

MAY 2024

VFW of Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

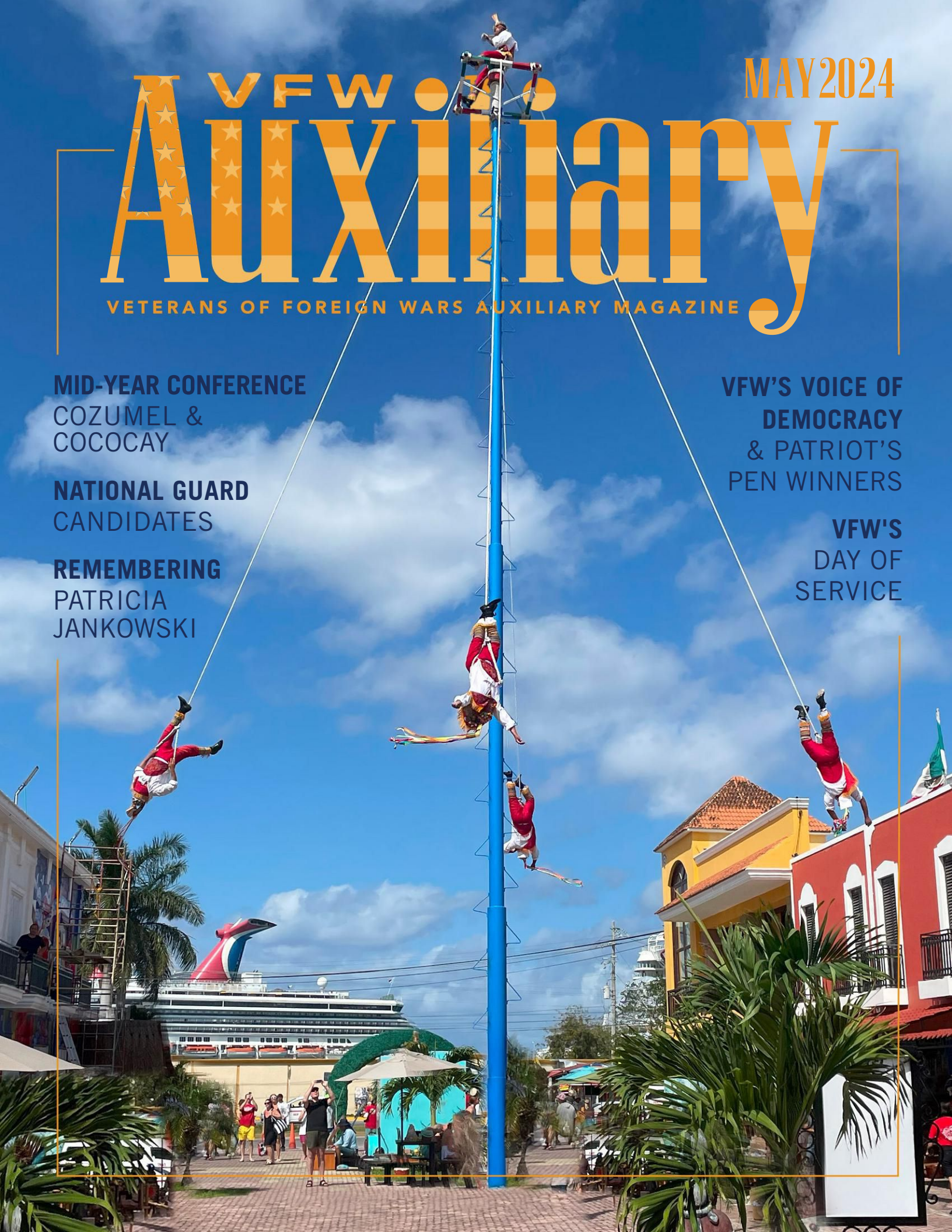
MID-YEAR CONFERENCE
COZUMEL &
COCOCAY

NATIONAL GUARD
CANDIDATES

REMEMBERING
PATRICIA
JANKOWSKI

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

VFW'S
DAY OF
SERVICE



LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

VFW AUXILIARY'S 111TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

JULY 27 ★ AUGUST 1, 2024

REFERENCE

vfwauxiliary.org,
the National Facebook page
and the National
E-Newsletter for the
latest details.



DATES & DEADLINES

May

- MAY 1 • Loyalty Day
 - Department Chairmen submit Year-End Reports to Department Presidents
 - VAVS forms due to National Headquarters
- MAY 5 Entries due to National Headquarters for the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest, Illustrating America and Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue!
- MAY 8 V-E Day
- MAY 10 Year-End Reports due in MALTA
- MAY 12 Mother's Day
- MAY 20 Armed Forces Day
- MAY 27 Memorial Day
- MAY 31 Deadline for National Convention registration and Delegate registration

June

- JUNE 10 Member Recruiter Award forms for five (5) new members due in MALTA
- JUNE 14 Flag Day
- JUNE 18 Father's Day
- JUNE 30 End of 2023-2024 Program Year and Deadline for all donations

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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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About the Cover

About the Cover: Members and tourists experience the Danza de los Voladores in Cozumel, Mexico. The "Dance of the Flyers," during which men swing from ropes attached to a pole nearly 100 feet high, dates back four and a half centuries, when Aztec locals engaged in this spectacular ritual to please the gods and end drought and hunger.
Photo by Amanda Cook

GET DIGITAL

DID YOU KNOW

THAT VFW AUXILIARY MAGAZINE IS A DIGITAL-ONLY PUBLICATION?

We made the transition in January of 2023. However, National Headquarters still receives calls from members missing their printed magazine.

Please help us help members find our National magazine. Spread the word. Remind members in meetings. Include this information in your communications.

The decision: The National Council of Administration voted in favor of a digital-only National magazine to save the VFW Auxiliary money. The cost of a digital publication is a mere fraction of the substantial funds required to print and mail out a paper magazine to our nearly 480,000 members. We were sorry to see our printed magazine go, but it was a decision based on cost savings, to the tune of close to \$1 million a year. Printing and mass mailing became very expensive. The savings went back to support investments that took a hit during the pandemic.

