and data rates may apply. You can opt out at any time by following the instructions provided in the communications. No mobile information will be shared with third parties/affiliates for marketing/promotional purposes.		

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES	
Life Membership fees are not refundable.	
Attained age at 12/31 of year applying for Life Membership.	
Through 20	\$253
21-25	\$242
26-30	\$230
31-35	\$219
36-40	\$213
41-45	\$201
46-50	\$196
51-55	\$184
56-60	\$173
61-65	\$161
66-70	\$150
71-75	\$132
76-80	\$109
81-85	\$86
86-90	\$69
91 and over	\$58

Revised January 2026

SCHOLARSHIPS AMBASSADOR



KIM DAVIS

1201 Daniel Dr.
Paragould, AR 72450-1926
(870) 476-4963
kdgun11@gmail.com

I am so excited to serve as a National Ambassador and promote our VFW Auxiliary Scholarships. What fun we will have this year bringing increased awareness to all the scholarship opportunities. Scholarships allow us to recognize patriotic students and become the bridge to promoting citizenship and patriotism throughout our communities.

This year I would like to focus on celebrating talented students who participated in our contests at every level. Let's "roll out the red carpet" for them. They have worked hard and deserve for us to shine a spotlight on their writings and artwork. Your Auxiliary can even host a "red carpet night" to celebrate our Scholarships honorees. See page 48 for more information.

Also, do not forget during the year to share pictures on your local Department's social media pages and with National (info@vfwauxiliary.org).

Continuing Education Scholarship

All the support we poured into the Continuing Education Scholarship last year has improved the awareness of this wonderful opportunity. Let's keep the momentum going! Our members, with at least one year of membership, their spouses and children are eligible to apply. This benefit of membership can also be a useful recruitment tool.

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest

The VFW Auxiliary has been recognizing the amazing talent of young artists for more than 45 years through this contest. A free full-color brochure to promote this contest is available to order in MALTA. Share your creative ways of promoting this scholarship opportunity. Once you have been granted permission from schools and businesses, post information where young artists are sure to have access.

The Scholarships link on the VFW Auxiliary National website has everything you need to learn about our scholarships: how to apply, where to submit the entry, etc. This will ensure you have all the vital information needed to meet requirements and deadlines.

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

The 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest is also available to students in grades 9-12. **Important:** Entries must include a photo of their 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art to be submitted with the mailed entry to HQ. Sadly, sometimes when the art is mailed to HQ, it can be damaged during the shipping process, even when carefully packaged, and the photo is needed to be able to evaluate what the art was truly designed to be.

VFW Patriot's Pen

The VFW Patriot's Pen is an essay contest for students in grades 6-8. We have been a valued supporter and promoter of this contest to make it as successful as possible, and we continue to do so.

VFW Voice of Democracy

The VFW Voice of Democracy is a vocal recording of a written essay by students in grades 9-12. Let us continue to grow this program with dedicated and creative efforts.



SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

Student Participation • Recipient Recognition • Promoting Scholarship Opportunities • Increasing the Funds

Each of our scholarships encourage patriotism, assist students in attaining an education and help students reach their full potential. This increases VFW and Auxiliary recognition while supporting our communities, students and members.

Continuing Education Scholarship

Open to any VFW Auxiliary member (who has been a member for at least a year), their spouse, son or daughter with a financial need. Entrant must be at least 21 years old, complete the application and submit an essay of 300 words or less. The application must be received at National Headquarters by February 15:

Program Awards Administrator
VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

Or email it to info@vfwauxiliary.org

\$2,250 will be awarded to one applicant in each of the four conferences. Scholarships are paid directly to the American college, vocational, technical or trade school of the awardee's choice. Applications are in MALTA Member Resources under the Scholarships tab.

To donate to the Continuing Education Fund
Log in to MALTA. Click on "Make a Gift."
Select Continuing Education or mail checks to:

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attn: Continuing Education Fund
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

These two Patriotic Art Contests are open to any student in grades 9-12 by the March 31 deadline who is enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions: or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or older, GED and adult education students, or national winners of the same previous Patriotic Art Contests are ineligible. Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique.

Scholarships are paid directly to the American college, vocational, technical or trade school of the winners' choice.

