

NOVEMBER 2024

# VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

NATIONAL CONVENTION  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

SUNDAY  
FUN DAY

2024-2025  
NATIONAL GUARD  
JANEY FEHER



# IT'S TIME TO FILE YOUR 990-N FORM

Treasurers, please remember your 990-N (e-Postcards) must be submitted to the IRS no later than November 15, 2024.

This is important because it allows Auxiliaries to maintain their tax-exempt status. So, if you haven't already, take action to get this filed now and avoid problems later.

Note that the IRS does not accept paper forms.

Smaller charities that are eligible and choose to file the Form 990-N, Electronic Notice for Tax-Exempt Organizations (e-Postcard), must sign in to the IRS's modernized authentication platform using either their active IRS username or create an account with ID.me, the current IRS credential service provider.

Form 990-N submissions may be made on the IRS website.



## DATES & DEADLINES

### November

NOV 11 Veterans Day

NOV 15 VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Post judging complete

NOV 28 Thanksgiving

NOV 30 See the *2024-2025 National Program Book* for Membership awards deadline

### December

DEC 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

DEC 15 VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen District judging complete

DEC 25 Christmas

DEC 31 • Circle of Excellence goal: Paid Officers - Auxiliary Officers  
MUST have dues paid by this date.

• New Year's Eve

For more information on awards, see the [2024-2025 National Program Book](#) online in Member Resources behind MALTA login.



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UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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## About the Cover

**About the Cover:** Special Convention guests, including "Buddy"® Poppy child Layla, VFW National Home staff member Rhonda Kennedy, who is Program Secretary and teaches piano and Home Board of Trustees President Keith Jackson, make their way out of the hall after addressing the Delegation. *Photo by Ryan Armbrust/Sniper Photo, LLC.*



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# DIGITAL GET

## FACEBOOK FLAGGING & POST REMOVAL: WHAT'S HAPPENING AND WHAT TO DO

If you use Facebook to keep informed on National Auxiliary matters, you may have noticed something strange happening lately: the flagging, banning and removal of our posts. You may have tried to share and received the warning that the post is spam or "trying to get likes in a misleading way." You may have tried to click on a link and gotten a 404 error message informing you that it is broken or goes nowhere, even though it is the same link that has always worked. Or you may have posted our content to your own page, then received a message explaining that it was in violation of the rules and further violations would lead to consequences on your personal page.

**The good news is, you're not alone. The bad news is, there isn't much we can do about it.**

As of September 10, we are seeing our posts on the VFW Auxiliary National Facebook page removed at a rate of about one per day. Most of the time, though not always, these flagged posts have links that take members to our website, to BenefitHub, to the VFW's website or to MALTA. We receive two warnings: "trying to get likes" and "taking people to an outside site." For that reason, whenever possible, we are now adding "link in comments" and/or "link (to our website) in bio" to avoid this, which seems to be working for now.

It may work better to copy and paste the content instead. We appeal these warnings each time, though thus far it has not led to the reinstatement of any of our content. This is likely because no actual people are reviewing; it is entirely handled by AI, bots and algorithms.

We do have hope, though, as other organizations are having the same issue and one recently caught the attention of the *Washington Post*. In northern California, the Lake County Fire Safe Council has been sharing potentially life-saving information about the spread of wildfires, evacuations and other emergency situations with their followers, only for Facebook to remove them as "against (their) community standards on spam." While this happened on occasion in the past, "something changed" in June for them, which is also when the problems started for the VFW Auxiliary's page, and the number of posts being flagged has risen tremendously.

While we have been unable to reach anyone at the social media platform, we hope that their solution will also prevent this from happening to us on a near-daily basis, but for now, please look to our comments, bio and website for all information requiring links. Also visit us on Instagram.

## get SOCIAL



**Instagram**  
[@vfwauxiliaryhq](#)



**LinkedIn**  
[VFW Auxiliary](#)



**Facebook**  
[vfwauxiliary](#)



**Pinterest**  
[vfwauxiliary](#)



**YouTube**  
[VFW Auxiliary National Organization](#)





*I cannot wait  
to meet many  
more of you as  
I travel to your  
Departments.*

Dear members —

Auxiliaries all over the country are off to a fast start working our Programs and making sure our veterans are taken care of. My heart swells when you talk about all the outstanding projects you are doing. Your creativity and love that you pour into each of these projects show in your face when you describe them to me. A special "Thank You!" to each of the Departments that I have visited so far and a special hug to the VFWs that have opened their Post homes so we could gather.

As we begin the winter months and you are having those wonderful gatherings of your family, please remember we have so many of our members that are in facilities or cannot leave their homes. Take the time to reach out to them, not only during the holiday seasons, but all year round. Most of our members just need to know we are thinking of them whether it is a card, phone call or a visit. A few minutes of our time could mean the world to them.

The [CAFE](#) event at the [VFW National Home](#) was a huge success and I would like to thank all of you that made it to this wonderful event. Our Auxiliary and VFW members walked the streets at CAFE to celebrate our beautiful Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The year 2025 kick-starts the 100th Anniversary of our National Home. Do you have your birthday cards ready to mail to them? These cards will be hung up there for all to see. The National Home Board has several events planned to commemorate this event. If you did not get a chance to join us in September or want to enjoy more time at the National Home, check out the upcoming events on their website.