Members can receive VFW Auxiliary Magazine two ways:

- If you have a valid email address in [MALTA](#), you will automatically receive the National magazine delivered

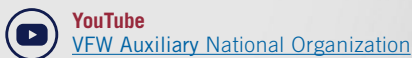


directly to your inbox. Encourage other members to enter their email addresses in their MALTA member profile. We won't send you junk mail!

- Visit our National website, Media, Magazine. All issues, from the current edition to archives from 2012, may be accessed [there](#).

Non-digital Auxiliary members: We realize that unfortunately, this means some of our members will not receive their magazine the way they used to. To fellow members who do have computer access, consider reaching out to and reconnecting with our members not on computers or smartphones. One option is visiting these members and sharing the magazine with them on your tablet, or reading the magazine to them.

get SOCIAL





You all have shown me what true friendship and family are all about.

Dear members —

We are getting down to the wire, but the work is never done. As the VFW Auxiliary, we should be continually working all Programs and building our membership. Membership at the time I write this is at over 100% paid. Wow! I am so overwhelmed by all that every single one of you continue to do every day for our veterans, their families and the communities you live in.

Please keep in mind that not everyone likes meetings and some of our members are not able to get out and attend meetings, even with a ride, but we should make them feel important. How about if we go visit them and read them the National E-Newsletter or digital magazine and show them pictures? What if we remind them that they could do a project in their nursing home or assisted living facility and turn that in for hours? I believe this will make them feel like they are part of the team because they can contribute by doing this.

You all have shown me what true friendship and family are all about. I have enjoyed the trips to all of the 50 states and I was able to go see how the Auxiliaries in Guam and the Philippines were doing, and attend two of the four Conferences. My [CAFE](#) in Utah at the Golden Spike National Park was awesome. The Mid-Year cruise was everything I hoped it would be. All of the above is because of you, the members of the greatest Auxiliary in the world, the VFW Auxiliary.

Thank you all, I have felt so loved by all of you, even if you were not able to attend, just by the responses from emails and Facebook.

Bless you all and keep our military serving around the world in your thoughts and prayers that they all come home safely to their families.

Loyally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carla J. Martinez".

CARLA J. MARTINEZ

National President



I look forward to seeing many of you in person in just a couple of months in Louisville for National Convention.

Dear members—

You, our members, make us the great organization we are. All nearly 480,000 of you. The VFW Auxiliary is a member-based organization, meaning without you and the many more we hope to invite into our organization, we couldn't work our Programs at every level that support our mission of improving the lives of our veterans, service members and their families.

We want to hear from you, too. Share your #AuxiliariesinAction and #AuxiliaryPatriotism on social media. Send us your photos and story ideas at info@vfwauxiliary.org. Tell us what you think about the magazine with a letter to the Editor. Please note that some of your submissions will work better for our other communications outlets like our National E-Newsletter or on social media. Also keep in mind that the magazine is published only six times per year; it can take time for us to get to your story. We do review what you send us to see if it is a good fit.

We want to keep our lines of communication open. The best way to ask us questions will always be via info@vfwauxiliary.org. Submitting questions on social media typically only delays responses, as many times, we have to ask you to submit your comment to our information email address.

This is monitored every weekday. Once we receive your question or concern in this inbox, we either answer or route it directly to the appropriate staff member who will respond to you.

We do receive questions via Facebook, comments and DMs, and if we can answer them there, we will. However, many times we will refer you to info@vfwauxiliary.org, which serves as our hub for assigning inquiries to the correct staff member.

I look forward to seeing many of you in person in just a couple of months in Louisville for National Convention. There we'll be able to reconnect, take in training, recognize members for their achievements and more. If you haven't already registered, do so in [MALTA](#) now. Visit our [National Convention web page](#) for more information, including housing, a tentative agenda and brochures from all five candidates for National Guard.

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

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

VOLUME 87 NUMBER 6

Editor-In-Chief
Amanda Cook

Contributing Writers
Nicole Panteleakos &
Skye Melcher

VFW Auxiliary Magazine

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Change of Address

Forward address changes to: Circulation Department, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111. Members may also change their own address or email address in MALTA. Or email info@vfwauxiliary.org.

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 a VFW Auxiliary Life Member and for some reason I have not been receiving the Auxiliary magazine anymore. Is this a thing of the past?

I always enjoy reading this magazine.

MICHELENE GERACE

Auxiliary 4668

LaSalle, Ill.

From the Editor: Michelene, we're so happy to hear you enjoy *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* and want you and others to know that it is still very much a publication of the present, except in digital format only. We went all digital in January of 2023. Find more details about this on page 3 of this issue.

How will Ms. Gerace get this answer, you might be wondering, if she is not online? She mailed us a letter and we called her back.

To those members who are online and on computers, tablets and smartphones: We hope you will try to connect with our members who do not have computer/tablet/smartphone access to share the magazine in its current format. It's a nice reason to get in touch with fellow members we may not see as frequently anymore.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

The editors of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* want to know what you think about features and articles you see (or would like to see) in the magazine.

While we have appreciated receiving all of your feedback about the National magazine going digital, we also look for constructive comments on what you liked, what you didn't and why as well as what you think we could include that we aren't already covering.

This is your page to voice your thoughts!

Email us at info@vfwauxiliary.org with Letter to the Editor in the subject line or send your letters to:

VFW Auxiliary Magazine,
406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor,
Kansas City, MO, 64111.

MY
VETERAN
 Quentin Stambaugh

For more than 70 years, Quentin Stambaugh saved his letters in a potato chip can.

