Americanism

Christina Maiville

Happy October Auxiliaries! I want to start by saying thank you to all of the Auxiliaries for your hard work in September. Between September 11th, POW/MIA recognition, Gold Star recognition, and Suicide awareness September is a heavy month to get through. I greatly appreciate efforts by everyone to recognize those whose hard work often goes unnoticed behind the scenes. I'm looking forward to continuing to see everyone's pictures on Facebook as the busy holiday season is rushing towards us! Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas are challenges in and of themselves then trying to add Americanism into the mix up the challenge level! Halloween is a great opportunity to dress up as your favorite Americana Icons like Uncle Sam or the Statue of Liberty whose birthday is October 28,1886. Maybe dress up as your favorite Sailor to help celebrate the Navy's birthday October 13,1775. As we look forward to November this could be a great opportunity to show your community appreciation. In MALTA under the Americanism program are premade citations that are a great way to acknowledge schools or businesses showing patriotism! I am sure everyone has a jam packed December with work, family, and social plans. Just remember the youngest branch of the Military's birthday is December 20th. Try not to forget about the Space Force! Take time for your Auxiliary members too, enjoy the holidays as we all continue Serving America's Heroes and keep Evolving for the Veterans!

VFW Auxiliary Arizona Poppy Chairman

Raelene Lam



I am so excited for our Department of Arizona enthusiasm on sharing Buddy Poppies with everyone.

Most popular question at this point is when we will have access to the 2026/ 2027 Buddy Poppy Display form, I should have the answer soon, but to resolve the immediate issue use the previous year's form just to keep the information of your Auxiliary and/or Post Display in order. As soon as we have the new form, you can then transfer the information. I appreciate both your patience and determination to get moving with this program.

With Veterans Day around the corner, please do your best to include the Buddy Poppies in your festivities. Making centerpieces for your lunch, Boutonnieres or gifts made from the Buddy Poppies could be a fabulous way to share them with our state of Arizona.

Let’s flood our social media with where we are going to be during Buddy Poppy Drives, Veteran Day Parades and other events we are hosting or taking part.

Once the events are over, share those beautiful photos of the events and the ways Buddy Poppies were used.

Please include me with all your ideas, things you have learned about people you have met while sharing the Buddy Poppies.

Sometimes, Buddy Poppy Drives are the only experience or contact the public has with the VFW & VFW Auxiliary. Make sure you listen to the public, especially if they are moved to share their connection with our military. This time is a great opportunity to invite them to events that are open to the public and share information about our other programs.

Having QR Codes for our programs handy are wonderful for those techy people. Also bringing calendars of VFW events, flags, applications, etc. gives you more chances for conversations for the public to see us as a great place for fellowship, social activities and to view us as part of the community.

My home VFW had a joint End of Summer Luau with our Auxiliary and MOC Pup Tent 13. We used this opportunity to include the Buddy Poppies in the Luau scene.





I hope you have fun developing ways to bring the Buddy Poppies to the attention of our community.

Raelenelamsierravista@gmail.com

Department of Arizona VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program 2026-2027

Patricia Stinson, Hospital Chairman
Plstin@yahoo.com

Welcome Fall and cooling off into the 90s!! What a wonderful time of year to go out and about. It's also a great time of year to think about what we can do for our veterans in our VA hospitals, VA homes and other facilities that help our veterans.

I am very pleased to have received several invitations to visit your district meetings. I am really looking forward to speaking with you all and answering questions. I am also going to ask you for some wonderful ideas to share with other auxiliaries on how to use the hospital grant.

Here is a great example of how our auxiliaries can work together with other organizations to help our veterans and utilize the hospital grant! VFW Auxiliary 10386 purchased memorial flags for a local care home that services numerous veterans in that community. The date to present the flags (purchased with the hospital grant and money from the VFW Riders) to Cornerstone Caregiving worked out to their "Grand Opening" Ribbon Cutting Event on September 15th.

Members of the VFW Auxiliary 10386, the VFW Riders District 9, Connie Hargreaves District 9 Auxiliary President, the Kingman Chamber of Commerce, Caregivers with Cornerstone Caregiving and other community members were in attendance.

