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Arizona VFW Auxiliary Newsletter

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President Bambi Johnson's Message

WOW! January was such an exciting month!

We started off running with our Winter Conference which not only held our Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen students, but we also were host to our National President Carla Martinez! **AND the Department of Arizona is at 100% as of January 22nd!**

What an awesome job by all the Auxiliaries to keep their members current and grow their membership. A hearty "Well done!" to all, and especially our wonderful Membership Chairman & Department Guard Becky Baldwin. Becky has done a great job by sharing her enthusiasm throughout the state and keeping all of us on track this year.

We started with a great turn out for our Flag & Flowers event at the local cemetery, which President Carla participated in. Our State Commander Bill came with many of our comrades to assist and honor the Veterans interred there. The youth volunteers did a great job of helping setup and poke holes in the stubborn ground for us to get the flags in. I love this program as you

definitely feel emotion when you say the Veteran's name out loud and thank them for their service.

Moving onto the USS Arizona Memorial Gardens for an Aisle of Flags Salute to our National President was next. President Carla was very moved by the honor and greatly enjoyed both the information in the welcome center and was so thrilled with the lights coming on, that she and I went to the Grey Wolf hotel next door and took pictures of the entire site from the higher floors!

During the Winter Conference, we were joined by officers of the US Military who helped conduct a very special Welcome Home and Pinning for not only our Vietnam Veterans, but their family members who also served their time while their loved ones fought for the ideal of our country. There were smiles as well as tears from those who collected their pins for a family member who is no longer with us. It was an honor to participate in such an emotionally charged salute to all of them.

Our Department Guard Becky Baldwin brought us into a new view of communication with an interactive presentation that was exciting, informative, and FUN! We all view things through our own experiences and the presentation helped us see that and how we can better open ourselves to other people's viewpoints for better communication. Hopefully she can do a more in-depth presentation in the future.

As always, the climax of our Winter Conference is the Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen Banquet. It did not disappoint! The students were a great example of how we can be assured that our country will be in good hands in the next generation. The Patriot Pen winner was wonderful, and the Voice of Democracy winner took our breath away! We wish them both the best at National!

With just two months left to complete your programs for the year, I hope that anyone who needs assistance with getting their Special Project Reports or PARs in will reach out to either their District President, a Department Chairman or Department Officer. We are all in this mission together!





The District Corner and flyers are located on the webpage www.vfwauxaz.org under news/events. Be sure to check out all that is happening around the Department.

News

***Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant** is open from Oct 1 thru June 1, 2024. The form is available on the Department webpage - www.vfwauxaz.org under programs/veterans and family support or resources/forms.



***Department MIT's** will be held on 2/3 at Post 6271 in Benson and 3/2 at Post 9399 in Apache Junction. Both trainings will be from 9-3 pm. The flyers are on the Department webpage - www.vfwauxaz.org under

news/events.

***Department President and Commander's Homecoming** will be a joint event on April 6th at Post 9399 in Apache Junction. Event begins at 5 pm and cost is \$25. Click [here](#) to see the flyer.

***Department Convention** is May 29th - June 2nd at Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson.

*Irene Nowacki is running for **Department Guard** at the 2024 Department convention. Click [here](#) to read her brochure.

*Department of Arkansas Kim Davis is a candidate for **National Guard** at the 2024 National Convention in Ky. Click [here](#) to read her letter and brochure.

*National President Carla, Department President Bambi, Department Commander Bill and Kim Harney's **shirts** are available to order. Click [here](#) for the order forms.

* **Department Sr. Vice** Lynn Pierre's order form for her shirt and pin is now available. They need to be ordered by April to receive at Department Convention. The Department is trying something new this year - pins must be ordered ahead of time. This way we know exactly how many to order and hopefully this will save money. Click [here](#) for the form and remember to get your order placed so you don't miss out!



National Council District #15 Member Chrissy Harlan

Happy New Year everyone! I pray that 2024 will bring our organization much success by helping Veterans, Youth and our Communities.

January was a busy month for me. I attended the Winter Conference in Arizona not as an official representative but as a member. Being recognized as the spouse of a Vietnam Veteran was more moving than I expected. I enjoyed the interactive training on communication led by Becky Baldwin and wished it could have been longer. The other presentations at the conference were informative and the casitas for Veterans seems like a great idea.

