

MAY 2022

VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

**CAFE & MID-YEAR
CONFERENCE**
MERRITT ISLAND
& MELBOURNE,
FLORIDA

**NATIONAL GUARD
CANDIDATES**

**VOICE OF
DEMOCRACY
& PATRIOT'S
PEN WINNERS**



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

VFW Auxiliary's 109th
National Convention*

JULY 16-21, 2022

**Note: Reference the VFW Auxiliary's National website, vfwauxiliary.org, the National Facebook page and HQ's E-Newsletter for the latest details.*

DATES & DEADLINES

May

- MAY 1
- Loyalty Day
 - 2021-2022 Year-End Reports due to Department Presidents
 - 2022-2023 VAVS forms due to National Headquarters
- MAY 5
- Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest Department winning entries due to National Headquarters
 - Illustrating America Art Contest Department winning entries due to National Headquarters
 - Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! Department winning entries due to National Headquarters

- MAY 8
- V-E Day
 - Mother's Day

MAY 21 Armed Forces Day

MAY 30 Memorial Day

MAY 31 Deadline for National Convention registration and Delegate registration

June

JUNE 10 Deadline for new or rejoined members to be processed in MALTA for the Member Recruiter Awards

JUNE 14 Flag Day

JUNE 19 Father's Day

JUNE 30 End of 2021-2022 Program Year and deadline for all donations

For Program awards deadlines for May and June, see the 2021-2022 National Program Book online at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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About the Cover

VFW Auxiliary National President Jean Hamil and VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic celebrate America's freedom at the Kennedy Space Center.
Photo by Amanda Cook.

Attention, please!

Are you verifying your membership in MALTA on a regular basis –at least once a year?

We encourage Auxiliaries to review and account for deceased members at least that often, because if you are counting Life Members who have passed away, your Auxiliary and the National Organization are receiving funds they shouldn't be getting.

For example, a quick analysis at National Headquarters of Life Members by age group recently revealed that we have thousands – yes, thousands – of active members age 91 or older.

So make a note to double check your membership numbers. It is likely there are times Auxiliaries truly don't know if members have died because these members may have moved on to assisted living or skilled care and they haven't been active with the Auxiliary for years.

All the more reason to check in. Connect with inactive members who might feel isolated. Send them birthday or holiday wishes. Try calling or visiting. If they are still a part of our organization, we should make them feel valued, even if they're no longer able to attend meetings and get as involved as they once were.





“
On a recent trip to visit our Auxiliary in Panama, we were greeted with positive energy and lots of questions.”

Dear members—

As I continue my travels, my heart warms with the outpouring of love from our members. You continue to **Soar Above & Beyond** for our veterans, military personnel, their families and our communities. I appreciate that you share with me your accomplishments that mean so much to our organization. It shows in your passion to serve!

On a recent trip to visit our Auxiliary in Panama, we were greeted with open arms, positive energy and lots of questions. We enjoyed spending time with our Auxiliary and VFW members. We listened, we learned about their challenges and after all was said and done - they are definitely on the right track for continuing to serve our organizations as a TEAM.

We all know the importance of the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Scholarship Programs. We were hopeful to be in-person for this event, but we are thankful that we could still recognize our students for their accomplishments. I was honored to work side-by-side with our VFW National Commander-In-Chief Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic and his VFW National Headquarters staff to acknowledge their achievements.

Our special project, Fund the Future, is making strides to provide more scholarships. Please continue to support this project, as we want to make sure our students know how important their future is to us as members. They are the future leaders of our country (local, state and national) and possibly our organization. Let's provide that step in the right direction.

Finally, have you registered for National Convention in Kansas City? We are looking forward to a fantastic event filled with lots of information to be shared with our members. As an integral part of the Auxiliary puzzle, your vote is an important one! Let your voice be heard on a National level. It will be wonderful to spend time with our members from across this great nation!

Loyally yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Hamil". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style.

JEAN HAMIL
National President



Who are spammers? First of all, they are strangers.

Dear members—

We've noticed that more of you are checking us out on Facebook and Instagram, which is fantastic!

We take a lot of time and energy to create posts that are engaging, informative and even fun. Naturally, we see your comments, too. While we're thrilled to see so many, there is a darker side to all of this activity on social media.

Posting: We are all different, and that's what keeps life interesting, even on social media. But, the VFW Auxiliary is an apolitical organization. We know you have feelings about the current and former U.S. Presidents, but the National Facebook page is not the arena for sharing these opinions. It is also not the place for racist, sexist or hateful comments. Let's try to keep it clean, respectful and nonpartisan. And remember, what you post, EVERYONE can see. Even your boss. And your pastor. And your neighbor.

Replies: Facebook also should not be the place for solicitation or other shady/opportunistic content. But the more HQ posts, and the more comments we receive, the more spammers and scammers we attract.