VFW Auxiliary National Scholarships: Young American Creative Patriotic Art

First Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$15,000

Second Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$7,500

Third Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$4,500

Fourth Place – Janice Criswell Department of Kansas Scholarship
\$4,000

Fifth Place – Sandy Germany Department of Alabama Scholarship
\$1,500

Sixth Place – Evelyn McCune Department of Kansas Scholarship
\$1,500

Seventh Place – M. Blanche Child Department of Kansas VFW Auxiliary 1650 Scholarship
\$1,000

Eighth Place – Jean Hamil Department of Florida Scholarship
\$1000

Ninth Place – William F. Ehrlich VFW Auxiliary No. 1391 Department of Wisconsin Scholarship
\$1000

Tenth Place – Department of Minnesota VFW Auxiliary 100th Anniversary Scholarship
\$1000

Eleventh Place – Past National President Brenda Bryant Scholarship
\$750

Twelfth Place – Department of Florida VFW Auxiliary Scholarship
\$500

Thirteenth Place – Betty Morris Department of Maryland Scholarship
\$500

Fourteen Place – Juanita Crowe-Durbino Department of Tennessee Scholarship
\$500

Fifteenth Place – Lorraine Frier Department of North Dakota Scholarship
\$500

Sixteenth Place – Department of Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary Scholarship
\$500

Seventeenth Place – Rosemary Mazer Department of New Jersey Scholarship
\$500

Eighteenth Place – PDP Carol Betro and PNP Sandi Kriebel Scholarship
\$500

Nineteenth Place – Department of North Carolina VFW Auxiliary Scholarship
\$500

Twentieth Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$500

Twenty-first Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$500

Twenty-second Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$500

Twenty-third Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$500

VFW Auxiliary National Scholarships: 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art

First Place – Jane Reape Department of New York Scholarship
\$2,500

Second Place – VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$1,500

Third Place - VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$1,000

Fourth Place - Patricia Mortensen National Scholarship
\$1,000

Fifth Place - VFW Auxiliary National Scholarship
\$500

Deadlines for Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art entries received by:

Participating VFW Auxiliary – March 31
(District Judging is OPTIONAL)

VFW Auxiliary Department – April 15

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters – May 5

Recognition Is Key

It is important that scholarship winners receive recognition at every level.

Ways to recognize winners:

- Host an awards ceremony.
- Present a certificate and/or gift.
- Present awards at a school assembly.
- Don't forget to recognize the parents and teachers!

VFW Auxiliary Scholarship and Contest Resources

Official forms and contest rules can be found in MALTA Member Resources and on our VFW Auxiliary National website: <https://vfwauxiliary.org/>

To support the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship and the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Scholarship escrow fund:

Log in to MALTA. Click on "Make a Gift."
Select Patriotic Art or mail checks to:

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attn: Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

VFW National Scholarships and Contests

The VFW Auxiliary is proud to be a longtime supporter of the VFW and their scholarships, contest, programs and grants.

- **VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship**
Established in 1947, this VFW audio-essay competition provides students in grades 9-12 with the unique opportunity to express themselves regarding a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay.
- **VFW Patriot's Pen Scholarship**
This VFW essay contest encourages young minds grades 6-8 to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay, expressing their views based on a patriotic theme.
- **VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"**
Introduced in 2013, this VFW program awards scholarships to qualifying service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt.

VFW Resources

Please see the VFW website for contest themes, official forms, rules and eligibility:
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education>



** While this VFW scholarship is listed in the Scholarships Program section, the Auxiliary has not adopted it; therefore, donations to the VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" are reportable under the Veterans & Family Support Program.*

SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding "Red Carpet" event/celebration honoring VFW and VFW Auxiliary Scholarship participants.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Scholarships Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The Department Scholarships Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Scholarships Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Scholarships Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of a "Red Carpet" event/celebration honoring VFW and VFW Auxiliary Scholarship participants.

Winners will be announced and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT AMBASSADOR



BETH WEST

6500 Verona Pl.
Round Rock, TX 78665-2352
(512) 848-0093
bethvfwaux@gmail.com

The Veterans & Family Support Program is comprehensive Program. At its heart is a strong emphasis on assisting veterans, service members and their families and promoting veteran and military suicide prevention and mental health awareness.

In a novel by Allan Gurganus, the main character is a surviving spouse of a war veteran. She says, "Well, see, there's the war and it gets holt of him. It shakes him something awful, and then he gets to grab me by the scruff of my neck. (He didn't get to, but I noticed he sure done it often enough anyway.) So, say, he's the last vet of that war, but me? Why, honey, I'm a veteran of the veteran." The words resonate and remind me why our work with veterans and their families is so important.

Unmet Needs (National Military Service and National Veteran Services)

The VFW Auxiliary has many options in our scouting report to provide support to our veterans and their families.

National Veteran Services provide service officers both pre and post discharge. Veteran Service Officers are crucial in making sure veterans receive their earned benefits and entitlements. Think of them as the trainers, preparing veterans to manage and adapt to civilian life.

National Military Services aids those currently serving. These are more like the coaches looking over the playbook to find the right call for the situation.

National Military Service programs include the VFW's Military Appreciation Program (MAP), Adopt-a-Unit, care packages, VFW Financial Assistance, "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" and the Student Veteran Support Grants. Financial assistance is needed, as no one heals mentally or physically when they are on fourth down, with no time outs, less than two minutes in the fourth quarter and out of range of a field goal. We also need to be familiar with available skilled military suicide prevention and mental health awareness initiatives.