Meeting the young people that participated in the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen is always an awesome experience. I was honored to be seated with some of the parents of the students. I believe both of the Department of Arizona winning entries were excellent and should do well in the national competition.

I was excited to attend the Department of New Mexico Mid-Winter Conference in Las Cruces. I was able to attend their Audit, Budget Meeting and Officers Meeting on Friday then their Conference and Council Meeting on Saturday followed by their Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teachers Awards Saturday night.

Unfortunately, the Department President had a small stroke on Saturday morning, but the Sr. Vice President Renee King picked up the ball and ran a great meeting. During their conference there was also a presentation regarding tiny homes for veterans called Forget Me Not Veteran's Park. The Program Presentations done by the Auxiliary Department Chairman were all outstanding. I especially enjoyed the interactive Scholarships presentation.

It was a pleasure meeting the students that participated in Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen as well as the Teachers that were being honored. The Patriots Pen essay was especially moving, and both students will do well at the National level.

The National Mid-Year Conference is approaching quickly. If you have not reviewed the information on the meeting, please do so now. For Arizona members you can find the information at vfwauxaz.org. For New Mexico members please contact your Department President Beth Miller or Department Secretary Jeanette Garcia. Please let me know how you would like me to vote on any of the issues on the agenda. Please email me at vfwkidsrus@gmail.com.

Thank you everyone for the hospitality I have received at both conference meetings, and I look forward to seeing you again soon.

**Western Conference Membership Director
Valerie Wrinkle**



Hello to all my Western Conference "True Grit" stars!

February is here, and that means only 5 months until someone walks the Red Carpet at the National Convention to receive the "Golden Malta!" I would love for "True Grit" to be the winner.

Here are our current standings:

- 1st: Southern Conference with 99.14%
- 2nd: Western Conference with 98.82%**
- 3rd: Eastern Conference with 98.55%
- 4th: Big Ten with 98.17%

The Western Conference only has two states with 100% plus so far and that is Arizona with 100.73% and California with 100.12%. Most of us are not too far behind, but I would love to see all of us at 100% or better!

We still have time if we start doubling our efforts right now. Check your unpaid rolls. Are there any members who just need help getting their dues paid? Help them out! Have you been recruiting? Let potential members know about the benefits of being a member of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States! Remind them how important it is that we continue to fight for our veterans, active military and their families! Show them how we support youth in our community and adults who want to continue their education. Let all

your members know that they have a supporting role, so they feel valued and appreciated. We are a great group of patriots, and we should not hide our light under a barrel. We should be shining a spotlight on ourselves!

I know we can win this race for our Executive Producer Ansje Lansing and Studio Executive, National Auxiliary President Carla Martinez. Don't quit now – I know you all have **True Grit** and before we call this movie a wrap, I want to see us over 100% so we can walk that Red Carpet at National and accept that **Golden Malta** on behalf of the entire Western Conference. We can beat out the other movies and win Best Picture because the **West is the Best** and we have **True Grit!**

Now let's get out there and win this thing! I believe in all of you!



Secretary/Treasurer Kim Sloan

We've had some issues with credit card applications. Mostly having to do with the cc expiration or the cc is declined. If a card is declined, the Treasurer will be notified to contact the applicant. Sometimes it's a matter of not being able to read the number. We will

try a card a couple of times before the applicant is told that they need to provide alternate payment. Note that they are not a member until payment has been received.

District Secretaries, please review the Outstanding Auxiliary Checklist to confirm that the Auxiliaries are correctly shown as attending District Meetings. Let me know if there is a correction to be made.

MIT's – Auxiliaries need to have at least one member attend an MIT. We use sign in sheets so if your auxiliary is not shown as having attended an MIT, let me know and I will go back and review the sign in sheets. There are only 2 more MITs to get this credit. These are good trainings and we want to encourage you to attend.

I'll be attending the National Mid-Year Conference this month from Feb 11 thru Feb 17 and then I'll be out of town from Feb 27 thru March 2, but you can always email me if you need something.

Elections are coming up.... it's time to start talking to members about the duties and responsibilities of holding an office. Every Auxiliary deserves to have good leaders!

