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Arizona VFW Auxiliary Newsletter

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You might think that you don't matter in this world, but because of you someone has a favourite mug to drink their tea out of each morning that you bought them. Someone hears a song on the radio and it reminds them of you. Someone has read a book you recommended to them and gotten lost in it's pages. Someone's remembered a joke you told them and smiled to themselves on the bus. Never think you don't have an impact. Your fingerprints can't be wiped away from the little marks of kindness that you've left behind.

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President Brenda Kinghorn's Message

Get ready for August!

I have begun my Official Visits in District 3, District 4, District 6 and District 10. These Districts, with their Auxiliaries have hit the ground running since April 1st.

There are several new District Presidents this year, along with new line officers. As I was speaking to these members, in their new roles, I told them we all are new to our positions, including me. I am also nervous, scared and worried about messing up. But we have mentors, experienced, seasoned and/or trusted advisors. They all have been in our shoes, and they would love to help, answer questions, advise and counsel for a better outcome.

With that being said, this year we are trying out something new. To help the Districts, there are going to be teams of 2 members, consisting of line officers and PDPs to attend the District meetings in the Fall. They will help at the District meeting with a "Department School of Instruction" on this year's programs, par reports, membership goals and Q & A. These teams will help the District Presidents though out the year to answer questions or to help with a situation that may have arisen. The teams will be at an additional District meeting only if needed. We have done this, so the Districts Presidents have a go between with the Districts and the Department. Department will be informed of any problems and these can be addressed as soon as possible.

Thank you for all you do and continue to do.
"Let's Do It Do It"

Our National Auxiliary President Lois Callahan's theme -
"From Sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free"



*The PAR report is up and running. The form is behind log in at www.vfwauxaz.org. Please log in and get your Auxiliary PARs caught up and current.

*There is a new PAR checklist to help you keep track of your completed monthly activities. Click [here](#) to view the checklist. Thank you to Linda Buschardt of Auxiliary 10386 who wrote up the checklist and shared it.

*The Department is trying something new this year. There will be one **MIT** in Phoenix that will take place over one weekend. It will start the evening of August 22nd. The flyer is below as well as on the Department website www.vfwauxaz.org under News/Department & National Events. Book your room now.

***Fall Conference** is Oct 3-5, 2025. Click [here](#) for the agenda, banquet and hotel information.

*Recently, Texas has had terrible flooding. Click [here](#) for more information on how your Auxiliary can help out those who need it.



Friday night at the MIT is optional. However, if you attend the Friday night session, your name will be put in a drawing for a free hotel night at Fall Conference. 5 members who attend MIT on Friday night will win a room. Will you be one?? Hope to see you on Friday!

It is the responsibility of the President to provide financial and membership status to their corresponding VFW – **See Sec 810 Item D**. This is the only time the Auxiliary is required to communicate that information to their VFW counterpart.



We've already received inquiries about removing officers. If you are contemplating that action – review **Sec 809B CAREFULLY** and consider the consequences of that action.

If you receive an inquiry from a VFW about starting an Auxiliary at their Post, please contact the Department Chief of Staff Bambi Johnson. We have a set procedure which we are happy to share with the inquiring VFW and to help them start the process.

Please do not send me personal checks for new member dues or life member fees. Those dues and fees must go through the Auxiliary account. This creates a paper trail for the Auxiliary. And the Trustees are supposed to be verifying dues and fees payments when they audit the Auxiliary records. We have a few new Treasurers this year – if you have any questions or need help, please reach out to me or to Asst. Treasurer Kim Harney. After about 3 months you should be able to answer basic questions from the members about the financial status of the Auxiliary. If you answer – “because that was the way I was told to do it” or “I don’t know why we do it that way” – it’s time to call for assistance. Don’t get frustrated – get answers!

What is required to accept the Audit Report at all levels of the organization? The Audit Report must be read by a Trustee or a member in good standing, the person reading the Audit Report makes a motion to accept the Audit Report, another member in good standing seconds the motion. The President asks if there are any questions regarding the Audit Report. Those questions can either be answered by the Trustees or the Treasurer. The President then calls for the vote. The motion is either accepted or not.

Please log into **MALTA** and review the proposed Bylaws resolutions. If you feel strongly about any of them and will not be at National Convention, please let someone who is going to convention know how you feel. Right now you can communicate your opinions to National Chaplain Kim Harney, ND15CM Chrissy Harlan, President Brenda Kinghorn, SVP Melissa Martin, JVP Jeanne Hampton, Chief of Staff Bambi Johnson or me.



