

Hello Arizona,

As we are gearing up for Christmas and the New Year, busy with our daily lives, there are still many struggling with insecurities. Take the time to help at your local food banks or soup kitchens, it's a wonderful way to give back and help your community. We can also help families by inviting them to our Christmas celebrations and dinners at the Post or by sponsoring a family for Christmas. Whether it's gifts for the family or food items for them to prepare Christmas dinner at their home it will bring joy and something special to be remembered.

Did your Auxiliary have the chance to be involved in a Wreathes Across America Ceremony? If so, please post pictures of your volunteers and auxiliary using hashtags. #AZ2526Americanism

It is a great time of year to remember to check on the condition of flags and make sure they haven't been damaged by the recent storms. This provides an opportunity to educate the community on where and how to properly dispose of their flags. Check with your neighbors if you see they have a flag that needs to be retired. They may not be able to replace the flag on their own and could use a hand. It costs us nothing to be kind.

Have a Wonderful and Safe Christmas and a Happy New Year

## ***Auxiliary Outreach 2025-2026***

**[#AuxiliaryOutreach](#) and [#az2526outreach](#) or [#az2526AuxiliaryOutreach](#)**

December is such a special and magical time of year! I hope everyone is thinking of ways to assist in your communities with so many festivities that need "helpers"!

As winter is upon us, consider reaching out to Salvation Army. They have opportunities throughout the State: [Volunteer Opportunities - The Salvation Army USA Western Territory](#)

There are many fun National Days in December: [National Holidays in December, 2026 | Days Of The Year](#)

Now is the time to think ahead to activities that you can do in January

January 21<sup>st</sup> is National Hugging Day which was created in 1986 by Reverend Kevin Zaborney from Caro, Michigan. [National Hugging Day, January 21 Holidays. Free Warm Hugs.](#) I'm sure you can find an organization where you can give hugs and a helping hand!

There are many other fun National Days in January: [January 2026 Holidays by Day. National, International.](#)

This month's shout out goes to the Nogales Auxiliary 2066 who collected and delivered blankets, sheets, and other items to Crossroad Nogales Mission.

Keep up the hash tagging and keep in mind that this is a good time to read up on the National Citation and think about your own special outreach activity to shout out about: [auxiliary outreach aux aw.pdf](#)

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Winter Conference and hope to hear from your District Presidents about upcoming Auxiliary Outreach activities coming up in your Districts!

***"As you shine your **light**, the world grows **bright**, you are a beacon of **love**."*** Sara Manke, National Ambassador, Auxiliary Outreach, 2025-26.

Remember, You've Got a Friend in Me! Please don't hesitate to ask me if you have questions!



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary  
Auxiliary Outreach Program

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## BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

With the holiday season upon us, we have new opportunities to increase awareness of Buddy Poppy and the VFW National Home. Always think of how you can distribute poppies and educate people about the Home. We have incredible ways to benefit the lives of those in our communities and our veterans.

Have you updated your Auxiliary PAR lately to include Buddy Poppy/National Home? Currently we are at 83% participation officially (86% unofficially) for the program. Certainly, more activities have been held supporting the program. How great would it be if AZ was at 100% by the New Year?! Let Arizona shine!

Here is a little history about the Pollett family and the beginning of the National Home to inspire you:

The VFW National Home welcomed their first residents on March 9, 1925. Annie Pollett, the widow of Sgt. Edward Pollett, WWI veteran, and her six children, Lillian, Howard, Mary, Thomas, Woodrow, and Margaret, moved in after arrangements were made.

At that time, the National Home was a working farm, and the family had chores raising and caring for the crops, cows, chickens, and more. The children went to school in Eaton Rapids, and some graduated from Eaton Rapids High School.