At National Convention, we launched a Membership QR Code that will help you with recruiting. This QR Code will take you to a landing page where you will find information about what we in the VFW Auxiliary do, a fact sheet, how to find an Auxiliary near you and importantly, a fillable membership application. If you did not get one of the keychains with the QR Code on it at Convention, don't worry. You can go to MALTA Member Resources then Membership and the QR Code is there for you to download. Put this on your business card, on posters to use for recruiting or take a picture of it and keep it on your phone for easy access. The possibilities are endless. Currently we are working with the VFW Store to make a keychain available through them.

Have you started working on the Operation Bottom Cover for the children of our service members or veteran families? If not, start finding out who needs the help with diapers, or you can donate on MALTA. Together we will cover those adorable bottoms.

This is my special project this year that helps families of service members and veterans who are struggling with the cost of this basic baby need. Find out more about this project in the *2024-2025 National Program Book* or filed under Miscellaneous in MALTA Member Resources and in the July edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*.

I cannot wait to meet many more of you as I travel to your Departments. Hug your family and tell them how much you love them. May each of you be blessed with good health and much love. I can't wait to hear more of your stories.

Loyally,

BRENDA BRYANT

*National President*





*Did you know  
that just a  
thoughtful card  
or visit can  
really bring a lot  
of cheer and joy?*

Dear members—

We're closing in on what many consider to be the most wonderful time of year – tucking in to delicious holiday meals and enjoying quality time with loved ones. However you celebrate this holiday season, let's remember those for whom this time of year can feel especially lonely and isolating.

The end of the calendar year can also be a difficult time for our veterans and fellow members who might be alone or separated from loved ones. Remember to keep them in your thoughts, and let those thoughts about our veterans, service members and our extended Auxiliary and VFW family become actions of spending time together.

Did you know that just a thoughtful card or visit can really bring a lot of cheer and joy? And these gifts are free or cost so little. Let's also think about promoting the 988 (then press 1) veterans crisis line emergency number, especially this time of year. We know that heightened feelings of isolation and depression can contribute to thoughts of suicide.

It was great seeing the many members who attended our 12th Celebrating America's Freedom Event at a special place that we, the Auxiliary, has been supporting from nearly the beginning of our own organization – the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan – a lovely community that helps veterans and their families with successful new beginnings as they transition from active-duty to civilian life. We will celebrate soon with the Home as they mark their centennial! See National "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador Jodie Hollinger's ideas for how we can get involved in this big birthday by reading her Program pages in the *2024-2025 National Program Book* in [MALTA](#) Member Resources.

And look for a story in the next edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* with more details about CAFE and the Home's plans for their 100th anniversary.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* that includes more National Convention coverage, a story about the history of the National District Council (Do you know what they do?) and much more.

AMANDA COOK  
*Editor-In-Chief*

## VOLUME 88 NUMBER 3

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Amanda Cook

**Contributing Writers**  
Nicole Panteleakos &  
Skye Melcher

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### Editorial Office

Address all communications for publication to The Editor, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111, (816) 561-8655, Fax (816) 931-4753. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by return postage and no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. Poetry submissions are not accepted. Or email [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org).

### Graphic Design

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### Change of Address

Forward address changes to: Circulation Department, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111. Members may also change their own address or email address in MALTA. Or email [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org).

### Website

[www.vfwauxiliary.org](http://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](mailto: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.

Great job on the magazine – (I) especially liked the Our History of Eligibility! That will interest a lot of our members.

**KIM SLOAN** | *AUXILIARY 549* | Tucson, Ariz.

I loved seeing the winners (of the Patriotic Art and Illustrating America contests)! And the magazine!

**MARY WILKENS** | *2023 and 2024 National judge for HQ art contests.*

*The following comments were made on social media about the VFW Auxiliary's Patriotic Art contests' National winning entries. They are Young American Creative Patriotic Art, 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art and Illustrating America.*

Congratulations to all of these very talented artists. You are all amazing.

**IRENE NOWACKI** | *AUXILIARY 9399* | Apache Junction, Ariz.

Congratulations to Ana (Young American Creative Patriotic Art first-place National winner in 2024) and all the other winners. All entries are amazing. So much talent.

**VALERIE CANO** | *AUXILIARY 4384* | Anthony, N.M.

Congratulations!! Well deserved...this tugs on my heartstrings.

**CAROLYN PACCIO** | *AUXILIARY 8488* | Kingsley, Pa.

They were all pretty spectacular... a lot of talent. Thanks for sharing.

**RHONDA WHITE** | *AUXILIARY 470* | Erie, Pa.

Congratulations to all the very creative artists!

**ANGEL SAMAC** | *AUXILIARY 4816* | Porter, Texas

That's phenomenal! Great job!

