

JULY 2024

VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

**CONTINUING EDUCATION
WINNERS**

**INCOMING DEPARTMENT
PRESIDENTS**

**REMEMBERING
JANICE CRISWELL**

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S
SPECIAL PROJECT**

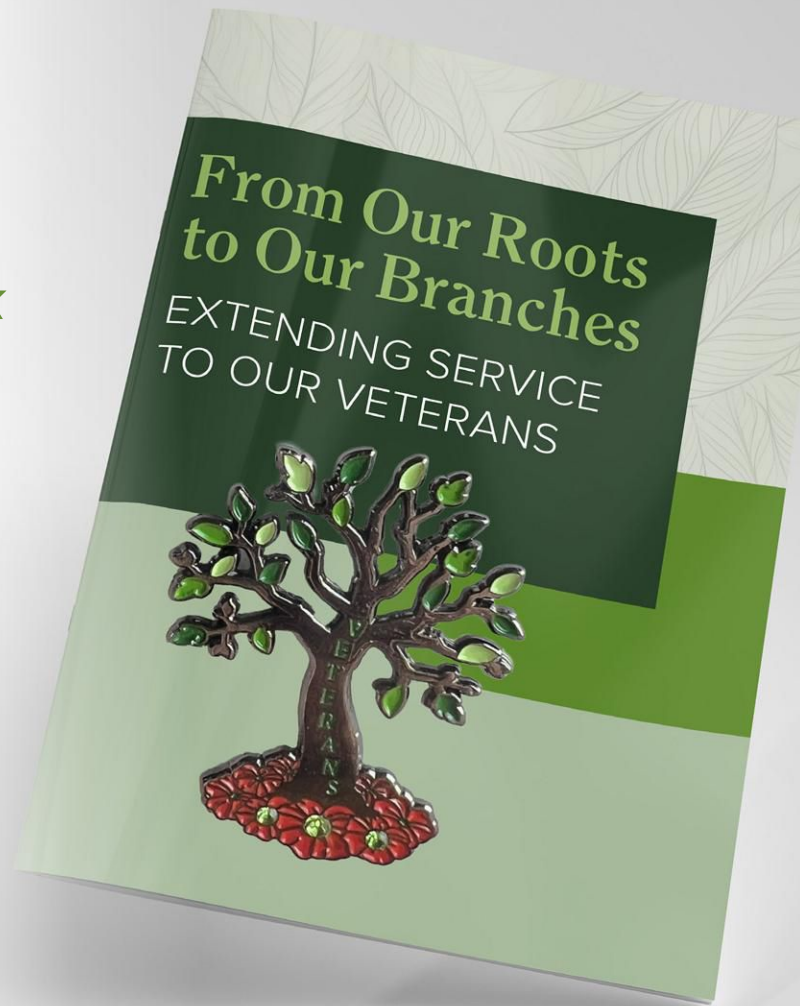
**THIRD-ANNUAL
VFW DAY OF SERVICE**



FIND THE 2024-2025 *National Program Book*

It will be behind MALTA Member Resources after National Convention. This document is filled with useful information about all of our National Programs, their Ambassadors and awards. It can also be a great recruiting tool. To read about Programs news, see Page 10.

Note: You do not have to print the entire book – you can choose to print **ONLY** the pages you need rather than the entire document.



DATES & DEADLINES

July

- JULY 1 Start of the 2024-2025 Program Year
- JULY 4 Independence Day
- JULY 27 National Convention begins
- JULY 31 Circle of Excellence – All installation reports received

August

- AUGUST 7 National Purple Heart Day
- AUGUST 31 Circle of Excellence – All Auxiliaries must be bonded

For more information on awards and deadlines, see the *2024-2025 National Program Book*.

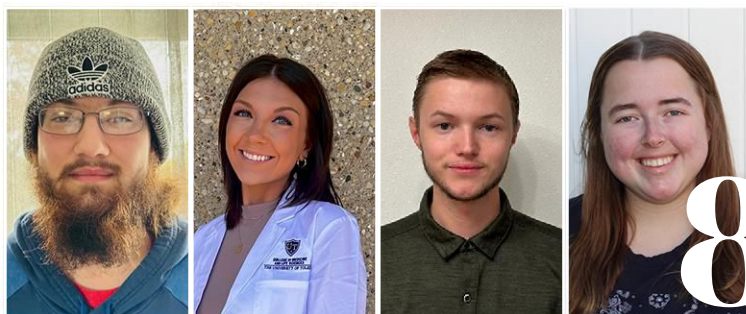
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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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About the Cover: VFW Auxiliary and Post 6632 members from Red Bud, Illinois worked together to make improvements to the area around a Flag pole at Lincoln Park for their VFW Day of Service project. FROM LEFT: VFW District 14 Commander Clyde Rowold; Winnie Rehmer, Auxiliary 6632 Auxiliary Outreach Chairman; Kathryn Rowold, District 14 President and Auxiliary 6632 President; and Bronda Hubler, Auxiliary 6632 Membership/"Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman.

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VFW & VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL CONVENTION APP

The VFW and Auxiliary are sharing a National Convention App again this year. In it, the VFW and Auxiliary have organization-specific content for attendees. Download this free app, called VFW Events, in the Apple and Google Play stores to see BOTH organizations' schedules, create your own personal Convention schedule, find meeting locations, chat with other members and more. The VFW's agenda items are color-coded red, while ours are blue.

