

Americanism

Christina Maiville



Happy September VFW Auxiliaries! I am so excited for the fall season and the pumpkin spice everything, though I am the person that must wait until the first day of fall to partake in the first pumpkin spice latte! As we move into the latter part of 2026, I want to look back for just a moment at everything that has happened in the last two months. MIT was A LOT, but such a great opportunity to learn and share a vast amount of information. A big thanks to Amanda Granillo and Jeanne Madlangbayan from Humana for joining in the Auxiliary shenanigans! Even though Fall Conference fell on the Holiday weekend the VFW and Auxiliary still created a weekend packed full of learning, camaraderie, laughter, and a few tears. If you were unable to attend, I suggest you look into the story of Capt. Ronald Forrester, his daughter Karoni Forrester was the keynote speaker at the Banquet and told us about her experience with DPAA bringing her father home. The

entire story is also available on Youtube “Missing and Not Forgotten”.

September is a busy month with Suicide awareness, Sept. 11th remembrance, and POW/MIA remembrance on the 18th. With the heaviness of all that it is important to find some up-lifting stories. Crystal McCarthy has asked me to share an up-lifting moment from US history. On September 7, 1813 the United States gets its nickname uncle Sam the name is linked to Samuel Wilson, a meatpacker from Troy New York, who supplied barrels of beef to the United States Army during the war of 1812 Wilson stamped the barrels with US for United States but because he was known locally as uncle Sam soldiers began referring to the grub as uncle Sam’s the local newspaper, the Troy post, picked up on the story and uncle Sam eventually gained widespread acceptance as the nickname for– and personification of – the US federal government.

Remember that sometimes what we think are small actions like supplying soldiers with food can have a huge impact for many years!

VFW Auxiliary Arizona Poppy Chairman

Raelene Lam



While you are planning your Buddy Poppy Distribution Event, remind your team that they have an opportunity to meet the public, invite them to post functions, and make them aware of programs. A lot of the public have never been to the VFW and are not aware that we are more than a canteen. We love our canteen, but we are so much more. We are a team that is still serving our community and helping our veterans and families with personal needs and legislation.

Stay relaxed, have a good time together, make new friends, and sweetly put a poppy in the hands of every person that wants one.

Here is my suggested ABC's Checklist:

Preparing for Buddy Poppy Distribution go through your checklist

A) Make sure you have a place.

1. Get permission
2. Understand exactly how and where your team can set up
3. Understand the terms of using the space (what the manager will allow)

4. Be clear with date and time.

B) Start Recruiting Your Team

1. If working jointly with post work out money details
2. Keep sign-up sheets easy with a point of contact for any updates
3. Encourage everyone to wear VFW/Auxiliary/ Poppy attire if possible.

C) Table at Event

1. Put extra supplies under the table.
2. Make sure you have weights for flyers (never fail wind is going to blow on your event day)
3. Stay in agreed area
4. Make sure the table area stays clean, and everything is clean when finished.
5. Make sure a representative lets management know the event is finished and thank them for allowing us to use their space.

I hope to hear from you regarding your Buddy Poppy Event.

Raelenelamsierravista@gmail.com



Leland Gilmore and I enjoyed talking to many of you at the Arizona VFW & VFW Auxiliary Fall Conference. As your Buddy Poppy Chairmen we are here to help you resolve issues you may have during the year.

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

Hello everyone!! Happy almost end of summer in Arizona!! I am very happy to tell you all about our amazing MIT that we had in August. We had a so much fun on Friday night with the reps from Humana. It was a great way to meet new friends and catch up with old ones.

On Saturday we did our trainings and all of the participants were excited to be there and learn about the programs. It was especially great to see so many participants from the comrades' there. I did my best to make sure to cover all of the points that our National ambassador is advocating. I also pushed my own favorite point, our Hospital Grant program.