**NEDRA SEALEY** | *Nahunta, Ga.*

MEMBER

# SPOTLIGHT

SHARON FREDERICK

## PROVIDING HELPING PAWS TO NEVADA VETERANS

Behind a slobbery smile and some puppy dog eyes is a helping paw providing comfort to veterans and communities in Southern Nevada.

After reading an article in 1980 that her county's hospital would begin a therapy dog program, Sharon Frederick, Life Member and President of Auxiliary 12198 (Las Vegas), felt that one of her dogs at the time had the "right stuff" to become a therapy dog. She had one of the first six dogs in Southern Nevada to nationally certify for the new program.



According to the American Animal Hospital Association, a hospital therapy dog is a well-trained dog that promotes improvement in human physical, emotional, social and cognitive health. One of the biggest misconceptions about therapy dogs is that they must be purebred, but really, a lot depends on the dog's personality and how well they work around medical equipment.

Frederick's current dogs are both mixed breeds, K-9 Asta is a Pitbull/Poodle mix and K-9 Kane is an Australian Cattle Dog/Chihuahua mix. Asta was a service dog gifted to Frederick from a veteran family while Kane was adopted from a local rescue. Both dogs are sponsored by her Auxiliary.

But how do Kane and Asta truly help hospitalized veterans and their community?

"As you know, many of our veterans suffer from PTS(D) and will bond with a friendly dog before engaging with a human," Frederick said. "There is nothing more gratifying than to see a veteran petting and speaking with my dogs – I'm just the human at the end of the leash. Dogs provide a safe, calming atmosphere."

Her dogs have also worked "Buddy"® Poppy and Youth Activities events, weekly visits to a private neurological and orthopedic rehabilitation facility and most recently, Frederick and Asta have been the keynote "speakers" at the national conference of the National Association of State Approving Agencies focusing on educational benefits for veterans.

According to Frederick, the reason therapy dogs are so important is because they provide unconditional love without judgement.

Kane supervising a "Buddy"® Poppy drive at Ace Hardware with owner/handler Sharon Frederick of Auxiliary 12198.





K9 Asta with Post Commander Luke Bialchak of Post 12198.

“That is why our favorite hospital unit is inpatient mental health (through their specific request),” Frederick continued. “These patients don’t have lengthy visiting hours and not many are given clearance to visit this ward. Therapy dogs have specific rounds just as medical staff, and their arrival is greeted with anticipation. They have their favorite nursing staff and can tell when they are on vacation leave. Specifically, we have bonded with a father and his young son since his hospital visits coincide with our hospital rounds. We greet a veteran spouse every visit to outpatient mental health while she waits for transportation for her disabled husband attending his weekly focus group.”

Frederick’s Auxiliary Secretary Doris Poders said that she has seen firsthand how Frederick’s work with therapy dogs and veterans makes a huge difference in their lives.

“Veterans that are recovering are so happy just to see a friendly face and dog that is comforting and is a happy acquaintance,” Poders said. “When a veteran has to be in the hospital for a length of time, they look forward to that visit.”

“Sharon has been doing hospital work with therapy dogs for many years and it is her passion to keep it going with more dogs visiting on regular days and times.”

Past Department President (Nevada) Carol Webster said that Frederick never appears to have a bad day, that her upbeat personality and spirit make her a role model for this.

“Sharon, Kane and Asta have set the gold standard of this program. She shows love and patience, yet she is a strict follower of the rules for the safety of the veterans, patients and the dogs,” Webster said.

Auxiliary members interested in learning more about therapy dogs and how to start programs that connect them with veterans in their area may contact Frederick at [sharonfrederick@cox.net](mailto:sharonfrederick@cox.net).

✳ SM





# LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

VFW AUXILIARY'S 111<sup>th</sup>

# NATIONAL CONVENTION



Depending on how you look at it, members headed to the northernmost Southern city or southernmost Northern city along the Ohio River for National Convention 2024 – Louisville, Kentucky. And depending on where members were from, our event was in “Looavul,” “Luhvul” or “Looeville.” But no matter how you say it, one thing for certain is: members enjoyed

a very full week of business, celebration, recognition and learning in Derby City.

“We’ve all banded together,” said then-VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez with pride, in reference to her theme ***Banding Together for Our Veterans*** as she reflected on the 2023-2024 Program Year. “I loved my year.”





Martinez's many accomplishments included a third consecutive year of membership growth, an incredible amount raised for the VFW National Home, a push for the passing of important legislation, raising suicide awareness, the awarding of more scholarships than ever before and countless hours spent directly aiding veterans and their families while bettering our local communities.

At Convention, members could again map out their schedules thanks to our shared VFW and Auxiliary Convention app called VFW Events and/or with the help of our printed National Convention Book that contained even more details and resources.

More than 1,500 Auxiliary attendees spent many hours inside the Kentucky International Convention Center soaking in everything Convention, beginning on Saturday night with the Circle of Excellence Ceremony. Auxiliary and VFW members cheered on 43 Circle inductees. These Department Presidents were celebrated for their dedication to achieving key organizational goals. To learn more about the Circle and how your Department can join this elite group, see the *2024-2025 National Program Book* in [MALTA Member Resources](#).

