

# From Our Roots to Our Branches

EXTENDING SERVICE  
TO OUR VETERANS





# 2024-2025

## *Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary National Officers*



**PRESIDENT** Brenda Bryant (center)

**SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT** Lois Callahan (upper left, then counter clockwise)

**JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT** Donna Mills

**CONDUCTOR** Sandra Uzell

**CHIEF OF STAFF** Betty Arnold

**CHAPLAIN** Kim Harney

**SECRETARY-TREASURER** Ann Panteleakos



Dear Members,

For 110 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary members, through their dedication and passion, have shown how much our veterans and their families mean to us. It is building on this unmovable foundation which has made the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary so strong. Each of us has a veteran in our lives who made us eligible for membership in this organization—a veteran who served our country with the hopes of making it a better place for their families. We need to continue remembering our veterans and their mission as this organization moves forward into the future.

My theme for this year is: ***From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans.*** The pin this year is a tree that represents this organization. The roots are our veterans and Auxiliary members of the past — the people who helped shape us into who we are. The trunk of the tree represents our veterans because they are the strong individuals who hold us up and why we work so hard for this organization. The branches signify all the members in this organization, as well as all the branches of the military. Finally, the leaves are all the many Programs we do for our veterans, our families and our communities. And as the tree branches reach up and out, by working together, we can also reach for the skies.

This year, there will only be 11 National Programs. You asked for us to reduce the Programs and I have been listening. Mentoring has been incorporated into the Extension & Revitalization Program. We must continue mentoring for leadership within our Auxiliaries, so we have new members who can replace us when the time comes, but you are right, it doesn't need to be a standalone Program. I encourage each of you to read this 2024-2025 National Program Book and the future Program material put out by the National Ambassadors. It is their goal to "think outside the box" and develop ways for all of you to receive credit in each of these Programs.

Our Auxiliaries do great things for our veterans and our communities because of the uniqueness of the members within them. Find those special talents that each of your members bring to the meetings and let them all shine. Take that enthusiasm with you as you go into the communities with our Programs. Our communities depend on the outstanding work we do.

My goal this year is to encourage unity among our VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. Think what a difference we can make if we work together as one. We are a family of like minds and there is no limit to how much we can accomplish, working together on our common goal, making life better for our veterans, their families and our communities.

Henry Ford said it best: "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success."

Wishing for each of you a very successful year,

Brenda Bryant  
National President



Now that the baby has been delivered –  
How are you going to make sure everything is covered?

## National President Brenda Bryant's 2024-2025 Special Project

# OPERATION BOTTOM COVER

We have discovered there is a need for diapers for the babies of our military and our veterans. So, we are partnering with Operation Showers of Appreciation. They distribute diapers all over the world to active-duty military and veteran families. They have been in business for more than 15 years.

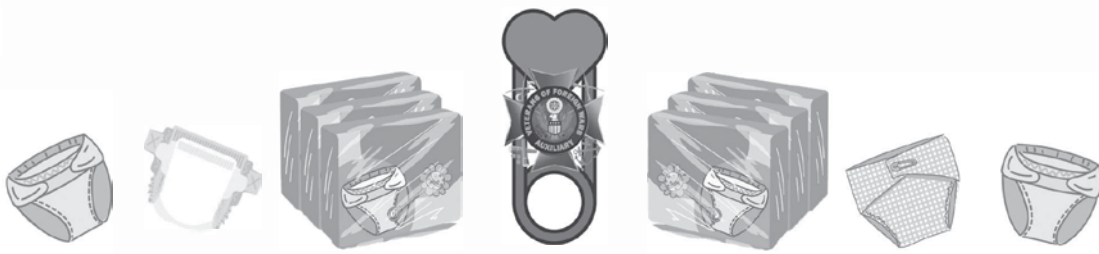
Did you know that in Japan it costs twice as much for active-duty service members to purchase diapers then it does in the states?

### How can your Auxiliary help?

1. Gift money to Operation Bottom Cover through MALTA under gifts – National President's Special Project or mail a check to National Headquarters earmarked NP Special Project.
2. Coordinate with and make a gift of diapers directly to a military base. If you don't have a contact at the base, reach out to your VFW VMS Chairman, maybe they can help.
3. Host a diaper giveaway for veteran or military families at your Post.

### How can your Auxiliary directly help a family?

1. Share this link to Operation Showers of Appreciation with members: [www.osoamil.org](http://www.osoamil.org). Operation Showers of Appreciation (OSOAmil) is an organization whose mission it is to honor and support military and veterans by providing assistance in everyday life, including addressing needs through their Diaper Assistance Program.
2. Your Auxiliary can donate directly to a veteran or military family with this need in your area.
3. Don't forget the wipes. Maybe you can challenge the VFW for every box of diapers you deliver, they can throw in the wipes. Let's work together.



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# 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.**

## Criteria for entering the Circle of Excellence:

### 1. Growth in Membership:

Membership Standings by June 30, 2024 based on June 30 final membership statistics. Membership will be based on figures listed on the CMR - Paid, Cancelled & 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. Once suspension is lifted, points will be awarded.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
15		Installation report received at National Headquarters by July 15.
10		Installation report 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. Once suspension is lifted, points will be awarded.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		All Auxiliaries bonded by August 31 or request for suspension

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
10		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 that date by October 1.

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

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.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
10		Department Chairmen are to promote National Programs at the Department level.

**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 benefits 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 President **MUST** complete and submit the online Year-End Report.

Possible Points	Actual Points	Criteria
25		Department President <b>MUST</b> 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 <b>MUST</b> 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 <b>MUST</b> complete at least one project, activity or donation that benefits veterans by April 30. If not, the Department <b>MUST</b> 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 31. **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 15. The Department Officer must then report to the Department President by April 30.

*(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

## **Circle of Excellence Awards:**

### **AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN**

1. \$500 to the Department for meeting all of the criteria listed on pages 1-3 and entering the Circle of Excellence.
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 DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN 2024-2025

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

### 11 Programs Judged:

- Americanism
- Auxiliary Outreach
- “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home
- Extension & Revitalization
- Historian & Media Relations
- Hospital
- Legislative
- Membership
- Scholarships
- Veterans & Family Support
- 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, 2025.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. 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.***

2024-2025

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



**KATLYN BURKE**

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How do you celebrate or promote patriotic holidays? Do you promote a patriotic holiday within your community? It is the perfect time to show your community what the Auxiliary is about and bring attention to patriotic holidays and the importance of them. By your Auxiliary showing it supports patriotism, it shows your community, veterans and their families are a top priority.

## **Patriotic Holidays**

As we come together with friends and families on patriotic holidays it is a good time to remember to pay tribute to the men and women who have served in the U.S. military as they have served or are currently serving to protect our country and freedom.

There are many important patriotic holidays throughout the year; some may be more commonly known than others, but all are equally important. These patriotic holidays are a good time to bring friends and families together and show your community how important our country is and what it means to you.

Lesser-known patriotic holidays are just as important as the other patriotic holidays. It's important that we focus on all the patriotic holidays as it shows us supporting patriotism and making veterans and their families top priority. Here are a few ways to promote lesser-known patriotic holidays:

- Study the history behind the lesser-known patriotic holidays so you can educate others about them and why they are just as important as the other patriotic holidays.
- Participate in a parade. Ask members and youth to help with the parade by handing out Flags.
- Fly the American Flag

- Do something nice for veterans/ service members on the specific patriotic holiday.
- Attend a patriotic ceremony.
- Raise awareness about the lesser-known patriotic holidays.

Here are some less commonly known patriotic holidays we can observe:

- Loyalty Day is on May 1 each year. "It is a day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for recognizing the heritage of American freedom."
- Purple Heart Remembrance Day is observed on August 7. Each year on this day our nation recognizes the men and women who were wounded or killed on the battlefield by remembering the sacrifices they made.
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is September 17. On this day in 1787 the U.S. Constitution was signed.
- POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday of September. On this day, we honor those who sacrificed and are prisoners of war and those still missing in action.
- Day of the Deployed is observed on October 26. This day honors all the service members who have been deployed in the service of the United States. This day also honors their families and all the sacrifices they have made during deployments.

As we promote patriotism and celebrate some of the lesser-known patriotic holidays don't forget about some of the well-known patriotic holidays as well:

- Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May.
- Flag Day is observed on June 14.
- Independence Day is observed on July 4.
- Veterans Day is observed on November 11.

## **Promote Patriotism**

We feel patriotic hearing our National Anthem sung or saying the Pledge of Allegiance on patriotic holidays; it helps us remember the value of our freedom as American citizens and passing our patriotism on to the next generation and many to come after.

We can celebrate patriotic holidays and #AuxiliaryPatriotism in many ways; here are a few examples:

- Participate in a parade. Ask members and youth to help with the parade by handing out Flags.
- Fly the American Flag
- Visit a historic landmark
- Host a community celebration
- Support a veteran, do more than just thanking them for their service. Lend them a hand with things they may need help with.

### **Branch of Service Birthdays**

It is important to celebrate each branch of service's birthday as we are proud of our U.S. military and what they represent, and they are the reason why we are free. It is also important to remember the order of how the Military flags should be faced left to right. (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard)

### **Flag Education during Patriotic Events**

As we celebrate these patriotic holidays and promote patriotism, it is important to educate others about the U.S. Flag any moment we can. The U.S. Flag has symbolized freedom for many years and is important that we teach everyone about Flag education.

- How to properly salute the Flag
- When to display the Flag
- How to conduct a Flag-raising ceremony
- How to fold and store the Flag

### **Patriotic Instructor**

As a Patriotic Instructor, you have a crucial and important role in the Auxiliary as you teach the members about giving the proper salute to the American Flag. Also, you help teach our members about the traditions of our organization.



# AMERICANISM PROGRAM

## Flag Education • Promote #AuxiliaryPatriotism • 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**

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* helpsheet 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*. Patriotic items and educational materials are available for purchase through the VFW Store at 1-833-VFW-VETS or online at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).

### **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](http://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. For more information on this and other Flag etiquette, refer to MALTA Member Resources.

### **Promote Patriotism – Celebrating Patriotic Holidays**

Patriotic holidays are an opportune time to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. When fun family events are presented to the community, prospective new members will walk through your door. Patriotic holidays can serve as the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism, veterans and their families as a top priority. For more information about patriotic days and ways to celebrate, visit MALTA Member Resources.

**National Vietnam War Veterans Day** – March 29  
National Vietnam War Veterans Day honors a generation of men and women who served and sacrificed. March 29 marks the anniversary of when the last combat forces departed South Vietnam in 1973, even though some troops remained until their final departure in 1975.

**Loyalty Day** – May 1  
On May 1, 1930, 10,000 VFW members staged a rally at New York’s Union Square to promote patriotism. Through a resolution adopted in 1949, May 1 evolved into Loyalty Day.

**Armed Forces Day** – Third Saturday in May  
A day to pay tribute to the men and women currently serving in our nation’s armed forces.

**Memorial Day** – May 30 (Traditional)  
Patriotism calls for all citizens to be reminded of the deaths of their fellow countrymen during wartime. By honoring the nation’s war dead, we preserve their memory and thus their service and sacrifice.

**Flag Day** – June 14  
This day celebrates the official symbol for the United States: our “Stars and Stripes.” Flag Day was first recognized by Congress on June 14, 1777.