Speaking of which, I want to give you some great ideas for using the grant!! We have VFW Auxiliary Post 10227 using it to buy socks for the VA hospital in Prescott and the VA home in Flagstaff! VFW Auxiliary Post 12128 is using the grand to get holders for DVD players and game controllers as well as tablets for our bed-ridden vets at the VA home. We also have another auxiliary that wants to use the grant to buy gift cards for the Vetsgiving at the Phoenix VA hospital in Phoenix. These are great ways to use your grant if you don't have any other projects in mind.

That's a great introduction to the Vetsgiving at the Phoenix VA hospital. This event will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2026, at the Phoenix VA hospital parking lot near the VAVS building. This is a fun event with music, food and lots of people! It is also a great way to

utilize your hospital grant money. You can purchase 10 \$25.00 gift cards to go to the veterans that attend this event. If interested, contact me for additional information.

Last, but not least, Fall conference. This event was held in Tucson, AZ and was well attended. The trainings were held on Friday and Saturday afternoon with great success. The trainings were done with both the auxiliary program chairman and their comrade counterparts. It was truly a great collaboration and I think everyone left the conference with new friends and a greater understanding of how much more can be accomplished when we work together.

Legislative

Connie Hargreaves

VFW Voices of Service

Stories in Action

Honor the Contract. Hear the Reality.

Our nation made a promise to those who served. Help lawmakers hear directly from you about what keeping that promise really means.



Scan to share your story.



What a wonderful Fall Conference this year! VFW and Auxiliary working together as a team and sharing ideas for this year's programs. Such great and creative SWAP ideas for all Auxiliaries to utilize. Thank you, Comrade Anthony Hernandez and Comrade Robert McDermott, for including the Auxiliary in the conversation.

TCAVA, the Take Care of American Veterans Act will be hitting the congressional floors again and we need to raise our voices, letters or emails to let our representatives know to vote no on this act. Taking the easy way and piling on 60 bills to expedite some that hurt veterans and/or makes veterans pay other veterans is not the correct way to do things and the VFW will be hitting Capital Hill in force shortly after this newsletter comes out to let them know just that. So, we can back our VFW up by contacting our Senators and Representative.

Please check your local event calendars, contact your candidates and let's get out to meet, talk and tell the candidates what we want to see happening for Veterans on both the State and Federal level. Be polite, let them know what veterans would like and be sure to get their contact information. Let's get our voices and our stories heard. Remember we want them to come meet and talk with us in our community Posts sometime this state legislative session.

Arizona election law requires citizenship and residency verification for voter registrations, and photo ID is required to vote in Arizona. Voter registration deadline is October 5, 2026. Your vote is your voice, check your registration, your name and address and ensure you are registered, be a part of the process that shapes our community, our country, our VETERANS as well as our future.

October 7, early voting begins, October 27, last day to mail in ballots, November 3rd Election Day and November 9 is the first day to Canvass the votes.

Below are some helpful links to stay informed as we come into elections. How to speak, where to find out what the VFW is advocating for our veterans and their families.

- Know who your candidates are: <https://azcleanelections.gov/find-my-candidates>
- <https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts>
- <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/MemberResources/Download/1004>
- <https://www.votervoice.net/VFW/home>
- <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/MemberResources/Download/435>
- <http://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service>
- <https://vfw-org-hqagarhxahbybyd9.z01.azurefd.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Advocacy/PriorityGoalsBrochure.pdf?la=en&v=1&d=20250106T152145Z>

Historian Media Relations

Paulette Marshall

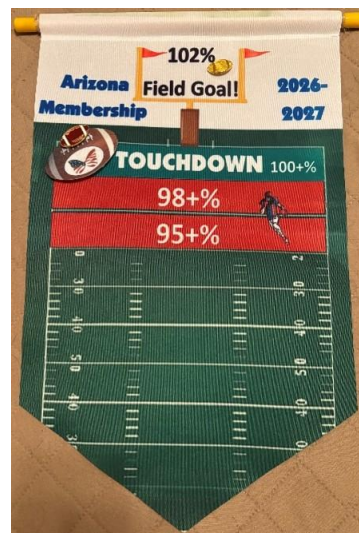
Wow, what a ride these last few months have been! I have been so happy to meet everyone in Arizona (well it feels like the whole state, but the VFW and Auxiliary are wonderful). We just got done with Fall Conference in Tucson, two weeks earlier was the MIT and I know most of us have had our 1st district meeting already.