Also on Saturday, the Auxiliary announced top National winners of the Young American Patriotic Art Contest, the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest and Illustrating

America. If you missed the gallery in the exhibit hall at Convention, you can find this year's national winners [here](#). Later in the week,

members viewed stunning video renditions of the "Star-Spangled Banner" from Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! winners Breanna B.\* (K-8 division) of the Department of Oklahoma and Teralyn H.\* of the Department of North Carolina (9-12 division).

The National Programs Seminar, during which members heard from 2024-2025 National Ambassadors about their emphases this year, and the VFW's First-Time Attendee Welcome Orientation open to VFW and Auxiliary members were the headliner events on Sunday.

National Membership Ambassador Linda Roloff introduced her Conference Coaches who had fun showing, with the help of some costumes and props, the audience just who they'll represent – branches of the U.S. military. "Branches" also tie to our current National President's theme.

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**PPREVIOUS PAGE:** Then-VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento and then-VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez pause for a photo after Sarmiento presents her with her Medal of Merit at the joint opening session. **THIS PAGE:** Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! national anthem singing contest winners Teralyn H. of North Carolina and Breanna B. of Oklahoma. **PAGE 11:** Martinez meets with Better World Award recipient and actor Gary Sinise.





They are: Big 10 - Air Force, Southern - Army, Eastern - Marine Corps, Western - Navy. National Line Officers, Coast Guard, donned whimsical inflatable animal innertube floaties while Past National Presidents, Space Force, were good sports about their astronaut helmets.

See all Ambassador presentations in MALTA Member Resources under National Convention.

On Monday the Joint Opening kicked off with all of the flash and dazzle of a WWE Smackdown. After an entrance preceded by a healthy dose of fog effect, then-VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento took the stage in a very sparkly gold jacket. Once the session was underway, he presented then-VFW Auxiliary National President Carla with the VFW's Medal of Merit.

"This Medallion is a gift that I will be able to look at and treasure every day," she said. "It represents the 470,000-plus Auxiliary members and the VFW members that



worked alongside of each other...I am so proud of everyone as they stepped up for the common goal that we all have and that is to support our veterans, families and communities."

Tuesday's finale was the VFW Patriotic Celebration, with its parade of red, white and blue, (and even a few patriotic aliens and dogs) from every state in addition to foreign-based members. Auxiliary Line Officers joined VFW leadership on stage for the fun of welcoming all.

In total, members from the VFW and Auxiliary raised more than \$150,000 for National President Carla's joint special project with Sarmiento, the VFW National Home Welcome Center renovation.

Members enjoyed remarks and presentations from special guests - Martinez chose the Gary Sinise Foundation for the Better World Award and \$10,000. Sinise has dedicated decades of his life to advocating for veterans, service members and first responders. He accepted the award from Martinez in a pre-recorded video that was shown at Convention.





**LEFT:** Then-National President Carla returns husband Stanley Martinez's salute before accepting her Past National President pin. **MIDDLE:** Martinez and then-Conductor Kim Harney join the Delegation in song. **BELOW:** The 2024-2025 National Line Officers. From left - Chief of Staff Betty Arnold, Conductor Sandra Uzell, Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, Senior Vice-President Lois Callahan, President Brenda Bryant, Junior Vice-President Donna Mills, Chaplain Kim Harney and Guard Janey Feher.

Other guests included a representative of the Brown Cancer Center – University of Louisville Health, who accepted \$25,000 from the Auxiliary for cancer research (additional cancer research donations went to The Jackson Laboratory in Maine and Huntsman Cancer Institute in Utah); the VFW National Home and “Buddy”® Poppy Child Layla\*; Military Order of the Cootie Supreme President Billie Cassidy and member GinaMarie Doherty, president of Military Women Across the Nation.







In her final speech as National President, Martinez thanked fellow members, her Department leaders and Ambassadors, Past National Presidents, fellow Line Officers and many others including family, friends and other mentors.

“To the members of this wonderful organization, this journey would not have been possible without you all,” she said. “We are all in this together as a team. You all passed the word to be humble and kind and in addition, worked with the VFW to help Commander-in-Chief Sarmiento *Meet the Challenge* while *Banding Together for Our Veterans*.”

For members who were unable to travel, Convention was available via livestream courtesy of Amwins, the Auxiliary’s benefits provider. Please note that livestream is a great way for members to observe Convention proceedings from afar, but it is not a replacement for attending in person because it can’t capture every single moment from every angle.



In other news, the Auxiliary offered its members training and learning opportunities about topics including MALTA bookkeeping and software, Amwins Group Benefits and a Department Secretaries’ and Treasurers’ Get-Together.

New post-Convention is the launch of our MALTA app. MALTA will continue to be available on your computers and tablets, but the phone app will make it easier to keep needed content right in your pocket, including your membership card.

You can access the app by clicking on or copy/pasting the links below on your mobile device:

**Apple URL** - <https://apps.apple.com/app/vfw-auxiliary-malta/id6482576653>

**Android URL** - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vfwauxiliary>

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**LEFT:** Michael Maruszak, Big Ten Conference Coach for the 2023-2024 Program Year, finds a familiar face. **TOP:** Stanford Shiroma, current Department of Hawaii President, is escorted down the aisle.