The World War II veteran had written them to his family back home while serving in the Pacific. Home was in Spring Grove, Pennsylvania, where he was one of eight children born to Jessie and Mabel. In 1944, Stambaugh was a 20-year-old radioman and gunner on a B-52. In February, 2024, he celebrated his 100th birthday. In the days and months that followed, Stambaugh was widely recognized, including by his VFW Post and the Pennsylvania House and Senate; by his side for each of these events was Tara Wenzel, a Life Member of Auxiliary 5265, and a friend.

Wenzel met Stambaugh a few years back through a mutual friend, Mary Morgan, and they “clicked right away.” She and her husband began spending time with Stambaugh and Morgan, and it was his involvement with the VFW that inspired Wenzel to join the Auxiliary. She joined under her grandfather, who, as she learned while researching her eligibility, was on a ship patrolling the waters off Japan within sight of the *USS Missouri* when the surrender was signed.

A longtime fan of history and historical record-keeping who has studied World War II leaders Winston Churchill and Dwight Eisenhower, Wenzel told Stambaugh of the memories he put on paper, “We really need to document this.”

She has been helping him to do exactly that ever since, organizing the letters into binders and asking many questions about the places he’d gone and the people

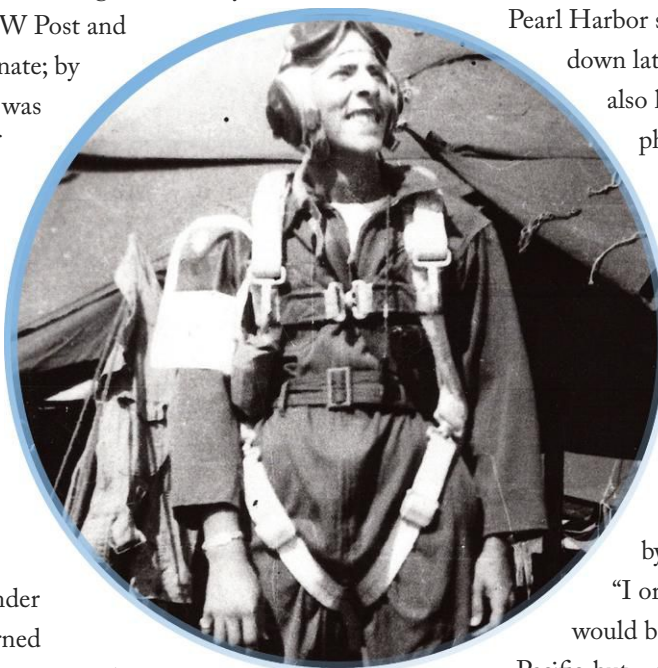
he’d known. This turned into a memoir-writing project, and in addition to listening to Stambaugh share his stories, Wenzel has been thoroughly researching, not only confirming the details of many of Stambaugh’s 39 combat missions, each of which he detailed in what she calls his “little black book,” but to find information about some of those Stambaugh knew and lost touch with. This includes a friend confirmed killed in action, and a local boy thought to have died in Hawaii only to learn that the

Pearl Harbor survivor had actually been shot down later, over the Bering Sea. She also helps Stambaugh sort through photographs, which include not only Stambaugh and his crew, but pictures he took during missions, including at least one of a Japanese ship he hit from his plane.

“Once a week we got together... and we’d go letter by letter and I’d say ‘Who is this person?’ What did you mean by that statement?” says Wenzel.

“I originally thought (the memoir) would be more about this time in the Pacific, but... what these letters painted was what life was like for the families waiting back home.”

Prior to his service, Stambaugh had never been out of Jackson Township. He went to a one-room school house, then hitchhiked every day to get to the high school, from which only he and one sibling graduated. After, he worked in an auto parts store, then started working for a company making Navy aircraft. The first time his draft number came up, he received a deferment as he was already working a defense job. The second time, he was





ready to serve. Stambaugh soon decided he “would rather fly out than walk out,” to quote the man who owned the local airport, and began training as a pilot in the Army Air Corps. He was assigned to a crew of young men with whom he would become friends. They were all sent to Hawaii together, but before they could be deployed, Stambaugh fell ill. He was in the hospital for weeks, from around Thanksgiving to Christmas, during which time he sent letters to his crewmates who’d been sent on ahead. When he was finally well enough to be sent overseas, he hoped to meet up with them again.

But his last letter was returned, marked deceased.

“He tells his youngest sister in one of the letters, ‘I’ve got some sad news,’” says Wenzel. His entire crew, each of his friends, had been killed, leaving Stambaugh with only the saved letters, black and white photographs and his memories. “He’d had a lot of loss,” Wenzel continues. One of his friends was brutally murdered in a prisoner of war camp just after the Japanese surrendered, and nearly seven decades later, his grandson, Cameron, was killed by an IED in Afghanistan. The Private First Class was only 20 years old, about the same age Stambaugh was when wounded during his final mission.

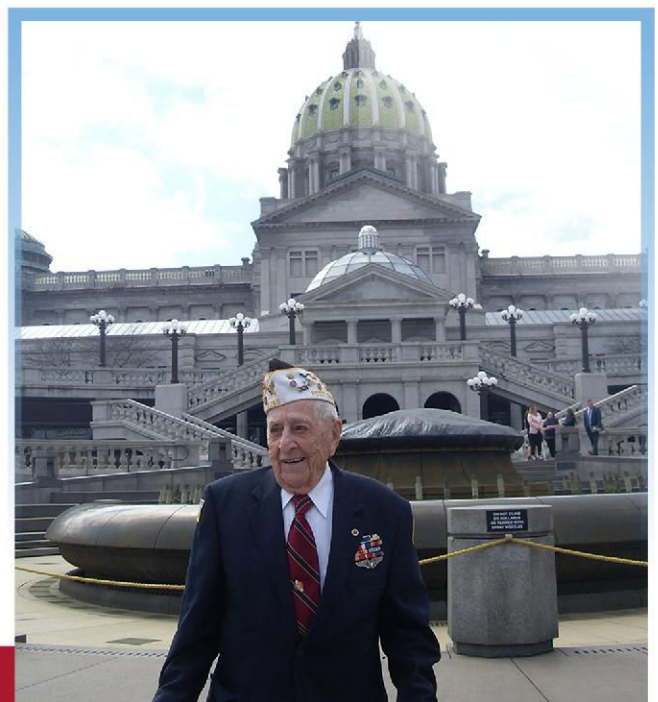
When Wenzel nominated Stambaugh for the “My Veteran” feature, she did not list his hardships, or even much about his exemplary military service and medals. Her focus was primarily on the type of person he is.