Who are spammers? First of all, they are strangers. They reply to your Facebook comments, asking you to friend them or buy something or click on a link. They use fake pictures to create fake accounts they hope will entice you to interact with them. Try to avoid them. Their goal is to trick you into giving them money. Some of the spammers and scammers might seem pretty legit – like a person who genuinely wants to get to know you. Others are more obviously far out. True story - we blocked a spammer on Facebook who replied to multiple members' comments with a link to the love potion he wanted to sell.

The takeaway: Please be cautious if you're approached by a stranger on social media. Look for dead giveaways like unusual wording or a too-good-to-be-true offer. When in doubt, choose to ignore them. We at HQ do our best to filter spammers out with our account settings and manually report/hide/delete the rest that sneak through. But the spammers – from all over the globe – are hard at work 24/7.

We want you to enjoy our National pages, but do proceed with caution when you're in your social media world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Cook'.

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

VOLUME 83 NUMBER 6

Editor-In-Chief
Amanda Cook

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VFW Auxiliary Magazine

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Website

www.vfwauxiliary.org

Reader's VOICE



This is the space for comments regarding your *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*. Mail your submissions to National Headquarters or email them to info@vfwauxiliary.org, marked "Letter to the Editor." We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor should not be interpreted as the opinion of the National Organization.

I am writing to thank you for the article about Auxiliary Community Outreach in the January magazine.

I would like to see more of the Programs explained in the same way.

We have many new members in the Auxiliaries who don't understand the Programs and are not sure what can be reported and when it should be reported.

JEANNETTE MITCHELL

Dayton, Ohio

Auxiliary 3288 Brookville

FROM THE EDITOR: *Jeannette, thank you for writing in. While we cannot cover Programs every issue, we do promote the National Program Book in the magazine regularly and on our social media. We also focus on new Programs and significant changes to existing Programs when the new Program Year begins each July.*

I'm a Life Member of VFW Auxiliary 793, Saint Johnsbury, Vermont. Many family members (served in the) military; my father, World War II, my husband, our three sons, our two grandsons.

What I have noticed for a few years now, around here and other states, I never see anyone selling the poppies... anymore. As a child, everywhere you went on a sidewalk someone was selling them. Our four children sold them always. My husband was a Patriotic Instructor Color Guard for VFW Post 793 for over 25 years and very proud. He would take a day off of work to make sure a veteran would have their military veteran funeral. He was very proud to carry the colors. When my husband wasn't able to do it anymore, that was one thing that really bothered him a lot as he took great pride in doing them. He was an 82nd Airborne paratrooper, overseas two times while serving his country. He also was a military aircraft mechanic. His mother was President of 793's Auxiliary, and his dad was Commander of 793. Also, my husband's brother was 793's Commander at one time. And my sister was President of 793's Auxiliary. We all go way back.

JANET SMITH

Concord, Vermont

Auxiliary 793

Saint Johnsbury

MY VETERAN

CLIFFORD B. KANE

WHEN LINDA MISURACA, 2021-2022 DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA PRESIDENT, visited the Kennedy Space Center for Celebrating America's Freedom Event in January, being surrounded by the history of the space program led her to reminisce about her father, a veteran who was also a participant in the early days of the Space Race. He worked on an aspect of space travel that paved the way for the U.S. to be the first to walk on the moon.

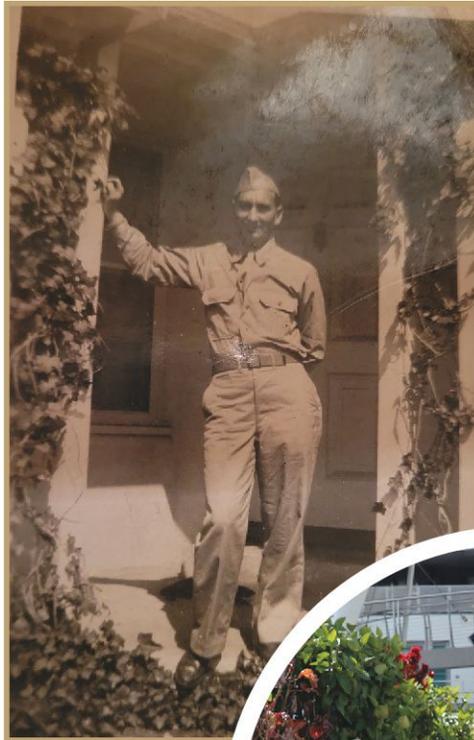
Misuraca's father, Clifford B. Kane, served in the Army at Camp Pendleton, California during the 1940s. Following his service, Kane went to work for McDonnell Aircraft (which later merged with Douglas Aircraft Company) in St. Louis County, Missouri. At that time, McDonnell had a contract with NASA to construct components of the Saturn V rocket; Saturn rockets were used to propel Apollo program crafts into space. Kane was a tool and die maker who helped construct the interstage rings that connected the modular stages of

the craft. The Apollo crafts were constructed of three pieces; two pieces were jettisoned during the missions allowing a more efficient method of transporting a larger payload.