**MIDDLE AND BELOW:** New Circle of Excellence inductees celebrate with friends and peers. **ABOVE:** National Line Officers, VFW staff, Martinez and Sarmiento welcome guests at the VFW's Patriotic Celebration.







During official business, members considered the following Resolutions:

- Resolution #1 - Expand Eligibility **NOT ADOPTED**
- Resolution #2 - Treasurer Ledger **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #3 - District President Transfer **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #4 - Increase District Dues **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**
- Resolution #5 - Post Disbandment **NOT ADOPTED**
- Resolution #6 - Profess a Belief **NOT ADOPTED**
- Resolution #7 - Department Audit Committee **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #8 - NDCM No Candidate **TABLED**
- Resolution #9 - Term of Office **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #10 - Payment Acceptance **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #11 - Trustees **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #12 - Musician **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #13 - Real & Personal Property **ADOPTED**
- Resolution #14 - President, Secretary, Treasurer  
Convention Expenses **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**
- Resolution #15 - National Convention Delegate Count  
**ADOPTED WITH HOUSEKEEPING UPDATES**



For full proposed Resolutions text, visit MALTA Member Resources, National Convention.

Delegates elected Janey Feher, Department of Kentucky, as National Guard. Read her story on page 16. All National Line Officers, led by National President Brenda Bryant, were installed with all appointed Officers. To learn more about 2024-2025 National Officers, click [here](#).

We hope to see you in Columbus, Ohio August 9-14 for National Convention 2025. 🌟 AC

*\*Last names omitted for privacy.*

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**TOP:** Color Bearers practice their presentation of Department Presidents on the final day of Convention. **BELOW:** Musician Carolyn Hook greets a friend before returning to the keyboard. Hook is one of the ladies behind the music we hear every day we are in session. *Convention photos by Ryan Armbrust, Amanda Cook and Bob Knudsen.*

# 2024-2025 NATIONAL GUARD

## JANEY FEHER



They say good things come in threes. For 2024-2025 VFW National Guard Janey Feher, great inspiration to pursue a path to the National Chairs arrived in the form of three people. They are her father, Alexander, who held positions as Post and

Department Commander, his

Auxiliary counterpart, past Department of Kentucky President Wanda Aull and Past National President and fellow Kentuckian Marion Watson.

"I grew up at the VFW Post when I was little, as my dad was there all the time," Feher said. "It was the place you went on the weekends with your parents. But holding any Auxiliary office was not on my radar then."

With the guidance of two mentors, that all changed and she considered taking on leadership roles.

"The very first time I went to a Conference I was not sure of anything! However, my dad turned me over to PNP Marion Watson and Wanda Aull. I was so fortunate to have them explain everything going on. The more I learned, the more I realized that I wanted to be a part of it. I began doing things in my Auxiliary and the rest is history. Marion ...gave me guidance, support and much love as we talked about what it was going to be like running for a National office. Now here I am beginning a new journey that will be remarkable as well as rewarding."

The Auxiliary is so important to Feher, she said, because without veterans, we wouldn't be where we are enjoying the freedoms we have.

"We are lucky to be part of a country that supports them and helps take care of them and their families. Our organization is the greatest veteran service organization ever and I know that the members will always keep it in our hearts and do whatever is needed to thrive."

Feher, a Life Member of Auxiliary 7387 in Hazard, Kentucky, joined on the eligibility of her Army veteran father who served during World War II.

For her first year holding National office, she looks forward to learning and listening.

"As I was campaigning, I loved visiting and talking to members," she said. "I am excited to continue listening to the members and hearing from them – their ideas, dreams and goals for our organization. Being a teacher for 32 years, I know how sharing ideas can help an organization grow and I am so excited to be part of it. However the brief time I have been in this position, I have seen how much thought goes into decisions that impact our organization. It is definitely a team effort, and I look forward to being part of this team and everything that is to come in the future."

While teaching at Cumberland Elementary School in Harlan County, Kentucky, subjects she taught over the years included math, music, dance, art, drama and computer skills.

### MORE TO KNOW ABOUT FEHER:

"Although my mom (Mary Jane) and dad are not with me in person, they will always be with me in spirit and I know that are supporting me every day. My only sibling, Susan, lives in Lexington and listens to my passion for this organization.

"I love traveling, reading, singing, playing bingo and being with friends. Now that I have retired from teaching, I want to learn how to make stained glass items and am incredibly lucky as we have a place right here in my hometown. Stay tuned for those adventures!" ♦ AC



**TOP:** Janey Feher at National Convention 2024. **BELOW:** Feher with her mentors, Past National President Marion Watson, father Alexander Feher and Past Department President Wanda Aull back in 2007.



# AUXILIARY ACRONYMS

EVERY ORGANIZATION HAS ITS OWN INTERNAL LINGO, AND THE AUXILIARY IS NO DIFFERENT. BELOW ARE SOME TERMS THAT MEMBERS FREQUENTLY SEE, ALONG WITH EXPLANATIONS.