Americanism Heather Lyn

Hello Arizona!

It's that time of year again, we have school starting back up, several patriotic holidays, and monsoon season. What does monsoon season have to do with Americanism?

Well knowing how to care for our flag during the season of high winds, rain and dirt storms is something we should know and be doing out of respect for our flag. When caring for our flag during monsoon

season here are a few tips to consider:

- Rotate your flags seasonally to help reduce wear and tear
- Bring flags inside during storms or extreme weather to protect them from damage
- When putting your flag back up make sure to inspect it for damage from the wind rain or sun.
- Cleaning and proper storage of your flags will help to maintain and keep your flag's colors vibrant.

These practices will help your flag remain in good condition. Our flag stands as a beacon of freedom, which was earned by the sacrifice of many. By displaying our flag properly and with pride shows our continued support for the core values of Americanism – freedom, unity and service.

There are so many ways we can share information and facts with everyone young and seasoned alike. What about hosting a game show like Jeopardy? Have members answer questions about our flag, that have point values and at end of game they could turn their points in for a prize. Could ask questions like this:

- In what year was the current flag designed?
- Answer: 1958 by a 17-yr old high school student/Boy Scout named Robert Heft as a school project.

Have fun with it, it may surprise you how many facts you didn't know. I look forward to seeing all the great ideas and creative ways you all did to celebrate the patriotic holidays.

See you all at **MIT**

Auxiliary Outreach Amy Bennett

[#az2526outreach](#) [#AuxiliaryOutreach](#)

Hello Department of Arizona Volunteers!

I've been very happy to see some hash tagging going on as I've been watching for your outreach activities on Facebook!

The goal for Auxiliary Outreach is to work hand-in-hand with other organizations, getting our members out there while you wear something that says VFW Auxiliary (pin, hat, name badge, etc.) Remember to vote on your activities at your meetings! Let's focus on creating **PARTNERSHIPS** with other organizations to help make their events successful. Reach out to your local libraries, food banks, and animal shelters, etc.

A great way to honor President Brenda's special project would be to go to the homeless shelters and volunteer your time during meals or by partnering with a crafting organization and handing out their items to the homeless in your neighborhood parks. Remember you cannot plan the event or give money or items to the event. You are simply there to volunteer your time. **REMEMBER IT IS NOT VOLUNTEERING FOR BUT RATHER VOLUNTEERING WITH!**

Some upcoming Community Service Days that you may want to focus on include:



- August 9 – National Book Lover’s Day is a great opportunity to connect with your local library and see if they need a helping hand. [National Book Lovers Day](#)
- September 11 – Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. On this day Americans across the country are called to volunteer in their local communities in tribute to the individuals lost and injured during the September 11, 2001, attacks, as well as first responders and the many who have risen in service to defend freedom.
- September 16 – National Voter Registration Day’s 2025 season has officially launched! Help get Arizona #VoteReady for their next trip to the ballot box. [National Voter Registration Day](#)

“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!



Buddy Poppy/National Home Peggy Welch

This is going to be an exciting year!

Our VFW Auxiliary Buddy Poppy/National Home Ambassador, Sandra Jeffries, encourages us to set sail with our VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callahan’s theme, “From Sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Our Veterans Who Keep Us Free.” Many of us have already launched our boats with some great events promoting Buddy Poppy and National Home.

Post 1433 Auxiliary, with help from Post 285 and Post 12098 Auxiliaries, hosted a 2 day Day of Service event with Comrades to feed 421 Navy Reserve and Family Members. They promoted Buddy Poppy, and ABC 15 TV was there to film. Post 1433 had another event to support the Carry the Load organization to preserve the sanctity of Memorial Day. Poppies decorated hats and heads. Post 9907 Auxiliary and Post 2364 Auxiliary participated in local events promoting Buddy Poppy and National Home. Post 10254 Auxiliary and Comrades held events promoting veteran-owned businesses and the Fourth of July. Buddy Poppies were distributed, as well. A great start!

Continuing into the year, we can find our **boat** (site of distribution), **gather our gear and equipment** (resources to aid our event), **plot our course** (set up volunteer schedules and opportunities), and then **set sail around our nation** (have successful poppy drives). Keep in mind the following points:

- What is the Buddy Poppy and why do we distribute them?
- Describe your setup and did you communicate with the public?
- What do you want to learn from the experience?
- How many people did you meet, were any veterans?
- Did you recruit any new members?
- What are creative ways to make your event successful?
- How did you draw people to your event/table?
- Is this an event you can do on a regular basis?