Annie's grandchildren visited the Home in August 2014 and said their parents considered themselves fortunate to "grow up in a safe and secure environment with supportive, caring adults." Lillian worked as a secretary in the Governor's Mansion and lived to be 91. Howard's health was poor, but he played football and basketball in high school and his daughter said, "he would do anything for anybody." Mary moved to Chicago with her husband and, also, lived to the age of 91. Thomas enlisted in the U.S. Navy and survived Pearl Harbor. He was in the Navy for 25 years, and then had a civilian job until retirement. Woodrow also served in the U.S. Navy and married a member of the WAVES. Margaret married and moved to Nebraska to raise her children. Truly a success story of the VFW National Home and its mission to Build Strong Families! \*Information from the VFW National Home newsletter.

Currently the National Home has 10 homes waiting for new residents. The Washington House just had a family success story – the family was accepted and graduated in just 7 months! Remember, though, families have up to 4 years to complete the program. Case Managers help families with guidance, encouragement, and accountability to help them understand their unique challenges and to create a personalized plan for success. The Home offers safe and stable housing, financial guidance, veteran transition support, education and childcare, and community support. To see some of the success stories, visit [vfnationalhome.org](http://vfnationalhome.org). Go to the bottom of the screen and click on “Stories.” Pick any of the videos. WARNING – you may need some tissues!

Our National Home goals, as you know, are to Promote and Increase Awareness of the Home, Educate on Eligibility and the Helpline, 800-313-4200, Purchase a Centennial/Life Membership to the Home, purchase a Tribute Brick, and fulfill our National Citation goals by submitting an outstanding event/activity that creates awareness and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the National Home and promoting the program to National. The VFW Commander-In-Chief, Carol Whitmore, and the National Auxiliary President, Lois Callahan, have partnered in a Special Project for 2025-2026, “Stock the Store.” Donations will enhance the Welcome Center’s retail space into a convenient kiosk accessible to residents and staff. Think of fun, creative fundraisers to benefit this project. Snow days will not need to result in no supplies!

Remember to thank your supporters and say so often. Send them a text or drop them a line to acknowledge their generosity. Sarah Sims is the Community Development Manager and can help you with questions about the National Home. [ssims@nationalhome.org](mailto:ssims@nationalhome.org).

Lastly, keep your Buddy Poppy Program strong. It is so inspiring for you to share your activities. If you are at a loss, borrow another Auxiliary’s idea. Use it as a SWAP. Recently Auxiliary 7968 presented Gold Star Mothers each with a Red Poppy planting kit. This idea was used a year ago by Auxiliary 10254 at a District 5 meeting as a gift for attendees. Buddy Poppy does not need to be limited to official drives. There are many avenues for distribution. How about a door prize for everyone who wears a Buddy Poppy at an event or a meal at your Post? If they wear a poppy, give them a raffle ticket and draw for the door prize during the event/meal. Of course, have poppies available so everyone can participate.

Some activities since the last newsletter include the following:

- Auxiliary 12098 had a “Sangria and Shopping” event where poppies were distributed.

- Auxiliaries 9907, 7400, 1796, and 10386 held Buddy Poppy/National Home Drives (with other programs included, too. 1796 attached poppies to Matchbox cars to help boost donations.
- Auxiliary 1433 hosted a Women's Veterans Day Luncheon with poppies included.
- Auxiliaries 10386 and 6790 handed out poppies at Veterans Day Parades and 6790 enlisted the help of the Girl Scouts.
- Auxiliary 8242 partnered with their Comrades and the Yuma Police Dept. in an annual event Supporting the Special Olympics. They also distributed poppies at their fundraiser for the MCAS Food Pantry.
- Department of AZ District 9 decorated program hats (including Buddy Poppy) at their School Of Instruction (SOI).
- Auxiliary 7400 included Buddy Poppies with their Gifts for Veterans in Care Centers.
- Auxiliary 10254 participated in the Community Festival with the Comrades.
- Auxiliary 12098 participated in the Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) event on Veterans Day with Comrades.
- Auxiliary 7968, along with their Post Commander and District 10 officers, promoted membership during the AZ State Fair at a table adorned with Buddy Poppies.
- Auxiliary 9400 promoted Buddy Poppy at their craft fair.