IMPORTANT:

- When you register in the app as an attendee, you must choose an affiliation (enter VFW or AUX) in order to receive announcements/push notifications.
- Comcast email addresses are not compatible with the app software.
- Upon creation of your profile, the app will ask for your preferred time zone. Be sure to select "Detected Device Time Zone." This will ensure that your app time zone is updated upon arrival and all agenda items have the accurate time.
- If you're unable to access the VFW Events app for any reason, you can still access the web version of the app at eventmobi.com/VFWConvention2024.

Be sure to download the VFW Events app today!

Check back for more information to be added to the app as we get closer to Convention.



get SOCIAL



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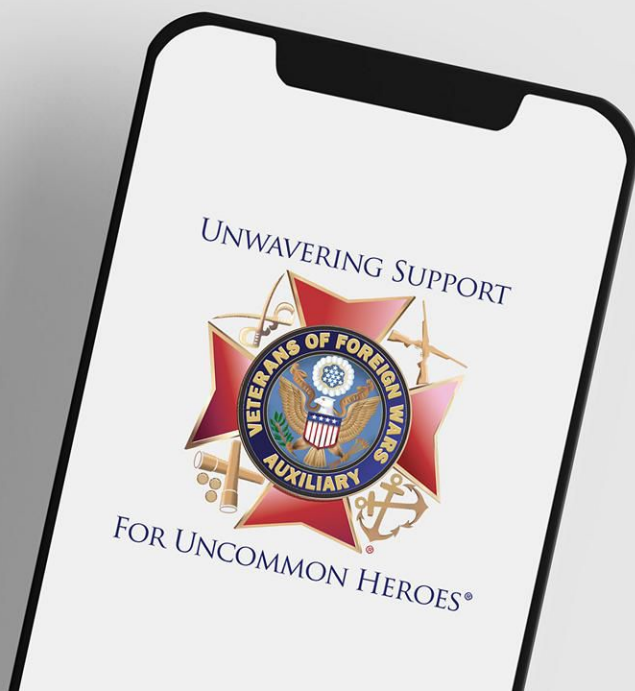
Facebook
[vfwauxiliary](https://www.facebook.com/vfwauxiliary)



Pinterest
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YouTube
[VFW Auxiliary National Organization](https://www.youtube.com/VFW-Auxiliary-National-Organization)





*Your commitment
to work tirelessly for
our veterans and
service members...
is a testament
to your kindness,
caring and
compassion.*

Dear members —

I have three words to describe my 2023-2024 year: Tenacity, encouragement and commitment. No matter where I went in my journey this year, everyone was so wonderful and caring. Everyone's determination to get things done and push through no matter what the circumstances may have been are beyond what I could have dreamed of.

I have always known our members were continuously doing things, but to witness it all over the world was beyond my wildest dreams. Our encouragement of each other by just sitting, listening and talking to someone even when we just feel like we cannot go another day shows the true meaning of family; you do not have to be blood to feel related to one another and we, the VFW Auxiliary, are truly sisters and brothers. And like other families, we endure the loss of our loved ones together. Among those who left this world to become our guardian angels this year are my North Dakota Department President Alice Benson and National Headquarters' Director of Administrative Services Janice Criswell, both of whom passed suddenly and unexpectedly. We also lost another dear mentor, leader and friend, PNP Pattie Jankowski.

Your commitment to work tirelessly hour after hour for our veterans and service members, their families and our communities year after year is a testament to your kindness, caring and compassion. You all not only showed commitment to the veterans by just being there for them, but you promoted suicide awareness and the VFW National Home Welcome Center special joint project with VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento with all the other Programs the National Ambassadors put out to you.

I want to thank my husband Stanley, sister Cindy and brother Darrell and their families for always being there for me; I love you all. My son and his family are amazing and I love them - thank you for your support. All my guardian angels in heaven watched over me during my travels and kept me safe. My in-laws, Evila and Robert, thank you for always being there for me. My almost 480,000 VFW Auxiliary brothers and sisters as well as the more than 1 million VFW comrades, you all make me a better person just by knowing you and seeing you all in action. All of you have made this the most memorable year for me and I am so proud and honored to have served as the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary National President for the 2023-2024 year, ***Banding Together for Our Veterans*** while remaining humble and kind. Thank you, thank you, thank you; I will forever be grateful, you will be in my hearts and prayers always.

Loyally,

CARLA J. MARTINEZ

National President



We look forward to celebrating and recognizing our members who have worked hard this year to support our mission.

Dear members—

We are headed to National Convention soon, so please keep an eye out for the latest news and updates on our National website, vfwauxiliary.org, and in our National E-Newsletter, including a special edition that features highlights of National President Carla Martinez's Program Year.

We look forward to celebrating and recognizing our members who have worked hard this year to support our mission. We also have business to attend to, training and new National Ambassadors who will share their focus for their respective Programs in the 2024-2025 year.

Very sadly, since I last wrote to you, we have experienced a great loss at National Headquarters and across our organization when Janice Criswell, Director of Administrative Services and friend and mentor to many for decades, unexpectedly passed away in May. We miss her, and will feel her absence at Convention and in our hearts. Look for a story honoring her on page 15.