Misuraca recalls few details about her father's connection to the NASA missions, but she does have a memory of a family get-together held during an Apollo launch. Her extended family held a backyard picnic and listened to a launch on the radio.

Misuraca, a Life Member of Auxiliary 1114 in Evansville, Indiana, joined the Auxiliary in 2008 under the eligibility of her husband Vincent Joseph "Joey" Misuraca who served in Vietnam from 1970 to 1972.

★ MR



RIGHT: Visiting the Kennedy Space Center for Celebrating America's Freedom Event evokes memories of Linda Misuraca's father. Misuraca is a Life Member of Auxiliary 1114 in Evansville, Indiana. **ABOVE:** A photo of Misuraca's father, her veteran, Clifford B. Kane, whose work contributed to the early days of the Space Race.

Support the VFW's Inaugural Day of Service

The VFW will kick off its first-ever Day of Service on May 7, an initiative that invites VFW Posts, members, veterans of every stripe and community advocates to unite and host a community service event on this day and throughout the month of May.

The VFW Day of Service is an outgrowth of the organization's #StillServing campaign launched in 2020 to recognize the ongoing dedication of veterans and service members who continue to serve their communities. VFW Day of Service, led by veterans and in concert with other organizations and civic groups, is open for anyone to participate. The inaugural VFW Day of Service on May 7 marks the start of veteran-led community service projects to take place throughout the month.

"We are calling on all VFW Posts and members across America and around the world to join in the VFW Day of Service by planning an activity for May 7, or at another point during the month, to show that we never stop serving" said VFW National Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic.

We can work together on this. Here's how:

Share with your Posts! Engage your dual members! As pillars of our communities, we can join forces on these projects! VFW members must sign up for Day of



INTRODUCING VFW DAY OF SERVICE

Service, but Auxiliary members may work with their Posts and civic groups on Day of Service activities. Day of Service is community service – volunteering time with another organization – to make a meaningful difference.

Also think about how Auxiliaries can report Day of Service hours as they relate to VFW Auxiliary Programs. *See the 2021–2022 National Program Book for reporting criteria.*

Visit VFWDayofService.org for more information or email info@todaysvfw.org with any questions. We will want to see what you and your Posts are doing for VFW Day of Service! Take pictures and post with the hashtags #VFWDayofService, #StillServing and others including #AuxiliaryPatriotism and #AuxiliariesinAction.

VFW AUXILIARY'S

9th Celebrating America's Freedom Event

AND MID-YEAR CONFERENCE

Merritt Island &
Melbourne, Florida



T MINUS 4...

Auxiliary members and their guests, nearly 500 of them, take their seats along the periphery of a lawn at the Kennedy Space Center Complex. You can't miss the nearby Saturn V moon rocket. At 363 feet, it is a bright orange beacon that doubles as a landmark, silently guiding attendees to their destination for a truly out-of-this-world experience – the 9th Celebrating America's Freedom Event.

Flag Bearers queue in order along a palm-tree-lined path, readying themselves for the posting of the colors and parade of Flags that escort in special and esteemed guests; VFW Auxiliary National President Jean Hamil, VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic and Department Presidents.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Members and guests take their seats for Celebrating America's Freedom Event on a sunny day at the Kennedy Space Center Complex. *Photo by Nicole Panteleakos.* Rita McCabe, Department of New Hampshire President, gets an autograph from Astronaut John-David Bartoe. Pat Paul, Massachusetts Past Department President, poses with a Complex character ready for a space walk. Kansas Department President Tessa Butcher is escorted to her seat by Past Kansas Department President Jane Ryser and Kansas' Junior Vice-President Mike McCandless. **PAGE 11:** VFW Auxiliary National Line Officers pause for a photo at the beach. **FROM LEFT:** Guard Donna Mills, Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, Junior Vice-President Carla Martinez, President Jean Hamil, Senior Vice-President Jane Reape, Chaplain Brenda Bryant, Conductress Lois Callahan and Leona McDremott, Chief of Staff. **BELOW:** National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador Jeanne Laurine answers questions about her Program at a breakout session following Mid-Year Conference. *Photos by Amanda Cook.*

1 BLA



Past National President Sandi Onstwedder, CAFE emcee, gives four minutes' notice before presentations commence. Following a moving rendition of the National Anthem, National President

Hamil addresses the crowd, welcoming all to this awe-inspiring place of exploration and discovery, "where dreams become reality and the impossible becomes not only possible, but commonplace."

Hamil goes on to share history about the United States Space Program that dates back to the 1950s; nearly a decade later, the Kennedy Space Center came to be. U.S. President John F. Kennedy visited the construction site of the future center just one week before his assassination in 1963; it had been the goal of his administration for America to reach the moon before decade's end.

