

Americanism

Hello VFW Auxiliaries! My name is Christina or Crissy Maiville, I am so excited to be the Americanism Chairperson for 2026/2027 during the 250th Celebration of the United States! While I am a relatively new face to the VFW Auxiliary, I have spent a lot of time in other acronym organizations. Starting in high school with the FFA, then got married and was pulled into the Army Reserves FRG, then later when my kids started school the PTO called and I answered. Now I get to spend my time with my husband in the amazing VFW and VFW Auxiliary community!

I am excited to see and learn from the diverse membership in Arizona over the upcoming year. I also hope to bring my past experiences and my own unique style to this position. I am most excited about the POP images each auxiliary gets to create! This is a chance to take something special to your community or post and use that for your social media and marketing! Don't forget the National citation the application is available in Malta, you deserve recognition for all your hard work!

A couple quick housekeeping things to also mention. Please notify me if your auxiliary promoted, participated or recognized any patriotic days or the branch of service birthdays. If you distributed or present American Flags or POW/MIA flags take lots of pictures and post them on Facebook with #AZ2627Americanism. Also please make use of the Citations, and



certificates for businesses available on Malta. Let your community know you appreciate their support of the VFW and VFW Auxiliary. Again, post the pictures to Facebook and use the #AZ2627Americanism. Facebook stalking gives me something to do while I wait to pick up my son from school!

Lastly, some American Trivia! A brand-new flag is flown each day at what residence? This is an easy one! The White House of course!

VFW Auxiliary Arizona Poppy Chairman

“In Flanders Fields the poppies blow....”

Hello, I am Raelene Lam, Arizona Poppy Chairman for 2026 / 2027.

The mission for the Arizona VFW Buddy Poppy Program is to help the state of Arizona, recognize, then reflect on the treasure of this small three-part flower known as the Buddy Poppy.

The original Buddy Poppy is the stem, the red silk pedal and the label. This beautiful poppy is recognized as the memorial flower, which its distribution has raised funds for charitable programs on behalf of the needy and disabled veterans, and surviving family members of deceased veterans.

My wish is for AZ VFW Auxiliaries to implement the Buddy Poppy in every event we host. It is important that our community is familiar of the presence and benefits of the Buddy Poppy. The more it is seen by the public, the more opportunities we will be given to share information on the Buddy Poppy Program.

To share information about the Buddy Poppy Program, we need fun, interesting ways to help our membership, volunteers and the public to learn or become re-introduced to special remembrance “Buddy” Poppy.

On my home post level (#9972 Sierra Vista) my first introduction this year to the Buddy Poppy, I have used GPT to create POP art using our membership as the characters, adding short trivia to leave on the tables in the canteen, also in our dining hall. These cards can be traded on the tables.

This brings me to the third goal for this year, which is to share our ideas, the main mission is to distribute the Buddy Poppies. I want to hear and see how you try to make the Buddy Poppies land in the hands of our

community. If you have a fabulous idea, even if you haven't used the plan yet, it is great to share it with our auxiliaries. We need to educate, flood the community with Buddy Poppies and share ideas and experiences (which will make our program stronger).

This year we will be working under the guidance and expectations of our National Buddy Poppy Ambassador, Donna Marie King.

I am looking forward to meeting you on August 14-16, 2026 Member Involvement Training (aka MIT) in Tempe. MIT will give us an opportunity to network and set up technics to make this another successful year.

The torch: be yours to hold it high.



The illustration shows two women, one younger and one older, focused on making red poppies. The younger woman, on the left, has blonde hair in a ponytail and wears a pink t-shirt with a VFW Auxiliary logo and a name tag that reads 'AUXILIARY PROUD SUPPORTER'. The older woman, on the right, has short white hair and wears a grey t-shirt with a 'BUDDY POPPY' logo. They are surrounded by boxes and a bucket filled with red poppies. One box is labeled 'BUDDY POPPIES VFW AUXILIARY' and another 'HONOR * SERVE * REMEMBER'. A bucket in the foreground says 'BUDDY POPPY WEAR IT PROUDLY'. In the background, a man in a purple VFW Auxiliary shirt is partially visible. The top right of the graphic features the 'VFW AUXILIARY' logo with a Maltese cross emblem and the tagline 'UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES'.

**VFW
AUXILIARY**

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**UNWAVERING SUPPORT
FOR UNCOMMON HEROES**

Due to difficulty obtaining enough Poppies for the 1923 distribution a plan evolved to pay disabled and needy American veterans to make the Poppies.