So creative!

“Honoring the dead by helping the living” and “Building Strong Families.” You’re caring for veterans in creative and innovative ways continues to shine, Arizona!

Hospital

Happy Holidays!

Sometimes I stress myself trying to think of NEW ways to help and entertain our veterans, but then it dawns on me that any motion is better than none. Whether it's an old program with a new twist or just an old program that worked. Patients change and sometimes just need a distraction to pass the time. Remember, talking is one of the easiest ways to get people to share memories. Of course, I also know it's not easy for everyone to start a conversation with a stranger. Think about someone you have known that you wish you could have one more talk with and look at the veteran as a brother or sister. Maybe try even addressing them that way. Even take a note or two on how to start the next time. It will get easier.

Just wanted to remind you all again that there is a hospital grant waiting for you. Only 5 have been applied for this year. So, there's \$10,000 dollars waiting to be spent on our veterans. Honor Escort is part of the hospital program, how about getting your local EMTs or Fire Dept, Coroner's office a body flag? Respect for those who have given all.

On a cheerier note, it's time for Santa and his Elves to make smiles. Candy canes, candy kisses, popcorn, tinsel, garland, funny hats and ugly sweaters are all in order. It doesn't have to be expensive it just has to earn a smile. A smile might even save a life today.

Now I quote from Kim Copson, National Hospital Rep. "Make sure you are filling out your auxiliary reports that go to the Chairmen. All your work deserves to be counted, and the reports show just how much you are doing in your state for our veterans."

And please use #AZ2526Hospital when you post your wonderful work on Facebook.

Just a reminder, be sure to check with whatever facility you visit for their specific wants and needs. It might be different than you imagine. The Phoenix VA wish list is on the Department website.

Again, positive affirmations are always good to share. Look some up on google or make up some little cards with some of your own. I had some fun at Vetsgiving in Phoenix with frogs. I have a lot, very small, and just threw them on the table. Everybody loved them. Forever Rely On God. They just put them in their pocket for a reminder to have faith.

Hopee this message gives you some ideas. Please share back.

Happy New Year!

Amy Timbes

## Legislative Newsletter - December

Becky Baldwin

### ACTION CORPS WEEKLY

Since we kicked off our state-wide Action Corps push on **July 1, 2025**, Arizona has seen steady growth in both subscribers and members responding to Calls to Action.

- **Baseline (7/1/25)**
  - Subscribers: **13,924**
  - Call to Action participants: **71**
- **Current (11/1/25)**
  - Subscribers: **14,306**
  - Call to Action participants: **209**

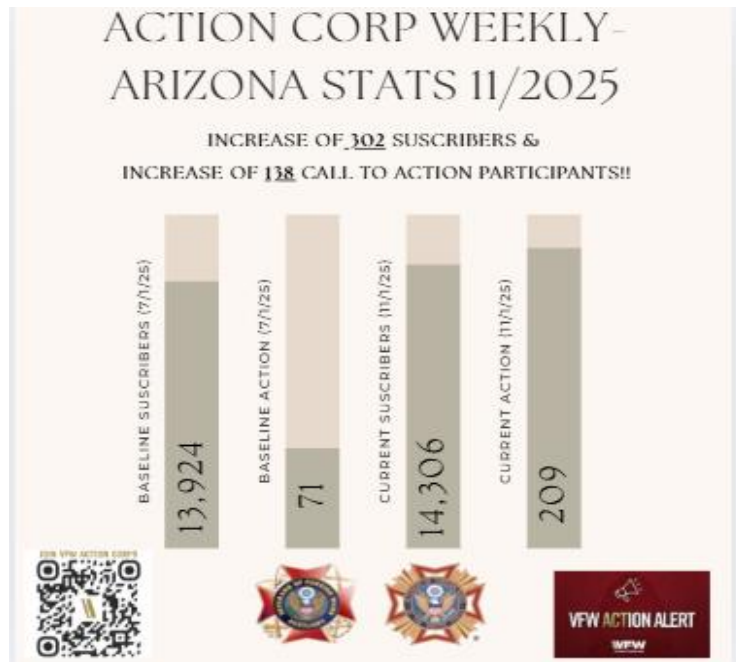
That's an **increase of 302 subscribers** and an impressive **increase of 138 members taking action**—nearly tripling our participation in just a few months!