A big shout out to the Recruiters and the Treasurers who worked so hard to recruit and process membership!

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

If you have a young family member
(must be related to a VFW or Auxiliary member)
between the ages of 10 – 15

And

They would like to volunteer at the 2024 Department Convention

Please contact the Department Secretary – Treasurer Kim Sloan
at 520.307.7940

They must be accompanied by an adult who will be at convention and
responsible for the young person when not “on duty”.

Unfortunately, we do not cover any of the costs for these volunteers.

We just want to expose them to the joys of volunteering and getting to
know more about the VFW Auxiliary which they may want to join.



Americanism Lori Schaeffler

It is time to get back to the basics and teach our nation's future leaders the true meaning of patriotism. In doing so, we will create awareness among parents and educators about the importance of bringing patriotism to the forefront in the classroom and the community. Have you contacted a school and asked them if you could? Here in Arizona, Spring Break is right around the corner for

many schools. I have talked to a few teachers who are looking to fill empty space and they love our Veterans.

What is happening in February:

February 4th

Happy birthday to the USO- the USO was founded in 1941. They have helped troops both overseas and at home as well as families of deployed, wounded and fallen military personnel. There are more than 250 locations worldwide with more than 30,000 volunteers. Many major airports have USO welcome Centers for our troops when they come home. See if you can find a location near you and send a patriotic card. Provide a box of candy or a sweet treat to thank them for what they do. You can also provide them American flags and maybe they will give you a heads up if they know that troops are coming home.

February 14th Valentine's Day

Everyone loves to get flowers on Valentine's Day. Why not buy that special someone a red, white and blue flower arrangement instead of the traditional red roses. You can always be extra patriotic and add an American flag, pin or a

charm for that special someone. You could also give a gift to a Veteran's family because this could be the first year, they are without that special someone.

February 15th Presidents' Day

I don't think I need to remind to fly your flag. But, why not have a Presidents' Day lunch combined with Valentines Day at your Post or Auxiliary and put together a Presidents' Day matching game. Provide a list of famous quotes and a list of US President then they will draw a line from each quote to the matching president.

PSST.... First 4 people to text me of which President I'm related to will get a special gift at our convention. Let's see who really reads my newsletter. I challenge each of you to continue thinking outside the box!

Why not look for a Veteran or a Veteran's family who may need some help doing some spring cleaning or just someone to talk to. Just having that extra ear can change someone's life; it did mine.

Look for American flags in your neighborhood that are not looking so healthy and offer to replace them. Remember those people in your communities who display their flag and acknowledge them with a certificate so they can be recognized and appreciated for flying our nation's colors.

Did you know that in 1931 the "Star Spangled Banner" bill made it to the floor of Congress. Americanism became the third national service program adopted by the VFW Auxiliary. The program continues to be stronger than ever. We can't stop though; we must continue to work together to promote patriotism and being good Americans. This is certainly one of the most important programs for all Americans and the VFW Auxiliary.

Please continue to report what you have done throughout this year. Please send reports to stickwoman90@gmail.com

Auxiliary Outreach Melissa Martin

It was so good to see everyone at winter conference. I hope everybody had a good time. It was nice to have our National President be able to attend and get to see our youth exceed in the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen, I think it also teaches our youth how to work hard for our Veterans and also out in our communities.



So many of you are working hard at our local food banks which is needed since there are so many that are homeless and also a lot of people do not have enough money to put food on the table for every meal.

I have seen so many good reports, keep them coming your Auxiliaries can send in multiple reports. There is so many things to do like helping your local fire department put on a pancake breakfast for the community.

Remember you can't donate any money towards it or plan the event just to

help. Keep up the good work!



Buddy Poppy & VFW National Home Home Connie Hargraves

By now everyone is well into their project reports utilizing Buddy Poppy with another program and some have been inventive to say the least! But there is a second National Citation for educating the community on National Home which seems to be throwing a

loop in the mix.

Since January of 2025 is their 100th anniversary maybe I can help with some information to make it seem a little more relevant since the home is not in Arizona and our country and time evolves as to what we can offer.

The origins of today's VFW National Home can be traced to a 23-year-old woman named Amy Ross. In 1922, Ross made it her mission to help find jobs for the thousands of unemployed veterans in Detroit. VFW received a donation from millionaire cattleman Corey Spencer, who gifted 472 acres of land near Eaton Rapids, MI.