This would have been an impossible goal had it not been for hundreds of dedicated and talented individuals – among them the three astronauts, also U.S. veterans,

who manned Apollo Eleven. Two hundred-nineteen of America's 330 current and former astronauts were also members of the military as of 2016. While most belonged to the Air Force or Navy, every single branch is represented.

"Behind the scenes, thousands have worked tirelessly in the fields of astrophysics, engineering, and technology, writing code, testing equipment, and running numbers to ensure that astronauts from Alan Shepherd and Ronald MacNair to Sally Ride and Mae Jemison would be able to launch into space and return to earth successfully," Hamil said. "In the early days of NASA, these included women known as 'human computers,' immortalized in the film *Hidden Figures*, which follows three Black women who were astrophysicists and mathematicians.

Hamil's remarks then take a somber turn, paying tribute to those extraordinary individuals who, 36 years ago, lost their lives in the Challenger ascent.

President Ronald Reagan chose to forgo the scheduled State of the Union Address to instead deliver a memorial address to the seven Challenger crewmembers who lost their lives, and to remind Americans of their bravery and perseverance. In his words, "We mourn their loss as a nation together... they had a hunger to explore the universe and discover its truths. They wished to serve, and they did. They served all of us."

As the VFW Auxiliary, we know all too well what it means to lose loved ones who wished to serve, many of whom have given their lives doing so, and we also know what it means to dedicate ourselves to the service of others. Today, we honor those United States astronauts who have changed the world by venturing into the heavens, in addition to remembering the soldiers and veterans who protect us here at home."

Mihelcic followed Hamil's remarks with a healthy dose of good humor, saying, "Much like the great end to a movie, you start to leave, the credits start scrolling, but

STOFFE!

the next thing you know there's more to the movie. Well, President Jean gave you a great speech, and now I'm tagging along as the B-roll as the credits flow past. But, since I'm here anyway, I'll take a few more minutes of your time before you leave! Thank you for allowing me to be here and share this celebration of American freedom with you. I'm in awe standing here today. As a young man reading science fiction about space travel to watching the Space Race, from tuning in weekly to *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Major Nelson* and *Cocoa Beach* to watching the first man walk on the moon, I have been fascinated with the heavens above.

Through it all, the overriding theme has been American exceptionalism. America, whether by government or by private industry, is sending rockets into space and extending the frontiers of humanity, we are making our planet Earth a better place by focusing on the stars. We are the future!

President Jean talked about the women who have been instrumental in America's race to space and beyond. However, we never knew of these great people because we learned about it all from HIS—story. It's time we learned the truth and we are learning about that from HER—story! Yes, HER—story. America is the great melting pot of genders, race and nationalities. We have so much to learn about our future and we can only learn it by actually learning about our past. I'm proud to be standing with President Jean and all of you as we continue to celebrate America's freedom by celebrating all Americans who have brought us here today!"

Mihelcic and Hamil linked and lifted their hands in celebration as festivities came to a close, their broad smiles making the Sunshine State just that much brighter. Members and guests then launched their own exploration of the many wonders of the Complex.

Department Presidents attended a special luncheon with Astronaut and Astrophysicist John-David Bartoe, whose home away from home for nearly eight days in the 1980s

was aboard the International Space Station. He took his audience on a journey of a day in the life on the ISS, where workdays are 12 hours, two of which must be dedicated exercise to maintain muscle mass in its microgravity environment. All of this occurs while these special workers orbit our planet at more than 17,000 miles per hour. He said one thing that never gets old: how breathtakingly beautiful and fragile Earth appears from this vantage.

In solidarity with fellow Auxiliary members and those we serve, in honor of the brave and brilliant pioneers of the stars, many of whom are and were veterans, and with the help of the Kennedy Space Center Complex, the Auxiliary *Soared Above & Beyond* on this day.

Mid-Year Conference:

National District Council Members heard inspiring words from Mihelcic with his message of teamwork and promise that our organizations, two sides of a coin, are here to stay to support and fight for our veterans, service members and their families.

Also joining the meeting was new VFW National Home for Children Executive Director Michael Wilson, who joined their staff in January of this year. Wilson himself is a retired U.S. Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major who has focused professionally on working with veterans and veteran organizations in recent years. He shared how proud and honored he is to work with and for the National Home and the families they help.

Attendees enjoyed informative presentations from all National Ambassadors and heard from the three National Guard candidates. Read more about them ahead of National Convention on page 15 of this issue.

★ AC and NP

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service

Serving Veterans During the Pandemic



Carrie Alm, Auxiliary 3442, is the VAVS Representative at VA Black Hills Health Care System in Hot Springs and the South Dakota State Veterans Home. She has continued serving veterans throughout the pandemic by collecting items for veterans transitioning to independent housing; delivering cards and treat bags with the help of other members and local youth and more.

As Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) begins its 76th year partnering with Veterans Service Organizations, including charter members Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the VFW Auxiliary, we celebrate the continuing mission to serve veterans in VA medical facilities, Community Living Centers and Fisher Houses, as well as Federal Cemeteries and state veterans' homes. The program has experienced many changes over the years, growing from the 13 charter members to more than

350 organizations, expanding the ways in which veterans are served, and most recently, rethinking the entire program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the past two years, VAVS volunteers have struggled to serve veterans when facilities were locked down and direct access to veterans was suspended for the safety of all. But Auxiliary VAVS implemented creative methods to complete their mission.

National VAVS Representative and Past National President Sandi Kriebel describes how VAVS continued to serve veterans in the time of COVID as "... a team effort by every Auxiliary across this great nation." She credits VAVS volunteers with providing "thousands upon thousands of homemade masks, doctors' coats, hospice body pillows, socks, slippers, books, blankets, quilts, thinking of you and thank-you cards." **Other examples of VAVS serving veterans during the pandemic include:**

- Members in California have reached out to groups and organizations in their community and received donations of cookies and blankets. They have also donated craft items for veterans in rehabilitation facilities.
- In South Dakota, an Auxiliary and Post provide \$200 each month for refreshments and needed items, and collects items to support the discharge room for veterans moving on to an apartment in the community.
- Many Departments have hosted greeting card drives, flooding VA facilities and state veterans' homes with cards for every occasion, letting veterans know that they are remembered and cared for.

- Members have held virtual events such as bingo via video conferencing platforms.

While VAVS hours have suffered due to lockdowns and other COVID-19 protocols throughout the past couple of years, monetary and in-kind donations have increased exponentially. Across the board, VAVS Quarterly Reports and Annual Joint Reviews indicate an increase in funding allowing VA facilities to replace items such as homemade baked goods and VAVS-sponsored events with other activities.

Despite the challenges faced by VAVS during the pandemic, a new wave of remote VAVS volunteerism has taken shape, providing more opportunities to serve veterans. The Compassionate Contact Corps program, wherein volunteers “meet” with veterans via phone or video chat on a regularly-scheduled basis is being established across the country. The program provides consistent contact and support to homebound veterans, while allowing Auxiliary members whose work schedule or personal responsibilities are not conducive to traditional in-person VAVS duties an opportunity to participate. Some state VA facilities have the Compassionate Contact Corps program up-and-running, while in other states, it’s being introduced.

Other non-traditional VAVS opportunities have been in existence for several years but have become more common during the pandemic, such as:

- Writers (newsletters, recruitment ads).
- National Cemetery volunteers.
- Creating homemade items such as blankets, etc.

As the pandemic wanes, VA facilities are beginning to reopen. We are seeing a slow-but-steady return of in-person VAVS volunteerism. Thanks to all who have used creativity and determination to continue serving veterans; the Auxiliary VAVS program has remained a fixture in the lives of veterans and will continue to do so through our 76th year and beyond.

VAVS is one of two facets of hospital volunteerism under the umbrella of the Auxiliary Hospital Program. VAVS Regularly Scheduled volunteers must be vetted and certified. Many hospital volunteers, events and donations fall outside of VAVS. All hospital activities, events and volunteering are reportable under the Hospital Program.

★ MR

Auxiliaries May Qualify for up to \$8,500 in VFW Foundation Grants

The VFW Foundation offers a total of four grant opportunities through two programs. **We are excited to report that these grants are open to Auxiliaries.** The grant programs are called the Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant and the #StillServing Grants. These grants are slated to end on July 31, 2022 but may close earlier if all funding is exhausted.

Visit these links for grant reporting requirements, guidelines and more information: www.vfw.org/grants and www.vfw.org/utch.

Application forms are also available online at www.vfw.org/grants. Instructions on how to apply can be found on the application forms. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact VFW Foundation Grants & External Relations Coordinator Jason Couch at jcouch@vfw.org or 816-968-1174.



NATIONAL GUARD CANDIDATES



JOYCE BILYEU
CALIFORNIA

What inspired you to run for National Guard?

Being a VFW Auxiliary member makes me proud and has given me the opportunity to honor my family's legacy of military

service to this county, along with all veterans. It is so rewarding to see so many people dedicated to service for veterans. This pride, along with motivation from family and friends, has inspired me to want to run for National Guard. It is in my heart. As a National Line Officer, it will give me a larger platform to share our mission with the world, and to advocate on a higher level for veterans. It would allow me to share with others throughout the nation the amazing work our members do for veterans. It is also an opportunity

to encourage, support and inspire local Auxiliaries, and to let them know that their work is valued, and they are truly making a difference for America's Heroes.

How can we best position our organization for continued success?