Include promotion of the VFW National Home and Eligibility Information/Hotline in every event! Buddy Poppy and the National Home go together. One honors the dead, the other helps the living.

Keep in mind we are celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the National Home in Eaton Rapids, MI this year. Purchasing Tribute Bricks and Life Memberships are ways that we can support Military, Veteran and VFW/Auxiliary families who are setting goals to be successful. The Department of Arizona is dedicated to supporting the Arizona House. A beautiful home that currently houses a family of five who became eligible by one or both parents being a veteran. You can see a picture and floor plan at www.vfwnationalhome.org.

Remember to communicate your Buddy Poppy/National Home events/activities by using the following hashtags: #az2526buddypoppy, #az2526nationalhome, #az2526media, #vfwauxiliaryaz, and #vfwauxiliary. Also, please send me an email at sunlover1102@gmail.com to report your activities. This will make sure I do not miss anything so that I can report to our National Ambassador. The hashtags also help our Auxiliary members come up with ideas for SWAPs.

Let's continue making it a Buddy Poppy filled year helping our Military, Veterans, VFW/Auxiliary members, and communities.

Chief of Staff Bambi Johnson

A healthy Auxiliary is dependent on active and involved members. All existing members have a hand in getting new members to feel like they are welcome to the "family" of your Auxiliary.



The courtship starts with recruitment, but the goal is a lifetime marriage commitment! Once you accept a new member, you are in the dating stage, so put your best foot forward by sharing your passion for our organization.

The first few months your "dating" should include a warm welcome from an officer, welcome committee member or mentor and an orientation presentation or packet outlining our programs, your officer contact information, your Auxiliary Fact Sheet and upcoming events.

Getting a lifetime marriage commitment can only be achieved when you have engaged the member in Auxiliary activities. Be welcoming, fun and appreciative of your membership. Anytime is a great time to work with your Membership Chair to hold a Member Appreciation social!

Make August your Healthy Auxiliary check-up month. Your Welcome team and Mentors can assist with the Healthy Auxiliary Toolkit both at your meeting and various social times. Listen to what your members have to say about changes that have been made and those that they would like to see. Every voice counts...especially those that don't come to meetings.

A good way to assist members to interact with each other outside of your Post home or meetings, is setting up a Facebook Group. A Facebook Group keeps all their posting and photos private among the group members. You can invite your members to join, and they can share ideas, interests and events from their computers or cell phones. This is a great way to also collect pictures for you to share with the program chairmen.



Historian/Media Paulette Marshall

Exciting time of the year for National Convention is just around the corner; I cannot wait to get there and see friends from both the Department of Arizona and around the world. Expect to see many pictures of our Department and others as we participate in the fun that will be had in Columbus, Ohio.

Our National Ambassador for Historian/Media Relations Kristin DiGiacomo has set her current promotion and her focus for this year is for “Auxiliaries using and creating reels to spread the word about our Programs and what each of your Auxiliaries are doing in your communities! Reels are videos that are up to 90 seconds long and can be made up of a single video, multiple video clips, still photos or a combination of everything.”

Malta has instructions on how to create a reel. Instructions can be found under member resources, click the Historian & Media Relations, Websites & Social Media – Websites, How To Create a Facebook Reel.

“Please remember to check your 2025-2026 National Program Book for information on awards and deadlines. It will be available in print at National Convention but you can see it now when you log in to MALTA under Member Resources.”

Both of these resources can also be found on the Arizona Department page - www.vfwauxaz.org under programs/historian/media

I look forward to seeing your Auxiliaries in action through the reels you create, please don't forget to use your hashtags for your program chair and use the hashtag #AZ2526Media so I can easily find your reels and pictures.

Hospital Amy Timbes

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,



In July I began a new adventure. I now volunteer one day a week at the Phoenix VA hospital voluntary services office. It is very informative and rewarding. Interacting with many other volunteers throughout the day. They come from every walk of life but largely are veterans and family members.

There are so many opportunities to volunteer for a few hours or once a week

and more. Especially in the face of costs today and cutbacks, volunteers are not only needed but necessary to fulfill all the jobs. Believe it or not people actually call to see what they might do to help, health care professionals, business leaders, young people and of course retirees. Yesterday I found a new recruit at the beauty shop. She used to volunteer back east and wants to start again. We all need to wear the “Ask Me” button, so much subject matter, lol.