“After serving in the military, he returned home and continued to serve his community by being a magistrate and senior judge until mandatory retirement at age 80 (during which he) “helped those brought before him to get on the right track,” according to Wenzel. Additionally, Stambaugh “plants a sizeable garden each year and shares his harvest.”

Stambaugh tends to both flowers, most notably his beautiful canna lilies, and food, including tomatoes, some of which he cans to turn into delicious sauce, and cabbage. “My husband and I were the beneficiaries of some wonderful homemade sauerkraut that he made.”

VFW Post 5265 honored Stambaugh with his VFW Silver and Gold Legacy Life Membership at his 100th birthday party, while both the House and Senate welcomed him with detailed introductions and standing ovations. These celebrations were overwhelming to witness, but also well-deserved. Wenzel is currently trying to help Stambaugh get his Purple Heart, and they are about one chapter away from finishing the first draft of his memoir, which will help to keep Stambaugh's story and the memories of his crewmates alive long after the last veteran of World War II has passed.

Says Wenzel, “He is a wonderful, wonderful man.” ✨ NP



THIS PAGE: World War II veteran Quentin Stambaugh is honored at the Pennsylvania state capital on his 100th birthday. **PAGE 7:** Stambaugh when he served as a radioman and gunner during World War II.

2024 MID-YEAR

CONFERENCE

Anchors aweigh!

For Mid-Year Conference 2024, it was bon voyage, Port Canaveral, and full steam ahead to the Caribbean!

More than 400 members, along with special guests from the VFW and VFW National Home, joined VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez for smooth sailing on the Atlantic Ocean. Even Christmas, the Martinez's service dog and cherished family member, was on board for her very first cruise!

Royal Caribbean's ship offered space for Council of Administration business, fellowship and fun - two cocktail receptions (two Conferences at each) - to accommodate the great turnout - and a healthy dose of vitamin "sea" with onboard entertainment, activities and dining and port days in sunny Mexico and the Bahamas.

At the Council meeting, members heard from VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento, Adjutant General Dan West and Quartermaster General Marc Garduno; Angie Harkins, VFW National Home Program Director, and 2023-2024 National Ambassadors, who shared their best SWAPs. Attendees also learned more

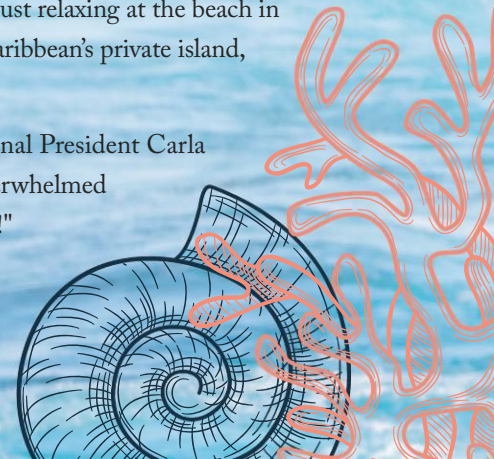
about all five National Guard Candidates who spoke at the meeting: Kimberly Davis, Arkansas; Janey Feher, Kentucky; Kay Gedling, Alabama; Donna Howell, Alabama; and Susan Simmons, Georgia.

Proposed Resolutions to the National Bylaws submitted by Departments prior to the Conference were presented. All Resolutions properly put forward get posted behind [MALTA](#).

The Council approved National Headquarters' transition to a new 401(k) employee pension plan that will incur less expense and better benefit staff.

On free time, there was no shortage of beautiful blue ocean views, sea day dance parties and contests and plenty of shopping, exploring or just relaxing at the beach in Cozumel and on Royal Caribbean's private island, CocoCay.

Of the Conference, National President Carla said, "I was speechless, overwhelmed (with) love. Thank you all!"



YEAR

EXPERIENCE



TOP: National Ambassadors race the clock in the Mariner of the Seas' escape room.
BELOW: Members head back to the cruise ship after a relaxing day at CocoCay, Bahamas.

MID-YEAR 2024

One evening, National President Carla hosted Department Presidents, Past National Presidents and VFW and VFW National Home folks for a private dinner at Chops Grille steakhouse on the Mariner of the Seas ship. We captured the moment (and everyone in their finest attire) with a pre-meal photo.

Martinez joined National Line Officers and Ambassadors for escape room adventures. Both groups had one hour to solve the many puzzles and riddles it took to “save the world” from atop the cruise liner. Let’s just say the Ambassadors made better time... by about five minutes.

“The thing I most enjoyed about the Mid-Year Conference was the opportunity to see all my Auxiliary family! It was also special because we had three generations of family in attendance! My grandma, mom, aunt and myself,” said Tessa Butcher, 2023-2024 National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador.

Look for a preview of Mid-Year Conference 2025 on page 12 and visit the [Events page](#) on our National website to

learn more and make arrangements to attend. Convention in Louisville, Kentucky (July 27-Aug.1) is our next National event, and registration is open until the end of this month. See our [National website](#) and MALTA for more information. ✨ AC

CLOCKWISE FROM MIDDLE: Sherrie Leslie, Alice Burrell (Department President) and John Morrow of Delaware get ready to sail away. VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez and friends enjoy the beach at CocoCay, including Past National President Francisca Guilford, Barbara Melnick of Alaska and Barbara Young of Utah. Martinez dances the afternoon away on sail away day. Department Presidents pose with Martinez and VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. Members gather for group photos at one of two Conference receptions.