**Independence Day** – July 4  
On this day in 1776, our forefathers formed a new nation by adopting the Declaration of Independence.

**Patriot Day** – September 11  
This day is to perpetuate the memory of those who perished in the attack on America that occurred on this date in 2001.

**POW/MIA Recognition Day** - Third Friday in September  
POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation’s prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day, traditionally on the third Friday in September, is one of the six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations.

Auxiliary members are passionate about bringing attention to former prisoners of war and those missing in action by holding ceremonies to both educate their communities and honor these special veterans. One way to honor these veterans and educate youth and the community on this subject is by having a Missing Man Table Ceremony. This practice provides a visual demonstration of the significance of POW/MIA Recognition Day. You are encouraged to share this ceremony with youth groups partnering with the Auxiliary. Find a sample of the ceremony wording and table setup in MALTA Member Resources.

**Gold Star Mother’s & Family’s Day** -  
Last Sunday in September  
On this day, Americans are encouraged to display the Flag and hold appropriate ceremonies as a public expression of our nation’s gratitude and respect for our Gold Star Mothers and Families.

**Veterans Day** – November 11  
This is an opportunity to honor the brave men and women, both living and deceased, who fought America’s battles past and present.

**Pearl Harbor Day** – December 7  
This day is in remembrance of the same date in 1941 when Japanese bombers staged a surprise attack on U.S. military and naval forces in Hawaii.

- Branch of Service Birth Dates**
- U.S. Army - June 14, 1775
  - U.S. Marine Corps - November 10, 1775
  - U.S. Navy - October 13, 1775
  - U.S. Air Force - September 18, 1947
  - U.S. Coast Guard - August 4, 1790
  - U.S. National Guard - December 13, 1636
  - U.S. Space Force - December 20, 2019

**Military Flags Order of Precedence**  
According to Department of Defense guidelines, military service flags, insignias, etc., should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard.

**Star Family Recognition**  
You may have seen a Blue Star, Gold Star or Silver Star service flag or service banner in the window of a home in your area. A service flag or service banner is a banner approved by the Secretary of Defense that family members of those serving in the United States Armed Forces can display.

- Blue Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border, with a blue star for each family member serving in the United States Armed Forces during any period of war or hostilities.
- Gold Star Families can display a flag or banner with a white field and a red border, with a gold star that represents a family member who died during military operations.
- Silver Star Families can display a flag or banner with a blue, an outer red and inner white border, with a silver star that represents a family member who was injured, wounded or became ill during or as a result of combat.

You are encouraged to recognize and honor these families in your community.



# AMERICANISM PROGRAM AWARDS

## **Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about lesser-known patriotic holidays.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Americanism Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Americanism Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

## **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Americanism Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of lesser-known patriotic holidays.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 9.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# AUXILIARY OUTREACH AMBASSADOR



## BAMBI JOHNSON

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Apache Junction, AZ 85119  
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auxiliaryoutreach24@outlook.  
com

The VFW Auxiliary has always been about volunteering and helping others. The VFW Auxiliary Outreach Program gives Auxiliaries the opportunity to do more with local communities, civic organizations and many other wonderful organizations and is a way to be more visible while establishing ourselves as strong supporters of our community.

The general population may not have a good understanding of our organization and what we do. Without a membership card, their view is from the outside of our building through events and media.

By seeing members, in VFW Auxiliary attire, partnered with other groups, at events and programs to benefit the community, we show our belief in sharing our most valuable asset... **our time.**

While volunteering at an event with an organization, you can engage with others about who we are and what we do. This is a great way to provide information about our Programs and attract new members who have a similar passion for our mission. Think of this as a way to **invite the outside into** our organization.

### **Here are some ways to find and establish partnerships in your area:**

- Prepare a letter of introduction to send to organizations that do community events.
- Create a flyer that can be posted to both your Auxiliary and community social media pages.
- Email your members asking if there are members of any outside organizations that do community events.
- Do a press release about the Program.
- Check local newspapers and bulletin boards.

### **Steps to a successful Auxiliary Outreach project:**

- Partner with organizations that could use assistance.
- Vote and approve a motion to provide that assistance at your meeting.
- At least one Auxiliary member must participate in the event.
- Wear VFW Auxiliary attire while participating (shirt, hat, name badge, lanyard, etc.) and share info about the VFW Auxiliary, what we do, why we do it and, of course, how they can become a part of our organization if they are eligible!

### **Suggested Auxiliary Outreach events for partnerships:**

- Partnering with First Responders: assist Police with Child ID kits or assist EMTs hosting CPR training.
- Senior Citizens Centers: deliver groceries or deliver for Meals on Wheels or teach a basic computer class at a senior center.
- Help animals and the environment by partnering with an animal shelter, plant a tree with parks and recreation or clean a public area.
- Help the food insecure and/or homeless: partner with a food bank or help sort donations at a homeless shelter.
- Partner with the Red Cross or others at their blood drives.
- Events can be held at your Post Home if the volunteers are only there to help another organization and the Auxiliary did not plan the event.
- Auxiliary Outreach is for projects not affiliated with VFW or VFW Auxiliary Programs.
- Donations, either monetary or of goods, are also not reportable under the program. Time, funds and goods should be reported to your Post using the VFW Community Service report.

### **A special benefit of the Auxiliary Outreach Program:**

*When individuals of all walks of life weave themselves together for the sake of others, we create a beautiful design with lasting threads of friends and fellowship.*

You can find forms and many helpful items for the Auxiliary Outreach Program behind MALTA Member Resources, Auxiliary Outreach.



# AUXILIARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

## Building Partnerships • Auxiliary Participating in Outreach

Auxiliary Outreach is partnering with organizations for the benefit of your community or its institutions. Auxiliary Outreach can:

- Be performed by people of any age, skill set or ability level.
- Benefit any group of people such as children, senior citizens and those with disabilities.
- Benefit animals, the environment and public spaces.
- Be done in communities of all types and sizes – rural, suburban and urban, small and large.

We partner to make a difference in our community, but we also receive benefits including:

- Helping others
- Learning new skills
- Career advancement
- Increased confidence
- Meeting new people
- Fighting stress and depression
- Developing a stronger sense of purpose
- Personal growth

### Outreach and the VFW Auxiliary

While emphasis is placed on our core VFW and Auxiliary Programs, we realize Auxiliaries also participate with other community organizations. Auxiliaries can now report and be recognized for such community work through the Auxiliary Outreach Program. Projects may be done by the Auxiliary alone or with the VFW Post.

Collectively, all of our volunteer hours need to be counted to effectively show the importance of the local VFW and VFW Auxiliary to the community.

Be visible and show your pride in the VFW Auxiliary by wearing Auxiliary-branded attire when you participate in Auxiliary Outreach. A shirt, jacket or hat with the Auxiliary emblem can start a conversation about the Auxiliary and what we do. It is also a great way to show members volunteering out in our communities and not just in our Post Homes.

### What's Considered Auxiliary Outreach

When an Auxiliary partners with an organization outside our own, it should be considered Auxiliary Outreach **if the project was approved by the Auxiliary and recorded in the meeting minutes prior to the project.**

On rare occasions such as a natural disaster or emergency community need, the project may be voted on after the fact. (When the Auxiliary votes to partner with another organization and only one member is able to show up, it still counts as Auxiliary Outreach.)

Examples include:

- Participation in walks that benefit other organizations as an event spotter, water station volunteer, timekeeper, etc. (Walking or running in the race is not part of Auxiliary Outreach.)
- Partnering with local police on child ID kits.
- Partnering with firefighters on fire safety and prevention.
- Partnering with EMTs to host CPR training.
- Partnering with parks and recreation departments to plant trees, adopt-a-park initiatives and develop community art installations.
- Partnering with an animal shelter or mobile neutering clinic.
- Partnering with a soup kitchen to stock shelves or serve food.

When we participate in Auxiliary Outreach we become better citizens of the communities in which we live.

### What's Not Considered Auxiliary Outreach

- **Auxiliary Outreach is for projects NOT AFFILIATED with VFW or VFW Auxiliary Programs.**
- Volunteer work that is performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary is NOT considered outreach service. Examples of projects that do not qualify include:
  - Repairs or maintenance to the Post Home.
  - Cooking or serving a meal for a Post or Auxiliary fundraiser.
  - "Buddy"® Poppy distribution.
  - VFW or Auxiliary meetings, Conventions, Conferences or schools of instruction.
  - Church activities for one specific congregation and not the entire community (e.g., usher, elder, deacon, minister, etc.)
  - Serving on a board in your community. (e.g., school board, board of trustees, etc.)

## **QUALIFIES**

Spending time in a local homeless shelter kitchen serving meals, bussing tables or cleaning up.

Partnering with the police or fire department on bicycle or home safety training class.

Your Auxiliary approves helping a local cancer group setting up their event or manning a booth.

Partnering with the garden club to clean up local parks.

Help a youth group collect food donations for the local food pantry.

## **DOES NOT QUALIFY**

Taking comfort items to the local USO.

Donating trophies to a youth sports group.

Hosting a luncheon/dinner for a local organization

Sending an Auxiliary check to support a charity that organized a walk-a-thon or run.

Collecting clothing and comfort items for homeless veterans at the Post Home. (This would be Veterans & Family Support.)

Passing the collection basket at church services.

# AUXILIARY OUTREACH PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding photo collage created by the VFW Auxiliary of their VFW Auxiliary Outreach partnerships during the current Program Year.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most outstanding photo collage of their VFW Auxiliary partnerships during the current Program Year.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Auxiliary Outreach Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Auxiliary Outreach Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Auxiliary Outreach Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Auxiliary Outreach Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of how to build partnerships outside of the VFW Auxiliary organization.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 13.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# "BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME AMBASSADOR



## JODIE HOLLINGER

4013 Sunnyside Road  
Manheim, PA 17545  
717-232-7604  
jodie@vfwauxpa.org

This year we are going to **CELEBRATE!** One hundred years ago, a 23-year-old woman's mission was to help veterans in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and we are still doing it today. On January 7, 2025 the VFW National Home will turn 100 years old! The VFW National Home was the **FIRST** National Program for the VFW Auxiliary.

Over the span of a century, the VFW National Home community has undergone a remarkable transformation. In the beginning, the teenage boys oversaw the fire department for the National Home. When the Home first started there was a hospital and a dentist office on campus. This has now been renovated into the Health and Education Building, which has the Veteran and Family Resource Center located in the basement. This has been a positive area for the veteran and their family to meet with employment specialists, peer support specialists and case managers to work on their personal goals, family goals and self care.

Regardless of all of the changes, our unwavering dedication to our veterans remain steadfast and unchanged. Now more than ever the families are participating in activities held on campus and when you see the interaction with the residents you sense the "community" feeling they have.

Within a year, the National Home went from a Silver to Gold-Level award for being a veteran friendly employer by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. This positive change came under the direction of Executive Director Mike Wilson. He has energized the staff and brought a brightness back to the Home. Some other new changes are:

**Guitars for Vets Program** – Ten free lessons for the veterans and then a new acoustic guitar for completing the program.

**Cup of Joe** – Spend two hours on a Saturday morning with other veterans having coffee, donuts and telling stories.

**Golf Event** – Annual golf outing to raise money for the activities and events at the Home.

**Heroes to Hives** – National Home staff and residents participated in beekeeping classes facilitated by a local beekeeper and VFW member.