Membership is the key to success for the future of our organization. It is imperative that we continue to recruit new members and at the same time, retain our current ones. We should be more diverse in our recruiting efforts and look for new and innovative ways to recruit the next generation while respecting the legacy of past members' contributions to the organization. To be successful, we should focus our efforts on being proactive and responsive advocates for veterans and their families. We must be the change that we want to see and accomplish this in the spirit of service, not self. Membership is the lifeline of our organization and the pathway to hope for so many veterans.



JEANETTE GARCIA
NEW MEXICO

What inspired you to run for National Guard?

Running for National Guard was not always my dream. It took a lot of time, many conversations and asking a lot of questions. Veterans are a very important part of my life. I want to be able

to provide support and help in any way that I can. Knowing what we can do as an Auxiliary, a District and a Department, I feel that at the National level, I could do even more with the help of our members and help Auxiliaries become stronger as we work together for veterans and families. The National Organization

can make an even greater difference in the lives of our heroes. My next step in making a difference is to run for National Guard.

How can we best position our organization for continued success?

As an organization, we as members must believe in the organization, the goals and WHY we are here. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary needs to continue to acknowledge our members, provide training, give updates, communicate regularly and LISTEN to recommendations, issues, and the good things that are happening with the Auxiliaries. We must reflect on what is not working and why. Make change where change can make a difference. Smile and have fun while working our Programs, while strengthening our Auxiliaries and growing future leaders. Everyone has something to bring to the organization, but we will only know that if we communicate with our members. For continued success in our organization, our focus must be centered on our veterans and their families.



KIM HARNEY
ARIZONA

What inspired you to run for National Guard?

I have been around veterans my whole life. Being raised in a military family, the military way of life; moving to new places and meeting new people was all I knew growing up. Joining the

Junior Girls and then later the VFW Auxiliary allowed me to show how thankful I am to those who serve by giving back to veterans and their families. I have a passion for what we do and what our organization stands for. I decided I could contribute to the future of our organization by running for the office of National Guard.

How can we best position our organization for continued success?

We can best position our organization for continued success by listening to our members. They are the most important asset we have. It is imperative that we provide guidance to them in areas such as Programs, Officers' duties or leadership roles. Mentoring is essential if we want our members to feel like they are important part of the team. We need to teach others who we are and then, when they join our organization, encourage them to become a part of our team. We must invest the time in our members to ensure that our Auxiliaries continue to flourish. Our organization must also be willing to embrace change and see it as an opportunity for improvement. It is important that, as members, we listen to each other as well as being open-minded to new ideas in order for our Auxiliaries to be sustainable.



BEFORE BRAD AND SHERRY CAME TO THE NATIONAL HOME, THEY WERE broke, ready to split up, expecting a baby and without a home to call their own.

Today Brad just completed two master's degrees while at the same time working as a mental health counselor in a private practice.

Sherry pursued and finished her business degree, and the couple owns their own home and drives a paid off car.

"We will spend the rest of our lives giving back. It changed our life trajectory." - Sherry

If you know of a military or veteran family who could use a fresh start, refer them to vfnationalhome.org/help or 800.313.4200



VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN

★ 2021 / 2022 ★
FIRST-PLACE WINNERS'

ESSAY EXCERPTS



DANIELA MARE
LAKE RONKONKOMA

*Sponsored by Post 9486:
Lake Ronkonkoma, New York*

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

"AMERICA: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

\$30,000

America is like a paint palette. With an endless array of chromatic possibilities; the palette in the hands of the people and the brush in that of the government, we in synchronicity can

paint a beautiful picture. Each unique color represents the individuality of every U.S. citizen and every color has an equal opportunity to change the painting in its own distinct way.

So, where do we go from here? How do we represent the colors of America?

From pledging our allegiance to the tricolored, Star-Spangled banner to painting our own picture with the paint palette of America? The simple answer? The word

is unity. Unity is the only way we can go from here. Unity is the way we can look at our neighbors to our left and to our right and see more than black and white, but the endless array of chromatic possibilities.

Do not be mistaken, the diversity of our nation and the difference of opinion is what provides America with the foundation to be the nation that it is, the nation that promises liberty and justice for all. It is with these differences that our own original colors come back to us. Our colors, our endless array of chromatic possibilities is what we use to paint the picture of America. What is the picture we paint as Americans? That is the picture of unity. A picture in which everyone contributes their own color. The picture that is colored with happiness and care. So where do we go from here? The answer is simple. We must pick up our paint palettes and begin painting our unified picture.



SYED ALI
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

*Sponsored by Post 1982:
New Iberia, Louisiana*

PATRIOT'S PEN

"HOW CAN I BE A GOOD AMERICAN?"