## **ACH (AUTOMATED CLEARING HOUSE) –**

Electronic funds-transfer system that enables electronic transfers of money in the United States. The ACH network acts as a financial hub and helps people and organizations move money from one bank account to another. ACH transactions consist of direct deposits and direct payments, including business to business transactions, government transactions and consumer transactions. (source: Investopedia.com)

**AMBASSADOR** – The National Ambassadors are appointed annually by the National President. The Ambassadors communicate and promote National Program goals to Department (state) Chairmen and the membership at large.

**AUXILIARY** – The local unit of the VFW Auxiliary organization; also, the shortened term for all levels of the organization.

**BOOKLET OF INSTRUCTIONS** – Yellow pages within the Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual; a manual of internal policy and procedures for the Auxiliary (all levels).

**BYLAWS** – The Auxiliary's rules and procedures. The Bylaws include the purpose of the Auxiliary, membership criteria, how Delegates are elected, the duties of Officers at all levels of the Organization, information on the Organizational image and the discipline of members, among other topics. Available for purchase from the VFW Store. It is available digitally behind MALTA Member Resources.

**COE (CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE)** – A premier group of Department Presidents who have proven their leadership. The program replaced the former Outstanding Department President awards and gives every Department President the opportunity to achieve National recognition for the hard work of the Department. When a Department President achieves the Circle of Excellence, they remain in the Circle forever.

## **COA (COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION)- DEPARTMENT LEVEL –**

The Council of Administration approves the Department budget and the audit, proposes and approves expenditures outside Department Standing Rules, budget and Bylaws and represents the Department in all matters in the interval between Department Conventions. The Council of Administration of a Department consists of the Department President, Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Conductor, Guard, Chief of Staff, District Presidents (Auxiliary President if no District) and the four immediate Past Department Presidents.

**DELEGATE** – An Auxiliary member elected annually by fellow members to represent their Auxiliary at the District, Department or National Conventions.

**DEPARTMENT** – The VFW Auxiliary National Organization is organized into 50 Departments, with one representing each of the 50 states. The Department is the liaison between National Headquarters and Auxiliaries and Districts and relays information to all levels.

**DISTRICT** – Geographic area within a Department. Districts are liaisons between Auxiliaries and Departments and relay information to both. The VFW determines District boundaries.

**FLOOR WORK** – Ritualistic movements performed on the floor during a traditional or contemporary Auxiliary meeting at all levels. Floor work is not done during a roundtable meeting.

**MALTA** – (Membership Auxiliary Leadership Technology Access) Our online membership system built specifically for the VFW Auxiliary. Also access MALTA via the new app!

**NATIONAL DISTRICT COUNCIL** – The National District Council comprises Auxiliary members that are elected by the Department(s) (states) they represent and serve a single two-year term. The 28-member Council is the ruling body between National Conventions and the Council members are the voice of the members from the Department(s) they represent. The Council functions similarly to a board of directors or a board of trustees.

**PROGRAM** – Outline of resources designed to bring needed services, information and assistance to veterans, service members and their families, and our communities. The National Organization has 11 Programs: Americanism; Auxiliary Outreach; “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home; Chief of Staff & Extension; Historian & Media Relations; Hospital; Legislative; Membership; Scholarships; Veterans & Family Support; and Youth Activities.

**PROJECT** – A task or event within a Program.

**RITUAL** – Activities unique to the Auxiliary, including how meetings are conducted, officer installations and special ceremonies, including the member initiation and memorial service.

**SOI (SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION)** – A training event put on by a Department or District near the start of each Program Year.

**VAVS (VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE)** – The VFW Auxiliary participates in the government-run program Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service. Along with the VFW, the VFW Auxiliary is a charter member of this Veterans Health Administration program, which began in 1946. The Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) operates one of the largest volunteer programs in the Federal Government, supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support. The VFW Auxiliary has been a part of this program since its inception in 1946. The mission of the VAVS is to provide a structured volunteer program under the management of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



# SHARE YOUR SUNDAY FUN DAYS!

We know our members work hard for our veterans and communities every day, but we have fun, too, and that's why we are collecting Sunday Fun Day photos now!

Send us your pictures from holiday parties and sock hops, softball games and corn hole tournaments, face painting at Family Freedom Festivals, performing in skits, or just enjoying yourselves during a Mid-Year Conference or Convention. We want to see line dancing, ballroom dancing and breakdancing. We want to see candids featuring laughter, smiles and even silliness. We want to see you happily involving your children and grandchildren in our Programs. We want to see friendship and fun.

Email these to us at [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org) with the subject line Sunday Fun Day and we may feature your Auxiliary on a future social media post using the hashtag #SundayFunDay - note that this is not an Auxiliary-specific hashtag, which means our posts will come up alongside those of other social media users, hopefully broadening our reach. 🌟 NP



Members of Post and Auxiliary 7536 in Ohio had fun in the park celebrating the centennial birthday of World War II veteran Bill Decapite. 7536 is National Conductor Sandra Uzell's Auxiliary.