**The Veteran Tribute Tree** – To honor our living, deceased or deployed by placing a ribbon on the tree at Christmastime.

During this year, I would like Auxiliaries to take the time to **CELEBRATE** with me. I am hoping each Auxiliary will consider sending a heartfelt birthday card to the VFW National Home in celebration of its 100th birthday. Please have the cards to the National Home by the beginning of January so they can be displayed for the birthday party. Plans are being made to have the celebration shared so everyone can join in on the fun. Instead of sending gifts for the traditional birthday party remember the VFW National Home has an Amazon Wish List with things they could use or your Auxiliary could make a donation to help with costs of the 100th celebration in June.

Auxiliaries across the Nation have supported the National Home for a century in ways that range from building a chapel to most recently renovating the Welcome Center. There are so many different ways to support the Home, here are just a few others:

- National Home's Amazon Wishlist
- Become a Life Member
- Donate to Health & Happiness
- Purchase a brick for the Tribute Park
- Become a Hometown Hero contributor

Over the course of the year, we will have many events and special things for the National Home and I hope Auxiliaries will participate and help in all of the celebrations. Our biggest celebration will be when we hold our event on the National Home grounds in June 2025. We will be inviting alumni back to the Home and you may even see former "Buddy"® Poppy children in attendance.

Website – <https://vfwnationalhome.org>

- News and events
- Testimonials
- Strategic plans
- History
- Online store
- And more
-

Facebook – follow at VFW National Home  
See exciting events and current happenings along with photos of the families on campus.

The VFW “Buddy”® Poppy is worn as a profound gesture of respect to honor the valor and sacrifice of those who have laid down their lives for their country. The first “Buddy”® Poppy distribution was held on Memorial Day 1922.

When you have a “Buddy”® Poppy distribution you are honoring the dead by helping the living and you are also able to include bringing awareness to some who may not understand who and what we are. Why not collaborate with JROTC, Scouts or other youth groups and ask them to join you in the distribution of the “Buddy”® Poppy?

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.

When you are ready to hold a “Buddy”® Poppy drive be sure you order your Poppies from your VFW Post, if the Post will not order them for you, please contact your VFW Department headquarters and be sure to allow 4 weeks for delivery. There are now two options for the “Buddy”® Poppies, they are the traditional “Buddy”® Poppy and the VFW also has a metal “Buddy”® Poppy that is available. This new metal Poppy is nice for a collar or suit jacket. Each “Buddy”® Poppy purchased by a Department for distribution contributes to the following:

- One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Home
- One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Headquarters Veterans Service Fund
- One and a half (1.5) cent goes to the Department’s Veterans Service Fund

# "BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

## "Buddy"® Poppy Education/Outreach • National "Buddy"® Poppy Display Contest VFW National Home Education and Community Outreach

### "Buddy"® Poppy

The "Buddy"® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community for 100 years. As the VFW's official memorial 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 a 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.

These small but mighty memorial flowers have raised millions for the welfare of veterans and their dependents. The 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 Poppies.
- Request the order form from your VFW Department Headquarters at least two to three months (8 to 12 weeks) in advance of your distribution date.
- Brochures, "Buddy"® Poppy distribution supplies and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org) or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

#### "Buddy"® Poppy Distribution Tips

- Talk to your VFW Post about a joint drive 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, after-school, Scouts, Young Marines and faith-based clubs.
- Ask volunteers to wear Auxiliary- and/or VFW-branded clothing to both promote the Auxiliary and VFW and connect the distribution of poppies to the organization.
- Remind volunteers they are NOT SELLING "Buddy"® Poppies, but DISTRIBUTING them for donations.
- Never refuse someone a "Buddy"® Poppy because they are unable to donate. A "Buddy"® Poppy honors all veterans.
- See the VFW's "Buddy"® Poppy Chairman'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.

#### Honor the Dead by Helping the Living

- 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. (Sec. 904)
- "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 Poppy drive.



- 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. Let your imagination run wild!

### 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, etc. 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](mailto:lrolf@vfw.org).

### Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

If your Department decides to hold an unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest, for example holiday tray favors, please ensure that all participants and judges understand the rules and guidelines. The winners of an unofficial contest will not be forwarded to National for judging.

## VFW NATIONAL HOME

**Turning 100 this Program Year**, 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 child care, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities. Families find healing in a safe and peaceful environment of tree-lined streets, 42 single-family homes, facilities such as a gym, library, computer and science labs, day care center, playgrounds, fishing pond, hiking trails and more!

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.

Reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment, rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, emotional wounds, financial stress, fractured family relationships, hopelessness and more can be the outcome for families with a parent serving our country—now, recently, or from earlier generations. Over the years, the National Home has met the changing needs of America’s military and veterans’ families.

Through it all, one thing has remained constant: the National Home’s commitment to honor our nation’s veterans and service members by providing help and hope for their children and families.

The 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.

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 National Home, they are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. Together, in partnership with the whole family, the National Home is dedicated to helping each family reach its full potential.

Even military families not living on the National Home campus can receive invaluable assistance through the National Home Helpline, which is staffed by caring professionals who help callers with urgent needs seek solutions in their own communities. If you know someone who needs assistance, encourage them to:

- Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200,
- Email [help@vfwnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfwnationalhome.org), or
- Visit [vfwnationalhome.org/help](http://vfwnationalhome.org/help).

The VFW National Home, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, is governed by a seventeen (17) member Board of Trustees made up of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, who as Life Members of the National Home, are dedicated to the mission of the National Home.

One way the Auxiliary supports the 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 National Home:

- Christmas gifts
- Graduation gifts
- Maintenance of Auxiliary-sponsored buildings
- Emergency repairs and renovations. Donations can be made online in MALTA or by mail.

**Making a gift is easy on MALTA. Gifts 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](http://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

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

1. VFW and VFW Auxiliary members and organizations are eligible to become Life Members. Life Members may vote for the Trustees who represent their National Home District and approve any proposed changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- (Please be sure the National Home has your correct name and email address since bylaws/ ballots are emailed.)
2. Any individuals or organization wishing to support the National Home's mission can become an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges.

The cost of becoming a Life Member is a one-time fee of \$50 and includes a membership certificate, a wallet card and a Life Member pin.

Visit [vfwnationalhome.org/membership](http://vfwnationalhome.org/membership) for:

- More information
- Life Membership application
- To purchase a Life Membership

**For more information, visit the National Home's website at [vfwnationalhome.org](http://vfwnationalhome.org).**

# **“BUDDY”® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS**

## **Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event using the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event using the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
2. Most outstanding activity and/or event to recognize and celebrate the VFW National Home’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to recognize and celebrate the VFW National Home’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Entry forms required for each award and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry forms to their Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry forms to the National “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of the uses of the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy while educating the community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
2. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of recognizing the VFW National Home’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
3. 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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 18.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION AMBASSADOR/ NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF



**BETTY ARNOLD**  
*National Chief of Staff*

11510 State Route M  
Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670  
vfwextension24-25@outlook.  
com

A Department Chief of Staff is an important part of the success of our VFW Auxiliary and vital to each Department in achieving our goals to serve our veterans and their families, increasing membership and promoting our Programs. The Chief of Staff will serve as the Extension & Revitalization Chairman and must be knowledgeable in all facets of Auxiliary including Bylaws and Programs and promoting Mentoring for Leadership.

They should be the Department President's assistant when asked and should be kept updated on what is going on within their respective Department. The Chief of Staff will be a teacher and mentor, and be compassionate while working with District Presidents and Auxiliaries to assure that the Auxiliary is functioning in a proper manner. A Department Chief of Staff can be a sounding board for the Department President and an extra set of eyes and ears to be on the lookout for the "Red Flags" that may indicate an Auxiliary is in trouble and needs assistance to be a healthy Auxiliary. Promote the use of *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation* and using the resources in MALTA to take on the training of members. With the permission of the Department President, offer to assist the Department Secretary in getting any missing Bond or Installation Reports. Request copies of the Official Visit forms from the Department President to peruse and perhaps pickup on a "Yellow Light" signal.

## **A TRADITION AND PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE**

The VFW Auxiliary has been built on a strong foundation based on the traditions established in 1914. With those traditions comes a sincere promise to safeguard the future of the Auxiliary. The Extension & Revitalization Program will benefit every member of the Auxiliary. Keeping informed and becoming knowledgeable of our traditions and subsequent Programs will help us to mentor our members and prepare them for leadership roles. This is the heart of what we do in this Program.

## **BRANCHES GROW TALL WHEN ROOTS RUN DEEP**

Each Department President has appointed a Department Chief of Staff to work closely with them to ensure that Auxiliaries remain strong and vibrant and that our organization grows and produces proud, patriotic and energetic members who will honor and protect our veterans and their families. Our foundation is solid – now it is up to us to build on that structure.

## **MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP**

Train and educate members to be future leaders. We must ensure that the legacy of the VFW Auxiliary continues through strong and healthy Auxiliaries comprising members who are prepared to take on leadership roles to continue to move the VFW Auxiliary forward. Do not allow Auxiliaries to stay "anchored to the past" – technology is a wonderful tool that gives us the ability to reach so many members which then allows us to continue the tradition and promise to take care of our veterans and their families. Blend the past with the present to guarantee our future.

## **GREEN LIGHT – YELLOW LIGHT – RED LIGHT**

Auxiliaries who are at the **GREEN LIGHT** are healthy Auxiliaries. Refer to MALTA Member Resources for the Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit – there are seven resources to assist Auxiliaries in identifying and solving issues within the kit.

**YELLOW LIGHT** Auxiliaries are exhibiting a Red Flag and a caution light and it is up to the Department Chief of Staff, when requested by the President, to take a look to assist the Auxiliary. The District President or Auxiliary Representative must be honest in the assessment of their visit to an Auxiliary as they have firsthand knowledge of the Auxiliary and communicate any concerns to the Department President and/or Chief of Staff. This Red Flag could be failure to meet any one or more of the essentials of an Auxiliary but also be a subtle flag about attracting no new members, failure to report in Programs to assist veterans and families, no new officers, not growing and failure for members in attending District and state meetings and trainings.

As soon as the **Caution** light appears, the Department Chief of Staff needs to work closely with the Department President and observe what is happening on the Auxiliary level - be ready to spring into action.

This is the time to step in and **OBSERVE** the Auxiliary and offer MENTORING. Pick the member or team that fits the Auxiliary – there is no one size fits all. Perhaps mentoring will be the remedy and the Auxiliary can get into the **GREEN** quickly. Mentors are counselors and cheerleaders. Focus on positive attributes and encourage those while offering guidance and training.

At this time, the hope is to avoid suspension but if it becomes necessary – your team should be able to attend their meetings and get them back on track. This is a critical time for an Auxiliary and your spirit of kindness is an absolute must. This is **REVITALIZATION** at its peak.

**RED LIGHT** – the Auxiliary will be put on suspension as a time to step back and regroup. Suspension simply means there is some work to do to get the Auxiliary where it needs to be. The hope is that the Auxiliary will recover and come back stronger and better than before.