On Jan. 7, 1925, the VFW National Home was founded, helping to fulfill the VFW pledge to "honor the dead by helping the living." Later that spring, the Home welcomed its first family to an old frame farmhouse, Mrs. Pollett and her six children. Pollett had become suddenly widowed and lost her husband's military pension.

Another focus was on children and their health. At the time a hospital was needed with some of the health issues in children like polio. A hospital was built to focus on those needs as well as other needs of families. You can walk through the National Museum and the history and see pictures of the kids in the hospital and some of the other activities they were able to do like participating in the volunteer fire department.

The National Home has evolved to meet 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 active-duty military by providing help and hope for their children and families. The Home provides a "hand up, not out" through counselors, education, and structure.

Arizona sponsors the Arizona house which helps to provide a family with a home, no rent, and a chance to prepare for the future with guidance, educational support and counseling as well as jobs. Yes, it is not in Arizona, it is located in Eaton Rapids Michigan where there is the most bang for the buck. Looking at the cost of maintaining 42 homes, teachers, education centers and supportive services we can help and reach many over the United States. Remember, the Veteran that protected you came from many communities and many states.

Please consider making this an outstanding year in fundraising leading up to the 100th Anniversary Celebration and include poppies in all that you do. Home Front Hero, Tribute brick, Centennial Brick, Life Membership and Legacy.

Some Fun Ideas for February events and projects:

- Childrens Dental Health Month – give a toothbrush and mouthwash with poppies attached.
- Mardi Gras - include a metal poppy in the bread baby, attach to poppies to Mask and beads.
- Valentines Day – hearts, candy, send a card-include a metal poppy, and don't forget National Shut-in day Feb 19th.
- World Scout Day – do a Poppy drive utilizing your local scout troop, place flag and poppy at gravesite.
- Presidents Day – Preamble scroll with Poppy to hold rolled up.
- National Propose Day February 8th, how about a Poppy bouquet.
- Valentines Day – wrist corsage of poppies, how to make available on vfwauxaz.org BPNH page.
- National Tortilla Day February 24th, top with a poppy on a burrito, make an imprint of metal poppy on tortilla Quesadilla.

Your imagination can be unlimited!!
After all you are starting on your fantastic Poppy Displays too.

Chief of Staff Johnnie DeBoard

How are your Auxiliary New Year resolutions working? Are you striving to be more inclusive of the members? Are you communicating better with your post members? I have heard from a few auxiliaries that need some ideas with these two things.



Here are some examples that may work for your auxiliaries.

More inclusive of the members

- Have a monthly newsletter, including upcoming dates and events.
- Utilize the communication tree that can be found on our website.
- Ask the members for ideas and utilize them. They may need tweaking but work together to make something happen with them.
- You want all the members to feel wanted/needed and their opinions to count.
- Have a member's event to socialize with and get to know each other. It's always easier to talk to someone you know.

Communicating better with the post members

- Invite the Commander to your meetings. Ask if he/she would like to address your membership.
- Have a member that gets along well with the Commander talk with him/her weekly to see if things are going well. Help where you can.
- Ask how your Auxiliary can help the Post? Maybe they need a fund raiser

or help sprucing up the grounds.

- Have a social to honor our comrades. Let them know we are here for them.
- Don't get into their business, stay in your lane. This can be tricky just be cautious of what you are saying.

Getting new members

- First things first If you don't have anything nice to say don't say anything at all! You don't have to like everybody, but you do need to respect your fellow members.
- When a new or potential new member comes in don't talk negative. Who wants to join a group of negative people? Most people don't! I would love to say this isn't happening, but I know it is. We all need to stop acting like children and remember why we joined this organization. I believe we joined to honor the Veteran we joined under and to serve our Veterans and their families.
- If you have an issue with a particular member, ask someone who is unbiased to join you and that member to discuss what the problem may be. It could just be a misunderstanding and can quickly be resolved.

I hope these ideas will help; your feedback is always welcomed. We are nearing the end of the year; if you need help or ideas with a certain program reach out to the chairman, they want to help you succeed.