The Auxiliary's Veterans & Family Support Program is more than fundraising for VFW programs. It is also a call to action for our veterans and military families within our communities. We encourage continued support of those programs financially and with service. We also challenge you to find ways to be more supportive of mental health and suicide prevention strategies in your Auxiliary and in your community for veterans and their families. In other words, do not just be the cheerleader; be the super fan, the band, the announcer, the security, the janitor or whatever it takes to get the veteran and/or family member the resources they need when they need it.

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness

Aren't we all a "veteran of a veteran" in some way? That quote especially came to mind when I was asked if an Auxiliary could create and have a support group for spouses of veterans suffering from PTSD. I apologized to her, stating that if the Auxiliary is not a good enough support group for you, then we have failed. We joined not just to honor our veterans, not just to take care of and advocate for our veterans, but also to find a community of support for family members like us. The Post is a safe place for the veteran. The Auxiliary should be a safe space for their families.

Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD) and mental health awareness will be our focus this year. This is very personal for me and something I am passionate about as a spouse to and granddaughter of veterans

who struggled/are struggling with PTS. The family suffers, too. Secondary PTS is perhaps less recognized and diagnosed than PTS, yet just as prevalent in the immediate families of veterans living with PTS. Our focus should be on promotion of the resources we have to help those struggling and to educate the public on them as well. Be their “Hail Mary” pass with fractions of a second left on the clock. The play you call could be holding a veteran/military resource fair, asking a qualified speaker to address your meeting about suicide prevention, PTS and Secondary PTS or promoting the 988 (then press 1) Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline. Whatever we can do to continue to make the VFW and its Auxiliary the safe space our military/veteran family needs should be our focus always and should always put those at risk within sight of the goal line.

See page 54 to read about Veterans & Family Support Awards.





VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

*VFW Veterans & Military Support Programs
Assist Veterans, Service Members and their Families
Promote Veteran & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness*

Spread the Word about National Veterans Service (NVS)

VA Claims & Separation Benefits

The VFW's **National Veterans Service (NVS)** was established to help all veterans, service members, their families and survivors. NVS consists of a nationwide network of VFW Accredited Service Officers and Pre-Discharge Representatives who are experts in navigating VA processes and are the key to your success. VFW Accredited Service Officers are with America's veterans every step of the way once they're ready to file a claim. This is a service the VFW is proud to offer — **FREE OF CHARGE** — to anyone seeking assistance with the claims process.

Pre-Discharge

The VFW Pre-Discharge program was established in 2001 through a cooperative initiative with the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This program ensures separating and retiring active-duty military personnel receive assistance in obtaining their VA entitlements and benefits upon discharge. Pre-Discharge offices are located on or near major military installations across the country.

Additional information, links and forms are located on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>

Military Appreciation Program (MAP)

The VFW Military Appreciation Program (MAP) is the outstretched hand between the local VFW and military community, offering support around the world. Since 2005, MAP has sponsored events supporting service members and their families.

A large part of MAP is the **Adopt-A-Unit** program, providing VFW Posts with the opportunity to adopt hundreds of military units around the world. Adopt-A-Unit's goal is to develop supportive relationships with units before, during and after deployments to help deliver the vast network of resources the VFW has available to the military. Unfortunately, VFW Auxiliaries will no longer be eligible to request this money. This does not affect the VFW Auxiliaries' ability to request Foundation grants.

Additional information, links and forms are located on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support>

Student Veteran Support Grant

The VFW recognizes that both funding and support for our student veterans and dependents at institutions of higher learning can often be difficult to find. The **VFW's Student Veteran Support Grant** offers much needed assistance to support specific student veteran events. The grant, administered by the VFW Washington Office, focuses on supporting the overall student veteran population within the community, which consists of many student veterans at campuses across the country that are not affiliated with a Student Veterans of America chapter. The grants will be disbursed to a VFW Post or Department that has submitted an application, to support the student veterans at the university or college.

Additional information, links and forms are located on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>

VFW Foundation Grants

- **VFW #StillServing Grant**
The #StillServing Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts, Districts and their Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred while doing community service projects.
- **Uniting for Veterans Grant**
The Uniting for Veterans Grant is a limited matching grant available to VFW Posts or VFW Auxiliaries for monetary, food, or item donations to local food banks, pantries or homeless relief organizations in their communities.
- **Post Assistance Grant (PAG)**
The Post Assistance Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts to offset expenses incurred for building repairs and equipment that enhances or restores the applicant organization's ability to serve veterans and their community.

More information about VFW Foundation Grants is located on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/post-grants>

Disaster Relief

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is accepting donations to help veterans, service members and military families impacted by natural disasters. The VFW's Disaster Relief Fund provides our organization with the opportunity to react quickly with immediate relief to those in the affected areas.

Uniting for Veterans

In 2018, the VFW and Humana created Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) to actively address food insecurity across America with an emphasis on the military community. VFW Posts and VFW Auxiliaries are integral to making a positive dent in food insecurity and veteran homelessness.

For more information about UTCH, please contact the VFW Foundation at foundation@vfw.org.