Read more about Programs news on page 10 of this issue. Also in this magazine, we have news about how members' generosity helped fund the VFW National Home Welcome Center renovation, also joint special project of National President Carla and VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. Look to page 17 to read about incoming National President Brenda Bryant's special project that will help offset the expense of diapers for military and veteran families.

It is always wonderful to see members in person at Convention, and beyond that, we like hearing from you, too, about the National magazine. Send any feedback about this or past issues to info@vfwauxiliary.org for our Reader's Voice section. What you send us could be featured in one or multiple National communications.

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

VOLUME 88 NUMBER 1

Editor-In-Chief
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Skye Melcher

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www.vfwauxiliary.org

READER'S VOICE



This is the space for comments regarding your *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*. Mail your submissions to National Headquarters or email them to info@vfwauxiliary.org, marked "Letter to the Editor." We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor should not be interpreted as the opinion of the National Organization.

In this Reader's Voice, we'll share a mere fraction of the outpouring of fond memories and anecdotes posted to the National Facebook page with the news of the unexpected passing of VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters' Director of Administrative Services, Janice Criswell, a fixture at HQ for more than two decades and a 45+ year Life Member.

Janice was a godsend to many of us and her knowledge is irreplaceable! She could help us all out with any question asked. She will be so very much missed.

MARYBETH ARNOLD | **AUXILIARY 4042** | *Bigfork, Mont.*

Janice was an amazing woman, a good friend to many and a mentor to all. Always ready with a smile and a laugh and a very dedicated worker for our organization. She will be missed. Condolences to all who loved her.

KATHY WALERY | **AUXILIARY 6158** | *Fair Oaks, Calif.*

Whenever I would call her she would just give me all the time I needed during my Department Presidency year. She was a mentor and a great wealth of knowledge.

TERESA BREWER SINGH | **AUXILIARY 3809** | *Middletown, Ohio*

Janice, you touched my life in so many ways. You were a mentor, friend and a kind person. You were humble and incredibly smart. Life is going to be hard without having you in it. May you rest in peace and guide us as a guardian angel to always do the right thing. Love you Janice and already missing you.

CARLA MARTINEZ | **VFW Auxiliary National President**

I have no words. Her guidance, mentorship and heart will be truly missed.

DEBBIE BOTKIN LITTLE | **AUXILIARY 10580** | *Warrenton, Ore.*

Great woman and awesome mentor. She will be forever missed.

MARILYN SUE MCGEORGE | **AUXILIARY 1069** | *Fairfield, Ohio*

Your compassion and knowledge will never be replaced.

You, as a mentor and friend, will always be in our hearts and minds. You will be missed and loved by many; prayers and comfort to your family

JO CROUSER | **AUXILIARY 4326** | *Sophia, W. Va.*

Rest in peace, sweet friend. Always my companion to walk out of work late with. The biggest heart and smile that will be deeply missed. She has left big shoes to fill.

KELLY JONES | **VFW National Headquarters' Director of Development AUXILIARY 7356** | *Parkville, Mo.*

Janice Criswell's services were private and family only. To honor her memory, the Department of Kansas intends to raise funds to create a National Patriotic Art scholarship in her name, a fitting tribute to a woman who loved mentoring and working with students. Anyone wishing to contribute may send donations to the address below, earmarked J. Criswell Pat. Art Donation.

Jeanette Cox
P.O. Box 414, McPherson, KS 67460

MY VETERAN

Richard Marshall



Advocating for fellow veterans is what drives Richard (Tony) Marshall, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War.

Now an accredited veterans service officer (VSO) with the Department of Veterans

Affairs in Nevada, Marshall's journey to his current role began with a tough reentry to civilian life after serving overseas. Getting the help he needed was a struggle, which influenced him to make his life's work about stepping in on other soldiers' behalf.

Marshall joined the Marine Corps after graduating from high school. He originally wanted to go to college, but his family's financial situation didn't allow him to do so.

After boot camp and infantry training, he was deployed to Vietnam, where he would be injured during a truck explosion and sent home. After six months of recovering and being on limited duty, he was discharged.

Like many soldiers, Richard did not receive a warm welcome home after his time in Vietnam and suffered from undiagnosed Post Traumatic Stress (Disorder) or PTSD(D).

"Three marriages, three colleges and I worked many jobs over the next 29 years; I was a walking mess," Marshall said. "Self-medicating with daily drugs and alcohol. During one of my usual episodes, I was approached by an (accredited) service officer from Boise, Idaho Post 63 and asked to be evaluated for PTSD(D)."

Marshall agreed and six months later was in treatment. His experience with the service officer changed his outlook on life, leading him to become a VFW Life Member and, later, a service officer himself.

"In 2003, I began working with other service officers to learn how to file the forms and to ask the appropriate questions," Marshall added. "I was determined to prevent any veteran that I could from going through what I had gone through. In 2005, I became a Post service officer for the VFW and the American Legion."

"Richard is totally inspired and involved with his comrades, their families and friends," wife Sandra Marshall, Life Member of Auxiliary 12198, said. "He is surrounded by many family members who have served faithfully. Richard listens and voices his direct opinion."

In 2023, Marshall became an accredited service officer assisting veterans with their VA claims and benefits while being an advocate.