\$5,000

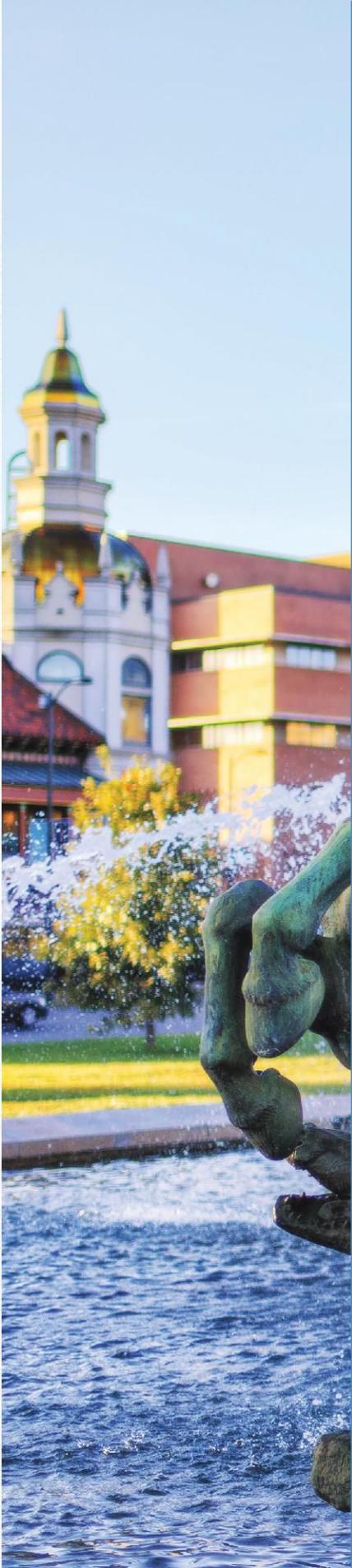
Growing up I am always taught by my parents the value of giving back to others. As a Boy Scout, I learn the importance of giving back to the community.

Being a good American starts with being a good person. Someone who can be loyal, honest, kind, and live life in an exemplary manner. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit our community almost two years ago, it was a rough time for everyone. One of the communities which suffered the most was

the elderly and senior citizens living in the nursing home...and I thought I can take this opportunity and bring light to some people's life during these dark times.

I started a project called "Letters to Grands" and with the help of my mother reached out to several nursing homes in our area. I started writing them letters every night. Bringing cheer to the people made me feel like I am doing my duty to the country.

To me, being a good American means to make a difference in your community no matter how small it is, to be loyal to your country, and make sure to defend it from any outside and inside enemies. I learn the lessons from our veterans and soldiers who sacrificed their lives so we can have the freedom we enjoy.



2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

FRI, JULY 15

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Early Packet Pickup at Loews Kansas City and Kansas City Marriott Downtown Hotels

SAT, JULY 16

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

10:00-11:30 a.m. Conference Meetings

Noon-1:30 p.m. 45-Plus Club Luncheon
(Reservations required)

5:30 p.m. Circle of Excellence Ceremony

SUN, JULY 17

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:30-9:30 a.m. Joint Memorial Service

10:00-10:30 a.m. First-Time Attendee's Meeting

10:30-11:30 a.m. Meet the National Line Officers

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Past Councilors' Club Luncheon

1:00-4:30 p.m. Programs Seminar

MON, JULY 18

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Joint Opening Session

1:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m. Council of Administration Meeting

2:30-5:00 p.m. Auxiliary Opening Business Session

TUE, JULY 19

8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Auxiliary Business Session

6:00 p.m. VFW Patriotic Celebration

WED, JULY 20

8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Exhibit Hall Open

8:30 a.m. Auxiliary Business Session

1:15-2:15 p.m. Treasurers' Training (*Department Only*)

2:30-4:00 p.m. Auxiliary Treasurer, Secretary & Trustee Training

THURS, JULY 21

8:00 a.m. Flag Presentation

8:30 a.m. Officer Installation and Closing Session

4:00-6:00 p.m. Joint Reception for Commander-in-Chief and National President (*Ticketed event*)
Kansas City Marriott Downtown Hotel

POST-CONVENTION EVENTS

FRI, JULY 22

9:00 a.m. National District Council Meeting, Loews Kansas City Hotel

6:00 p.m. National President's Celebration, Loews Kansas City Hotel

Note: This schedule is tentative. Please be sure to visit the National website and read the E-Newsletter for the latest updates.

REGISTRATION FORM

National Convention: Advance Registration \$25

45-Plus Luncheon *(Complimentary) **

Name Membership No.

Address City State ZIP

Department Phone Email

Check enclosed Money order enclosed Credit card

DO NOT SEND CASH.

Credit Card No.

Visa MasterCard

Name on card

Discover American Express

Billing address for card

City State ZIP

Expiration date

3-digit CVV code on back of card *(Visa, MasterCard, Discover)*

4-digit CVV code on front of card *(Amex only)*

This form and all payments must be received at National Headquarters by May 31.