Historian/Media Nancy Schatz

As we move through this program year, I am thinking about all the wonderful events that have been happening and memorable experiences each one of you have had since July of last year. You are all amazing and pleasure to work with on the Historian and Media program. Remember too...as Historian you are the one that keeps the history of your Auxiliary alive and thriving! So be sure to capture all those great events and document them on Facebook and in pictures.

I had the pleasure of attending the Winter Conference last month and took a ton of pictures...especially National President Carla Martinez's "official visit" and of all the smiles at the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Awards Dinner! Oh my gosh, the kids in attendance were all beaming and it came through in the many pictures taken—that's for sure! Those are memories that cannot be replaced... And the visit from President Martinez was truly a great experience. She is a very warm individual and a wonderful example for us all to follow!

The end of our program year is quickly approaching...can you believe it's only two months away...March 31, 2024, will be here before you know it, right? Why is that date important? It's the end of the program year and all your reports are due just 15 days later—April 15, 2024.

As of December 2023, I have received Historian and Media reports from 14 auxiliaries and two have submitted videos. How exciting!!! Who will receive “Best Interview” or “Most Engaging Member Interviewed”??? Be sure to get your entry in soon so your auxiliary can be included in the awards!

The winner is...

**Hospital
Denise Williams**

VOLUNTEER



Hope this New Year has been good for you and yours.

What a wonderful Winter Conference we had. It was fun and educational too. I noticed a lot of new members there.

I enjoyed visiting with our National President Carla Martinez, what a welcome we gave her with the Aisle of Flags.

Please let me know if I forgot to report your projects, I usually reply I got it. Sometimes I do not receive it, then I get a note from you, so I get right on it. If I do not have it, I will let you know.

Remember we have outstanding Hospital Volunteers, so let us start recognizing these wonderful volunteers, I see so many volunteers! We should recognize those that go unnoticed. These people are priceless so let us start recognizing these wonderful people. Even some of veterans in assisted living are impressive volunteers, we just might not even notice.

When we visit our Veterans take time and look around to notice who helps their fellows Veterans. We will be amazed how many wonderful Veterans that always helps everyone. I received so many project reports with impressive volunteers; all their hard work they do.

I would like to thank all these wonderful volunteers. Do not think we do not notice what you we do. What a fantastic job you do. “Hats off to each and every one” I am enormously proud of all of you!

Remember we halfway through the year and projects reports still need to be turned from auxiliaries, I know you doing Hospital stuff. Why not report it? We really want to know what is going on in your area. Do not forget the Hospital Grants you could get. Just make sure it follows protocol.

At the conference, I was glad I was able to talk to some of you. Hopefully I was able to help. Remember I am always here. If I do not have the answers, I want to try my best to find them. I am here for you all, do not hesitate to ask.

VAVS Region 3

The Yuma CBOC falls under the Tucson VA

system. We are looking for a VAWS Deputy to serve as the liaison between that CBOC and the VAWS committee. This would entail you communicating the needs of the CBOC to the Auxiliaries in your area. If this is something that you'd like more information on, please call me!



KIM SLOAN
520.307.7940



Legislative JaNice Robertson

Be an Advocate – Be Informed – Be Engaged

Wow! February already?

In January the VFW sent out a new set of Priority goals for the 2024 year. They can be found in MALTA under resources and Legislature or on our website vfwauxaz.org. Be

sure to look it up and find out what we are doing for our veterans.

Remember, the National Citation is for our Auxiliaries to host an activity and/or event that educates their community on Veteran Legislation issues. Now is the time to have town halls or host a meet and greet with their legislators. Find out who or what they can and are doing for our Veterans. The Sandra Day O'Connor institute has a great write up at <https://civicsforlife.org/citizens-guide-to-presidential-primaries-2024/> this will help you through the primaries and help us get informed. Now is the time to start. Remember to look into the Civics 101 course so you might be the winner at our Department Convention, May 29th - June 2nd at Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson. Let me know if you have taken the course.

Have you to signed up for **VFW ACTION CORPS** weekly? Let me know how many you sign up. Are you receiving **Legislative Alerts**? If so, act on them.