"Veterans, old and young, are left without knowing what's available or even what questions to ask," he said. "To be able to provide 'the answers' to the unasked questions and move a veteran in the right direction is my reward. To see the positive change in a veteran's future with self and family is worth it all."

Outside of being a VSO, Richard assists bereaved out-of-state family members to finalize their deceased veterans' affairs, helps Post and Auxiliary members relocate into a new facility and conducts a monthly Veteran's Informational Seminar at the North Las Vegas Resource Center.

"We have a large population of military, active and retired, and veterans. The seminar is one way for me to reach out and a chance to bring the community together," Marshall said. "The monthly seminar is an overview of benefits, state and national, and a general insight into the claims process. This provides those veterans, family members or anyone interested in veterans an opportunity to learn from an accredited service officer the correct answers, to sometimes very misled assumptions. ★ SM

Congratulations

2024 CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS! **\$1,250** PER CONFERENCE



EASTERN CONFERENCE

**COLE TYLER
THOMAS**

AUXILIARY 1964
MIFFLINBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA

Cole Tyler Thomas has long been fascinated by the mechanics of electronics. The son of Auxiliary 1964 Life Member Candi Thomas, he has now completed his sixth semester at Pennsylvania College of Technology, where he is studying Electronics and Computer Engineering. He has also interned at Therman Product Solutions for two summers and plans to either do so again this year, or intern elsewhere in the same field.

"Since I was a child, I've always enjoyed electronics, and was curious as to how they work. As I grew older, through some high school electronics classes, this passion was ignited, and I knew that I wanted to make it my career...", he said. "This scholarship will allow me to continue my education at Penn College without worrying about financial details, leaving me with more focus to put towards growing my knowledge and skills."



SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

**KAYLA
BROWN**

AUXILIARY 10087
BEVERLY HILLS,
FLORIDA

Kayla Brown, a Life Member of Auxiliary 10087, is a first-generation college student who is working towards her goal of becoming a physician. While loans help her attend, transportation and other education-related needs are not covered. With two years of medical school under her belt and more to go, Brown is dreaming about the day she receives her medical degree and starts her journey.

"One day, I will graduate with a medical degree in hand and two letters added to my signature, but what I will cherish most is the honor and privilege of serving others in their time of need. I view each day as an opportunity to build upon my foundational knowledge to ensure my future patients and their families feel secure in placing confidence in me. I want to stand before them fully prepared to care for their health and wellness with security and empathy, because that is the true duty of a physician," Brown said.



WESTERN CONFERENCE

**DANIEL JOSEPH
GATELY**

AUXILIARY 549
TUCSON,
ARIZONA

During the pandemic, Daniel Joseph Gately began his career as a teacher... virtually. Upon the return of students to in-person learning, Gately, the son of Auxiliary 549 Life Member Kathryn Gately, was able to complete his first official year in the classroom, which is when he made the choice of bettering himself for the students he teaches. He is now pursuing a master's degree in education with a focus on gifted education and educating multilingual learners.

"My commitment to having a career in education has been unwavering despite the ever-increasing struggles that students and educators face in the workforce...", he said. "In my daily work schedule, I see almost 120 students ranging from gifted to advanced, to multilingual and even those with learning disabilities. I feel that the choices I have made professionally are sound but I can also reflect on my life and realize that I need to further expand my understanding of my students, their needs and their paths to success."



BIG 10 CONFERENCE

**EMILY GRACE
LAURIE**

AUXILIARY 1652
MCCOOK,
NEBRASKA

When Emily Grace Laurie was in high school, she spent every Friday lunch period as a volunteer working on communication and social skills with the students in special education. Little did she know that she would later start pursuing a master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Mary. Laurie is the daughter of Auxiliary 1652 Member Tamela Laurie.

"Through this experience, I have been exposed to all that a speech-language pathologist can do and who we might work alongside," Laurie said. "I am so thankful for the opportunities that I have received through my education. With the help of this scholarship, I will be able to achieve my goal by getting through school with less debt allowing me to focus on becoming the best speech-language pathologist I can."

CLICK HERE



to learn more about
this scholarship.

SPECIAL JOINT PROJECT

WILL BENEFIT VFW NATIONAL HOME RESIDENTS



VFW and Auxiliary members gifted nearly \$125,000* for the combined special project of VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez and VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento this Program Year. Funds will bring more on-site resources to the families on campus by converting the administration lobby into a Welcome Center.

"Because we are miles from town, there is little support when it comes to basic food and beverage needs," said VFW National Home Executive Director Mike Wilson. "The retail space in the Welcome Center will be a space where residents can get simple things like bread, milk and microwavable dinner choices that are conducive to feeding a family on a limited budget and time constraint. In the meantime, our clothing and souvenir space in the Welcome Center will be more convenient for our visitors and guests."

Additionally, he said, "The Welcome Center project will change the face of the administration space by providing

a warm and welcoming environment for our visitors and residents as well as insuring postal and parcel mail gets to the residents in a timely manner. With so many people ordering online these days, no one should have to wait for a package because we are closed for the evening or the weekend."

For nearly 100 years, the National Home 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.

"We are truly thankful to Duane and Carla for taking on this project fundraiser and all those who donated to it," Wilson said.

He had described the renovation as "a game changer in how we support the families within our community. This project is part of our mission to provide a positive, safe, and healthy environment for our residents to achieve their personal and family goals."