Donna Miller, Senior Vice-President of Michigan Auxiliary 4659, taught members to belly dance, then they put on a performance for veterans and the public.



Members of the Department of Maryland had fun in the sun on a riverboat tour during National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.



Members at Iowa's Department Convention recreate the fun of a 1950s sock hop and diner, including National Junior Vice-President Donna Mills.



# AUXILIARY RELIEF FUND

## Did you know that every VFW Auxiliary has a Relief Fund?



While this fund that comprises “Buddy”® Poppy distribution proceeds and other contributions is restricted, what you may not know is how versatile it is.

### *There is so much good you can do with it!*

#### **Some ways you can help others with this fund:**

- Aid to Auxiliary members who need financial assistance. You can make a difference by using the fund as a resource. Some examples – paying a member’s current year’s dues or utility bill.
- Monetary gifts to the VFW National Home– Health and Happiness or a gift of a National Home Life Membership to your Auxiliary President, for example.
- Invest in hospital work for veterans, military personnel, Auxiliary members and their families. Brighten their lives with activities and visits.
- Make a contribution to the Cancer Aid & Research Fund.
- Perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and comfort their survivors. Some ideas – purchasing memorial flowers or a funeral dinner.

Members can put Relief Funds to work to help our veterans, service members, their families and youth! Consider how your funds can best benefit your communities.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the Auxiliary Relief Fund, refer to Page 21 in the Booklet of Instructions and in Section 813 A of the *VFW Auxiliary 2025 Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual.*

# Our HISTORY



The National Council of Administration from 1931 with then-National President Ada Harrison.

**1920** was a big year for the VFW Auxiliary. They were awarded their permanent charter, backdated to 1914, and adopted their first official Bylaws and constitution, signaling the end of their formative years. Women gained suffrage and, for the first time, were allowed to vote in federal elections across the nation. Membership had reached a record high of more than 5,000 women, the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of VFW-eligible veterans, joined by U.S. Army Nurses who served overseas but could not join the VFW as it was then for men only.

And a National Council of Administration was created to replace the existing Board of Trustees.

Thus began a new form of governance that would grow and change over the next 100+ years, but remain instrumental to the function and future of the organization.

"The Council of Administration is the overseeing body of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary," explains Judith Barnes, who represented Connecticut and Rhode Island from 2022-2024. "The COA reviews all policies and expenditures to ensure our great organization stays on track, continues to function efficiently, and continues to give 'Unwavering Support For Uncommon Heroes' far into the

future. COA members are a fabulous means to disseminate information, and collect concerns at local levels."

## FORMATION AND FUNCTION

The Council initially comprised five members serving staggered terms, with first-ever National President Margaret Armstrong elected to a five-year term, Sadie Kern for four, Lydia Riegel for three, Stephina Hawkins for two and Florence Stark for one. Their duties included oversight for the overall organization and making decision by vote in accordance with the wishes of the members between National Encampments, which included an annual mid-winter conference. Departments did not exist yet, so Council members did not represent a particular part of the country.

From 1920 to 1921, Auxiliary membership more than doubled, and in 1922, the VFW proposed a change to the Council of Administration: giving additional seats to the National Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-President and Treasurer. By the summer of 1923, the VFW Auxiliary boasted more than 15,000 paid members, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to disseminate necessary information to all. The Council voted to fund the first Auxiliary publication, the *VFW Auxiliary Messenger*,



unfortunately, the high cost meant it only survived for one year. While most Council members served one- to five-year terms, popular two-time National President Kate “Mother” Hutcheson was elected to the Council “for life” in 1924. (She died in 1931.)

1927 was the final year that the Council was comprised only of 10 members, primarily Past National Presidents; as of the following year, they were joined by National Council Members 1 through 8 for a total of 20, including the aforementioned National Line Officers.

### THE GREAT DEPRESSION, WORLD WAR II AND THE VIETNAM ERA

Over the next several years, the Council continued to make decisions that would impact the organization for decades to come. In 1931, they voted to create a new standing committee: Legislative. The Council took on additional responsibility and importance from 1942-1945, as the impact of America’s entry into World War II caused shortages at home that made gathering for National meetings and distributing information difficult. The Auxiliary restructured the way they used their four-page *Auxiliary Bulletin*, effectively replacing memos and other mailings, as paper was in short supply, and the Council subsequently voted to send copies to Department Chairmen in an effort to keep members informed across the country. During these years, membership swelled to a quarter of a million women.

By the mid-1960s, the size of the Council of Administration had again grown. Now there were 17 numbered members, four additional members and four National Line Officers for a total of 25. For more than 50 years, the National Council of Administration continued to serve the organization by being a voice for the people when it came time to discuss and vote on Auxiliary business, and also by bringing information from the National Organization back to Departments and Auxiliaries after Mid-Year Conferences and National Encampments (later National Conventions).

### ENTERING A NEW CENTURY

At various points throughout the decades, the Council members’ designated areas of representation changed. For example, Council Member Number 2 represented Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island for many years, then only Connecticut and Massachusetts, and later Massachusetts and Vermont. Then, less than a decade ago, the National Council of Administration underwent another significant change.