*Photos on pages 10 and 11 by Amanda Cook
Selfie this page by Carla Martinez*



MID-YEAR CONFERENCE 2025 CANCUN, MEXICO

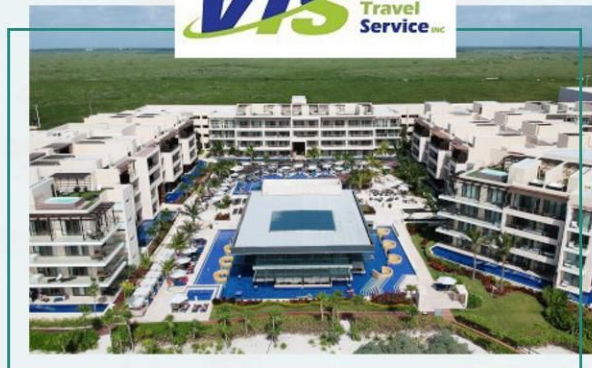
Join

incoming VFW Auxiliary National President Brenda Bryant for Mid-Year Conference next year in Mexico at the beautiful Hideaway at Royalton Riviera adults-only all-inclusive resort in Cancun February 1-6, 2025.

The Hideaway at Royalton Riviera is tucked away on an impressive, ultra-secure property just a short car ride from the hustle and bustle of Cancun's hotel zone, and features a stunning beach area just for Hideaway guests, 11 restaurants to suit any palate, live entertainment, pools, a casino, spa and much more.

Centuries ago, Cancun was ruled by the Maya. Just a block or two off the main transfer-to-hotel route, vestiges of their architecture peek out amongst the high-rise condos and resorts. Cancun as we know it was carved out of the jungle; most days are balmy and bright on the Yucatan Peninsula along the Caribbean Sea. Prepare for fun and sun!

Space is not guaranteed in all room categories until booked. Contact Veterans Travel Service at (800) 325-9377.





KIMBERLY DAVIS
ARKANSAS

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR NATIONAL GUARD?

I have been inspired by my brother, a Marine, who needed support for his family while he was away. There were no resources to help them. I never want another family to feel the way he felt then.

I have skills that will help our members, veterans and their families feel valued and heard. Together with the talent and the passion of all members, our organization can thrive and continue to serve veterans and communities to live their best life. As I have served on all other levels of our VFW Auxiliary, I have learned and loved, I am excited to continue to serve and I am inspired to be your next VFW Auxiliary National Guard.

HOW CAN WE BEST POSITION OUR ORGANIZATION FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS?

I am excited by the successes of our members and our leadership, the accessibility of our resources on MALTA and the transparency of how our organization is accomplishing our goals. As we continue to afford opportunities for our members to serve and employ their talents and skills, we will continue to excel. We have such a rich and honored history to build upon and such new and exciting opportunities ahead! We must continue to welcome new members into our organization, to listen to their ideas and value the diverse talents offered. We must continue to listen and learn from our seasoned members. With such a rich wealth of knowledge, talent, passion and energy, our Programs and our mission will continue to be successful. I want to be the bridge to link all these necessary keys for success together. Our service will continue as long as there is a veteran or family member that will benefit from what we do!



JANEY FEHER
KENTUCKY

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR NATIONAL GUARD?

I was inspired by three people: my dad, Past Department President Wanda Aull (my dad's counterpart his year), and Past National President Marion Watson (dad's counterpart as National Council member). My dad took me to the meetings and these two ladies were

the ones who mentored me. They are all gone now, but their inspiration of serving the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary will always be in my mind and heart. They truly gave "unwavering support for our uncommon heroes."

HOW CAN WE BEST POSITION OUR ORGANIZATION FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS?

We can communicate with everyone - not just the leaders. We need to be better at this on all levels in our organization. By doing so, we can make sure our organization continues to grow.

We also need to be open to technology and helping our older generation understand what can be accomplished by using it. So many times they feel "out of the loop." We don't need to make them, or any others, feel this way. Everyone is valuable in this organization whether they hold a position or not. We are all members first!

GUARD

Candidates



KAY GEDLING
ALABAMA

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR NATIONAL GUARD?

As a 25-year veteran myself, I know how important it is to have the support of our family and community. Being there for our veterans and their families is my number-one priority. Making sure that

our organization is still here for the next 100+ years, I have a clear vision of how we can do this. Making sure we honor our traditions while we evolve with the generations.

HOW CAN WE BEST POSITION OUR ORGANIZATION FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS?

Our organization is facing a time when we need to reevaluate how we do business. We can't continue to

operate the way "we have always done it." Our reliance upon word of mouth, our website and on social media pages aren't enough. We must necessarily take the next leap forward to advertising and the use of technology portals (i.e. QR codes, etc.) that show we are in step with today's warriors and their families. We must showcase our mission of helping veterans and their families by utilizing the methods and technology (that get the) most traffic by the generation we are trying to reach. We MUST meet them where THEY are.

We can never forget our fiduciary responsibility to be the best stewards of our finances. It is incumbent upon us to carefully use the funds we have to their fullest benefit for our veterans and their families. Streamlining our budget and the careful adherence to it is and must remain a top priority.

Additionally, we must apply the same level of respect that we have for our finances to our members' time and effort, being careful to never waste either.



DONNA HOWELL
ALABAMA

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR NATIONAL GUARD?

The VFW Auxiliary is my passion. I have been inspired to run for the office of the National Guard from the actual "objective" of the VFW Auxiliary organization. Through my love of assisting the VFW and its members, assisting our veterans and their families,

working our Programs, promoting patriotism, mentoring and upholding our Auxiliary traditions. It is because of what our organization stands for and the services we provide that I have the desire to be an Officer of this great organization at the National level.

HOW CAN WE BEST POSITION OUR ORGANIZATION FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS?