Thank you to every Post, Auxiliary, and member who has been sharing the sign-up link, promoting the QR code, and reminding folks to open and respond to the alerts. Your efforts are making Arizona's voice stronger on Capitol Hill.

Please continue to:

- Share the **Action Corps Weekly** QR code at meetings and events.
- Encourage members to not only subscribe, but to **click and respond** when a Call to Action hits their inbox.  
Include Action Corps reminders in your Post and Auxiliary newsletters and social media. Together, we're turning subscribers into **active**

**advocates** for our veteran and their families.



Paulette Marshall

Media Relations/Historian

December Newsletter

If you are anything like me, you're in full swing with activities at your post, tis the season after all. Christmas and New Year's upcoming, Thanksgiving just finished what a whirl wind of activities. Hopefully, you are sharing this all on social media and letting the Veterans of your area know all the special things you are doing for them.

Our National Ambassador for Media Relations Kristin DiGiacomo, has a fantastic new Blog on MALTA about taking good pictures of people. She is reminding us of the rule of thirds. I highly recommend that you take the time to read her Blog if you could use a few pointers.

I would hope that you are also going to share some of your Wreaths Across America photos with me as well. I know that so many of you participate in this wonderful event, I have done so myself for several years, but unfortunately, I have a conflict this particular year, so show me all of you in action! Keep the photos coming, keep tagging me and also send to me through email just in case I miss it to [daphine2@hotmail.com](mailto:daphine2@hotmail.com).

Happy Holidays to you all!

Membership - Crystal McCarthy

### **Auxiliaries in the Wild – Membership Highlights**

Our Auxiliaries have been out roaming the state like bright little beacons of service, showing Arizona exactly what our members' commitment to veterans *looks* like. Here's a peek at 2025 (all found on social media through the #AZ2526Membership tag) — a trail of community footprints, handshakes, open conversations, and plenty of good energy:

- **Aux 8807** teamed up with the *Tonto Basin Chamber of Commerce* to spotlight the Auxiliary and strengthen community partnerships.
- **Aux 2066** staffed a table at the *Santa Cruz County Job Fair & Community Expo*, sharing membership information with job-seekers and families alike.
- **Aux 9907** hit *Show Low Days* and even mixed it up with **Miss White Mountain Apache Queen, Shavaughn Titla** — a crown-worthy moment for membership outreach.
- **Aux 769** jumped in to help their Post put on a **Young Kidz Concert**, later giving heartfelt kudos to their volunteers and Comrades on Facebook.
- **Aux 8242** showed their support at the *Yuma Police Department Annual Event*, hosting a table that cheered on the **Special Olympics** community.
- **Aux 10254** connected with neighbors and reminded them that their dedication to veterans endures — even in challenging seasons.
- **Aux 3632** marched proudly in the **Tempe Veterans Day Parade** and then kept the momentum going with membership outreach at Tempe Beach Park.
- **Aux 1433** passed out water and shared who we are at the *Out of the Darkness Walk* supporting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

It's been a bold, beautiful start — and the second half of the year is ready for even more footprints in the sand.