Each of the Memorial Flags presented are also accompanied by a note on the VFW Auxiliary Letterhead, designating "the Flags are made possible by the Department of Arizona VFW Auxiliary

Hospital Grant" and inviting the "family members" to visit with us for any needs or to speak about their Veteran's story.

Remember to let me know when your auxiliary does anything for our veterans that are in the hospital or a care home. If you would like me to attend any of your activities, please let me know when and where and I will do my best to be there. Also, remember to send me pictures of your activities so I can send them to National. I really love reporting your activities to National so I can brag on our auxiliaries!!

Legislative

Connie Hargreaves

TEAM VETERANS: GET YOUR GAME PLAN READY!

All right, team—bring it in!

Legislative Day is coming, and preparation starts before we take the field. Our mission is clear: help lawmakers understand the needs of veterans, service members, caregivers, and their families. Every member has a role, and every prepared voice strengthens our team.

STUDY THE PLAYBOOK

Start with VFW’s Priority Goals. Learn the issues, review your talking points, and check the facts. Know who represents your legislative district and how to contact their office. Use our legislative training materials to build confidence and understand how an idea moves toward becoming law.

PRACTICE YOUR PLAYS

You don’t need a long speech. Practice a short introduction, explain one concern, share a verified fact or local example, and make a clear request. Stay respectful, listen carefully, and give legislative staff the same courtesy you give the lawmakers.

BUILD THE TEAM

Coordinate with your Post, Auxiliary, and legislative leadership. Decide who will speak, who will take notes, and who will handle follow-up. Bring concise materials that lawmakers can review after your visit. Learn how Arizona’s Request to Speak system works so you’re ready when opportunities arise.

FINISH THE DRIVE

Our work continues after the meeting. Send promised information, record questions and next steps, and report back accurately. Follow-through turns a good conversation into lasting advocacy.

We have the mission. We have the team. Now let’s prepare, show up, and carry veterans’ voices into the conversation!

ONE MORE PLAY: YOUR EARLY BALLOT!

My challenge to you: complete, sign, seal, and send in your early ballot by Friday, October 16! That’s our team challenge date—not the official election deadline. Give your ballot time to arrive and track its status at my.arizona.vote.

Already voted? I’d love to celebrate with you! Email a photo of your early-voting sticker to tlc3conniet@yahoo.com. Please share only your sticker—not your ballot or voting choices.

For a separate chance to win a prize, email me with the subject “Team Veterans Drawing.” I Voted sticker photo is not required to enter but would love one, and sending a sticker photo does not provide an additional entry.

Historian Media Relations

Paulette Marshall

Well, it is time for the fun to begin! The “holiday” season is upon us, and we are all busy creating memories and doing excellent work for our Veterans with activities galore: Halloween, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. Some are having Military branch birthdays, Stand Downs, Wreaths Across America, and so much more. Now is a great time to show off exactly how much we contribute to the success of this organization with our partners, the VFW Comrades. One Mission with multiple organizations working together to assist those who have signed on the line for all of us. Please be sure to be taking pictures, documenting, tagging, hash tagging and preserving the evidence of the mission.

I’d like to see us start a game of Tag You’re It. Tag another Auxiliary in addition to the Department of Arizona Facebook page, showcasing your activities, with the challenge for them to pass along their great works, tag you back but also tag an Auxiliary whether it is in your district or anywhere else. I will have a surprise for those who get a response at Winter Conference, so be sure to tag me as well (https://facebook.com/daphine2).

Continue to work on your National Award Citation project, dig through those archives, I was very lucky in my digging and found

the rosters for the Men's Auxiliary. It may seem silly but I got very excited, it reminds me of doing family trees. Have a great spooky season!

Membership

Bambi Johnson

Engage new members with a solid plan during their first year as an Auxiliary Member.

- The first 3 months are the most critical to show a new member that they are valued and appreciated.
- They just paid to donate their time and energy to our cause and should receive an orientation on
- programs and benefits and mentoring to help develop a feeling of commitment and belonging.

Be sure to utilize the New Member Orientation Checklist.