## **EXTENSION**

We need to make certain that current Auxiliaries are sound but it is important to make presentations to unaffiliated Posts and when viable to institute new Auxiliaries. An Auxiliary cannot exist without a Post and there must be a 2/3 vote of the Post to get started. Positive and knowledgeable Auxiliary presenters are important when addressing a Post. Ask permission to describe the benefits of an Auxiliary to a VFW Post. Extension tools and presentations are available in MALTA Member Resources.

# EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

## Maintain and Strengthen Current Auxiliaries • Present to Unaffiliated Posts Establish New Auxiliaries • Recognize Red-Flag Auxiliaries

Chiefs of Staff work with District Presidents and the Department President to maintain current Auxiliaries. They encourage members, promote teamwork and provide guidance during challenging times such as suspension, consolidation or even the loss of a Charter. Chiefs of Staff also work closely with their Department President and organizers to establish new Auxiliaries.

### Maintaining Current 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 Auxiliaries be more productive.

1. The Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit includes seven (7) resources to assist Auxiliaries in identifying and solving issues:

- Healthy Auxiliary Checklist
- Healthy Auxiliary Member Questionnaire
- Auxiliary Meeting Clinic
- Communication Phone/Text Tree
- Good Job Certificate
- Healthy Auxiliary Certificate
- VFW Auxiliary Mentoring Guide

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, etc.

3. Saving an Auxiliary may be achieved by recruiting new members. Work with your Membership Chairman to help an Auxiliary become Healthy. (No new members = a true Red Flag) (See Membership in MALTA Member Resources for recruiting tools)

### 5 Essentials of an Auxiliary

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

1. Auxiliaries should have at least ten (10) business meetings per year. (Sec. 210, A.) Five (5) members in good standing (of that Auxiliary) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. (Sec. 212, A.)

2. Dues should be paid by at least ten (10) members on or before February 1 of the current year. (Sec. 207, C.)

3. Quarterly Audits by Trustees must be submitted. (Sec. 814)

4. Officers elected, installed and reported to National Headquarters no later than June 30. This generates the bond application via email. (Sec. 804A and 806A)

5. The offices of President and Treasurer MUST be bonded by August 31. (Sec. 814, E.)

### Establishing New Auxiliaries

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

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

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

• It would help to allow two others who are knowledgeable with 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 Auxiliary once it is instituted. It is recommended that the organizer and the organizing team work with the Auxiliary and its members for at least a year, or until they are ready to proceed as an Auxiliary in good standing.

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

For more information on this topic, see Article II, Auxiliaries and Article VIII, Officers (Sec. 815) of the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual.

### **Mentoring for Leadership**

- 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. Mentoring for Leadership will enhance all types of Program activities.
- 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 good communication and respect for each other is demonstrated.
- Utilizing the Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future document will help you get started in creating a Program for your Auxiliary.
- Through this Program you will be encouraged to embrace and promote the CARE concept.

**C** - Catch the member when they first join.

**A** - Ask them to participate.

**R** - Remember what it felt like to be new.

**E** - Engage them in a Program that fits them.

- Over time, this member may express interest in holding an office or chairmanship. Work with them to help them succeed. This will only make the Auxiliary and the organization better. Choose the mentor carefully. If the member is interested in floor work, choose an experienced floor worker, if they are interested in keeping books, have them work with the Secretary or Treasurer.
- The real goal here is to train your replacement and give them the tools they need to succeed.

Remember to use our Resources:

*Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation*  
Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit  
MALTA – Extension & Revitalization  
The current year National Program Book  
“Understanding Auxiliary Traditions” video

# EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION AWARDS

## **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Chief of Staff in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of mentoring and/or training to educate their VFW Auxiliary members on the duties of the Officer roles to ensure the future of the VFW Auxiliary.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 24.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.



# HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS AMBASSADOR



## TELA HARBOLD

12130 Lake Allen Drive

Largo, FL 33773

727-366-8143

telaharbold@gmail.com

Are we preserving the history of our Auxiliaries? Does your Auxiliary use social media to let the community and members know who we are and what we do? Social media is the best tool an Auxiliary has to share Auxiliary news, events and projects and for keeping our members and community in the know about what we do and how we help our veterans, their families, our youth and our communities. Historian Media Relations is the Auxiliaries answer to the five Ws: Who-What-When-Where-Why. A picture may be worth a thousand words but the five Ws tell the story behind the picture. Everything our members do to support our veterans and Programs becomes part of our history. By preserving these memories, we ensure that future generations understand our patriotic traditions as well as who we are and why we do what we do.

### Media

Social media platforms are continually evolving, and new platforms are constantly popping up. The more we utilize these forms of media, the more people we make aware of the work we do, the lives we change and the veterans we serve. A successful Auxiliary uses all forms of media to promote and educate others about our Programs, our scholarships, our service to veterans, their families, our youth and our communities.

Communication through traditional media is still important, so continue reaching out to the community through traditional media such as:

- Television
- Radio
- Door Hangers
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Newsletters

However, using digital media, we will reach a broader audience that includes the younger generations. For some, social media can be very intimidating, but we can reach out to a tech-savvy friend or relative who can easily teach us how to use social media and create informative videos.

Email along with Auxiliary and Department websites are a great way to reach out to members and communities.

Other social media outlets include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Pinterest

It isn't necessary to utilize all social media options, however, email and Facebook (Meta) are vital means of communication for Historian & Media Relations Chairmen.

### Recording Auxiliary History

It is important to maintain written reports and photos of the history of our organization. These reports and photos will illustrate the changes that time creates. The various ways to keep this information include:

- Digital Photo Albums
- Traditional Photo Albums
- Digital Scrapbooks
- Traditional Scrapbooks
- Memory Books
- Three-Ring Binders

Be sure to include newsletters, event flyers, thank-you notes, menus and other mementos. Use the five Ws and document names and dates with all photos.

Get VFW members involved when the National President visits your Department. This will show the nation that the Veteran of Foreign Wars Auxiliary is working in unity with the VFW. Together we can do great things and accomplish the goals of our Programs while taking pride in serving those who have sacrificed so much for all of us to have what others can only dream about.

Let's make this the year that GREAT changes happen to keep our organization and what we do in the spotlight everywhere and to highlight the selflessness of our veterans and members!



# HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

## Historian Duties • Media Relations

The member responsible for Historian & Media Relations duties is a memory keeper and collector of the five Ws: the who-what-where-when-and-why of your 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 member captures the narrative of the Program Year. At the Auxiliary, District and Department levels, these members are the people who get the word out about the Auxiliary to our communities. They inform the public about our valuable National Programs.

### Auxiliary and District Historian & Media Relations

This member keeps a written report of the history of their 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 Auxiliary events.

### Department Historian & Media Relations

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 Auxiliary Historian & Media Relations Chairman, this position also compiles photographs and newspaper and/or video clips of Auxiliary news.

The Department Historian & Media Relations member 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

This member documents the travels and activities of the National President. Department-level reports and photos are essential for this job. According to Article VIII, Sec. 821 of the National Bylaws, "The Historian shall collect all authentic material pertaining to the history of their Auxiliary, carefully compile the same, and submit a report at the end of the year."

In addition, he or she may also choose to compile a keepsake pictorial scrapbook, photobook, slideshow or video for the National President, but this is not essential.

For the media relations piece of this role, a great place to start is MALTA Member Resources.

There you will find:

- The VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide that includes lots of valuable information and ideas to promote your Auxiliary.
- The VFW Auxiliary Elevator Speech/What We Do that summarizes who we are, what we do and how we describe ourselves as an organization to the media.
- Website and social media information – There are a lot of resources here, everything from the basics to setting up a Facebook page for your Auxiliary.

### Who should you contact about 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 Auxiliary events. Feel free to send a reporter or editor a personal email, and be sure to include your contact information.

### 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 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.

### Photography tips

Photos should be clear and sharp, at least 1 MB (megabyte) in size and taken with attention to detail. Avoid the following photo faux pas:

- Closed eyes
- Mouths open or full of food
- Distracting objects in the frame or awkward placement of people or things (e.g., trees popping out of someone's head, bunny ears, etc.)
- Offensive language on articles of clothing

# HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM AWARDS

## **Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Most outstanding promotion of VFW Auxiliary Programs to the community through social media sources.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the most outstanding promotion of the VFW Auxiliary Programs to the community through social media sources.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Historian & Media Relations Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best training/education on the use of social media sources to promote VFW Auxiliary Programs.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 28.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# HOSPITAL AMBASSADOR



## PAULETTE MCCORD

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rockyokie@gmail.com

The Hospital Program is one of the oldest Programs in our organization. We hold fundraisers and say all right, we did our part. But there is more to the Program. It is about the veteran.

This year we are going back to the basics. We are going to be their little ray of sunshine. We know what the veteran has done for us, now it is our turn to do for the veteran.

Mr./Mrs. Smith, a veteran, had discussed with their family, that when they could no longer take care of themselves, they wanted to go to the veteran's center. The closest one was an hour away. The time had come. At first, the family went each week to visit them. But then life got in the way; they had work, children, school and church. They would call and say, "Sorry dad/mom, we just cannot make it this week." At the veteran's center, Mr./Mrs. Smith sits by the window watching and waiting for someone to come.

This is where WE as Auxiliary volunteers play a huge role. We are the ones who bridge the gap between the family and the veteran. We share of ourselves. Imagine going into their room with a huge smile and a cheerful hello. "Good morning Mr./Mrs. Smith. I am with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary and would love to visit you. What branch of the armed forces were you with, where did you serve, how did you meet your spouse?" Before long you will see a grin on their face. When a veteran goes into the VA, all they have is their memories. You are helping them remember.

I know that everyone cannot visit a veterans center, but you can participate by making things and sending them. Get in touch with the activity director, they can inform you of different items they may need. Remember there are male and female veterans. We have so many holidays,

make party trays for them. Can you see the smiles on their faces as they get their food trays with a small homemade Easter basket on it? They know someone cares. Sometimes the smallest things mean the most.

You can recruit members and non-members to be volunteers. When you talk to them about volunteering, get excited, let them see how important they are and how one person can make a difference. You can volunteer at VA, non-VA hospitals or nursing homes. Just make sure at an Auxiliary meeting that you vote to participate.

Every Auxiliary has older members who no longer attend meetings. They may not be comfortable getting out after dark or not able to get out at all so go visit with them. They would love to still be involved with their Auxiliary. Ask them if they sew or knit and would they want to make items for our veterans.

I cannot wait to see what you can do with this Program. Think outside the box. Remember, veterans hospitals and nursing homes are more than brick buildings. It is the home of a veteran.



# HOSPITAL PROGRAM

## Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Support

### Valentines for Veterans • Women Veterans Health Care • Honors Escort

VFW Auxiliary members have been volunteering in hospitals and medical facilities since the organization's inception in 1914. The Hospital Program was one of the first nationally adopted Programs for the organization.

#### Where can we serve?

Members, non-members and youth can volunteer in many different types of facilities under this Program.

- Local hospitals
- Veterans' homes
- Nursing homes
- Domiciliaries
- Both VA and non-VA medical facilities and clinics

#### Who can serve?

- Members
- Non-members
- Youth
- Families

#### 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 varying types 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.

#### What can we earn?

Members can earn Hospital Volunteer Service Pins from National Headquarters for their volunteer hours. More information on hours needed and the proper forms to use can be obtained from Department Hospital Chairmen or in MALTA Member Resources. Hospital Chairmen should track total hours (both VA and non-VA) and submit an application for the pins. Members can also be named an Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year in their Program Division. Applications are available from the Department Hospital Chairmen.