The plan was presented to the 1923 National Encampment for approval.

Following the adoption of this plan, a VFW Poppy factory was placed in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

All veterans who manufactured poppies for the 1924 distribution were sent to a training workshop by the U.S. Veterans Bureau regional manager in Pittsburgh.

**Department of Arizona VFW Auxiliary Hospital
Program 2026-2027
Patricia Stinson, Hospital Chairman
Plstin@yahoo.com**

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the State of Arizona Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliaries. My name is Patricia Stinson and I am a resident of Mesa, Arizona. I am a proud member and past President of VFW Post 7968 Auxiliary. I have the privilege of being the daughter of a Navy veteran, the wife of an Air Force veteran and the mother of an Army veteran.

Now that that's out of the way, we have started the year out right with a great day at the Phoenix VA Hospital. On July 1, 2026, six of our volunteers (along with volunteers from other organizations) served lunch to over 300 veterans and hospital staff at the Phoenix VA Hospital. This was to help our veterans celebrate the 250th birthday of our great nation.

One of my focus points of this year is to get more people get involved in volunteering to help our veterans. There are numerous ways to volunteer in the Hospital program.:

1. You can become a certified volunteer at any of our VA hospitals. This allows you to go into the patient areas of the hospitals and talk directly to the veterans. If there isn't a VA hospital or VA home in your area, you can check to see if there is a nursing home or hospital that serves our veterans.
2. I am also encouraging members to volunteer through their talents. If you like to sew, crochet, knit etc, you can make and donate many different things our veterans need. (Eg: port pillows for those going through chemo therapy, blankets for those who are confined to a wheelchair).
3. You can also share your love of reading with a veteran. The veterans also love getting cards for special days. As I mentioned at our kickoff at convention, go to google and find a different national day (Eg:

national peanut butter cookie day) and send some cards for that day to veterans in the hospital or nursing homes.

Another of my focus points is our Hospital Grant. We have 48 auxiliaries in the Department of Arizona and only 15 auxiliaries applied for this grant. This is FREE money for your auxiliary to use towards helping our veterans. The application process is very simple and the application is on our website at: <https://vfwauxaz.org>.

This is just a small sample of ways you can give back to our veterans. Please keep in mind to log your volunteer hours as they help us earn VFW Auxiliary awards! The simplest way to do this is to text me at 480-861-6696 or email me a plstin@yahoo.com. All I need is your name, auxiliary #, what you did and the hours you spent there. Thank you for all that you do for our veterans! Let's make this an amazing year!

Legislative

My name is Connie Hargreaves, and I am this year's coach for our Legislative Advocacy Team. My qualifying veteran is Thomas Hargreaves, a retired Navy Veteran who served did three tours in Vietnam.

From First Down to field goal or touchdown, the VFW Auxiliary voices can be heard over the roar of the crowd. We need to run down the field, make our downs and passes and beat the opposing team of lawmakers.

We are Team Veteran Advocacy! We are the voice!

Audible - talk to lawmakers

Defense – know the bills and the reasons, pay attention

Victory – pass on knowledge to complete the goal

Offence – use the VFW tools

Carry – don't drop the ball, take it to the finish

Assisted – rely on your team and members

Completion – make your voice count

Yard – one bill, one step at a time, carry and protect, go that last yard

Recently, our lawmakers got a surprise. Thanks to Action Corps Weekly and Voter Voice, nearly 13,600 advocates have already joined the VFW's campaign urging Congress to remove disability compensation offsets from the Take Care of America's Veterans Act (H.R.9237/S.4744), generating a record of more than 46,800 messages to lawmakers nationwide.

More than half of those advocates took action with the VFW for the first time, demonstrating that veterans, families and supporters across the country are united in one message: veterans should not be asked to fund veterans' benefits.

JOIN OUR TEAM! Just go to <https://votervoice.net/VFW/register> and become an advocate.

There are a lot of downs needed to get to our goal line. Team Veteran Advocacy is the best defense to not only roll over the lawmakers' offense but to also be the offense in getting out the information, defending our Veterans and families by Congress doing the right thing.

Please check out <https://vfwauxaz.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=79265> to find more tools to defend our military through advocacy, education, talking and showing our Priority goals.

WE ARE CURRENTLY FIRST AND GOAL!

MEET YOUR CANDIDATES AND VOTE WITH A VETERAN IN MIND!!