Within The First Week
Call or email the new member to introduce yourself. Offer your contact information should that new member have any questions. If your Auxiliary has a website or Facebook page, tell them about it so they can see what's going on. Provide a calendar of upcoming events.

Encourage them to create a member profile in MALTA and give them instructions on how to load their card to their wallet.

Within The First Month
Invite the new member as soon as possible to whatever Auxiliary event is coming up next, whether it be a meeting, a community service project, or something else. Offer to pick them up if they need a ride. Or if it's a family event, be sure to let them know that

anyone can come. They might feel more comfortable coming with a family member or friend. Be sure to send them a reminder at least three days out from the event. And immediately following the event, send an e-mail or handwritten note saying that you're glad they came.

Give them a New Member Packet with the items available on the national VFW Auxiliary website (www.vfwauxiliary.org).

Within The First Two Months
Your Auxiliary will most likely have a meeting within this time period. Specifically invite the new member and save them a seat. Have a copy of "Understanding VFW Auxiliary Traditions" printed out, and make time to explain each of the items on it. Much of it will be entirely new to them.

Within The First Three Months
Scheduling is difficult, but try to meet up for coffee, and see if the new member has any questions about what they have been involved with so far. Have a copy of the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws and Ritual available in case a question comes up that you can't answer.

The goal with each of these steps is to maintain contact with the new member in order to engage them in your Auxiliary as soon as possible. Engaged members actively participate in Auxiliary meetings, events, special projects and leadership opportunities. Once you have engaged that member and extended that hand of friendship, continue to nurture that relationship. An engaged membership equals a healthy Auxiliary!

Partner up **Mentoring** – Utilize the knowledge of an existing member by matching new members with them and

having an orientation package with information about our traditions, officer contact info, upcoming events & programs.

Scholarship
Alison McHose



Fall in Arizona - Scholarships and Cool Weather are On Our Minds!!

For those of us who have lived in areas where four seasons are the norm, the Arizona Fall feels different. Much cooler weather, accompanied by clouds in the air; residuals of monsoon season rains. The Fall in Arizona is a much-welcomed friend.

As we enter this period, we must be vigilant to follow up with contacts we have made to spread the word about our wonderful

scholarship opportunities. Whether it be from visiting schools, to emailing family and friends, to speaking before homeschool groups, we must continue to spread the word. As the October 31st deadline for the VFW's Voice of Democracy oral essay and Patriots' Pen written essay approaches, we must work hard to get the applications submitted. As the months progress, we will be involved in celebrating these applicants at ceremonies or dinners in our local posts, auxiliaries and districts across our amazing Copper State.

For the scholarships at the VFW Auxiliary level, we have some time. The National VFW Auxiliary's continuing education scholarship has a deadline of February 15, 2027, along with the Department of Arizona's continuing education scholarship, and the merit scholarship for high school seniors are both due on April 1, 2027. The Auxiliary's Young American Creative Patriotic Art (both 3D and 2D) are both due on March 31, 2027. Our Scholarship National Ambassador Kim Davis, is encouraging auxiliaries to host "Red Carpet Events" for all of the young students who apply for our patriotic art awards. Participating auxiliaries will be eligible for a $25 award and recognition at the next national convention. Please keep working hard to educate, instruct and promote our scholarships to as many people as possible!

V F W
NATIONAL HOME

Hello Team Arizona! We are four months into the season, and I am inspired to see that so many of you are working the program. We have many opportunities to Promote the Home and Educate on Eligibility. Our National Ambassador, Mary Anne Kreutz, shared an excellent idea for this activity. Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Events are presented for National Guard and Army Reserve personnel after their deployments. It is the perfect environment to start the conversation. For more information and dates in AZ contact usarmy.usarc.63d-rd.mbx.yellow-ribbon@army.mil. StandDowns are another opportunity. Some locations and dates coming up are:

- Lake Havasu City StandDown, Saturday, Oct. 17th, LHC Aquatics Center
- Navajo County StandDown, Friday, Oct. 23rd, Ethel Berger Center
- Pinal County StandDown, Saturday, Nov. 21, HOHP Veterans Transition Center. Contact Arizona Veterans Stand Down Alliance for more details.
- VA Homeless Veterans StandDown, Sierra Vista, Oct. 23rd, contact Aly Paslay-Bennett, 520-241-0082, alyxandria.paslay-bennett@va.gov

Continue to Educate on Eligibility. Remember, Active Military with dependent children, Veterans with dependent children, and Adult Children with a parent who qualifies for or is a member of the

VFW or Auxiliary and have dependent children are eligible. Parents, widows, widowers and guardians of the children are also eligible. Do you know any members with children and families who are struggling? They may be eligible. It is worth mentioning and could give hope to a struggling family.