VFW Mental Wellness Campaign

The purpose of the project is to educate VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, veterans and communities about the important topic of mental health and wellness and offer proven tools to intervene on behalf of veterans in crisis.

In the year 2024-2025, the VFW expanded the program in support of an additional underserved veteran population: Veterans experiencing homelessness. The VFW has renamed the grant as it has expanded from its original purpose to address food insecurity in the local veteran community. The VFW Foundation is proud to work with Volunteers of America (VOA) who have been helping address homelessness for more than a century.

VFW Mental Wellness Campaign

The purpose of the project is to educate VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, veterans and communities about the important topic of mental health and wellness and offer proven tools to intervene on behalf of veterans in crisis.

In order to raise awareness, foster community engagement, improve research and provide intervention for those affected by invisible injuries and emotional stress, the VFW has teamed up with the nationwide organizations **Give an Hour** and the **Campaign to Change Direction, One Mind, PatientsLikeMe** and the **Elizabeth Dole Foundation** to combat this critical issue.

Find links and learn about resources and support to change the stigma surrounding mental health on the VFW website:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness>

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat or text. Veterans and their loved ones can dial 988 then press 1, chat online, or text 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Donations can be made online or by mail.

Donate online at vfw.org/ways-to-help, select the program you would like to donate to and click "Contribute."

Donate by mail by sending a check to:
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Processing Center
P.O. Box 2002
Milford, NH 03055-2002
<https://vfw.org/donate/your-support-matters>

Where does your dollar go?

Please remember to earmark your check.
Your donation will be immediately directed to the VFW programs where your support is most urgently needed.
<https://vfw.org/donate/your-support-matters>.

Other Resources

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary helped pass the Deborah Sampson Act that will enhance and improve VA programs and health services for women veterans and ensure they receive the care and support they need and have earned. It includes an expansion of the Women Veterans Call Center to include text messaging capability.

Women Veterans Call Center:

Call or text: 855-829-6636 or 1-855-VA-WOMEN

Women Veterans Health Care:

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/>

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding promotion of VFW resources for veterans, service members and their families.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador by April 30, 2027, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

2. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding activity and/or event promoting resources, including those for PTS, and assistance for veterans and their families (resource fairs, mental health clinics, etc.)

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of resources and assistance for veterans, service members and families.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

VFW NATIONAL HOME AMBASSADOR



MARY ANNE KREUTZ

17511 Vintage St.
Northridge, CA 91325-1438
(818) 425-9448
kreutzvfwauxdeptca@gmail.com

The National Home is once again its own Program for the VFW Auxiliary, and this comes with a renewed focus on this crucial service and its tradition of ***Serving America's Heroes.***

VFW National Home

The mission of the VFW National Home is to assist military members, veterans and their families with children by crafting a foundation of services and resources to achieve their personal and family goals in order to move forward in a positive, safe and healthy environment. Located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, it originally served as a working farm and community for families whose service members did not return. Today it has evolved to meet modern challenges like helping veterans with reintegration and PTS(D).

The National Home community is open to families of actively serving military personnel, veterans and relatives of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. The family can have one or more children. It is a place where a military family with children can find help during tough times to reestablish themselves in today's world.

Membership

VFW National Home Members, remember to make sure that the National Home has your correct personal information for the database in Eaton Rapids so we can hear your voice. The National Home and the VFW/VFW Auxiliary have completely different databases. Providing your personal information

ensures that VFW National Home Life Members can vote. A ballot will be emailed when it's your District's time to elect a new Trustee. See the VFW National Home website to see what District you're in. Making sure your information is up to date also ensures that you will receive election results, any changes in the Bylaws and updates of what is happening at the National Home. This is all done electronically. Remember, the computer systems that are used by the VFW or the VFW Auxiliary do not update the National Home database when you update your email address, mailing address, telephone or report a deceased member in MALTA. If you are not yet a member of the VFW National Home today, consider becoming a member. We are striving to support one another for another 100 Years of Service and we could certainly use your help.

Promotion of the VFW National Home

This year, VFW National Home Program will focus on educating members to help fill all the 43 houses at the National Home. The goal is to fill all the houses and find additional funding to build more homes for our heroes. We need to get the word out to all members, Veteran Service Officers, family and friends to encourage those who need help to make that call. Just encourage those who may need help to make the call to 1-800-424-8360 or check out vfwnationalhome.org. Take the first step to ask for help.

Did you know these fun facts about the VFW National Home?

- During the springtime, the 4-H kids at the National Home receive their hogs or bunnies; this helps to build their self-confidence as they discover values such as team building, responsibility and social skills.
- Your state could sponsor a hole at the National Home's Annual Golf Tournament.
- Cooties Christmas is a fun holiday tradition at the VFW National Home.
- Success stories of families that we all have helped over the years are available to read. Visit

vfwnationalhome.org to learn more.