Non-members can also earn a one-time-only volunteer pin for 100 hours. See the Hospital Program Guide or ask the Department Hospital Chairman for more information.

#### Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition 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:

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

For more information about being a volunteer, how to handle a Department Hospital Fund and other topics about this Program, download the Hospital Program Guide and VAVS Guide in MALTA Member Resources.

#### Valentines for Veterans

Share the love we have for our veterans and service members this Valentine's Day by sending a store-bought or handmade valentine, hosting a party, recognition event or dinner in their honor. Fellow members, individuals and groups in your community can use their creativity to show compassion for our veterans and service members.

#### Women Veterans Health Care

Women have served our nation for generations and are the fastest growing group within the veteran population. Comprehensive health services are available and tailored to the unique needs of women veterans. Learn about the resources and health care services available and help them receive the benefits and services they deserve.

#### Honors Escort

The Honors Escort Program is an opportunity to honor each veteran in a respectful and open manner and provides an opportunity for a veteran's family and friends, other veterans and medical facility staff to participate in a display of high regard and reverence for the individual at the time of death.

# 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.
- Fundraise 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.

# 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, 2024 to March 31, 2025. Entry form required available on MALTA Member Resources. Winners will be announced and citations presented at the 2025 National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.
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, 2024 to March 31, 2025. Entry form required available in MALTA Member Resources. Winner will be announced and plaque presented at the 2025 National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.
3. Citation to the Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year in each of the 10 Program Divisions. Entry form required available on MALTA Member Resources. Winners will be announced and citation presented at the 2025 National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most creative ways to interact with and to provide happiness to veteran patients.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that were the most creative in ways to interact with and to provide happiness to veteran patients.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Hospital Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Hospital Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Hospital Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Hospital Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of creative ways to interact with and to provide happiness to veteran patients.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 31.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# LEGISLATIVE AMBASSADOR



DEANNA  
"DEEDEE" GUYETTE

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dgullquist@verizon.net

## From the Beginning...

When our uniformed soldiers began fighting for our country hundreds of years ago, they did so without any guarantee of benefits when the fighting was over. It was simply their duty to serve and protect. But as the battle wounds mounted, someone needed to protect the soldiers and ensure that they received the necessary services and support upon their return home from war.

In the late 1800s, veterans trying to help each other began forming local organizations to secure medical and pension benefits. These organizations eventually merged and became the VFW of today, along with the VFW Auxiliary, which are founded on the principles of advocating for our veterans' rights and benefits within our government legislative system.

## Importance of Today's Legislative Program

I consider the Legislative Program to be the root of all other VFW Auxiliary Programs and initiatives. After all, legislative rights are the reason the VFW and Auxiliary were formed. And the VFW Legislative Priority Goals, which are released annually, provide the framework for all VFW work on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. ([www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service](http://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service)). All VFW Auxiliary Programs support and relate to the Priority Goals in one way or another. If we understand the *importance* of the Legislative Program, then our efforts to advocate for our veterans become that much more effective and our voices will be heard!

## It All Starts Locally

While it is imperative that we continue to monitor pending legislation in Congress, we must not forget that local government and laws also impact the quality of life for our veterans. The two go together and support for veterans' rights begins locally. By establishing strong connections with our VFW and elected officials, we are demonstrating our commitment to the legislative process.

- **VFW Post:** It is very *important* to work with our home Post on supporting legislative initiatives. Often both organizations are doing similar projects that could be more effective if they collaborated together. We can share ideas and information about local programs and projects that support the VFW Priority Goals. We can collaborate on letter-writing to lawmakers, assist members with voting and distribute/post information on pending legislation, just to name a few.
- **Local Government:** It is very *important* to reach out to our elected officials and seek opportunities to advocate for our veterans. Knowledge is power. We are the teachers, and our local lawmakers are the students. The more they learn about the VFW Priority Goals and veterans' issues, the stronger our voices become. And by inviting them to VFW- and Auxiliary-sponsored events, it opens the doors to better communication and strengthens our advocacy efforts.

## Advocates in Action

Now that we know the importance of the Legislative Program and educating our local lawmakers, we're ready to put our advocates into action! We need to be able to "speak the language" and navigate the legislative process effectively. Here are some things that will make us better advocates and improve our advocacy efforts:

- Become familiar with the VFW Priority Goals - then share this information with other VFW and Auxiliary members during meetings or in newsletters.
- Know where elected officials stand on veteran issues - then be prepared to draft letters for upcoming legislation.
- Sign up for the VFW Action Corps Weekly - then invite others to sign up.
- Respond to VFW Action Alerts - then spread the word for others to act.
- Get involved with town hall meetings - then encourage others to attend.
- Be sure to vote in all elections - then assist others with the voting process.
- Use the MALTA Member Resources, Legislative - then teach others what is available in MALTA Member Resources.
- DO NOT endorse any candidate on behalf of the VFW Auxiliary - we must remain neutral.
- DO NOT wear any VFW Auxiliary attire when campaigning for a candidate.



## 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 Auxiliary members, can influence lawmakers whose decisions affect veterans and their families every day. Join the chorus of voices that will ring out in legislators' offices this year.

Study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals. A copy can be found in MALTA Member Resources.

The Priority Goals reflect the resolutions passed by the VFW to strengthen and ensure an adequate VA system for millions of current and future veterans.

They call for much-needed attention to crises such as veteran homelessness and suicide. They request fully funding research on traumatic brain injuries, reducing the claims backlog, fighting veteran unemployment and improving timely transition assistance for veterans after leaving military service. The goals are grouped under six areas of concern:

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

These goals are released in January of each year by the VFW. Be sure you check the VFW website or MALTA Member Resources for the current Priority Goals.

### VFW Action Corps Weekly

It's free and it's full of news about what's happening on Capitol Hill, with veteran and service member issues and with our national security. Subscribe at the National website at [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) by selecting "What We Do" then clicking on "Legislative."

Contact your legislators: find out who's who. To identify your congressional representatives, visit the VFW website at [votervoice.net/VFW/register](http://votervoice.net/VFW/register).

### Step by Step—A Bill

To follow the progress of a bill through the stages of the legislative process, visit [congress.gov](http://congress.gov), where you may find a specific bill by its number or by a key word or phrase.

### VFW in D.C.

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 Auxiliary members about key legislation under consideration.

By testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW 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. (Find the VFW Legislative Fact Sheet in MALTA Member Resources, Legislative)

To contact the D.C. office:  
Website: [vfw.org/advocacy](http://vfw.org/advocacy)  
Phone: 202-543-2239  
Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

# LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event collaborating with the VFW Post connecting members with local lawmakers.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with most outstanding activity and/or event that collaborated with the VFW Post connecting members with local lawmakers.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2025 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, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Legislative Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of ensuring elected officials are educated on the importance of VFW legislative goals and veterans' rights.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 35.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# MEMBERSHIP AMBASSADOR



**LINDA ROLOFF**  
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## CONFERENCE COACHES



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### Keep Your “Why” Close By

It has been said that in order to know where you are going, you must know where you’ve been. Pretty simple concept, right?

When thinking about Membership, it’s helpful to revisit WHO we are. You will never get someone to join you until you know who you are and what you stand for.

### From Our Roots “Prepare Your Ask”

How many of us have read the Congressional Charter issued to the Veterans of Foreign Wars? It is a good reminder of WHO WE ARE!

The purposes include :

- To preserve and strengthen camaraderie among its members
- To assist worthy comrades
- To perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans
- To maintain true alliance to the government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws
- To foster true patriotism
- To maintain and extend the institutions of American Freedom, and
- Preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

Those are amazing reminders of the mission IF we adhere to that charter. Our VFW Auxiliary Charter closely mirrors that of the VFW, and we are coming off the longest war in American history, so why are we not bursting at the seams with members?

## To Our Branches

It's time to get real...now that we've reacquainted ourselves with our roots, we need to focus on reaching skyward with our branches! For us, that means figuring out the disconnect with the current generation of war veterans and their families...a.k.a. our potential members. As close as I can estimate, that little spark of magic is going to be in meeting them WHERE THEY ARE.

Where the elusive THEY are is online: on their phones and on social media. This generation literally makes life decisions (e.g. choosing their potential life partners... (think I'm cute; swipe right") in 1.4 seconds! Be where they are and do things like they do. If we give you some of the tools, do you think you can do it? YOU CAN!

## What We Must Do

Membership this year will involve changing everything about how we approach people. The veterans/families we are trying to attract will do just about anything to escape a face-to-face conversation with somebody they don't really know or have just met. But if you can "slide into their DMs" (kidding, but good imagery), by getting onto their phone and making it easy for them. When THEY feel like looking at it, YOU'VE GOT'EM!

## Something for Everyone "Get Your Ask In Gear"

Using our tree metaphor, we need to step into the gap between the branches.

## Make a list with two Columns:

**Column A** = Family you KNOW will qualify  
For as many as possible in column A, commit to gifting a membership to them for their birthday or to celebrate a holiday.

**Column B** = Family who MAY qualify  
This is your opportunity to reach out and reconnect with family who MAY qualify for membership, but you're unsure.

Can you even imagine? If every one of us did this method with ONE family member...We'd DOUBLE our Membership overnight! YOU are the key to success!

## At the Speed of Light "Don't Be Dead On Your Ask"

Ready to take this thing to the next level? Our Membership Team (the National Conference Coaches, National staff and myself) are providing a "new" electronic pathway to recruiting and membership.

We have created a QR code (see below) which is a link to access information that you can provide to potential members. (No more hard copies of stuff that folks can just toss as soon as they are out of sight.) This will happen phone to phone...a method that is familiar to and preferred by a tech savvy generation. The entire interaction can be quick and painless; AND it shows us to be modern and adaptable.

Behind this QR code will be things like the Fact Sheet, Membership Application, What We Do, Auxiliary Locator and anything else we might need in our "Recruiting Tool Kit".

To use military terms, we are in a target rich environment; so why aren't we hitting anything? If we embrace new techniques, we WILL be able to turn the membership tide and hopefully turn it into a tidal wave!

## Extending Service to Our Veterans What You Can Expect From Us

This might seem a bit unusual right here, but it's important that you know how much we appreciate every single member who recruits another person to join us in our mission to serve veterans and their families. That's why you should know what you can expect from us to support you in your efforts. The Conference Coaches and I are committed to open communication with the Department Membership Chairperson(s), Department Presidents and each other. We will employ Zoom meetings to meet electronically face-to-face for the purpose of encouragement, skills and team building and coaching.

We are here for our veterans and their families, right? YOUR Membership Team is here for you and that's a promise!

## Our Family Tree

Like a mighty Redwood, our goal is to be "Sempre-Virens" Always Living. A truly achievable goal if we model our organization after this indomitable giant. We MUST root ourselves firmly in our history, traditions and legacy of service. We MUST branch out and include EVERY one of our qualifying family members in our mission. And we MUST provide our new branches and young leaves with all of the necessary support to thrive indefinitely like the mighty Redwood. We are constantly reaching skyward. So don't "leaf" any qualifying member behind.





# 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.

### **Ask 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.

### **Important tools:**

- Fact Sheet, available for free from National Headquarters.
- Business card with contact information. (Order yours from the VFW Store, [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).)
- MALTA Member Resources.
- QR Code - See Page 38.