Continued technology updates: As technology keeps advancing it will continue to require changes throughout our organization. These changes must be implemented into Departments, Districts and Auxiliaries - all levels of the organization will become stronger. The implementation process will require implementing and continuing support Programs, mentoring, coaching and training.

Educating the public: A campaign to educate the public on the VFW and Auxiliary organization is needed so the information can be carried into the communities. The public needs to be educated on who the VFW and Auxiliary are and the positive effects of the organizations for our veterans and in our communities. A positive image should be seen in the public view.

Continued membership growth: Educating the public will bring new active membership into the Auxiliaries. Additionally, implement a campaign to reach out to younger potential members.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO RUN FOR NATIONAL GUARD?

My parents started my love for this organization and for our veterans my taking me with them to VFW meetings, to VA Hospital visits and on “Buddy”® Poppy drives from a very early age.

The patriotism that my parents instilled in me led me to serve in the Air Force for four years. I have thought about running for National Guard for a very long time, but due to my mother and husband needing me to be their caregiver, their needs had to come first. Many of my friends and family who know how much working for veterans, their families and our organization means to me are encouraging me to now run for this office. I now have all the time and energy that this office requires and want

to continue to make sure that we continue to assist our veterans and their families we can.

HOW CAN WE BEST POSITION OUR ORGANIZATION FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS?

Our success is going to depend on keeping members who want to continue our mission to assist veterans and their families; in order to do this we must do a better job at mentoring our new members so they don't leave the organization because they don't feel needed or they don't feel like their ideas are being heard. We have to be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things and working these into our core Programs. While working our Programs, we need to ensure that we are advertising what we are doing in our communities thereby hopefully getting others interested in joining us to continue our mission, which is to take care of our veterans. We must continue to use our experienced members for their guidance and wisdom.

Centennial Garden at the VFW NATIONAL HOME

Help us celebrate the upcoming VFW National Home Centennial with a personalized engraved brick in our 2025 Centennial Garden.

For a limited time only, you can secure your place in history for only \$500.

There are only a limited number of bricks available, so order yours today!



Remembering

PATRICIA JANKOWSKI



On Sunday, March 3, the VFW Auxiliary received word of the loss of our mentor, friend and Auxiliary sister, Past National President Patricia Jankowski (2000-2001).

Jankowski, a Life Member of Conroy-Renye-McNeil Auxiliary 4422 in Taylor, Michigan, joined on the eligibility of her stepfather, Donald Russell, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was always “dad” to her, having raised her after her biological father, Ned Fye, was killed in the Battle of the Bulge when she was only 2 years old. Jankowski’s dad made sure she honored her late father, displaying his photo on her dresser and encouraging her to be proud. On Groundhog’s Day in 1963, Pattie Fye married John Jankowski, a veteran she affectionately described as “goofy-looking” and “very supportive.” Their reception was at the VFW Post home.

As Department of Michigan President, Jankowski was an Outstanding President of the Year. Exactly 10 years later, as National President, she led the membership behind the theme **Today—Tomorrow—Always—Remembering Yesterday** to signify the organization’s ongoing goal of helping those who have fought for our country. Among her accomplishments, she was a member of the Blazette Color Guard for five years, earning two Bronze and one Silver Medal for competition at VFW National Convention, and she served as National Cancer Aid & Research Director and National Director for the VFW National Home Program while instilling a sense of patriotism in those around her.

Writes nephew and godson Jim Russell, a former Marine, “I could have never asked for a better woman who showed me how to love the United States.”

Jankowski was the first National President to visit Vietnam, where she had the opportunity to learn about the progress of the Vietnam-U.S. Joint Task Force Recovery effort to locate missing servicemen from the

Vietnam War. Her Far East tour took her to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency’s Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, to Guam where she met with Auxiliary members, to the Demilitarized Zone in Korea and to facilities run by the Veterans Affairs Commission in Taipei, Taiwan.

Those who knew Jankowski describe her as committed to the ideals and the mission of the organization, always ready to answer members’ questions.

“Pattie didn’t know a stranger,” says Past National President Evelyn McCune. “She was very soft-spoken, extremely intelligent (and) cognizant of people’s feelings and opinions.” Most importantly, says McCune, “She was a wonderful friend.”

Additionally, Jankowski “knew how to work and when to work, and was a staunch veteran supporter,” recalls Past National President Cortina Barnes, who was one of Jankowski’s Department Presidents. “But my gosh, she knew how to have fun!” A Disney fan whose favorite character was Minnie Mouse, Jankowski chose Orlando, Florida for her Mid-Year Conference. “Her night on the town for Qualifying Presidents (was a trip to Disney’s) Pleasure Island,” says Barnes. Qualifying Presidents had dinner and enjoyed live entertainment in a special restaurant’s upstairs room, which was closed to the public. “We were doing a conga line and she was in it, too!”

After living in Michigan for many years, Jankowski retired and moved to Florida. She was preceded in death by John, her husband of 45 years, and survived by many loving family members, close friends and her partner, Frank.

“I will miss her greatly,” writes Russell. “Thank you, VFW Auxiliary, for the love you showed her.” ★ NP



2023 -2024

VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY & PATRIOT'S PEN

FIRST-PLACE WINNERS' ESSAY EXCERPTS



SOPHIA LIN
Sponsored by Post and Auxiliary 3513
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ATTRIBUTES OF OUR DEMOCRACY?

\$35,000

My parents came to America in their early 20s with nothing but one suitcase and \$100 in their pocket. Graced with student visas and a goal of pursuing higher education, they wanted a better life in the land of

the free. I'll never truly understand the fear

they must have faced, packing up their lives to move 7,513 miles from their family.