- Your state or Auxiliary can sponsor a house at the VFW National Home. Visit the Community Section on their website to take a virtual tour of some of the homes. While on the tour, see if you spot your state-sponsored home. Check out the square footage, number of rooms, when it was built and more. Just because your state sponsors a home does not mean that a family in need from your state will be placed in that home. They will be placed in a home more suitable to their family size.

The VFW National Home is a living memorial to veterans. As one veteran who stayed there said, "Words can't describe my gratitude and thankfulness for the VFW National Home."





VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

VFW National Home Education

The VFW National Home was founded in 1925 as a place where families left behind by war—mothers and children, brothers and sisters—could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn't come home. The VFW National Home serves as a living memorial to America's veterans by helping our nation's military and veteran families during difficult times.

Over the years, VFW National Home has met the changing needs of America's military and veteran families. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: the VFW National Home's commitment to honor our nation's veterans and service members by providing help and hope for their children and families.

The VFW National Home Community

The VFW National Home located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has helped military and veteran families who need a fresh start. Families can live there rent-free for up to four years and have access to professional case management services, on-site licensed childcare, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities. The VFW National Home's community is open to families of service members, veterans and—recognizing that the effects of war can last for generations—descendants of members of the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary. The family can include one or both parents with one or more children.

Families find healing in a safe and peaceful environment of tree-lined streets of 43 single family homes and facilities such as a gym, library, computer and science labs, day care center, playgrounds, fishing pond, hiking trails and more.

In accepting families to the program, only one thing is asked of them: They must be committed to making changes in their lives. To remain at the VFW National Home, they are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. Together, in partnership with the whole family, the VFW National Home is dedicated to helping each family reach its full potential.

For more information and to find help visit vfnationalhome.org and click on the Get Help button.

The VFW National Home, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, is governed by 12 elected members, one member appointed by the Board and seven ex-officio members with VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, who as Life Members of the VFW National Home, are dedicated to the mission of the VFW National Home.

Health & Happiness Fund

One way the VFW Auxiliary supports the VFW National Home is through gifts of 10 cents per member to the Health & Happiness Fund. Contributions are critical since the campus and its programs receive no government funding. The Health & Happiness Fund supports the following at the VFW National Home:

- Maintenance of VFW Auxiliary-sponsored buildings
- Emergency repairs and renovations
- Christmas and graduation gifts

Donations can be made online in MALTA or by mail. Making a gift is easy in MALTA and can be made by an Entity (Auxiliary, District, Department) or by individuals.

To Make a Gift online in MALTA on behalf of an entity (Auxiliary, District and/or Department)

- The Treasurer logs into MALTA
- Go to the Duties tab for the entity you are making the gift on behalf of
- Select Make a Gift shortcut icon
- Click on Make a Gift blue box
- Choose program and enter amount
- Click on I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purchase
- Click on Pay Now

Entity gifts are done by ACH, if it asks you for credit card information you are not on your duties tab.

To Make a Gift online in MALTA on behalf of yourself, as an individual with a personal gift

- Visit vfwauxiliary.org and select MALTA Member Login
- Log into MALTA
- Select Make a Gift from the Main Menu
- Click on Make a Gift blue box
- Choose program and enter amount
- Enter credit card information
- Click on I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purchase
- Click on Pay Now

To donate by mail, send a check earmarked Health & Happiness to:

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attn: Health & Happiness Donations
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

VFW National Home Life Membership and Associate Life Membership

Another way to offer support is by becoming a Life Member of the VFW National Home. There are two types of Life Membership:

VFW and VFW Auxiliary members and organizations are eligible to become Life Members. Life Members

may vote for the Trustees who represent their VFW National Home District and approve any proposed changes to the bylaw and article of incorporation. Please be sure the VFW National Home has your correct name and email address; the bylaws and ballots are emailed.

Any individual or organization wishing to support the VFW National Home's mission can become an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges. For more information on membership, visit vfwnationalhome.org/membership.

Other Ways to Give and Offer Support

- Become a Home Front Hero
- Purchase a Tribute Brick or a Centennial Garden Brick
- Purchase an item for the Tribute Park
- Gifts from your IRA, stocks and securities
- Amazon Wish List
- Create awareness by wearing VFW National Home apparel and distributing promotional materials.

VFW Auxiliary Sponsorship

The VFW Auxiliary has been involved in the VFW National Home in myriad ways since the very beginning; as vocal supporters, fundraisers and volunteers. The VFW National Home was the Auxiliary's first continuing Program and we named our first official VFW National Home Chairman in 1927.

A few of our projects include:

- The Health & Education Center
- The Margaret A. Armstrong Guest Lodge and Memory Chapel
- Early Education Center
- The Community Center, with a gym, auditorium, kitchen, elevator and additional office space
- VFW National Home's Welcome Center

For more information, see MALTA Member Resources or visit the National Home's website at vfwnationalhome.org.

VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative activity and/or event that demonstrates what and where the VFW National Home is and who is eligible for the services provided by the VFW National Home.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department VFW National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of what and where the VFW National Home is and who is eligible for the services provided by the VFW National Home.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for distribution to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES AMBASSADOR



DEBBIE LITTLE

91727 Sunnyside Road
Warrenton, OR 97146-7214
(503)-739-0661
youthlittle26to27@gmail.com

My very first Department Program was Youth Activities. I was so excited to be a part of this bigger picture, which is the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. I was thrilled when I placed first in our division and walked across the National stage to receive my award. It was amazing to reach out to the youth in my community. Through this Chairmanship, I realized that our youth are eager to be part of patriotism in America and are like sponges soaking up all the information we provide to them.

VFW Auxiliary Lending Library

Start a VFW Auxiliary Lending Library in your community. Not every community has a local library, but your Auxiliary can bring books to kids with this new initiative called the VFW Auxiliary Lending Library. What is the VFW Auxiliary Lending Library? This effort will see Auxiliaries create and institute their own lending libraries where children can borrow reading materials. Members can work together to see how best these libraries will work in your community. The libraries can be placed anywhere (with proper approval, of course): outside your Post, at the community center, baseball field, city hall, Moose, Elks or Masons lodges. Your Auxiliary could give a child an opportunity to further expand their imagination by reading. They can be easy to assemble; outdoor library boxes can be found on Amazon and other online retailers. For the extra industrious, reach out to your local high school woodshop teacher and see if they would be interested in making it a school project.

Stock your library with selections from the Patriotism Through Literacy reading list found on the National website. Reach out to your schools to find the different reading levels to stock your library with. Approximately 61% of low-income families do not have any children's books in their homes. Because of this lack of access, these children can suffer lower reading scores and a greater likelihood of struggling in school. By starting a VFW Auxiliary Lending Library with an emphasis on youth books, your Auxiliary can make a difference.

Remember these tips to build your library project:

- Take a book. Share a book.
- Organize a reading to youth event at your VFW Post
- Contact a youth group, Scouts and high school clubs for help and advice on building your library.
- Use the #auxlendinglibrary to promote what you are doing for the VFW Auxiliary Lending Library project.

Illustrating America

Important reminder: There are several **CHANGES** this year to the **DUE DATES** for the Illustrating America contest. The Illustrating America schedule starting for the 2026-2027 year is:

December 15 (2026): Illustrating America student entries are due to participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging.

January (2027): Optional first-place Illustrating America winner in each grade division from each participating sponsoring VFW Auxiliary are due to VFW Auxiliary District for judging.

January 15: Illustrating America first-place winner in each grade division from each participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary or optional VFW Auxiliary District are due to the VFW Auxiliary Department for judging.

January 31: Illustrating America first-place winner in each grade division from each VFW Auxiliary Department must be received at VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters for judging.

Make sure you advise your Auxiliaries of the date changes. The youth participating today in our Illustrating America contest may be the youth that participate in Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contests later. Reach out to your local elementary and middle schools with the information early in the school year. Talk to teachers, see if they will incorporate the contest as a class project. This contest shows the community that the VFW Auxiliary is engaged in promoting patriotism among our youth.

Youth Groups

How many youth groups do you have in your community? There are so many youth groups out there for us to explore and work with. Scouting America, 4-H, the National FFA Organization, Future Business Leaders of America, YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National Honor Society, Toastmasters and so many more.

Invite youth groups to join in Auxiliary activities under the supervision of their adult group leader(s) and/or parents/guardians including:

- Serving and bussing tables for fundraising dinners.
- Participating in holidays and activities at nursing homes.
- Organizing a military night during a local football game.
- Building your Little Free Library and stocking it with books.

R.A.P. Recognition & Youth Acts Of Kindness

This is one of the easiest ways to recognize our youth when you witness their Random Acts of Patriotism. Have an R.A.P. card available to hand out immediately when you see that act of Patriotism. Recognize patriotic youth activities with a certificate at a school assembly. Become part of the school awards

program, present certificates for the Patriotic Youth Award and the Youth Acts of Kindness Certificate. Celebrate our youth by acknowledging their patriotic deeds. Find these fillable/printable resources in MALTA Member Resources.

For more details on the Youth Activities Program Awards, see page 66.





YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups • Patriotism through Literacy • Illustrating America

The VFW Auxiliary is in a unique position to help teach our youth the skills to become responsible adults through serving our country, communities and veterans. We have a new generation of veterans who need the support of family, friends and country as they serve overseas and when they come home from conflicts abroad. Today's youth are the future of our nation.

Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

As part of the VFW Auxiliary Youth Activities Program, a VFW Auxiliary can sponsor a youth group and engage youth in any one of our Programs, including activities to honor our veterans or assist our service members and their families.

Take advantage of the service aspects some youth groups require. Many youth-focused organizations require various types of community service or activities to earn merits in their units. College-bound seniors earn school credit for some of these same activities.