**The Nice List: Celebrating Our Members This Holiday Season** 🌲 ✨

Any season is the perfect time to sprinkle a little extra appreciation across our Auxiliary family. Membership appreciation doesn't need pomp to make an impact — just heart, intention, and a little creativity. Spotlight members on social media so their good work shines beyond the meeting hall. Send a **short-handwritten note** (a bit of old-school charm never misses). **Thank them publicly** at a meeting or event for *anything* meaningful to them — a project they led, help they gave, or simply their steady presence. Offer small gifts like **flowers from your garden**, a homemade card, or a \$5 gift card for coffee or a quick bite. **Host a mini-celebration at a meeting** by keeping business short and letting most of the time be about joy and connection. Even simple touches — a **“you're appreciated” board**, a fun photo wall, a bowl of favorite candies, or a **traveling “Auxiliary High-Five Award”** passed from member to member — create a sense of belonging. *Appreciation doesn't have to be grand to feel genuine; it just has to be shared.* 🎁 ✨

### **A Personal Note:**

As we close out 2025, I'm looking back at everything we've done together — the energy at our MITs, the conversations at district meetings, the connections made at Fall Conference, and the countless phone calls and emails that kept us moving forward. I've had the joy of meeting members all across Arizona and making new friends in every corner of the state. It's been inspiring to see business cards and QR codes in action and to watch our numbers rise simply by showing up in our communities and talking about our mission. With the fire at my own home Post, this year has carried its share of challenges, but this incredible group of members has reminded me over and over again of my *WHY*. Thank you — truly — for every effort, every idea, every moment of support, every phone call offering help. Happy Holidays, and bring it on 2026... we're more than ready!



Irene Nowacki

Scholarships Chairman

Greetings! I hope that you all had a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving. Wither it was with family, friends or complete strangers.

Hopefully you have all had the opportunity to meet and congratulate your Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen winners from your areas. Winter Conference will be very exciting to be able to showcase those that won. Remember, National President Lois Callahan will be visiting us then also.

How have you been doing with your promotions for Scholarships? Do you have any entries yet? Now is the perfect time to get this information out to as many kids as possible before they leave school for winter break. What better time for them to brainstorm and come up with their ideas.

When you are doing a membership drive or information booth, don't forget those quick snap QR codes that are available for those that maybe don't want to linger at your table but are interested in the information that you have.



Youth

## **Our Holiday Mission of Support and Connection**

### **Veterans and Family Support**

The holiday season is envisioned as the most joyful time of the year, a season pictured with celebration, warmth, and gratitude. However, for many veterans, service members, and their families, holidays can also be a period of stress, loneliness, financial strain, or emotional difficulty. A vital role we hold is to ensure these individuals are supported, remembered and connected.

As VFW Auxiliary members, part of our mission is to make sure these individuals are supported, remembered, and connected with through meaningful action by us.

Veterans & Family Support is part of the foundation of this great organization. I challenge all of you rise to the important task of supporting this part of our mission. During these holiday months, its importance becomes especially clear.

While some of us gather in celebration, others face seasonal challenges that aren't always visible. Many of Arizona's veterans live far from family, struggle with mobility issues, or face PTSD, depression, or anxiety that can be intensified. There only family close by might be you or other post members. Think of the Gold Star families, often navigating this season with a mixture of cherished memories and renewed sorrow. For them, the empty chair at the table is a powerful reminder of sacrifice.

Let's not forget financial challenges can also rise sharply this time of year. Veterans living on fixed incomes, single-parent military households, or families coping with recent hardship can feel overwhelmed by holiday pressures. Even the most resilient among us can feel the strain.

What can we do? One of the simplest yet most meaningful gifts we can offer is connection. A phone call, a handwritten card, a visit, a shared holiday meal: each can remind a veteran or family that you and their community have not forgotten them. Let's not forget check-ins with homebound veterans and veteran families or coordinate small teams to

visit those living alone or in care facilities. These visits don't need to be elaborate; often, a sincere conversation or a few minutes of fellowship can brighten a day more than any gift basket ever could. Even a phone or video call can lift spirits. No matter what the method, the message is the same, you are valued, and you are part of our family.

When we reach out and connect, we are strengthening our entire veteran community. Our acts support our mission in its purest form.....service. I challenge you all to do something, however small to support our mission.

Bless our veterans, service members, their families, and our communities. May we close 2025 favorably and open 2026 with renewed vigor to do the great work of this organization.

Regards

Ray Williams