We keep the wish lists available on the Department website www.vfwauxaz.org under hospital to help with donation ideas. Even when working with independent facilities we should inquire about their specific needs. Dealing with their patients, they have a clear view of what can benefit their patients. Also, occasionally go back to your program book (available on both department and national website). There are many ideas there and printable material to have on hand, even volunteer recruitment posters.

Training is around the corner, and I hope many members will take the time to pick the brains of officers and chairmen who work diligently to prepare information and encourage members and more to participate effectively. Aug 22-24 Embassy Suites, Tempe.

We strive to make it worthwhile and fun too. Most importantly, **SMILE** at everyone. Not only do we want to keep veterans and their families safe and cared for we need them to be happy!

See you in Tempe



Legislative Becky Baldwin

☐ **Legislative Waves Rolling Into August:
Gratitude in Action!** ☐

*Lighting the way between Veterans, Families &
Legislators with a wave of gratitude*

As we sail into August, our Legislative Program is already making waves!

Our First Wave: Gratitude.

We're starting this year by focusing on “Waves of Gratitude”—a reminder that positive advocacy begins with appreciation. Legislators work hard (some harder than others), and hearing from us when they *do the right thing* helps build trust and strengthen our partnerships.

Here's how you can catch the gratitude wave:

- **Send a thank-you email or note** to a legislator who supported veteran or military family legislation.
- **Include a story of a veteran your Auxiliary has served—put a face to the issue.**
- **Attach the Action Corps Weekly link so your message is backed by current data and calls to action.**

☐ **Take Action in Arizona: Know Who Represents You**

Want to thank your legislator or share a veteran's story but not sure where to start? Here's how to find your representatives:

- **Find Your Arizona State Legislators:** Visit [Find My Legislator](#)
- **Arizona's U.S. Senators:** [U.S. Senate: States in the Senate | Arizona Senators](#)
- **Find Your U.S. Representative:** [Homepage | house.gov](#)

Pro Tip: Keep it short, personal, and positive—thank them, tell them why you care, and let them know you're a VFW Auxiliary member who votes and advocates.

Coming Up: Let's Connect at MIT!

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at our **Member Involvement Training (MIT) happening August 22–24**. I'll be there to answer any questions you have about the Legislative Program and help you ride the wave with confidence. Whether you're brand new or a seasoned advocate, stop by—I'd love to help.

Membership Crystal McCarthy

- Dive In — The Oceans Four Challenge is Making Waves! □

Ahoy! The Oceans Four Challenge is in full swing, and we need you to help us build our ocean of belonging.

This membership adventure is all about bringing in every eligible family member — that means step, half, adopted family, grandparents, siblings, alongside all the usual ! We're casting a wide net because our mission is stronger when we all swim together. The challenge runs through September 30, so there's still time to hook those new members and help your Auxiliary shine!

Here's the best part: **every** Auxiliary that meets the challenge will earn a \$50 award! It's our way of saying thank you for keeping our sea full of support, strength, and service. Make sure you send me your completed tracking sheets by September 30 — just email them my way at crystal.post10254aux@gmail.com. All the forms and info you need are posted on the Department website at www.vfwauxaz.org on the Membership page to make reporting a breeze.



Get Ready to Dive into the MIT! Our upcoming Member Involvement Training (MIT) is your chance to soak up tips, sharpen your skills, and share your own awesome ideas. Bring your questions, your creativity, and your team spirit — together, we'll make a splash and keep our Auxiliary strong!

Let's ride this wave, grow our Auxiliary family, and show Arizona what the Oceans Four can do! Ready, set, let's make a splash!

P.S. Don't forget to submit your PARs to capture all of your amazing efforts! Every member's hard work deserves to be celebrated and recorded. If you host a membership event that's extra successful, creative, or just downright fun, please shoot me an email separately so I can spotlight and track all the fantastic things happening across our state. Let's keep sharing the wave of inspiration!



Scholarship Irene Nowacki

“Shine your light—others will be drawn by your brilliance”

What better way for us, as the Auxiliary, to showcase not only talent, creativity, passion in Youth but also in our Auxiliary Members?

This year's VFW Auxiliary Scholarship Program is excited to focus on the

National VFW Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarship. National President Lois Callahan wants to encourage members and their direct family members to reach for more and allow the National Organization to be a part of their success. When members give so much, it is only right they can reap the benefits!

How can the Auxiliary participate?

- Share the qualifications
- Encourage members, their spouses and children to apply
- Consider holding fundraisers to increase the amount and escrow fund
- Deadline to submit the National Continuing Education Scholarship entry is February 15, 2026.