Remember that involving youth in service to veterans in conjunction with your VFW Auxiliary can bring new membership to your VFW Auxiliary. When youth and the whole family are included, members feel more invested in your VFW Auxiliary. Sponsorship of a youth group can create a bright future for your VFW Auxiliary, veterans and the community as a whole.

Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations

The Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation is one way for VFW Auxiliaries to recognize youth groups for their efforts and service projects honoring our veterans and assisting service members and

their families. The Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation is available in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.

Patriotic Youth Award

The Patriotic Youth Award is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, service members and their families. A fillable, printable version of The Patriotic Youth Award is available in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.

Patriotism through Literacy

Promote and support reading among youth with this simple, fun and potentially free (use your local library) initiative. Introduce youth to historical figures and teach them about events in our nation's history while fostering a love of reading that can lead to a lifetime of learning.

Benefits of Patriotism through Literacy:

- Teach kids about various times in American history. Promote empathy and expose students to experiences unlike their own.
- Foster a love of books that leads to a lifetime of learning.
- Spend time with kids in the community in new, creative ways.
- Help youth gain better understanding of American history through nonfiction.

How can I participate in Patriotism through Literacy?

- Volunteer to read a historical or creative nonfiction picture book to kids at your local library.

- Donate historical fiction or creative nonfiction books to local schools, shelters or libraries.
- Host a read-a-thon and award small prizes (stickers, pins) for number of books or hours read.
- Run a writer's workshop for aspiring teen and tween authors at your VFW Post Home.
- Invite an author of historical fiction or creative nonfiction to do a book talk/signing in your area.

Reading has many benefits, including improved grammar and writing skills, improved focus and concentration, and it helps children to understand and share the feelings of others; reading stretches our imagination. As Dr. Seuss said, "Reading can take you places you have never been before."

Illustrating America

Open to any student in grades K-8 who is enrolled in a public, private or parochial school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions, or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen. Foreign exchange students and students age 15 or older are ineligible. National grade division winners of previous Illustrating America contests may enter the subsequent grade division but are ineligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous National winner.

Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. The Department first-place winner in each grade division will be forwarded to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters.

There are National awards for first, second and third place in each grade division.

Contest Rules:

- Entry must be completed during the current school year.
- Entry must be two dimensional.
- Entry must be on canvas or paper.
- Canvas entries must be submitted on a stretcher frame or canvas board.

- Paper entries must be reinforced with heavy paper or cardboard.
- Do not frame art with wood, metal, plastic or glass.
- Mats may be used, including mounted and floating mats.
- Entries may not be smaller than 8" x 10" and not larger than 18" x 24", **INCLUDING** mat.
- Crayons, paint, glitter, marker, pastel, pencil, watercolor, mixed or other media may be used.
- If the American Flag is used, it **DOES NOT** need to conform to the Federal Flag Code in relation to colors or numbers of stars and stripes.
- Completed contest entry form must be submitted with art entry.
- Student's name, age and grade level must be printed on back of art entry.
- Parent or guardian signature required on contest entry form.
- **Coloring sheets, digital art and photography are NOT accepted.**

Deadlines:

Entries received by:

VFW Auxiliary – December 15

District – (Optional)

Department – January 15

National Headquarters – January 31

Official form, details on requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA Member Resources or on the VFW Auxiliary website.

Involve Youth in ALL Auxiliary Programs

Youth play such an important role in our future. Encourage involvement from an early age in all VFW Auxiliary Programs. Every young person can find their place to serve when they are presented with a variety of opportunities to serve their communities and veterans. Teach youth about VFW Auxiliary efforts to respect and take pride in our country.

Project Examples

- Marching in patriotic holiday parades.
- Help veterans, service members and their families with yard work or household repairs.
- Sending cards or small gifts to the VFW National Home to support families.

- Planning card- and letter-writing events to send mail to our troops overseas or veterans in VA facilities.
- Organizing, assembly, collection and delivery of care packages for troops.
- Teaching computer skills to veterans.
- Visiting and volunteering in VA and non-VA facilities.

Youth Group Examples for VFW Auxiliary Sponsorship

- Youth sports teams and church youth groups
- School clubs and after-school programs
- Home-school associations
- Youth community service groups
- Service learning and civic engagement departments in high schools

Make Your Auxiliary Accessible to Today's Youth

It has never been so easy to communicate your cause and events to the world. Social media as teaching and information tools have natural collaborative elements allowing our youth to view and comment on each other's activities. They are tweeting on X, posting on Facebook, instantly sending pictures on Instagram and Snapchat and subscribing to YouTube channels. Get online and see what's new!

VFW Scout of the Year Program

Some of our earliest ties to the community involve youth groups and perhaps none are stronger or more lasting than the relationship between the VFW and America's scouting organizations.

The VFW Scout of the Year program recognizes members of Scouting of America and Girl Scouts of the United States of America for their standout citizenship, patriotism and love of country.