Our Auxiliaries are proud sponsors of the National Home, and last year, along with the VFW and individual donors, raised $134,000 to make the Retail Store at the Welcome Center a reality. Every amount helped! Residents are now able to buy food, sundries, and even produce from the RAVE garden. Purchases can be made while the store is open and after-hours.

Are you thinking of how to support the National Home financially? Life Memberships and Tribute Bricks are always available. For $100 you or your Auxiliary can purchase a life membership or gift one to someone. Nonmembers can purchase an Associate Life Membership for the same price. Tribute Bricks are now $200 and Centennial Bricks are still available for $500. This year Auxiliary 9401 presented a brick honoring Dallas Emery for her hard work and dedication. What a great memory!

The National Home has some wonderful projects in the works this year. They are renovating an area of the Community Center for Youth Innovation. It is now fully funded and will encourage learning through STEAM exploration and promote creativity, teamwork, and problem solving with the kids. Also fully funded is the Early Education Playground. Projects that still need to be funded are the VFW National Home Theater where families can watch movies with the full movie theater experience, and the

National Home Gym where residents can work out in a supportive community. These can be some projects to support and have some fun with. Challenge someone to do curls. Loser donates $10. Start a challenge for number of miles walked with donations to match.

I will leave you with some trivia: In 1922, one of the World Series games was postponed due to darkness. Proceeds from the makeup game - $25,000 – were donated to charity, helping to fund the beginning of the VFW National Home.

Veterans and Family Support

Irene Nowacki

Veterans & Family Support



Well, we have made it. The spooky season is upon us but do not fear, we are here to help.

Do you know of anyone that needs a little assistance. The **Auxiliary Rack Card** is a great source of quick reference

information. Do you have Rack cards available at your events? They are printable on the VFW Auxiliary website or if you would like to purchase them in bulk, they are available through the VFW Store. It is a wealth of information for things ranging from VA Caregivers Support, Homeless Veterans Assistance, Care center for Women Veterans and so much more. Keep these little beauties handy for any instance that you may be speaking with someone that is in need.

Do you know if your Post has adopted a unit yet? If not, please print out the **Adopt-a-Unit** application and suggest to your comrades to do so. This will help us, help current service men and women in the National Guard and their families develop supportive relationships with their units before, during and after deployments.

There are many ways that you can assist your adopted unit. Holding Family Days events where you have a BBQ and games. Maybe a water slide for the kids. Having Holidays with the families. Doing a white elephant exchange or a Christmas tree lighting party. Holding meetings that inform families of important programs that may help them now and in the future. Working on community projects together. Maybe cleaning up the local cemetery where you can say the names of the veterans that have gone before us so that they are never forgotten. Let us not forget the exciting Welcome Home parties. Let's let our local heroes know that we appreciate all that they are doing for this country and us.

Our service men and women deserve all the kudos and recognition for their hard work protecting this great country of

ours. Do your part and reach out to them. Help in any way possible.

Next month I will highlight Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness.