### **Follow Up!**

Most likely, 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.

### **Ask Them to Participate**

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 Auxiliary.

### **Ways to Encourage Participation**

- Monthly sign-up sheet for regular events.
- Emails and 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 best communicates, 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.

### **Have a Plan**

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

- Contacting current members.
- Outreach 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:
  - Make it as easy as possible for members to renew their dues. They can renew online in MALTA!
  - Plan recruiting events in your community each year. This can be done by just the Auxiliary or in conjunction with your VFW Post.

# 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. Recruiter pin to each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary from July 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. Department Treasurer must enter membership in MALTA with credit given to the recruiter by June 10, 2025. Recruiter pin will be mailed directly to the member from National Headquarters.
2. National Membership Achievement Award to each VFW and VFW Auxiliary member who recruits 20 new and/or rejoined members to the VFW Auxiliary from July 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. Department Treasurer must enter membership in MALTA with credit given to the recruiter by June 10, 2025. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. If winner is not in attendance, award to be mailed directly to winner from National Headquarters after National Convention.
3. Top Recruiter award to the one recruiter in each of the 4 conferences who recruited the most new and/or rejoined members in their conference. VFW Recruiters and VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. If winner is not in attendance, award to be mailed directly to winner from National Headquarters after National Convention.
4. VFW Auxiliary Recruiter Drawing for each VFW Auxiliary National Membership Achievement Award winner. Winners will be entered into a drawing to receive one \$500 Visa gift card. VFW Recruiters and VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award. Winner will be announced and award presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. If winner is not in attendance, award to be mailed directly to winner from National Headquarters after National Convention.

Recruiter Award Forms are no longer needed for VFW Auxiliary members. Reports are compiled by VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters from information entered in MALTA.

VFW members who recruit new and/or rejoined VFW Auxiliary members will need to fill out the required VFW members only form that is available in MALTA Member Resources. Completed form must be received at VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters and Department Treasurer must enter membership in MALTA by June 10, 2025.

## **Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. \$50 to each Auxiliary that reaches 100% Plus in Membership by June 30, 2025\*.
2. VFW Auxiliary Drawing. Each VFW Auxiliary that reaches 101% Plus by June 30, 2025\* will be entered into a one-time drawing to receive \$500.

## **Awards for Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Membership Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding training and promotion of the Membership Program.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 42.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

## **Awards for Departments**

1. Bronze Department Award #1: \$200 to each Department that reaches 95% Plus in Membership by November 30, 2024\*.
2. Silver Department Award #2: \$250 to each Department that reaches 98% Plus in Membership by March 31, 2025\*.
3. Gold Department Award #3: \$300 to each Department that reaches 100% Plus in Membership by June 30, 2025\*.
4. Platinum Department Award #4: \$400 to each Department that reaches 101% Plus in Membership by June 30, 2025\*.

Departments that receive the Platinum Department Award #4: \$400 ACH will still receive Gold Department Award #3: \$300 for a combined total of \$700.

### **5. Conference vs. Conference**

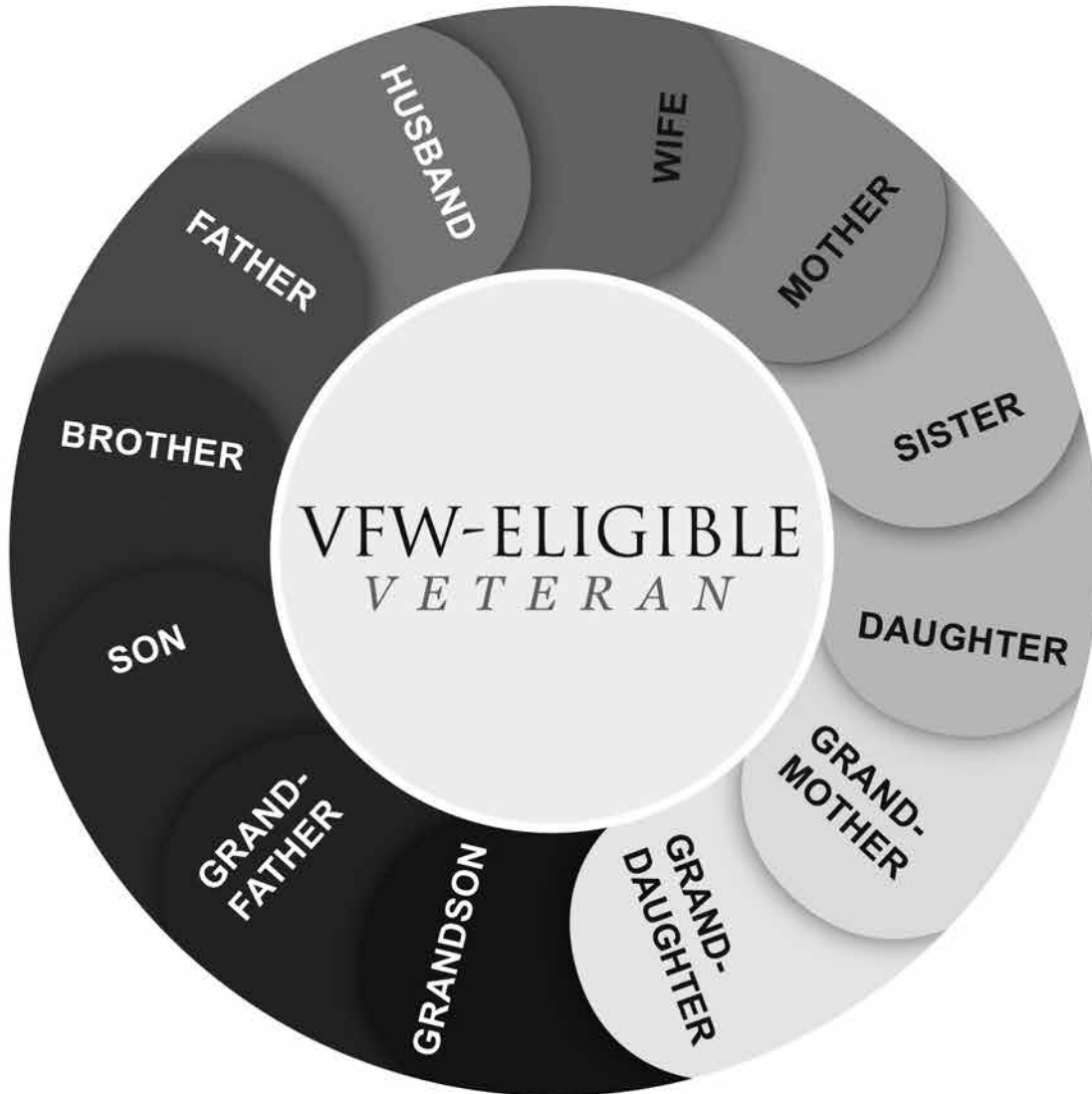
- a. \$50 to each Department within the Conference with the highest total percentage by January 31, 2025\*.
- b. \$50 to each Department within the Conference with the highest total percentage by June 30, 2025\*.

## **Award for Conference Coaches**

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

*\*Based on the June 30, 2024 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

An incomplete application could delay your membership start date.

**Applicant completes sections A, B, C or D and F. Auxiliaries/Departments complete section E.**

**A** Recruited/Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_ Recruiter Member ID \_\_\_\_\_  
 Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID (If already a member) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Annual Membership  Rejoin  
 Life Membership  Transfer  
 Member at Large in Department of \_\_\_\_\_  Member at Large - VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters  
*(If not a transfer, skip to B.)*  
 **LIFE MEMBER TRANSFER** Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_  
 **ANNUAL TRANSFER**  Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_  Paying  Nonpaying  
 **ANNUAL TRANSFER CONVERTING TO LIFE** (Fill out Life Membership information below.) Previous Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_

**B** THESE FIELDS REQUIRED  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  Female  Male  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**C**  **POST-AFFILIATED** (\*Must be a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)  
 Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ to Eligible Veteran\* \_\_\_\_\_ VFW Membership ID \_\_\_\_\_

**D** THESE FIELDS REQUIRED  
 **NON-AFFILIATED** (\*Veteran is not a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)  
 Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ to Eligible Veteran\* \_\_\_\_\_ VFW Post (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of campaign ribbons or medals: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**E** Investigating Committee Signatures  
 1  \_\_\_\_\_ 2  \_\_\_\_\_ 3  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Per Section 102 of the National Bylaws.  Rejected  Accepted Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_ Obligated Date \_\_\_\_\_

**F 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 further state that I believe in God. 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.)

**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

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP ONLY**  Check here if this is a gift.  
Credit cards may NOT be used for initial payment of Annual Dues.  
 Cash  Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership Fee  
 Name on credit card \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing address for card \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this, I agree to the stated charges for a Life Membership fee.

Revised February 2024

# SCHOLARSHIPS AMBASSADOR



DINA HUDSON

32 Montana Road  
Fairmont, WV 26554  
304-657-0557  
scholarshipvfw2425@aol.com

As a mother of two adult children, wife of a Marine Corps veteran and high school English teacher for 30 years, I can appreciate how important our scholarship opportunities are for students and families.

With the soaring cost of higher education and technical schools, the VFW Auxiliary is proud to offer scholarship opportunities for Auxiliary members, their immediate families and our youth. Education opens doors and creates opportunities. We are investing in our children by investing in their future to assure a brighter tomorrow for us all.

## Continuing Education Scholarship

This scholarship is available to Auxiliary members, their spouses and children. This is the only scholarship limited by membership.

The Continuing Education Scholarship is \$1,250 and is awarded to one winner in each of the four Conferences. This scholarship will be paid directly to the American college or vocational/technical school of the awardee's choice. See page 46 for more details.

What can you do to help? Spread the word! Put this information on your Post and Auxiliary websites, social media, and newsletters. Often, we forget to get this information to colleges. No one will fill out a scholarship application faster than a college student trying to finish a degree. Visit your local colleges, universities, community colleges and trade schools.

Most will have a designated person who will distribute these applications to their students. Brochures and applications are available at [vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/continuing-education/](http://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/continuing-education/) and in MALTA under Member Resources. We want to flood our national staff with applications!

## Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest

The VFW Auxiliary is proud to offer this two-dimensional art contest to all patriotic young artists in grades 9-12. The Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest now offers 19 National scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$15,000. Find more details on page 46.

## 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art is the Auxiliary's newest contest in the Scholarships Program. We are proud to offer this contest to all patriotic young artists in grades 9-12, offering four National scholarships: \$2,500 for first place, \$1,500 for second place, \$1,000 for third place and \$500 for fourth place paid to the college of winner's choice. Find more details on page 46.

Again, what can you do to help? Spread the word! Put this information on your Post and Auxiliary websites, social media and newsletters. Send information to schools, churches, and other youth groups. Where you find kids, you will find participants. Just putting the information out to schools is not enough. Teachers are busy with their prescribed curriculum and do not always have time to dedicate to contests, so here's an idea! Host an art day at your Post and invite your local youth groups. This will take some planning, but what a wonderful, wholesome day of fun and learning you could provide. The earlier we get our youth involved, the better we pave the way for future membership.

### **Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest Escrow Fund**

The Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest Escrow Fund needs your help to reward more of our young patriotic artists at the National level. Consider holding a fundraiser designated for Patriotic Art with your Post and Auxiliary.