The Home hopes to complete the project by late fall.

**At press time in late May.*

ABOVE: National President Carla Martinez helps break ground for the VFW National Home Welcome Center renovation.

2024-2025 National Programs News

IT'S THE NEW PROGRAM YEAR! In honor of that, we'll cover what's new in this story.

- *2024-2025 National Program Book* – Find this in MALTA Member Resources after National Convention. This book is packed with great information about all of our National Programs, their Ambassadors and awards. Members who register for and attend National Convention in person may also receive a hard copy of this publication.

This year, there will be 11 National Programs. Mentoring for Leadership has been incorporated into the Extension & Revitalization Program. While mentoring for leadership will continue within our Auxiliaries, it won't be a standalone Program.

The rest of our Programs themselves remain the same, however, the new Ambassadors will each have their own unique take on each and every one, including Program awards. Read about these in the Book and hear from them at the Programs Seminar on Sunday, July 28 scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. at National Convention. You'll also have the opportunity to meet your National Ambassadors following their presentations.

- If you are reading this article, now is the time to stop using or referring to old forms, as the content changes from year to year and we don't want to promote or share old or outdated information with prospective members or scholarship contest entrants.

Effective this year, the Auxiliary will no longer offer the Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! national anthem singing contest. Recurring technological issues contributed to this decision – including file permissions and formatting.

Now that you're prepared with the resources you need, welcome to the new Program Year! We look forward to seeing how you work the Programs, *From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans*. ★ AC



FROM TOP: Auxiliaries in Action from coast to coast: Auxiliary 4273 in Sandy, Oregon; Auxiliary 392 in Virginia Beach, Virginia; Auxiliary 5154 in Louisville, Tennessee; and from the Table of Contents page, Auxiliary 1058 in Zanesville, Ohio.



2024-2025 D E

PREST



ALABAMA
Stephanie Moore
Auxiliary 1762
Bessemer



COLORADO
Nadia Flores
Auxiliary 899
Alamosa



HAWAII
Stanford Shiroma
Auxiliary 2875
Honolulu



ALASKA
Charlotte Maynard
Auxiliary 9365
Wasilla



CONNECTICUT
Kathrine Fleischauer
Auxiliary 7666
Guilford



IDAHO
Denise Sampo
Auxiliary 10043
Lewiston



ARIZONA
Lynn Pierre
Auxiliary 9399
Apache Junction



DELAWARE
Sharon Leslie
Auxiliary 3420
Newark



ILLINOIS
Cindy Watters
Auxiliary 4226
Olney



ARKANSAS
Becky Lamb
Auxiliary 3543
Heber Springs



FLORIDA
Virginia Brehmer
Auxiliary 4643
Satellite Beach



INDIANA
Kathy Hankins
Auxiliary 1108
Richmond



CALIFORNIA
Sharonda Lewis
Auxiliary 5394
Compton



GEORGIA
Belinda Baragona
Auxiliary 7720
Cornelia



IOWA
Renee Quinn
Auxiliary 6414
Riverside

DEPARTMENT



KANSAS
Marsha LaRosh
Auxiliary 7743
Osborne



MASSACHUSETTS
Kelly Durkee-Erwin
Auxiliary 2394
Melrose



MONTANA
Carolyn Schmoeckel
Auxiliary 4067
Malta



KENTUCKY
Bobby Waddle
Auxiliary 1298
Bowling Green



MICHIGAN
Jane Dady
Auxiliary 5678
Tawas City



NEBRASKA
Carol Thompson
Auxiliary 7028
Palisade



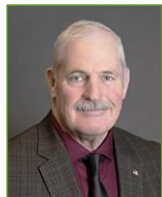
LOUISIANA
Ella Wilson
Auxiliary 4759
Starks