Historian Media Relations

Paulette Marshall

Welcome to the new Auxiliary year! Department Convention was busy as always. I have been blessed to see so many of you through the last year. Sorry if I didn't get connect with you one on one at the convention. Know I saw you but it is definitely busy being the Media Relations chair, constant camera in hand. If you didn't attend, you really missed out. I love connecting with friends old and new.

A quick introduction of myself. As well as being the returning Historian/Media Relations Chair, I have been a life member since 2021 and have found an absolute home with the Dept. of AZ Auxiliary. The mentoring I have received through MITs, District Meetings and just the ability to ask questions is a testament to the strength and commitment of the Auxiliary to bring fresh faces and encourage new member participation.

I am the wife of Navy Brown Water Vietnam Veteran, daughter of an Air Force Veteran, sister of two Army Veterans, one a Panamanian Veteran, mother of Army Afghanistan Veteran as well as mother of a still serving Air Force Iraqi Veteran who is currently stationed in New Mexico. So no loyalty to any particular branch of service, just an absolute dedication to all of our veterans.

This year one of the most important goals from the National Auxiliary Media Relations Ambassador is not to only document our current activities, but to be eligible for the National Award, it is time to remember those who came before us, the purpose to digitize our history. Each auxiliary needs to create their history story and post on social media (any forum of your choice).

Feel free to contact me if you need help in creating the videos, there are great resources available to all of us. Hoping to see many of you at the upcoming MIT in August, so we can work one on one, meet face to face and facilitate fantastic communication this year.

Membership

Bambi Johnson



In the 250 years of freedom that this wonderful United States of America has enjoyed, approximately 41 million people have served in our military and still that is only about 2% of the population.



Courtesy of the approximately 41 million Americans who have served in the military since 1775.

Let us have a military pride campaign this year,
"Who Do You Stand For?"

Have members carry a card with the names of all family members who served in the military throughout our country's 250 years. Keep the card with your auxiliary card and view it every time you need that auxiliary card, to revitalize your pride and dedication to our mission because, *You stand for Them.*

Although the Auxiliary Outreach Program is no longer a national program, partnering with outside organizations has proven to be a good source of new members. Please continue to assist other organizations anytime there is an opportunity to share information about our organization. Patriotism is very high during this 250th anniversary year and we must take advantage of that fact.

Please plan to attend this year's Member Involvement Training (MIT) to learn recruiting tips and how to assess articles to increase your membership totals. People join organizations that relate to their interests or beliefs. By learning to share your passion for helping veterans and your communities, you can engage others to want to do the same.

Help Us

NAME OUR NEWSLETTER Mascot!



Meet our fun little gal—our new
Arizona newsletter mascot!

She'll be popping up throughout the year
with tips, reminders, and a few surprises.

But first, she needs a name!

WE'RE INVITING
ALL ARIZONA MEMBERS
TO SUBMIT THEIR
Best Name Ideas!



CONTEST RUNS
Now through
AUGUST 15, 2026



THE WINNING NAME
will be chosen by the
Department President
and revealed in the
SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER!



**AND THE FUN
DOESN'T STOP THERE...**

Once she has a name,
let's find her each month!
Look for her hidden
throughout the newsletter.
See if you can **FIND HER!**

SO PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAP!

Send us your best name idea and help welcome our
newest *Team Arizona* friend!



**THANK YOU FOR BEING PART
OF THE FUN AND THE TEAM!**



VFW NATIONAL HOME

Hello Arizona! This year I will be the Department of Arizona National Home Chairman. Many of you know me from last year, but for those that don't let me tell you a little about myself. I spent most of my adult life in Tempe, AZ and in 2020 my husband and I were looking for a less hectic place to live, so we moved to Three Points, AZ just outside Tucson. There my husband joined the VFW as a Vietnam Marine, and I joined the Auxiliary under him. I became active in 2022, first as Buddy Poppy Chairman for Auxiliary 10254, and, later as Trustee. Last year I was honored to be your Buddy Poppy/National Home Department Chairman. This year I look forward to continuing to promote the National Home with all of you.

The program kickoff at the Dept. Convention was awesome. We have a football theme this year that will be carried on throughout the year. To reach a touchdown each Auxiliary will be encouraged to

- *Creatively Promote What and Where the National Home is,
- * to Educate about Who is Eligible for the program, and
- *to Provide Financial Support for the programs at the Home.

Your field goal will be an entry for the National Citation Award for most creative education of what and where the National Home is located.