### **VFW's Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy**

Students from public, parochial, online and home study programs compete through written and oral essays in the VFW's Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy \scholarship contest. The Patriot's Pen is a short, written essay for scholars in grades 6-8. The Voice of Democracy is a written essay and a vocal recording of that essay for scholars in grades 9-12. Find more details on page 47. Be sure to celebrate and recognize all students, teachers, parents and members who participate in and promote these scholarships. Invite your local media to attend and cover award ceremonies. The VFW store offers certificates for awards. Shop the VFW Store online at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).

# SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

## Student Participation • Recipient Recognition • Community Awareness • Increasing the Fund

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 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](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org)  
\$1,250 will be awarded to an applicant in each of the four Conferences. Applications are available from Department Scholarships Chairmen or in MALTA Member Resources.

### Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest AND 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

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 previous Patriotic Art Contests are ineligible. Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. One Department winner will be forwarded to Auxiliary National Headquarters. Please see the student brochure in MALTA Member Resources for more details on requirements and contest rules.

### 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

### National Scholarships: Young American Creative Patriotic Art

First Place – \$15,000

Second Place – \$7,500

Third Place – \$3,500

Fourth and Fifth Place – \$1,500

Sixth and Seventh Place – \$1,000

Eighth through Nineteenth Place – \$500

### National Scholarships: 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art

First place - \$2,500

Second place - \$1,500

Third place - \$1,000

Fourth place - \$500

Scholarships are paid directly to the American college, vocational, technical or trade school of the winners' choice. Please promote this contest in your area. We have talented and creative artists waiting to be discovered.

Please note that the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest is an additional scholarship and separate from the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest. See the official rules for art forms that are accepted for this contest.

## Recognition Is Key

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

Ways to Recognize Winners:

- Present a certificate and/or gift.
- Ask the winner to give a speech or lead the Pledge of Allegiance at an Auxiliary event.
- Host an awards ceremony.
- Present awards at a school assembly.
- Contact local media to feature winners in the news.
- Sample press releases available online in MALTA Member Resources.
- Invite winners to participate in a Conference.
- Don't forget to recognize the parents and teachers!

To Donate to the Patriotic Art Escrow Fund

Log in to MALTA. Click on "Make a Gift."

Select Patriotic Art

or

Mail checks earmarked Patriotic Art to:

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

Attn: Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund

406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor Kansas City, MO 64111

## 2024-2025 VFW Voice of Democracy Audio-Essay Contest

Theme: Is America today, our forefather's Vision?

Open to students in grades 9-12 by the October 31 deadline who are 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 intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or older, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or adult education students are ineligible. One Department winner will be forwarded to VFW National Headquarters.

## Deadlines:

**Entries to VFW Post – Midnight, October 31**

**Post Judging Complete – November 15**

**Department Judging Complete – January 10**

**Department Winner to VFW National Headquarters – January 15**

## National Awards:

First Place – \$35,000 scholarship

Second Place – \$21,000 scholarship

Third Place – \$15,000 scholarship

Fourth through 36th Place – \$7,000 to \$1,500 scholarship

37th - 53rd Place – \$1,000 scholarship

## 2024-2025 VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest

Theme: My Voice in America's Democracy?

Open to students in grades 6-8, by the October 31 deadline who are enrolled in 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 intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National contest are excluded from the contest.) One Department winner will be forwarded to VFW National Headquarters.

## Deadlines:

**Entries to VFW Post – Midnight, October 31**

**Post Judging Complete – November 15**

**Department Judging Complete – January 10**

**Department Winner to VFW National Headquarters – January 15**

## National Awards:

First Place – \$5,000

Second Place – \$4,000

Third Place – \$3,500

Fourth through 53rd Place – \$2,750 to \$500

## Scholarship and Contest Resources

Complete list of all contest rules can be found in the following resources:

- VFW website:  
[vfw.org/community/youth-and-education](http://vfw.org/community/youth-and-education)
- MALTA Member Resources
- VFW Auxiliary National website:  
[vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships](http://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships)
- Promotions from National Ambassador
- VFW Store: [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org) or 1-833-VFW-VETS

## Get The Word Out!

The first step is to identify likely individuals with whom you can discuss scholarship opportunities. The following are a few suggestions of groups that might be interested in what you have to say:

- Schools and JROTC Units
- Faith-based youth groups
- Youth-focused organizations
- Home-school associations
- Parent-teacher associations
- Youth sports teams
- Financial aid offices
- Student veteran center
- Scouts
- Young Marines

# SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about the scholarship opportunities in the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community about scholarship opportunities in the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Scholarships Chairman by March 31, 2025 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, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Scholarships Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of scholarship opportunities in the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 46.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT AMBASSADOR



EVAN SMILEY

700 Milan Road  
Payneville, KY 40157  
(270) 945-9016  
smileyvfw@gmail.com

You have probably heard that a shark must keep moving forward in order to survive. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary is no different. This year I am issuing a challenge to each of our members to be innovative thinkers, be creative and always **Keep Moving Forward!**

This year, ***From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans***, will be our theme as we advance to another year of service to our veterans, service members and their families. Veterans & Family Support is the core of everything that our organization stands for. Almost anything and everything that our membership does can fall under this Program.

Our veterans have sacrificed so much for us, and it's our time to do our part to give back to them. This year, our main focal points will be:

- National Veterans Service Suicide Prevention
- Childcare for active-duty service members
- Veterans and Military Support Programs

## **Veterans and Military Support Programs and National Veterans Service**

It is our duty to ensure that our veterans and their family members are aware of the aid available to them in times of need, such as financial assistance with mortgage or rent payments, vehicle expenses, utilities, food or clothing. Now more than ever, we need to guide our veterans and their family members in their efforts to obtain their VA benefits by pairing them with our VFW Accredited service officers. As Auxiliary members, it's important that we educate ourselves about Veterans benefits as well. Auxiliaries are encouraged to meet with VFW accredited service officers to get a better understanding of how they can help, or perhaps even invite one to an Auxiliary meeting.

As Auxiliary members, we can help provide the comforts of home when we adopt units and send care packages to our deployed troops. While it's important to remember those serving far away, it is equally important to remember them and their families prior to and post deployment. The VFW has financial grants that are available to help with events held by our Auxiliaries and Posts to support and recognize our troops.

For more information, visit the VFW website at: [vfw.org/assistance](http://vfw.org/assistance).

## **Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness**

Many veterans returning home do so with heavy hearts and minds. It's crucial that we, as an organization, take a stand against the stigma of mental health. Often things we don't think could ever be hurtful cut the deepest. Be mindful of the characteristics associated with thoughts of suicide and be watchful of our veterans' mental health. One veteran lost to suicide, is one veteran too many!

## **Child Care for Active-Duty Service Members**

As we serve diligently toward our mission of serving veterans, we often overlook those the veterans support themselves - their children. A special focus on this year's Veterans & Family Support Program is giving back to these families. Maybe it's babysitting for a few hours each week, providing diapers for the babies and toddlers or maybe just being emotional support for the spouse left behind to take care of the family. By being a confidant for service member's family, our members are providing that much more peace for our active-duty military.

So, now begs the question, how will **YOU keep moving forward** this year for the Veterans & Family Support Program?



# VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

## **VFW National Veterans Service • 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)**

The VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) helps veterans, service members and their families obtain the benefits they deserve – at no cost.

NVS provides a nationwide network of nearly 300 VFW Service Officers who help veterans navigate the Veterans Affairs system. Those VFW Service Officers recover more than \$1 billion annually in VA benefits for veterans and their dependents.

These highly skilled professionals assist all veterans, whether they are VFW members or not, in filing claims for:

- Disability compensation.
- Rehabilitation and educational programs.
- Pension and death benefits.
- Employment and training programs.

NVS also works to ensure veterans receive quality, timely and accessible VA health care, including:

- Hospital care.
- Outpatient care.
- Specialized health care for female veterans.
- Alcohol and drug dependency treatment.
- Medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service, exposure to Agent Orange, radiation or other environmental hazards.

Donations to NVS can be made online or by mail. Donate online at [vfw.org/ways-to-help](http://vfw.org/ways-to-help), select National Veterans Service, click "Contribute."

Donate by mail by sending funds to the VFW earmarked for NVS. Mail check to:

VFW National Headquarters  
Attn: NVS  
406 W. 34th Street, 11th Floor  
Kansas City, MO 64111

### **VFW Veterans & Military Support Program**

Veterans & Military Support contains programs initiated by the VFW: Military Assistance Program (MAP), Unmet Needs and the VFW "Sport Clips® Help A Hero Scholarship." These programs serve active-duty and recently discharged military.

Donations to Veterans & Military Support can be made online or by mail.

Donate online at [vfw.org/ways-to-help](http://vfw.org/ways-to-help), select Veterans & Military Support, click "Contribute." Donate by mail by sending funds to the VFW earmarked for Veterans & Military Support. Mail check to:

VFW National Headquarters  
Attn: Veterans & Military Support  
406 W. 34th Street, 9th Floor  
Kansas City, MO 64111

### **Military Assistance Program (MAP) Funds** **Ways to Connect with Troops**

MAP helps VFW and Auxiliary members give more of their local military units. It helps forge and nurture bonds with those units by providing financial assistance for Posts, Districts and Departments to sponsor morale-boosting send-offs, homecomings and casual get-togethers. Post and Auxiliaries participating in Adopt-a-Unit and Family Readiness Group events can also receive assistance. MAP keeps care packages circulating by covering postage costs.

For guidelines to apply for MAP funds, contact the VFW Veterans & Military Support office at 816-756-3390.

## Unmet Needs Can Help in a Crisis

A soldier is serving on foreign soil, but the rent is due back home. A soldier is driving a tank on alert for IEDs, and the family car needs a new radiator the family cannot afford. These are the situations Unmet Needs can address.

Grants of up to \$1,500 payable to a creditor can bridge the gap to make a mortgage or rent payment or to fund home and auto repairs, insurance, utility costs, food and clothing. To learn more, visit [vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants](http://vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants).

## VFW “Sport Clips® Help A Hero Scholarship” Program

The VFW and Sport Clips are giving the gift of scholarships to our nation’s heroes as a way of thanking them for their dedicated service to our nation. The VFW “Sport Clips® Help A Hero Scholarship” awards scholarships of up to \$5,000 to qualifying veterans and service members to help them complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. To learn more, visit [vfw.org/student-veterans-support](http://vfw.org/student-veterans-support).

## Veteran & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness

Make a difference in the life of a veteran or service member in crisis by educating yourself and others about the warning signs of suicide.

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:

- Call 1-800-MyVA411 to access all VA departments,
- Call 988 and Press 1,
- Chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net), or
- Send a text message to 838255.

Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hearing impaired individuals is available. Tip: Add the Veterans Crisis Line number as a contact in your cell phone for easy referral.

Purchase the Auxiliary Suicide Awareness Prevention Pin from the VFW Store. When someone asks you about your pin, tell them that the VFW Auxiliary is concerned about the rates of suicides among veterans and military service members; we want everyone to be aware of the unique stress they face.

## Mental Wellness Support and Resources

More than 16 veterans commit suicide each day, and the VFW and VFW Auxiliary are committed to helping change the conversation and stigma surrounding mental health in the United States.