Many bills have hidden Washington tricks that cause them to be harder to pass. The VFW realizes they needed to rally their members. To help us understand the process of a bill becoming a law information can be found at www.house.gov

Introduction & Referral of a Bill

- Any member in the House of Representatives may introduce a bill at any time while the House is in session by simply placing it in the “hopper” at the side of the Clerk's desk in the House Chamber. The sponsor's signature must appear on the bill. A public bill may have an unlimited number of co-sponsoring members. The bill is assigned its legislative number by the Clerk and referred to the appropriate committee by the Speaker, with the assistance of the Parliamentarian. The bill is then printed in its introduced form, which you can read in [Bill Text](#).

- An important phase of the legislative process is the action taken by committees. It is during committee action that the most intense consideration is given to the proposed measures; this is also the time when the people are given the opportunity to be heard. Each piece of legislation is referred to the committee that has jurisdiction over the area affected by the measure. For more information on this step of the legislative process see [Introduction and Referral to Committee of How Our Laws Are Made](#).

It was recently brought to the Departments attention that there is a Shark Claim Bill - SB 1308 that will be coming before the Arizona Legislation. To read the bill, click [here](#).

Together we can make a difference in the lives of our veterans, service men and women, and their families. We must remember they have protected our freedoms. Now it is time for us to protect their rights and benefits.

Remember to report to me.

Membership Becky Baldwin

[National Ambassador's January Article - Getting Closer to the Golden MALTA](#)

Happy February! What an amazing Winter Conference! Congratulations to all the winners in the "Best Picture" Award for 100% Membership!



I want to apologize to the members as I had the incorrect pull date for our 100% Auxiliaries. I pulled the report on 12/27/2023 so if you achieved 100% between 12/27 and 1/1 it was not included in the Winter Conference Winner. BUT don't sweat I have you down and all winners will be recognized at Department Convention this summer! Continue with the amazing work! As always Check out the Department Facebook Page to see who is in the 100% club and cheer them on!

This February is a leap year! What does that mean for membership? You have an extra day to talk with members, encourage them to be involved, sign them up for an event, find out if their family members are members too. One extra day this year can make a difference.

Project Reports are due soon. We are down to the last few months, don't delay. Not sure what to include in a Membership Report? Think about what you have done this year to involve members, gain new members, it is not limited to just a number or percentage Membership is so much more.

As always reach out if you have any questions or need any support.



Mentoring for Leadership Doug Kinghorn

[National Ambassador's January Article - January is National Mentoring Month](#)

Happy Valentine's Day, Department of Arizona! It was great seeing and talking with the attendees at the Winter Conference.

Now is the time to engage your membership, and mentor the mentees in your Auxiliaries. Ask them to rise up and take a leadership role, learn from the experienced mentors, match them up with the newer members.

We are celebrating mentors, learning how to be a good mentor, promoting the importance of mentorship and more.

Learning how to be a mentor and help with the growth of your Auxiliary membership. Increase membership engagement, member satisfaction and encourage the members to feel at ease asking questions at the meetings.

Build a diversity and belonging with your membership, friendships with the sisters/brothers of the Auxiliary. Positively impact the lives of the people in your Auxiliary.

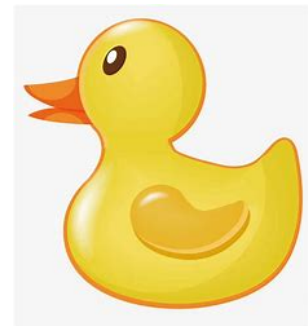
- What is the VFW Auxiliary organization's purpose?
- Why do we do what we do?
- Who are we doing our programs for? Helping whom?
- How did the mentoring structure happen in auxiliaries, districts and the department.

When communicating with your members, use language that will resonate with your membership. As we mentor each other, we can learn from each other, the Auxiliary leadership, programs and find our **WHY**.

As we teach, mentor and gain friendships, we will grow our organization. Ask questions, plan strategies, enrich the mentees and show the visibility of opportunities within our leadership.

Keith Doris Scholarship

[National Ambassador's January Article - Exciting Things to Come](#)



Just when you think you have heard all the inventive ways to get information out about our many scholarships, you hear of something new!

Our National Ambassador, Tina Hicks, has posted a new blog with a really

cute plan. During our mid-year cruise, she will be leaving little yellow rubber ducks all around the ship with note cards that direct where to go for information about the Scholarships we offer. What a great inventive way to catch the attention of people and get the word out!