I was truly honored to be able to speak with those who attended the MIT and give a joint presentation with Greg Algori during the Fall Conference. I hope that we gave some insight into the media side of promoting and recognizing those who help with events that the Auxiliaries and Post are doing. If there is something you are still unclear about, please feel free to reach out and if I don't have answer, I will do my best to find out for you.

Just a reminder, National Citation requires a historical journey of your Auxiliary to be created and posted somewhere in digital format. As many of you have heard me say, do not forget to include anything from Men's Auxiliary and Junior Girls you might find. Many Auxiliaries have roots in our family trees that reach back into those organizations. I also urge you remember, just like the National Commander and National President have a project to identify those Missing in Action, time is a thief. Our DNA, just like those lost in the Jungles, is degrading rapidly, our history is our DNA, so many Posts and Auxiliaries have lost their records due to floods, fires, insects or just being poorly stored. Now is the time to start remembering our past and continuing to build upon our future. Do not stop just because you have identified the past, continue to add to your digital archives. YOU are going to be someone else's branch of the Auxiliary tree that has helped this organization to grow and thrive.

Membership

Bambi Johnson



We kicked off the Just One Pledge push at our Membership Involvement Training last month. At the Fall Conference, we rolled out a new Just One Pledge card that features BOTH the VFW and the Auxiliary as we have a major focus on being the strongest VFW and Auxiliary team possible! Every member of both organizations is eligible to receive a Best Team Ever pin for recruiting one Auxiliary member.

Department President Melissa's coin will be given for recruiting 5 new members and we are continuing our membership pin with year rocker for 10 new memberships.

At Fall Conference we also showed what each Auxiliary can earn as the 2026-2027 the Membership banner. We have honored National President Danna Mills love of football with this year's design. Your Auxiliary can receive the banner at Winter Conference as if your 2026-2027 membership has reached the *Red Zone* with at least 95+%!

The special Department President's butterfly *Touchdown* football is awarded at 100+% and an additional Gold *Field Goal* Football pin will be awarded at 102+%.

Here is a fun idea to help get more members to your regular monthly meeting.

Hold a Plus One Challenge event.

<u>Plus One Event</u> Your Name Member Guest Name

A Plus One card is given to all members at the regular meeting.

Have attendees print their name on the card.

They are challenged to find one existing member that has not been at a regular monthly meeting and bring them to the following meeting.

If they bring a person to the meeting, fill in the guest's name on the card and turn it in for a drawing to hold at the end of the meeting. Both names on the card would win a prize. Our Auxiliary is giving a \$25 Visa Gift Card and a certificate for one free meal at the Post.

<u>Plus One Event</u> Your Name Member Guest Name

New Members help us Grow; Existing and Involved Members are our Strength!

Scholarship

Alison McHose

Scholarships are in full swing in September!! I hope all auxiliary scholarship chairs are busy spreading the word about all of our amazing scholarship opportunities. The goal is to get the word out to as many students, parents, community members and groups as possible. We need applicants! Time is ticking away (like the game clock - when it works - on the football field) with deadlines fast approaching for the VFW's Voice of Democracy oral essay and the Patriot's Pen written essay. The theme this year is "What America Means to a Veteran". This theme encourages students to speak to a veteran and to interpret in their own words what they learned by asking this question of a veteran. The deadline for these two contests is midnight on October 31, 2026.

Please reach out to members, family and friends to encourage them to apply. Remember, if no one applies, no one wins.