MINNESOTA
Karen England
Auxiliary 8729
Lake City



NEVADA
Maryanne Berdan
Auxiliary 9211
Reno



MAINE
Lonwood Keller
Auxiliary 887
Augusta



MISSISSIPPI
Tanya Constant
Auxiliary 5571
Bruce



NEW HAMPSHIRE
Francine Gregory
Auxiliary 5613
Jaffrey



MARYLAND
Deborah Sturgis
Auxiliary 5118
Easton



MISSOURI
Amy Jo Lett
Auxiliary 5675
Odessa



NEW JERSEY
Denise Beckler
Auxiliary 3020
Riverside



2024-2025 DEPARTMENT PRESIDENTS



NEW MEXICO
Renee King
Auxiliary 2951
Santa Fe



NEW YORK
Darlene Baker
Auxiliary 7325
Constantia



NORTH CAROLINA
Sandra Jeffries
Auxiliary 1920
Mebane



NORTH DAKOTA
Nancy Christenson
Auxiliary 1326
Bismark



OHIO
Jessica Gardner
Auxiliary 2800
Dayton



OKLAHOMA
Rebecca Merit
Auxiliary 577
Tulsa



OREGON
Debra Duggan
Auxiliary 7847
Halfway



PENNSYLVANIA
Andrea Meintel
Auxiliary 5265
Spring Grove



RHODE ISLAND
Stephen Doherty
Auxiliary 5390
Portsmouth



SOUTH CAROLINA
Donna Marie King
Auxiliary 10624
Mount Pleasant



SOUTH DAKOTA
Colleen Miller Foland
Auxiliary 2750
Mitchell



TENNESSEE
Gail O'Neill
Auxiliary 4641
Dickson



TEXAS



UTAH
Amber Silcox
Auxiliary 12087
West Jordan



VERMONT
Sandra Pinsonault
Auxiliary 6471
Manchester



VIRGINIA
Dawn Kuhn
Auxiliary 1994
Abingdon



WASHINGTON
Susan Gregg
Auxiliary 5056
Sedro Woolley



WEST VIRGINIA
Jamie Crum
Auxiliary 9926
Mason



WISCONSIN
Cheryl Woodards
Auxiliary 7591
Madison



WYOMING
Jessica Bryant
Auxiliary 1560
Sheridan



2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

All meetings are held in the convention center unless otherwise noted. Times for various functions are subject to change. Meeting rooms will be posted closer to conference dates and are subject to change.

LS = Livestream

FRI, JULY 26

10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Early packet pickup at the Louisville International Convention Center (South Pre-Function-Main Concourse).

SAT, JULY 27

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

10:00-11:30 a.m. Conference Meetings

Noon-1:30 p.m. 45-Plus Club Luncheon *(Reservations required)*

1:30-2:30 p.m. Amwins Presentation

6:15-7:15 p.m. Circle of Excellence Ceremony (LS)

SUN, JULY 28

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:30-9:30 a.m. Joint Memorial Service

10:45-11:30 a.m. National District Council Member Training

11:30-12:30 a.m. Past Councilors' Club Luncheon

1:00-4:30 p.m. Programs Seminar (LS)

MON, JULY 29

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:00 a.m. - Noon Joint Opening Session

1:30-5:00 p.m. Auxiliary Opening Business Session (LS)

TUE, JULY 30

8:00 a.m. - Noon Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:30 a.m. - Noon Auxiliary Business Session (LS) *(Last day for exhibits/registration)*

6:00-8:00 p.m. VFW Patriotic Celebration

WED, JULY 31

8:30-11:00 a.m. Auxiliary Business Session (LS)

2:30-4:00 p.m. MALTA & Accounting Software Training *(Open to all)*

THURS, AUG. 1

8:00-8:15 a.m. Presentation of Department Presidents with colors (LS)

8:30-11:30 a.m. Officer Election, Installation and Closing Session (LS)

3:00-5:00 p.m. Joint Reception for Commander-in-Chief and National President *(Ticketed event)*, Convention Center

5:30-9:00 p.m. National President's Celebration hosted by the Department of Missouri, Hyatt Regency Hotel Louisville

POST-CONVENTION EVENTS

FRI, AUG. 2

9:00-11:00 a.m. National District Council Meeting, Hyatt Regency Hotel Louisville

JULY 31-AUG. 4 Military Order of the Cootie's Supreme Scratch, Marriott East Hotel Louisville

Remembering

JANICE CRISWELL

Janice Criswell was an esteemed mentor to countless members during her 22 years on staff at National Headquarters. Her wealth of VFW Auxiliary knowledge was nothing short of remarkable; she could cite articles and sections of the *National Bylaws* from memory. She empowered members to succeed with candor and kindness.

The news of her unexpected passing in May elicited hundreds of stories and kind statements shared on the National Facebook page, as well messages of surprise and sadness. Fellow members, who were family to her, and former students, described Criswell as a legendary woman, irreplaceable...she touched many lives. She was a lifeline. She always had answers. And you always knew where you stood with her. And now, as one member stated, she "has her wings."

Criswell, Director of Administrative Services, passed away peacefully in her sleep on May 22, 2024. She is survived by her brother, Robert, a niece and nephew, three great-nephews and one great-niece.

She was a 45+ year member who served the Auxiliary in a number of capacities, including as the longtime Secretary of the Department of Kansas. She was also a Past Department of Kansas President and had served as Western Conference Membership Chairman and VFW-PAC Chairman, National Safety Director and National Chief of Staff under PNP Evelyn McCune. She joined Auxiliary 2864 under the eligibility of her father, a World War II veteran, because she wanted to belong to "the strongest women's group that supports veterans and young people."

During her more than two decades with National Headquarters, she was a familiar sight at National Conventions, seated on stage with pen and paper, always ready with information about the Bylaws and Auxiliary precedent. She also co-hosted HQ Roundtable, National Headquarters' Facebook Live show, several times per year, during which she would answer questions from the membership, give sound advice and banter good-naturedly with National Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos.

Panteleakos described her as dedicated, hardworking and caring, saying, "Janice had a great memory. She was always the first to offer a hand when someone needed it. She truly cared about the organization and all the members she helped. I knew people loved her, but I didn't realize just how many people she touched until she passed."

She truly did help many, and will be fondly remembered for it.

Jeanette Cox first met Criswell in the 1990s. Cox recalls a thoroughly inspiring and encouraging woman and the once-in-a-lifetime closeness they forged over the years.