When it comes to spreading information, we all need to think where and how we can “advertise” these scholarships, beyond the school premises. Schools will always be a major objective, where we bring the information to students, teachers and counselors. We also need to continually expand our reach throughout our communities.

Think of our Ambassador’s little yellow duck idea...this is what in marketing is known as a “silent seller”. That means you are “selling” an idea without being there in person. Every flyer that is posted somewhere, every brochure left on a table, every post on social media...is a “silent seller” that speaks to people without you being present.

Whenever you are leaving information, add an attention-grabbing item, such as bright colors in a flyer or perhaps something like her ducks. Just be sure that you provide both information on the scholarships as well as either contact info or links to websites for additional assistance.

We still have several scholarships to go for this year as listed in last month's newsletter and building relationships for future scholarships is a year-round effort.

We are all looking forward to seeing who wins at National Parade of Winners on Monday, March 4, with the program starting at 6 p.m. EST. Be sure to log on to www.vfw.org and watch as our state is represented and to see who this year’s winner is.



Veterans and Family Support Jeannie Hampton

If you were to title your Auxiliary’s Veteran and Family Support Program with a love song title, what would that title be? February is the month to recognize our Veteran Patients (and Caregivers). A little Thank You recognition goes a long way to someone in care.

Last year a Kindergarten Class in Kingman, colored printed pictures that depicted a popsicle dripping with the caption, “Veteran, you melt me” for Valentine’s Day. These were shared with Veterans at VFWs and Care facilities- and met by one now current Commander with, “You melt me. You know I still have the very first note I received when I was serving”. It matters to connect with those who may otherwise not hear words of support.

Honor Flight- we all celebrated Bob Braa’s invitation to Honor Flight, and he received “more than anyone else” on the flight home “Mail Call”. What about those Veterans who did not receive cards or notes of gratitude? It is simple to look up Honor Flight Arizona and connect with those coordinating the next

tours and offer a packet of cards and letters of encouragement and thanks for our Veterans' service. Leave them unsealed so they may be addressed for any Veteran.

Report Time: This is a call for every Auxiliary to explore the Veteran Service Organizations in your community. So many of the reports have shown things "I never knew existed". Find them. Connect with them. Partner with them. Reach out as the VFW Auxiliary to learn how to better serve our Veteran Community.

The only report that is required of an Auxiliary is Veteran and Family Support. You are doing the work in your community. If you are stumped, drop me an email or give me a call and we can discuss what you are doing and how that can be turned into likely more than one report. I love the emails that read, "The Auxiliary has raised money. Where would you suggest it could be donated?" (My head reels with "Wheel of Veteran Organizations")

Housekeeping: Wayback Machine: Remember Arizona Proposition 130- the % of Veteran disability off their property taxes that passed at the 2022 General Election? Filing for that exemption is again on the table and will close in each county by the end of February. Look to your County Assessor website under "Exemptions". Affidavit form from the County Assessor, letter from the VA showing % of Veteran disability status, property identification, photo identification are documents to file for the exemption. Please read the documents that list income that is considered. If you filed last year, the Assessor's Office should be sending a notice to inquire if anything has changed.

Land. I received a recent phone call requesting help. I went into the "Sky is falling" mode and made phone calls to representatives in the know. In so doing, let's talk about where our efforts can be directed. Arizona State Veterans Home Yuma should now be staffed and opened. Flagstaff had some construction issues which need to be corrected to completely open that facility. As Veteran and Family Support, that moves to the one funded by SB1172 in 2021 to break ground in Mohave County. First concern alleviated: They would be defunded by March 2024. Corrected, SB1172 the bill to allot funds, will not be defunded until June 2025. The clock is ticking. Next, at least 10 acres of commercial land needs to be "donated" to break ground. Not just any land. The land must support water, electricity, a service staff of individuals, local hospital, meet the needs of the residential Veteran population the home would serve. Land, in Mohave County, to best serve this facility. Any ideas?