Resources for Veterans, Active-Duty Military and Their Families

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
816-756-3390
vfw.org

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary (VFW Auxiliary)
816-561-8655
vfwauxiliary.org

VFW National Home Military & Veteran Family Helpline
800-313-4200
vfwnationalhome.org/get-help

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988 then Press 1 or Text 838255
veteranscrisisline.net

Military OneSource
800-342-9647
militaryonesource.mil

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Benefit Line: 800-827-1000
va.gov







Military.com
www.military.com

Veterans Employment and Training Service
866-4-USA-DOL
(866-487-2365)
dol.gov/vets

Center for Women Veterans
855-VA-WOMEN
(855-829-6636)
va.gov/womenvet

Military Connection
militaryconnection.com

National Military Family Association
703-931-6632
militaryfamily.org

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
988 or 800-273-8255
988lifeline.org

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
(800-422-4453)
childhelphotline.org

TRICARE®
www.tricare.mil

Assistance for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
(877-424-3838)
va.gov/homeless

VA Caregiver Support Line
855-260-3274
caregiver.va.gov

Make the Connection
maketheconnection.net

National Alliance of Families POW-MIA
nationalalliance.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-7233
thehotline.org

Children-Youth-Teens
militaryonesource.mil/parenting/children-youth-teens/



Unwavering Support
For Uncommon Heroes

www.vfwauxiliary.org

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Adopt-a-Unit

- Over **121,000 military and family** members are being actively supported by VFW Posts and Auxiliaries through the VFW Adopt-a-Unit program.

- Popular examples of Adopt-a-Unit activities:
  - **Family Days**- VFW understands the importance of family to the military member and their mission
  - **Welcome Home & Deployment events**
  - **Holiday events**
  - **Meetings and Support Seminars**
  - **Community Projects**- Annually, VFW posts ***donate $45 million dollars*** and ***5 million volunteer hours*** to community activities.
  - **Direct assistance**- lawn care, auto repairs, renovations to help accommodate a newly wounded service member
  - **And much more…….**

- VFW Posts work with unit commanders and senior enlisted personnel to develop supportive relationships with units before, during and after deployments. We offer a vast network of free resources and a variety of direct support for military members and their families.

- If your unit is interested in being adopted:
  - Check if someone in the unit is already a member of a local VFW Post.
  - Use the "Find a Post" locator on VFW's website: vfw.org/FindaPost
  - Contact VFW National HQs: m.a.p@vfw.org or 816.756.3390

Hello Team Arizona from Youth Chair Crystal!

Trunks, Treats & Teams!

Fall is here, and Trunk or Treat events offer a fun way to welcome families, connect with youth, and show our communities what the VFW Auxiliary is all about!

A few years ago, I heard an idea that has stuck with me: **an Auxiliary had a "trunk" for each program!** Imagine walking through an event where every decorated trunk introduces families to a different part of our mission. What a creative way to turn Halloween fun into opportunities for learning, service, and connection!

An Americanism trunk could feature patriotic decorations and a quick flag trivia game. Veterans & Family Support could invite children to make thank-you cards for veterans. A Scholarships trunk could introduce families to our contests, while **Youth Activities** could offer a simple craft and information about Illustrating America and your upcoming Lending Library. Reach out to your auxiliary and see how you could put this together.

BONUS: Give youth a role in the event, too. Invite Scouts, school clubs, youth groups, and members' children or grandchildren to help design decorations, create games, or run activities alongside adult volunteers. They bring imagination and energy—and gain a chance to practice teamwork and leadership.

Treats Beyond the Candy Bowl

Giveaways don't have to be sugary to be exciting! Coloring books, reading books, colored pencils, puzzles, and small toys make great alternatives to candy. Think mini activity books, bookmarks, stickers, or pocket-size games. Choose items appropriate for the ages attending, and consider asking community partners to help supply them. A child might finish a piece of candy before getting home, but a book or puzzle can keep the fun going!



Three More Reasons to Get Youth Involved

October 24 — Make a Difference Day
Let youth help choose a need in their community, then tackle it together. Collect needed items for a veterans' organization, clean up a neighborhood space, or assemble care packages using a recipient organization's wish list. Even one hour can make a difference!

November 13 — World Kindness Day
Challenge youth to spread kindness through small, thoughtful actions. Make cards for veterans or senior residents, write encouraging notes for classmates, or create a "kindness chain" with a paper link for each kind deed. Ask them: "Who could use a little extra kindness today?"

November 15 — America Recycles Day
Turn creativity into service! Invite youth to make decorations or useful crafts from clean, reused materials, organize a book-and-toy swap, or learn what their local recycling program accepts. Let older youth create signs to teach others how to recycle correctly.