Council member assignment had been based on membership percentages not reflective of the organization’s then-current numbers, as designations had previously been

determined by the membership percentages of the VFW by Department; these were restructured to give an accurate representation of Auxiliary members. At that time, some Council members were still representing three different Departments, while others represented one or two. Now, no National District Council Member represents more than two states, though some have only one. Many decades ago, staggered terms were replaced by two-year terms; this system of alternating continues, with shared Departments trading off, though at the 2024 National Convention it was suggested that if no new Council member could be elected by one of the two shared states, the other state would choose the representative for the next two-year term – this was tabled and will be voted on during National Convention in 2025.

“Our duties are to listen to National objectives for the organization, review the budget with a critical eye, ask questions, and vote... (and) to listen and hear the concerns of respective Areas,” explains Mercie Woodfolk, who represented Illinois and Missouri from 2019-2021.

“The value of the Council of Administration is to help advance the organization to remain relevant (and) ensure we are promoting key initiatives,” adds Frankie Bill, who is currently serving as National District Council Member – Area E (Minnesota) for the second time. “In other words, elevating and enabling the Auxiliary organization in a positive way.”

National District Council Member #3 Anna Fox says that serving in this position is an excellent learning opportunity, in particular in regards to the budget. “Many of our members get frustrated when we have a dues increase because they do not understand where their money goes,” she explains. “My goal is... to have as much knowledge as possible to share with the members.”

“It also is a great opportunity to dive deeper into the business aspect of the organization and to be a part of the decisions that will only strengthen and grow our organization,” says National Council Member Amy Vukasin, who represents Alaska and Hawaii. “To me, the importance of a Council of Administration is to be the voice for the members of the states I represent, getting their input on important matters that we vote on so they feel included... and to bring forth any concerns they might have.”

If you are interested in learning more about the duties of the National Council of Administration and/or serving in this position, consult your *Bylaws & Ritual* book and/or ask your current NDCM for advice. 🌸 NP



**JOURNAL/PLANNER** Black faux leather with debossed Auxiliary Emblem. Magnetic closure. Spiral bound weekly planner has a 4½ x 6½" writing pad, 3 business card slots, plus 1 window slot. 8¾ x 6¾ x 1¼".  
1221 \$22.95



**PATRIOTIC KNIT CAP** Show your patriotic side with this warm knit cap! Navy blue with white USA and red stripes plus coordinating pom. Made in the USA.  
7236 \$16.95

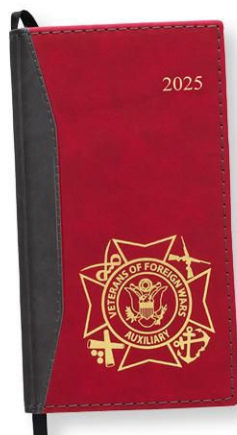


**PEN SET** Twist-action ballpoint pen and two-piece rollerball pen. Black ink, metal barrels with metal clips. Navy blue with gray engraved VFW Auxiliary and accents. Gift boxed.  
1142 \$32.95



#### BLUE/WHITE AUXILIARY POLOS

- 88/12 polyester/elastane
  - UPF 50 sun protection
  - Four-way stretch
  - Moisture wicking
  - Side vents
  - Men's three-button placket
  - Ladies' V-neck placket
  - VFW Auxiliary embroidered in white on left chest
  - No additional embroidery available
  - Ladies' runs small
  - Imported; decorated in the USA
- 7923 Ladies' S-3XL \$55.00 (runs small)  
7924 Men's S-4XL \$55.00



**WEEKLY CALENDAR** 13-month, one-week at-a-glance format. For daily planning, appointments and daily records. Pages for addresses and phone numbers. 3⅝ x 6½".  
1282 \$9.00

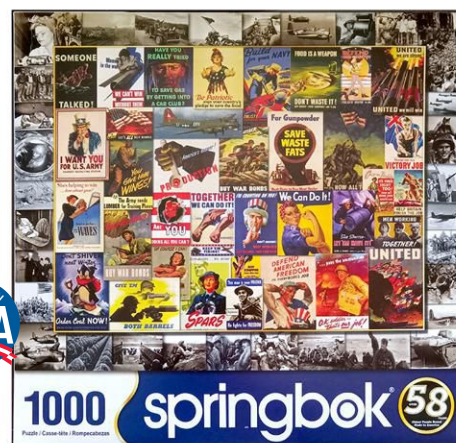
**VFW**  
VFWSTORE.ORG



**NEW! VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY ORNAMENT** Commemorate a milestone in the VFW's history. Makes a great gift. Handcrafted in solid brass with 24K gold finish. 2" diameter, 2.5" tall. Made in the USA.  
1025 \$29.95



**NEW! POPPY COIN** Brass, 2". Comes in a clear plastic envelope. Imported.  
1089 \$11.00



**PATRIOTIC PUZZLE** Vintage war photos and posters. 1,000 pieces. Finished size: 30 x 24". Average time to complete: 8-10 hours. For ages 7+. Made in the USA.  
1235 \$20.00