Hello Arizona! What a great Fall Conference. Thanks to all Chairmen for your dedication to the VFW and Auxiliary programs. As I listened to the presentations, I realized how the VFW National Home embodies our program missions. The Home promotes Americanism in their activities and Flags in front of all Homes, and it is founded on the support of the Buddy Poppy financially and by Honoring the Dead by Helping the Living. By keeping our Auxiliaries healthy to aid the Home, Extension and Revitalization helps. The National Home has a strong Media and website presence in which it shares current and past History. In the past, an Auxiliary supported Hospital was on campus. Legislative members are frequent guests for speaking and information gathering. Scholarships are available to enhance the education of residents. Veteran and Family Support is a key component of the goal-oriented program. Every family is evaluated for eligibility and is valued as a Member (Membership). Youth are a priority focus with activities, day care, 4-H, the Buddy Poppy Child, and numerous holidays and special events. The all-around goal, To Build Strong Families, is truly covered in our programs.

That being said, know this: most events and activities could be a chance to Promote the National Home and to Educate on Eligibility. Facebook and other social media platforms can help with your promotion, as well. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a useful tool, and it can help you come up with fun ways to educate. If you are using any logos, remember, they MUST be accurate. Check your facts before posting and USE YOUR HASHTAGS: #az2627nationalhome, #VFWnationalhome, #az2627media, #vfwauxaz, #vfwauxiliary, #vfwaz, #vfw. Add your Auxiliary hashtag – i.e. #vfwauxiliary10254.

The staff at the National Home are committed to helping residents succeed, but the families must be serious about setting and reaching their goals. The RED, WHITE, BLUE, and TRANSITION phases give families a step-by-step game plan for success. The resources are designed to help mind, body and soul. Familiarize yourself with the website at www.vfwnationalhome.org. There is a wealth of information and personal stories available.

A recent story is about a National Guard veteran who was deployed for 12 ½ years. He found himself going through a divorce for much of that time. At a Yellow Ribbon Event he learned about the National Home and applied. Once he and his sons arrived, they felt

welcome and made new friends and found military camaraderie. He needed help financially and emotionally, transitioning to have a single parent family. He states he is new to the program, but it has already made a positive impact on him and his children.

We are running for a Touchdown in our National Home Program:

- Identify Your Team – who in your VFW/Auxiliary can help promote the program
- Make a Game Plan – when do you want to promote, what tools can you use
- Pump up your Audience – be creative in Educating, have a colorful display, engage in conversations, have handouts and giveaways
- Run for the Goal – Educate on what and where the National Home is. Educate on who is Eligible. Promote the Home Financially.
- Send in an entry to me by March 31st for a VFW National Home Program National Citation Award (available on MALTA under Resources, National Home Program).

I will leave you with some National Home Trivia. In 1935, 15 brick homes were available for 160 fatherless or orphaned children from all over the US. Two more homes were under construction. Sibling groups were often placed with other sibling groups to fill a home, leading to lifelong bonds. Older boys delivered milk in the morning and helped with farm chores after school. Older girls worked in the central laundry or in the main office. On weekends all helped the housemothers with inside and outside chores. Of course, there was still plenty of time for homework, playtime and outside adventures.

Veterans and Family Support

Irene Nowacki

MIT was so much fun! Sports overload for sure. Hopefully you all had at least one member from your auxiliary attend that brought back some great information to share.

This month I will be highlighting National Unmet Needs, National Military Services and National Veteran Services. Plus a newer program, VFW Operation Uplink.

The VFW's Unmet Needs Program provides grants up to \$1500.00 to eligible service members, veterans and their families facing financial hardships that are related to military service.

Household expenses: mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance, utilities and primary phone

Vehicle expenses: payments, repairs, insurance

Food and clothing, including children's clothing, diapers, formula

School or childcare expenses

Medical bills, prescriptions, and eyeglasses

National Military Services provides essential support for veterans and military personnel through other programs such as MAP or Military Assistance Program which offers various forms of assistance.

National Veteran Services are those wonderful (few) folks that sit down and help our veterans fill out the paperwork to submit for VA claims for their much-deserved benefits for their service to our country. These men and women put in countless hours to ensure that our veterans get attention.