Official form, details and rules are located at:
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/scout-of-the-year>

YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative and/or unique VFW Auxiliary Lending Library.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the VFW Auxiliary Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The VFW Auxiliary Department Youth Activities Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National Youth Activities Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department Youth Activities Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of the VFW Auxiliary Lending Library initiative.

Winners will be announced, and citations will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for distribution to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairmen.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

2026-2027

YEAR END REPORTS

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Americanism 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted, participated in and/or recognized, any patriotic day and/or branch of service birthdays. _____

2. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that distributed and/or presented American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags. _____

3. The number of American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags distributed and/or presented by VFW Auxiliaries. _____

4. The number of Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificates of Appreciation or Respect for the Flag Citations presented to citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American Flag, POW/MIA Flag and/or other displays of American pride. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet "Buddy"® Poppy 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that held VFW "Buddy"® Poppy drives with or without their VFW Post. _____

2. The number of VFW "Buddy"® Poppies that were distributed. _____

3. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that participated in the VFW "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Historian & Media Relations 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that communicated quarterly with each of their members via email, mail, text or phone call.

2. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that have a Facebook page or website with or without the VFW Post.

3. The number of Auxiliaries that held a Media Relations "how to" training to educate their members (Examples: how to log in to MALTA, email, navigate Facebook and other social media).

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Hospital 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliary members that volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility (VFW Auxiliary members to be counted one time only per year). _____

2. The total number of hours that VFW Auxiliary members volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. _____

3. The total number of hours that Sponsored Volunteers and/or students volunteered under the VFW Auxiliary sponsorship and supervision at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. _____

4. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted, participated in, hosted or co-hosted any activity with or without their VFW Post. _____

5. The total dollar amount spent on all Hospital Program-related items and/or projects. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Legislative 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted, participated in and/or hosted or co-hosted activities regarding the VFW Priority Goals with or without their VFW Post. _____

2. The number of VFW Auxiliary members who contacted their legislators on veterans' issues by any means (Examples: emails, letters, postcards, phone calls, etc.). _____

3. The number of VFW Auxiliary members who attended events where they could interact with legislators (Examples: legislative conferences, town halls, meet-and-greets, etc.). _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Scholarships 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

Continuing Education Scholarship Contest

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the National Continuing Education Scholarship Contest (Examples: distributed applications, publicized or promoted the scholarship).

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the National Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest.

2. The number of students that submitted art entries to VFW Auxiliaries for judging.

3. The number of art entries submitted to the Department for judging.

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the National 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest.

2. The number of students that submitted art entries to VFW Auxiliaries for judging.

3. The number of art entries submitted to the Department for judging.

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Scholarships (continued) 2026-2027

VFW Scholarships

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that assisted their VFW Post in promoting or conducting the VFW National Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. _____

2. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that assisted their VFW Post in promoting or conducting the VFW National Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Contest. _____

Recognition

1. The number of Auxiliaries that hosted or co-hosted an awards ceremony to recognize awardees and participants in any/all contests with or without the VFW. _____

2. The total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by Auxiliaries, Districts and Departments in any/all contests. _____

Donations

1. The number of Auxiliaries that made a monetary donation to the National Continuing Education Scholarship fund. _____

2. The total amount donated to the Continuing Education Fund, to include Auxiliaries, Districts and Department. _____

3. The number of Auxiliaries that made a monetary donation to the National Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship fund. _____

4. The total amount donated to the Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund, to include Auxiliaries, Districts and Department. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Veterans & Family Support 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted, participated in, hosted or co-hosted with their VFW Post activities for any VFW Program. (Examples: Disaster Relief, National Veterans Service (NVS), Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health awareness.) _____

2. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that provided direct aid to veterans, service members and/or their families (Examples: meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.) _____

3. The approximate number of veterans, service members and/or their families assisted. _____

4. The total monetary donations and/or value of donations and goods/services provided to veterans, service members and/or their families. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Youth Activities 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

Youth Groups

1. The number of youth groups that VFW Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year. _____

2. The number of youth that VFW Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year. _____

3. The number of Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations awarded. _____

4. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that participated in Patriotism through Literacy. _____

5. The number of books donated in participation of Patriotism through Literacy. _____

Illustrating America Art Contest

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the Illustrating America Art Contest _____

2. The number of students that submitted art entries to VFW Auxiliaries for judging. _____

3. The number of art entries submitted to the Department for judging _____

4. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that hosted an awards ceremony to recognize awardees and participants in this contest. _____

5. The total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by VFW Auxiliaries, Districts and Departments. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet VFW National Home 2026-2027

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.

This report is to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: _____ Number of participating VFW Auxiliaries: _____

VFW National Home

1. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the VFW National Home. _____
2. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted the VFW National Home Helpine. _____
3. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that purchased at least one VFW National Home Life Membership in the current Program Year. _____
4. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that purchased at least one VFW National Home Tribute Brick in the current Program Year. _____

Department Chairman signature: _____

Date: _____ Conference: _____