To promote awareness think of any military, National Guard, or veteran activity that families with dependent children may be attending. Bring your handouts (available from www.vfwnationalhome.org) and the QR code. Perhaps a family member would be interested. Adult kids of VFW and Auxiliary members may be eligible if they have dependent children. One of the National Home's goals is to keep every home filled.

Financial support can be in the form of Life Memberships and Tribute Bricks, but there are other ways to provide support, too. Some are to

support the Health and Happiness fund, sponsor Christmas gifts for the kids, and donate to the 4-H program. I will be sharing in more detail during the upcoming year. You will each be my Fantasy Football team members for the Home team (National Home team, that is).

Huddle together with your Auxiliary members to call your plays for the year. We will have some fun during the year with National Home Trivia, as well.

Stayed tuned to the Jumbotron for more news and ideas!

Sincerely,

Peggy Welch

Sunlover1102@gmail.com

480-570-8876



This exciting Auxiliary year ties nicely into the 250th birthday of our great county. Students have an opportunity to express their patriotism, support of

and appreciation for service of our veterans throughout all branches, while at the same time competing for tremendous scholarship dollars.

Our main goals are to 1) encourage student participation; 2) recognize the recipients who are selected; 3) promoting scholarship opportunities and 4) assisting in the increase of funds to be given in the form of monetary prizes.

Also be aware that individual auxiliaries may also offer their own scholarships and we want to also promote them.

- The National Continuing Education Scholarship has a deadline of 2/15/27.

- The deadlines for the VFW Auxiliary's Young American Creative Patriotic Art (3-dimensional and 2 dimensional) 3/31/27.

- The Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Scholarship applications due by 10/31/26.

- The "Sport Clip Help a Hero Scholarship" is available for a Fall semester with applications due between 1/1-4/30 and for the Spring semester 8/1-11/15.

Help change students' lives by helping to reduce their education costs!
Spread the word about all Auxiliary and Post scholarships.

Submitted by: 2026-27 Scholarship Chair Alison McHose, Auxiliary 10254, Three Points, AZ - email: amchose@gmail.com

Veterans and Family Support

Irene Nowacki

Greetings VFW Auxiliary members!

My name is Irene Nowacki. It is my honor to be the Veterans and Family Support Chairman this year. I look forward to working with all of you on promoting this most important program.

Veterans and Family Support is the one program that MUST be completed each year. We must advocate for our veterans on mental health, PTS(d) awareness and so much more.

This year we have a few items that we really need to push to get the help that our veterans need. Over the next few months, I will focus on each one to give you ideas on how to promote these and help your communities and auxiliary.

Make sure that you read the monthly department newsletters for more information. I am always open to any questions that you have. I will gladly answer them in the newsletters that way everyone will be informed.

Remember, we are still using the QR codes to share with potential members and current members gain information on each program.

See you at National Convention in Reno. Safe travels to all.





Hello Team Arizona from Youth Chair Crystal!

I am beyond excited to kick off this year as your Department Youth Activities Chairperson! As a lifelong Denver Broncos fan, combining football season energy with Youth Activities feels like the perfect game plan for an incredible year ahead.

This year, our focus is simple: start where we are, use what we have, and make meaningful connections with the youth in our communities. We don't need giant budgets or complicated programs to make a lasting impact. Sometimes the smallest efforts create the biggest wins.

Our game plan this year revolves around three simple “plays”:

Play #1 – Build the Foundation

We'll focus on creating strong relationships through simple outreach, literacy projects, patriotism, creativity, and visibility in our communities. This is where we plant the seeds for future growth.

Play #2 – Draft Your Team

No successful team works alone! We'll encourage partnerships with schools, libraries, scouts, youth groups, community organizations, and fellow Auxiliary members who want to jump in and help make a difference.

Play #3 – Run the Play

This is where ideas come to life! From art projects and reading initiatives to Lending Libraries and community events, we'll take what we've built and put it into action in ways that work for each Auxiliary.

Throughout the year, I'll be sharing simple ideas, resources, seasonal activities, and easy ways your Auxiliary can participate without feeling overwhelmed. My goal is to help make Youth Activities approachable, fun, meaningful, and something every Auxiliary feels confident tackling.

At the end of the day, our Youth Programs are about more than activities. They're about building patriotism, kindness, leadership, literacy, confidence, and community connections that can last a lifetime.

So, grab your playbook, Team Arizona — because I truly believe this is going to be another amazing year!