Change the stigma, improve research, support your community and explore treatment options at the resources below:

- **VFW Mental Wellness Campaign**  
[vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness](http://vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness)
- **The Campaign to Change Direction**  
[changedirection.org](http://changedirection.org)
- **Give An Hour**  
[giveanhour.org](http://giveanhour.org)
- **Patients Like Me**  
[patientslikeme.com/join/vfw](http://patientslikeme.com/join/vfw)
- **One Mind**  
[onemind.org](http://onemind.org)
- **The Elizabeth Dole Foundation**  
[elizabethdolefoundation.org](http://elizabethdolefoundation.org)
- **Help Heal Veterans (Therapeutic Craft Kits)**  
[healvets.org](http://healvets.org)
- **Veterans Voices Writing Project**  
[veteransvoices.org](http://veteransvoices.org)

## Other Resource

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

[www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/index.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/index.asp)

# VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to increase awareness of suicide and mental health for veterans, military and their families.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to increase awareness of suicide and mental health for veterans, military and their families.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of awareness of suicide and mental health for veterans, military and their families.
2. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding activity and/or event to increase the support of veterans, active-duty service members and their families.
3. 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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 51.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

# YOUTH ACTIVITIES AMBASSADOR



## DOMINIQUE GARCIA

8308 Waverly Drive NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
505-974-0018  
dcgarcia.1121@gmail.com

As a member who has been involved with the Auxiliary since I was a 5-year-old Junior Girl, I feel that being involved at a young age not only helps grow our membership, but teaches children what it means to be involved, patriotic and an American. It also teaches youth who our men and women of strength are.

Our children are the future leaders of this organization; if we get them involved now it won't be as hard to get them to join when they are 16 years old. So how do we get them involved and teach them about our great organization?

### **Youth Reading to our Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth:**

Reading is a big part of growing up and learning. Many students have nightly reading starting at a young age in school. Sometimes just talking to the students about patriotism, America and our country can be dull. But taking the students on a journey in a book might capture their attention more and open their minds up. Let the little ones see what Frances Scott Key saw as he wrote the "Star-Spangled Banner," or how brave George Washington looked on this horse as our first president.

So how do we do that? If you go onto MALTA Member Resources, under Youth Activities we have the Patriotism through Literacy list. It is even divided up by grade levels. Pick some books from there.

Visit your local library and see if they are in stock; if not maybe see if you can donate some books off the list or even leave the list with them.

These books aren't just for venturing off into another time or reading a good story, they are to educate our students about patriotism, the Flag and our country. These books can also be found in bookstores, online and possibly even as e-books.

Through books, not only are children learning about our country and patriotism but creating a love for reading, understanding history and learning how to read and write.

- Host a day of reading. Veterans can come in and read to the children or the children can read to them. Choose a book from the Patriotism through Literacy list.
- When visiting a VA or nursing home see if the staff can set up a reading area for the children to read to the veterans or for the veterans to read to them.
- Create a read-a-thon, use R.A.P. Cards as the point system.

September 6, 2024 is National Read a Book Day. If possible, celebrate that day by hosting veterans and children at your post. Another big reading day in the classroom is Dr. Seuss Day happening on March 2, 2025. Check with your schools if veterans can go into the classroom so the students can read to them and vice versa.

### **Youth Groups:**

Educating our youth not only about our organization, but about America, patriotism, our veterans and volunteering. In the Youth Activities Program, we have something for every age group. There are many youth groups within our schools and community that we can support, sponsor and work with. These may include the following:

- The Scouts
- Church Youth Groups
- Boys & Girls Club
- School Sponsored Groups
- JROTC

High school students can use volunteer hours for college applications; some colleges require letters of recommendation.

How do we get them involved?

- Placing Flags on graves
- Helping serve meals at an event
- Invite them to participate in a "Buddy"® Poppy drive
- Create birthday cards for the 100th anniversary of the National Home

If children can help at an event, involve and engage them. Always remember to act responsibly and respectfully around youth. They are looking up to you and learning from you.

After they have helped, recognize them for a job well done and their accomplishments. We have fillable Patriotic Youth Awards behind the Member Resources in MALTA.

### **Illustrating America:**

We all know the look in a child's eyes when their "masterpiece" is fridge-worthy. Learn more about Illustrating America on Page 56-57.

### **R. A. P. Cards (Random Act of Patriotism)**

Children like to be told they are doing a good job. Praising a child can go a long way and it helps boost their confidence. When a child shows Random Acts of Patriotism, recognize them by giving them a card and explain to them why they are receiving it.

Create a reward system for the cards, each card is worth so many points. The points can help them win books, a soda, a prize, candy and movie tickets.

The Card template is located in MALTA Member Resources, Youth Activities.



# YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

## Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations • Patriotic Youth Award 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 Auxiliary Youth Activities Program, an 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 Auxiliary can bring new membership to your Auxiliary. When youth and the whole family are included, members feel more invested in your Auxiliary. Sponsorship of a youth group can create a bright future for your 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 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 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 by the March 31 deadline 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 Auxiliary National Headquarters.

There are National awards for first, second and third place in each grade division. The first, second and third place entry in each grade division will be displayed at National Convention. Please see the student brochure and entry form in MALTA Member Resources or on the VFW Auxiliary website for more details on requirements and contest rules.

Deadlines:

Entries received by:

Local Auxiliary – March 31

Department – April 15

National Headquarters – May 5

#### Contest Rules:

- Entry must be completed during the current school year.
- Entry must be two dimensional.
- Entry must be on canvas or paper.
- Submit canvas entries on a stretcher frame or canvas board.
- Reinforce the back with heavy paper.
- Do not frame art with wood, metal, plastic or glass.
- Mats, including mounted and floating mats, may be used.
- Entries may not be smaller than 8" x 10" and not larger than 18" x 24", **INCLUDING mat.**
- Watercolor, pencil, pastel, charcoal, tempera, crayon, acrylic, pen, ink, oil, glitter, marker 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.
- Complete contest entry form and submit with art entry.
- Parent or guardian signature required on contest entry form.
- **Coloring sheets, digital art and photography and are NOT accepted.**

#### Involve Youth in ALL Auxiliary Programs

Youth play such an important role in our future. Encourage involvement from an early age in all 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 Auxiliary efforts to:

- Respect and take pride in our country.
- Serve hospitalized veterans.
- Elect leaders who appreciate our military.
- Pass legislation that secures benefits for our veterans. And many other worthy efforts!

#### Project Examples

- Visiting and volunteering in VA and non-VA facilities. Raising funds for a community veterans memorial. Marching in patriotic holiday parades.
- Volunteering to help veterans and 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 a card- and letter-writing campaign in local schools 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.

#### Youth Group Examples for VFW Auxiliary Sponsorship

- Youth sports teams
- Church youth groups
- After-school programs
- Youth-focused organizations
- School clubs
- Home-school associations
- Youth community service groups
- Nonprofit organization youth advisory councils
- Service learning and civic engagement departments in high schools and colleges

#### 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 Twitter, posting on Facebook, instantly sending pictures on Instagram and subscribing to YouTube channels. If you don't know what any of this is – LEARN.

#### Popular Social Media Networks.

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | YouTube  
Pinterest | Instagram | Snapchat  
Get online and see what's new!

Visit MALTA Member Resources for publicity tips, social media guidelines and other helpful information.

# YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department Youth Activities Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Youth Activities Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

## Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Youth Activities Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of implementing youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.
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 Program goals listed at the top of Page 56.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.



**2024-2025**

# YEAR-END REPORTS

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Americanism 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

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

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

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted, participated, recognized any patriotic day and/or branch of service birthdays. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Auxiliaries that distributed and/or presented American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of American Flags and/or POW/MIA Flags distributed and/or presented by Auxiliaries. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificate 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 Auxiliary Outreach 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries as a group that partnered with another organization not affiliated with the VFW or VFW Auxiliary. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of organizations that Auxiliaries partnered with during the year. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of combined member and/or Auxiliary hours volunteered with another organization not affiliated with the VFW or VFW Auxiliary. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet

## “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

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

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

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

### VFW “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy

1. Number of Auxiliaries that held a VFW “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy drive with or without their VFW Post. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of VFW “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppies that were distributed. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Auxiliaries that participated in the VFW “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy Display Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

### VFW National Home

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the VFW National Home. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the VFW National Home Helpline. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Auxiliaries that purchased at least one VFW National Home Life Membership in the current Program Year. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of Auxiliaries that purchased at least one VFW National Home Tribute Brick in the current Program Year. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Historian & Media Relations 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries that communicated quarterly with each of their members via email, printed mail, text or phone call.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Auxiliaries that have a Facebook page with or without the VFW Post.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of Auxiliaries that have a website with or without the VFW Post.

\_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Hospital 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliary members that volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. (Auxiliary member to be counted one time only per year.) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Total number of hours that Auxiliary members volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. \_\_\_\_\_

3. 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. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted, participated, hosted or co-hosted any activity with or without their VFW Post. \_\_\_\_\_

5. 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 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

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

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

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted, participated, hosted or co-hosted with their VFW Post activities regarding the VFW Priority Goals.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Auxiliary members who contacted their legislators on veterans' issues by any means (example: emails, letters, postcards, phone calls, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of Auxiliary members who attended events where they could interact with legislators (example: legislative conferences, town halls, meet-and-greets, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Scholarships 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

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

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

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Continuing Education Scholarship Contest**

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the National Continuing Education Scholarship Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Auxiliaries that made a monetary donation to the National Continuing Education Scholarship fund. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest**

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of students that submitted art entries to Auxiliaries for judging. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of art entries submitted to the Department from Auxiliaries for judging. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Auxiliaries that made a monetary donation to the National Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest fund. \_\_\_\_\_

## **3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest**

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of students that submitted art entries to Auxiliaries for judging. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of art entries submitted to the Department from Auxiliaries for judging. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Auxiliaries that made a monetary donation to the National 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest fund. \_\_\_\_\_



## VFW Scholarships

1. Number of Auxiliaries that assisted their VFW Post in promoting or conducting the VFW National Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Auxiliaries that assisted their VFW Post in promoting or conducting the VFW National Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Contest. \_\_\_\_\_

## Recognition

1. Number of Auxiliaries that hosted or co-hosted with their VFW Post an awards ceremony to recognize awardees and participants in any/all contests. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by Auxiliaries, Districts and Department in any/all contests. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

# VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Veterans & Family Support 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted, participated, hosted or co-hosted with their VFW Post activities for any VFW Program. (Examples: Disaster Relief, Military Assistance Program (MAP), National Veterans Service (NVS), Unmet Needs, Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health awareness.) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of Auxiliaries that provided direct aid to veterans, service members and/or their families (Examples: meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Approximate number of veterans, service members and/or their families assisted. \_\_\_\_\_
4. 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 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

## Youth Groups

1. Number of youth groups that Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of youth that Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations awarded. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Auxiliaries that participated in Patriotism through Literacy. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Number of books donated in participation of Patriotism through Literacy. \_\_\_\_\_

## Illustrating America Art Contest

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the Illustrating America art contest. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of students that submitted art entries to Auxiliaries for judging. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of art entries submitted to the Department. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Auxiliaries that hosted an awards ceremony to recognize awardees and participants in this contest. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by Auxiliaries, Districts and Department. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_