Let's see if we can't beat all records for applications from the Department of Arizona! Click [here](#) to get the form. Get the word out!

School has begun and the deadline for the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Scholarships is looming. "How are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?" Visions come to mind. Words. Essays. This year's theme for both Voice of Democracy- open to all students in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades, and Patriot's Pen open to students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades is the same.

Voice of Democracy is worth \$35,000.00 to the winning recorded 3 to 5 minute essay. Patriot's Pen \$5,000.00 for a 300 to 400 word essay. Both are due to the local VFW by October 31, 2025.

Have applications with you. How many times, just running errands, do you meet a youth at a sandwich shop, or at a school/youth event, that may wish to "further their education". These are **NATIONAL** Scholarships. Many times, neighbors may say, "My grandkids live in Colorado". An easy response, "Wouldn't you be proud of your grandchild winning for their state, Voice of Democracy or Patriot's Pen.

Remember the Instructors, too, and genuinely support their efforts by offering Teacher of the Year information- [TeacheroftheYearEntryFormandBrochure.pdf](#)

Looking forward to learning how "You shine your light" for those who keep us free!

Veterans and Family Support Ray Williams

Established in 1914, the VFW Auxiliary has been dedicated to upholding its founding principles: supporting the Veterans of Foreign Wars, serving veterans, serving members, their families, and fostering patriotism in our Nation.



With the Auxiliary members in Arizona, this commitment is very evident in the myriad of ways we tirelessly volunteer time, donate resources, and advocate for the needs of our military community. It is critical we understand that the challenges faced by veterans and their families often extend far beyond their time in uniform.

"Knowledge is Power" means that having knowledge and understanding of something that enables a person the ability to influence situations, make informed decisions, and achieve their goals.

To apply this to the VFW Auxiliary and its principles, specifically Veterans and

Family Support have your list of contacts at available in a rolodex file or on your computer.

The VFW & Auxiliary has some outstanding National VFS programs such as:

- **National Veterans Service (NVS)** - [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Mental Wellness** - [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Financial Assistance for Service Members** - [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Student Veteran Support** - [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Pre-Discharge program** - [CLICK HERE](#)
- **VFW Auxiliary VFS page** - [CLICK HERE](#)

These programs are outstanding, however there are times when applying and waiting on a national program is not the best option in a critical time. I encourage you, your Auxiliary or District to start a directory of local entities that may assist.



Youth JaNice Robertson

I am really looking forward to going to the National Convention this year. I am very excited to meet up with my Youth Ambassador, Shannon Stanley. I know that with her assistance and knowledge we will make this a great year for our youth.

I hope by now you have read last month's newsletter where I mentioned the Second Lady, Usha Vance's, reading challenge. The youth (K-8) have until the 5th of September to accomplish the goal of reading 12 books and submitting for a prize and they have a chance to win a visit to the white house. Read more of this at www.wh.gov/read.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth and what better way of reading than from the **Recommended Reads** in our **Patriotism Through Literacy** in our youth program. Help them to find age-appropriate books. It is divided by age into three categories: Historical Fiction, Americana and/or Educational, and Creative Non-Fiction, Biography and Memoir. The new 25-26 list is in Malta under the Youth Program. Why not purchase a few of these and donate them to your local library or have a youth night where they can enjoy reading them with the veterans.

As in our **Reading Buddies**, where we have the opportunity to reach out and help a child become a better reader. How great it would be to see them excel in becoming more confident in their daily lives. I heard that many of our high school aged youth cannot read past the 4th grade level. If you have the love of reading, you can help our youth find their love in reading.

Illustrating America Contest rules and application forms for 25-26 are also on Malta. The contest ends on March 31st, 2026. Hand out applications in the back-to-school backpacks that most of you give out as school starts. Take them to the schools when you help the VFW with the Patriots Pen as they are for the same age group. Now you have combined programs with **Youth** and

Scholarship. All of our programs work together just be creative add a flag for **Americanism**, tie a **Buddy Poppy** to the backpack. There are so many ways to show our community the love we have for our Past, Present and Future Veterans.

What a great way to let our Youth know that they are seen by handing out **R.A.P.** cards or **Youth Acts of Kindness Certificates**. Again, go to Malta and see the 4 new cards and 2 certificates available to be downloaded.

Never forget the youth of today are our leaders of tomorrow. Let's help them prepare for their future.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary in Arizona | 326 E. Burrows St. | Tucson, AZ 85704 US

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