Yet looking back, my mother has never characterized her American experience as one of hardship. She has always said, "Every day was filled with hope - a hope that was enough to wake us up every morning." That same hope is what fueled my father as he earned his Ph.D. despite broken English and a limited vocabulary. It took them 11 years from the day they landed in this country to finally become official U.S. citizens. I asked my mother why she kept persevering in hopes of one day becoming an American citizen. She said: "Because to be a citizen is to be a part of democracy." America's democracy where dreams and visions gracefully advance through ballots cast and voices heard. She remembers proudly parading her "I voted" sticker after her first time voting, because America welcomed her to its democracy and she had a say. A say in a

country she couldn't originally call home, but now can. A say in their newfound responsibility to help steer the ship of democracy they'd chosen.

My parents' journey is a testament to the ideals that underpin our democracy.

In my quest to delve deeper into the greatest attributes of our democracy, I have also embarked on a mission to explore democracy from the perspective of those who've defended it.

Through the Veterans Heritage Project, I had the honor of interviewing a 100-year-old Jewish Navy veteran, Dolly. Despite our 84-year age gap, we bonded over the traits that make us both American. Dolly's enlistment was initially inspired by her father, a World War I Navy veteran, and even though her Jewish family painfully experienced American antisemitism post World War I, she joined 550,000 other American Jews without any hesitation, to fight for justice, human rights and equality. That is the pride of American democracy, a pride to resist aggression and terminate discrimination.

My parents' gratitude to those who uplifted them and Dolly's lifelong dedication to our country motivate me to be an active participant in our democracy.

A beacon of hope, a promise of opportunity, and a symbol of resilience: these are the attributes that make up our democracy.



BRYANT DAY
Sponsored by Post and Auxiliary 9943
MANSFIELD, OHIO

PATRIOT'S PEN

HOW ARE YOU INSPIRED BY AMERICA?

\$5,000

America's rich history is full of events that inspire me. One of these events is the American Revolution. The men who fought for the independence of our nation risked everything they had so that their children could live in freedom. Their example inspires me to be brave and to do good for my country.

Not only am I inspired by America's history, but also its proud sense of nationalism. This is shown each summer at Fourth of July celebrations across our great nation. Americans gather with family and friends to honor our freedoms of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that our forefathers secured long ago.

Although our history and our nationalism motivates me to be a good American citizen, what inspires me the most is the work ethic of America's people. In our country, everyone has the freedom to succeed, and serve our nation in many different ways.

From soldiers to firefighters, police officers to teachers, all Americans have the opportunity to make an impact. Our veterans provide a great example of dedication to a worthy cause. Their work ethic is inspiring to me because they are willing to leave the comforts of home to help people that they might not even know. I am grateful to live in a country where opportunities abound and if my work ethic is strong enough, I can achieve anything.

Through its history, nationalism, and outstanding work ethic, I am inspired by America to take advantage of the freedoms I have in order to be the best person I can be.

To learn more about the VFW's VOD and Patriot's Pen for which students compete to win thousands of dollars in college scholarships and to watch both students present their winning essays during the VFW's Parade of winners in Washington, D.C., [click here](#). Also find next year's themes.

THIRD ANNUAL VFW DAY OF SERVICE IS COMING SOON

BY JANIE DYHOUSE, VFW MAGAZINE

Growing on the success of the previous two events, the VFW Day of Service is scheduled for May 4.

VFW Posts around the country are amping up for the third annual VFW Day of Service on May 4. That date kicks off a month of veteran-led community service projects.

The Day of Service is an outgrowth of the VFW's #StillServing initiative that launched in 2020 and has since brought recognition to how much U.S. military veterans continue to serve in their communities after they take off their uniform.

We can join forces on these projects! VFW members should register their event [here](#) and Auxiliaries can click on this link to learn more about VFW's Day of Service 2024.

Also think about how Auxiliaries can report Day of Service hours as they relate to VFW Auxiliary Programs. See *2023-2024 National Program Book* for reporting criteria.

By concentrating on veteran-led community service projects on this day, and throughout the month of May, the VFW intends to bring focus to the role veterans play in the well-being of their communities and surrounding areas.

"We hope to harness the momentum of our last two events to make the third annual Day of Service the best yet in terms of participation and impact," VFW Director of Communications Randi Law said. "Through this event, not only have our members contributed in countless, meaningful ways to their communities, but they've had a lot of fun doing it. Our hope is the event continues to grow for years to come."

VFW's second annual Day of Service in 2023 grew its total number of grassroots events by more than 20 percent from the first year. VFW Posts in all 50 states,



as well as those in Europe, Guam, Asia and Puerto Rico, participated last year.

Much as Veterans Day commemorations take place throughout the month of November, the VFW Day of Service occurs on the first Saturday in May (and continues throughout the month).

The VFW asks that VFW members, all veterans and others [click here](#) to register their events on the interactive Day of Service map and receive a special participation decal and/or find a local event to join and see what veterans around the country are doing to make a difference.

VFW Day of Service events are community service focused, so it is up to you and your Post to identify what your community needs. Whatever Day of Service project you and your members decide upon will qualify. However, "Buddy"® Poppy, recruiting and events which raise monetary donations do not qualify as a Day of Service event.

Below are some examples of community service events:

- Drives — food, personal hygiene products, diapers
- Home repair
- Street/park/cemetery/vacant lot clean-up
- Health fairs
- Houseless to home support
- Playground rehab/installation
- Accessibility initiatives

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT VFW DAY OF SERVICE,**

CONTACT - info@todaysvfw.org.



2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

All meetings are held in the convention center unless otherwise noted. Times for various functions are subject to change. Meeting rooms will be posted closer to conference dates and are subject to change.

LS = Livestream

FRI, JULY 26

10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Early packet pickup at the Louisville International Convention Center (South Pre-Function-Main Concourse).