Another great program is the **VFW Operation Uplink**. This provides troops with free phone calls to their families to keep in touch.

There are many more programs available. Make sure to go onto the VFW Auxiliary and VFW websites to print out applications and flyers for promotion.

Don't forget to send in your over the top promotions for Veterans & Family Support. I cannot wait to share them with Ambassador Beth. Next month will be the sources available on the

website that you can print out and hand out at your next veteran event and Adopt A Unit.



Hello Team Arizona from Youth Chair Crystal!



Play #2: Draft Your Team

The Season Is Underway — Who's on Your Roster?

The foundation is built. The kids are back in school. Friday night lights are on, fall activities are underway, and it's officially time to get off the sidelines. **Play #2: Draft Your Team** is about making connections.

Youth Activities doesn't mean we have to create every project ourselves. Some of the best opportunities are already happening in our communities — we just need to find them. Look around your hometown. Who is already working with kids?

Schools. Marching bands. FFA. 4-H. Scouts. Sports teams. JROTC. Church youth groups. Libraries. Homeschool groups. Youth service organizations. Clubs you may not have even heard of yet. At Fall Conference, we had the opportunity to hear directly from several of those community organizations. They gave us a look at what they are doing with Arizona's youth — and, more importantly, helped us see where the VFW and VFW Auxiliary might fit into that picture. Those are your potential draft picks.

This month, challenge your Auxiliary to choose **one youth organization you aren't currently working with** and make contact.

But here's the important part: don't lead with what you want from them. **Ask:**

"What are you working on, and how can we help?" Maybe they need volunteers at an event. Maybe they need judges, mentors or an extra set of hands. Maybe they'd love veterans to speak to students. Maybe there's a project where their youth could work alongside your members. You won't know until you ask.

And remember — a partnership goes both ways. We're not simply looking for youth to participate in *our* programs. We're building relationships where we show up for their programs, too. That's exactly what the VFW Auxiliary Youth Activities Program encourages: working with youth groups and giving young people positive opportunities to serve their communities, veterans and service members.

Remember the Fall Conference Challenge:

ONE TEAM. ONE HOUR.

Your VFW and VFW Auxiliary are **one team**. Choose one youth group in your community and give them **one hour** of your time. Volunteer at their event. Help with a project. Attend something they're doing. Ask what they need and show up.

No money required. No elaborate project. No award waiting at the finish line. **The reward is working with the kids, building the relationship and showing them that our VFW and Auxiliary are part of their community.**

Then snap a picture and share what your team did on social media! Tell us who you partnered with, how you spent your hour and what you learned from working together. Be sure to use **#OneTeamOneHour** on your post so we can follow along and see how Arizona's VFWs and VFW Auxiliaries are getting off the sidelines and into the game with our youth!

Audible Calls from the Sidelines

September & October Youth Opportunities

us Sept. 11 – Patriot Day

Invite youth to participate in a remembrance activity, learn about service and sacrifice, thank first responders or help place flags.

Sept. 13 – Grandparents Day

Bring generations together! Encourage youth to interview a grandparent, veteran or senior and learn a little of their story.

Sept. 17 – Constitution Day & Citizenship Day

Make civics fun. Try Constitution trivia, a Preamble challenge or a kid-friendly conversation about what citizenship means.

Oct. 5 – World Teachers' Day

Recruit the kids to help recognize the people who help them grow. Cards, drawings and simple thank-yous can make someone's day.

Oct. 11 – International Day of the Girl

Celebrate the girls in your community who are leading, serving, learning and making a difference.

Oct. 31 – Halloween

Trunk-or-Treat, costume contests, pumpkin decorating, Halloween books or games — sometimes the best way to connect with youth is simply to show up and have fun with them!

Coach's Reminder

Not every special day needs to become a project. Use these dates as conversation starters, social media ideas and excuses to connect with youth organizations in your community.

Pick the plays that fit your team — and leave the rest on the clipboard.