No exceptions or refunds after this date.

DO NOT ENCLOSE DELEGATE LISTS WITH THIS FORM.

SAVE \$15!

Advance registration is \$25.

On-site registration is \$40.

Register in MALTA, pay with credit card (form above) or mail a check to:

VFW Auxiliary

406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor,

Kansas City, MO 64111

Attn: National Convention Registration

Registration must be received by May 31.

Registration received after May 31 will be rejected.

Member must be present at time of registration to receive packet.

45-YEARS PLUS CLUB LUNCHEON

Have you been a member for 45 years or more?

Come join the 45-Years Plus Club at National Convention.

The luncheon will be at noon on Saturday, July 16 at the Convention Center.

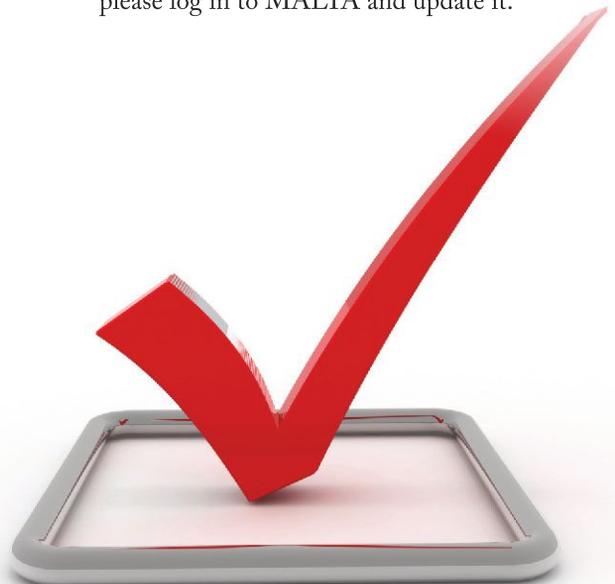
Register online or fill out form (above) and mail to National Headquarters. Registration is required to attend.

****Note: To register for the 45-Years Plus Club Luncheon, you must have been a member prior to June 30, 1977, and maintained continuous membership since that date.***

HQ MEMO:

AUXILIARY BUSINESS FOR REVIEW

-  **May 31, 2022: REGISTRATION CLOSES** for all National Convention events and for National Convention Delegates and Alternates. Delegates may be entered in MALTA, sent by mail, fax or email to info@vfwauxiliary.org. **Important note! Only members attending National Convention will receive packet materials. Packets will NOT be mailed after Convention. Do NOT register if you do not plan to attend. Members must be present at time of registration to receive packet, but on-site registrants are not guaranteed printed Convention packet materials.**
-  Before June 30, 2022: Input Reports of Installation of 2021-2022 Auxiliary, District and Department Officers online.
-  By August 31, 2022: The 2022-2023 bond payment for President and Treasurer of Auxiliary, County Council and District is due to National Headquarters. Department bond for its Treasurer is also due. Auxiliary Presidents and Secretaries may input this information online or send via mail to National Headquarters.
-  Bring your plastic membership card to Convention. Even though the VFW Store is now selling metal membership cards, you will need your plastic or digital card for registration.
-  National Guard candidate interviews on Page 15. Consider their comments carefully before casting your vote for the VFW Auxiliary's next National Line Officer.
-  Revisions and proposed amendments to the National Bylaws to be presented at the 109th National Convention. Find these on our website at vfwauxiliary.org/national-convention.
-  Your mailing address on this magazine is the same information you need to log in to MALTA. If your address is not correct, please log in to MALTA and update it.



1st CAFE

Vicksburg National Military Park, VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI



The inaugural Celebrating American's Freedom Event (CAFE) was held at Vicksburg National Military Park in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 2013. Then-Auxiliary National President Armithea "Sissy" Borel chose the location and attendees received the first CAFE coin depicting the National Park. The park preserves the site of the American Civil War Battle of Vicksburg and also encompasses the Vicksburg National Cemetery.

Borel was joined by then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien, 38 Department Presidents, dignitaries from Vicksburg and throughout Mississippi and members of the Veterans Affairs Board. During the event, Borel presented a check for \$2,000 to park Superintendent Mike Madell for preservation of the Civil War site. ✚ MR

FROM TOP: Flag Bearers line up, readying for the very first Celebrating America's Freedom Event. Then-VFW Auxiliary National President Armithea "Sissy" Borel with her granddaughter and then-Assistant Guard, Amber Steltz.



MY VETERAN

Clifford B. Kane played a role in the Space Race.



CELEBRATING AMERICA'S FREEDOM EVENT

& Mid-Year Conference
 on the Space Coast.



VAVS

Volunteering through the pandemic.

LOG IN TO MALTA TO:
 Update your mailing address and add your email address!



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