"Anyone that every dealt with Janice knows that she was more than willing to help you if you were willing to take the steps to learn. I've held many positions in the organization which I never would have dreamed of if it hadn't been for her continued guidance. The biggest thing about Janice was her compassion for the organization, and if you were her friend, she would do anything for you. There will never be another 'Janice' in my life. She was my rock and my friend, but most of all, she was as much a sister to

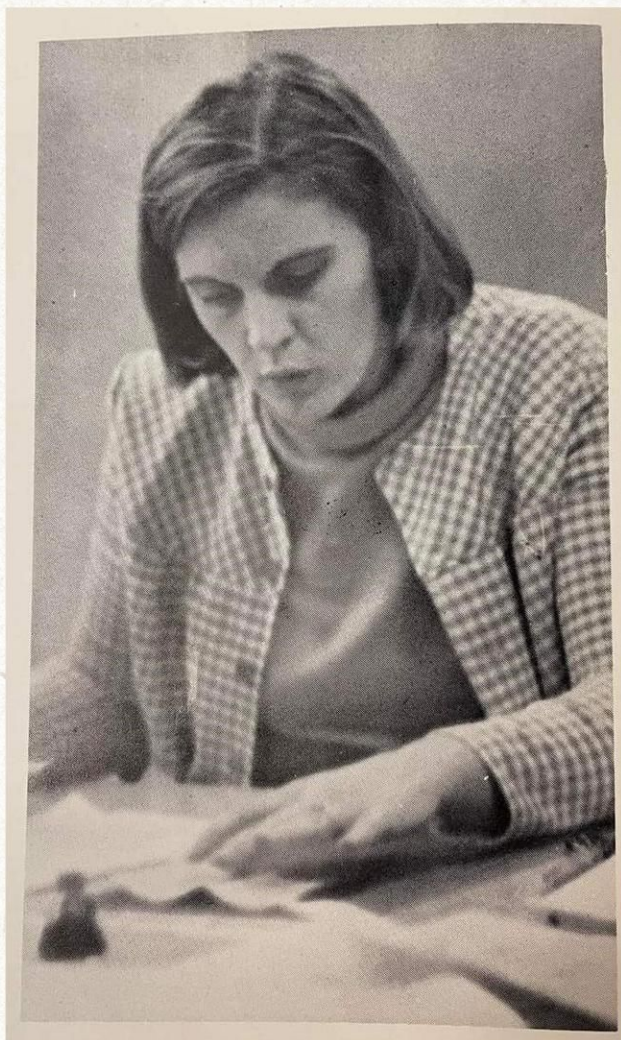


me as my own sisters. I loved her and will miss her more than she would even realize.”

“Janice was one of my favorite people and a great mentor,” said Department of Oregon Secretary Valorie Wrinkle. “I know people all over the country are going to mourn her loss. She had such an impact on all of us and was such a great resource. I had huge respect for her, but also I just liked her a lot as a person.”

Jane Thibault Barton described Criswell as “A dear friend, mentor and my sounding board. I’ll always treasure her friendship, sense of humor and support.”

“She was one of a kind,” said Leona McDermott, Past Department of Florida Secretary. “She will be sorely missed.”



Criswell’s talents included photography, computer skills and a mastery of the English language, which made her a solid editor and an asset in the many roles she served. For more than 25 years before joining the staff of National Headquarters, Criswell was a grade 7-12 Language Arts teacher. In 2023, the Wheatland High School’s Alumni Association honored her as an inductee into their Hall of Fame for her guidance, teaching methods and the way she inspired her students.

“She was one of my favorite teachers,” Richard Cooksey posted to Facebook. “I would (have) never made it out of high school without her help.”

Said Lee Weber, another of her students, “She was unabashedly herself. She was demanding and pushed us to be creative and excellent. Her lessons in editing and journalism have helped me my entire career.”

In the words of former student Kristi Wilderman, “Boy, did we learn a lot from you, Ms. Criswell!”

At VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters, we can certainly say the same.

This is our great loss. But as 2023-2024 Department of Alabama President and frequent National Musician Patsy Cole said, “...heaven’s gain.”

★ NP/AC contributed to this story

LEFT: An undated Wheatland High School yearbook photo shows “Miss Criswell” hard at work. According to a former student, Criswell was pictured frequently.

PAGE 15: Janice Criswell at National Convention 2021 in her element, always happy to chat with fellow members.

2024-2025 NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECT

OPERATION BOTTOM COVER

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

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. 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.



“

I decided on Operation Bottom Cover because more and more of our military are married couples, but the pay is still very low,” said incoming VFW Auxiliary National President Brenda Bryant.

“No person who is fighting for our country should have to worry about their families back home - How can you keep your mind on a military mission when you are worried about finances at home? This also goes for those veterans that just finished their time in the military and are trying to find their way in civilian life. Our goal with Operation Bottom Cover is to help veterans and their families by making sure these families are receiving the help they need for their children. Our challenge to the VFW is for every package of diapers the Auxiliary donates to a military family, the VFW donates a container of wipes.”



VFW DAY OF SERVICE: YEAR THREE

VFW and Auxiliary members across the nation and around the world joined forces for a third consecutive year to focus on what they could do for their communities through VFW Day of Service.

2024's VFW Day of Service was a great success with more than 520 events organized for this collective give back of veteran-led projects.

"United in their spirit of service, veterans demonstrated their unwavering commitment during VFW Day of Service," said VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. "Strengthening bonds and aiding neighbors, they showcased the power of collective action, showing the many ways they are still serving." Of year three, he said ahead of the May 4 kickoff, "Now we can call upon our dedicated membership and all



veterans to surpass last year's turnout, amplifying our impact in communities across the country."