At Winter Conference, Chuck Byers from Arizona Department of Veterans Services, spoke about the Tanner Thomas Village for Veterans [Home - Tanner Community Development Corporation \(tcdccorp.org\)](https://www.tcdccorp.org) 600 and 400 sq ft individual "Casitas" for Veterans 3 blocks from the Phoenix VA facility located at 1803 E. Broadway. After fulfilling the City of Phoenix requirements, this Veterans Village looks forward to breaking ground the 2nd or 3rd week in February. Each Casita will be fully furnished with sleep area, kitchenette, washer/dryer and even a dog door. To Adopt a Casita- \$800.00 covers fully furnishing, an additional \$200.00 allows the Veteran to personalize their living space. At the time of this writing, there are still 10 Casitas available to adopt. [TCDCCorp.org](https://www.tcdccorp.org) Under Programs, Donate. The contact information and Casita/Village plans are all available to view.

Register to vote. Our voice matters. Be cognizant of the initiatives that affect Veterans, Active-Duty Military (especially our Installations in Arizona), their families, (inclusive of Education initiatives for Military Family students) and our community. Contact your representatives. How we vote, how they vote, affects us in supporting our Veterans and Families.

Youth Irene Nowacki



I would like to start off by saying a huge shout out and **THANK YOU** to everyone that helped make the Winter Conference Book Drive a huge success. Thru all your hard work, we collectively donated 407 books! National President Carla Martinez was very proud of the collective efforts of both the Auxiliary and the Post working together. It has been decided that these books will be split up equally and distributed throughout the state so that they can reach as many youths as possible.

It is crazy to think that we are already into the second month of 2024. With that being said, you still have time to collect entries for the Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue and Illustrating America contests.

<https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Red-White-and-Blue-Singing-Contest-2023.pdf>

<https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Illustrating-America-2023.pdf>

If you are fortunate enough to receive multiple entries, please think about sharing them with other Auxiliaries that may not have been so lucky. We want to showcase as many youths as possible. They all deserve a chance to be recognized. Just think of how nerve racking it was for you to perform in front of a crowd or how proud you were of something that you created. Let's show these entrants that we are here for them to help promote them and get them awards for their time and effort.

Don't forget the RAP card or coins. The younger children really seem to love getting these and showing them off. Make a child that you see doing a Random Act of Patriotism smile by awarding them this token of appreciation for being a young Patriot.

Keep sending in your Youth Reports. I have received some outstanding ones so far. Remember, awards given out at Department Convention are for Outstanding reports that really wow. So, get out there and engage the youth in your area.

Don't wait to send in your reports. If you have sent in a report and I have not responded to you stating that I have received it, please call or email me so that I can make sure that you receive credit for it. We would love to see every Auxiliary get the Outstanding Auxiliary Award at Department Convention.

Lynn Pierre



It is always such a pleasure to report that our Auxiliaries have done the work that is so very vital to our mission. At this year's Winter Conference, our President, Bambi Johnson had offered Golden Eagle Pins to be given to any District President who acted as a coach and ensured that all their Auxiliaries had

kept their Program Activity Reports up to date. I am so honored to report that eight of our District Presidents earned those Golden Eagles.

They are:

- District 1 – JaNice Robertson
- District 3 – Sheila Eiler
- District 4 – Kathy Heeran
- District 5 – Crystal McCarthy
- District 6 – Doug Kinghorn
- District 7 – Reba Dermody
- District 8 – Sue Bancroft
- District 10- Keith Doris

Congratulations to you all and thank you for your constant support and coaching of your Auxiliaries!

Please be sure to continue sending in your monthly reports for the remainder of the year as this information is intrinsic to our continued success in supporting our Veterans and their families. Again, we have many ways of completing this easy form on our web page, www.vfwauxaz.org. If all those forms fail you, please feel free to simply fill them in by hand and snail mail them to me. EVERY report counts.

Thanks so much for your continued diligence and please remember to have fun!

Program Activity Reports



The PAR form can be found at www.vfwauxaz.org under Resources/Program Activity Reports as well as behind log in.

Login/Members Only, sign in and then click on Program Activity Report.

A black x means that the PAR was done using this year's form, and a red x means that the auxiliary used an old form from a previous year. For an auxiliary to receive the "Arizona Outstanding Auxiliary Award" they must use the current 2023-2024 PAR FORM.

Sent by kimharney@veteransofforeignwarsauxiliaryinarizona.ccsend.com powered by



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