VFW's third-annual Day of Service kicked off the first Saturday in May, a nationwide and worldwide initiative led by VFW members that invited VFW Posts and Auxiliary members, veterans of every stripe and local advocates to unite to host a community service event throughout the month.

Whether collecting goods for drives, facilitating accessibility initiatives and health fairs, caring for a memorial or providing resources to those in need, Day of Service projects helped many.

Auxiliary 10003 in Carmel, Indiana provided free breakfast for veterans and their families for VFW Day of Service.

"What a day! We were honored to serve breakfast... everyone that participated brought an unparalleled level of excitement and genuine gratitude," said Auxiliary 10003 President Brandon Brooks. "(We were) happy to support and serve, in some small way, those willing to give up so much for our freedom."

VFW Day of Service is an outgrowth of the organization's #StillServing campaign launched in 2020 to recognize the ongoing dedication of veterans and service members who continue to serve their communities. VFW Day of Service, led by veterans and in concert with other organizations and civic groups, is open for anyone to participate.



PAGE 19: VFW Post and Auxiliary 10624 members, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, came together for VFW Day of Service to host a food drive. All proceeds were donated to a VA hospital's volunteer pantry that provides for food insecure veterans. Pictured are Donna Marie King, Bill King, Ron ByCrott, Chad "Doc" McPeters and other Post members. **ABOVE:** Auxiliary and Post 769 members, along with Girl Scouts from Troop 2357 in Arizona, pick up trash, pull weeds and replace flags at a local cemetery ahead of Memorial Day. **TOP RIGHT:** Members from Auxiliary and Post 9820 in South Bend, Indiana hosted a lunch and promoted Auxiliary Scholarships and Youth Activities Programs. **RIGHT:** Auxiliary and Post 445 members from Pine Bluff, Arkansas work together on projects including a quilt guild that benefits hospitalized veterans and nursing home residents.





VFW DAY OF SERVICE

LEFT: Auxiliary 2550 members in Dunedin, Florida partnered with their Post for a community cleanup. **BELOW:** In Carmel, Indiana, Auxiliary and Post 10003 served free food to veterans. Among those pictured are Geoff Galliger, Laura Whitley, Chuck Krise, Lauren Weigel, Sarah Luke, Marseilles Short, Chris Dourado, Seth Stevenson, Cal Chaffin, Richard Leirer, Rebecca Chike, Dave Gezovich, Krystyn Lange, Kayla Wyatt, Tom Porteous and Joe Hunter-Lattak.



HQ MEMO

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS TO THE NATIONAL BYLAWS

Find all details on proposed resolutions and revisions to the National Bylaws to be presented at the VFW Auxiliary's 111th National Convention behind MALTA Member Resources, National Convention.

2024 PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

- Resolution #01 - Expand Eligibility
- Resolution #02 - Treasurer Ledger
- Resolution #03 - District President Transfer
- Resolution #04 - Increase District Dues
- Resolution #05 - Post Disbandment
- Resolution #06 - Profess a Belief
- Resolution #07 - Department Audit Committee
- Resolution #08 - NDCM No Candidate
- Resolution #09 - Term of Office
- Resolution #10 - Payment Acceptance
- Resolution #11 - Trustees
- Resolution #12 - Musician
- Resolution #13 - Real & Personal Property
- Resolution #14 - President, Secretary, Treasurer Convention Expenses
- Resolution #15 - National Convention Delegate Count

Also, on the National Convention page at vfwauxiliary.org, find links to brochures from the five 2024-2025 National Guard candidates.



PATRIOTIC T-SHIRT

- 100% polyester
- Distressed patriotic sublimated design with Auxiliary Emblem shadowed on front and back
- Imported

7868 Ladies' V-neck

S-2XL \$34.00
3XL \$40.00

7867 Men's crew neck

S-2XL \$34.00
3XL \$40.00
4XL \$42.00



PONYTAIL CAP 100% cotton. Unstructured, six-panel, low profile. Makeup resistant, breathable wicking sweatband. Antique brass tri-glide buckle closure. Concealed ponytail opening.

7156 \$20.00



SUNSHADE Blue with silver lettering. Polyester. 60" x 28". Made in USA.
1234 \$12.95



AUXILIARY MEMBER AND MILITARY VETERAN PIN 7/8". Rubber back.

1709 \$6.00



VETERANS & MILITARY SUICIDE PREVENTION

SUICIDE PREVENTION PIN Silver tone with translucent enamel.

Rubber back. Engraved on back. 1 1/8".
1724 \$3.25



PATRIOTIC LUGGAGE TAG

Includes clear plastic sheet, address card, and strap. 4 1/2" x 2 1/2" x 1/4".

1074 \$8.00



STRAP WRAP PAD Soft micro-velour outside with lined fleece padding. Wrap around handles up to 2 3/4" for comfortable grip. Embroidered VFW Auxiliary. Hook-and-loop attachment. 8 x 3".

1173 \$17.95



ROLLING TOTE Locking pull-up handle with in-line skate wheels. Multiple pockets. Spacious main zipper compartment. 600D polyester with screened VFW Auxiliary. Not for checked luggage. 13 1/2" x 18 x 8".

1134 Teal 1129 Black \$51.95