SAT, JULY 27

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)*

1:30-2:30 p.m. Amwins Presentation

5:30- 6:30 p.m. Circle of Excellence Ceremony (LS)

SUN, JULY 28

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

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

10:45-11:30 a.m. National District Council Member Training

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

1:00-4:30 p.m. Programs Seminar (LS)

MON, JULY 29

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

8:00 a.m. - Noon Joint Opening Session

1:30-5:00 p.m. Auxiliary Opening Business Session (LS)

TUE, JULY 30

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

8:30 a.m. - Noon Auxiliary Business Session (LS) *(Last day for exhibits/registration)*

6:00-8:00 p.m. VFW Patriotic Celebration

WED, JULY 31

8:30-11:00 a.m. Auxiliary Business Session (LS)

2:30-4:00 p.m. MALTA & Accounting Software Training *(Open to all)*

THURS, AUG.1

8:00-8:15 a.m. Presentation of Department Presidents with colors (LS)

8:30-11:30 a.m. Officer Election, Installation and Closing Session (LS)

3:00-5:00 p.m. Joint Reception for Commander-in-Chief and National President *(Ticketed event)*, Convention Center

5:30-9:00 p.m. National President's Celebration hosted by the Department of Missouri, Hyatt Regency Hotel Louisville

POST-CONVENTION EVENTS

FRI, AUG. 2

9:00-11:00 a.m. National District Council Meeting, Hyatt Regency Hotel Louisville

JULY 31-AUG. 4 Military Order of the Cootie's Supreme Scratch, Marriott East Hotel Louisville

REGISTRATION FORM

National Convention: Advance Registration \$25

45-Plus Luncheon (Complimentary) **Year Member Joined**

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 a 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.

Registrations 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 27 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, 1979, and maintained continuous membership since that date.

HQ MEMO

AUXILIARY BUSINESS

- **May 31, 2024: REGISTRATION CLOSES** for all National Convention events and for National Convention Delegates and Alternates. Delegates may be entered in [MALTA](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org), 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, 2024:** Input Reports of Installation of 2024-2025 Auxiliary, District and Department Officers online.
- **By August 31, 2024:** The 2023-2024 bond payment for President and Treasurer of Auxiliary 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.

FOR REVIEW

- **Bring your plastic membership card to Convention.** Even though the VFW Store is now selling metal membership cards, you will need your plastic card for registration.
- **National Guard candidate interviews on Page 13.** 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 111th National Convention. Find these in MALTA.
- **Your email address:** If it is not correct in MALTA, please update it or contact National Headquarters at 816-561-8655 or email info@vfwauxiliary.org.

Student robotics team helps families locate loved ones laid to rest at Arizona cemetery

For high school students studying robotics in Chloride, Arizona, teamwork isn't just about science and mechanics. It's also about building partnerships that give back to the community – in this case, working with a local Auxiliary and Post to help bring families and their veterans together in unconventional ways.

Kingman Academy of Learning Roaring Robotics Team 14436 partnered with the Chloride, Arizona VFW Auxiliary and Post 2190 to work on a cemetery mapping project for the loved ones of veterans laid to rest there.

The cemetery mapping project combines high resolution aerial imagery with geographic locations and photographs of veterans' grave markers to create an online application to aid visiting community and family members in locating graves of veterans buried in the Chloride Cemetery.

B.J. Maticic, math teacher and lead mentor for Roaring Robotics Team 14436, said the group always tries to provide some forms of community outreach through their school year and season.

"The Chloride VFW and Auxiliary had reached out and said they have an issue with the cemetery there; they've been wanting to find an easier way for people to find their loved ones," he said.

The Post and Auxiliary have been sponsors of the team for the last few years so when asked to aid, the team said yes.

Auxiliary member Cynde Anthony said that partnering with the team resulted in mapping the location of more 230 veteran grave sites in Chloride Community Cemetery. The Auxiliary originally placed Flags at each of the veterans' graves, but due to high winds the Flags were being lost.

"It's going to be a huge help, especially for people who don't live here, who would like to zero in on a veteran's grave," Anthony said. She has had out-of-town visitors reach out to her about not being able to find their veteran's grave site.

Once planning the project began, the team ran into one issue; they did not have any drones themselves so one of the team members' fathers provided his drone.

The team did a test run of their school's parking lot with the drone and then started tweaking the global imaging system (GIS). Mojave County has the most extensive GIS mapping in Arizona, so the team was able to use the county's information to find the locations and run their full program. The county hosts the GIS system application for the team.



Kingman Academy of Learning Roaring Robotics Team 14436 members Calista Aulich and Angsumali Clark taking pictures of grave markers.

"Once that was done, we had team members go out to take pictures of the headstone and get a GPS location of where the headstone was and we put in all the information...", Maticic said.

"When anybody goes to search, they could look by last name, first name or branch of service."

Visitors, after scanning a QR code made for the cemetery, can click on a veteran and then the app will tell them where to go and how to find the location for the grave.

Maticic said the students really enjoyed working on the project.

"We actually plan to (work with) some other smaller cemeteries around area to do the same thing and then eventually we want to map the whole cemetery for everybody," Maticic said. "This is probably going to be a six-year project to get everything done that we are working on right now."

Maticic said this project allowed the students to think about how many how many veterans are forgotten about once they have passed on while also helping the community.

"That's one of our biggest things for robotics; it's not just about a robot, it's about what you do to help everybody around while we're learning about making a robot," Maticic continued. "They enjoy that just as much as they enjoy the competition part."

Anthony added that the team experienced true patriotism and learned so much about the veterans laid to rest at the Chloride cemetery. ✨ SM



GRAVE MARKER FLAGS
Printed cotton with hemmed edges, mounted on staff with gilded spearhead. 5/16" dowel.

- * 2150 8 x 12" flag, 24" staff
1 dozen \$16.00
- * 2151 12 x 18" flag, 30" staff
1 dozen \$22.00
- * Must be ordered by the dozen



USA FLAGS

TOUGH-TEX FLAGS

- Long lasting, heavyweight
- 2317 3 x 5' \$42.00
 - 2318 4 x 6' \$52.00
 - 2319 5 x 8' \$82.00

NYL-GLO FLAGS

- Flies in the lightest breeze
- 2307 3 x 5' \$29.00



HAND-HELD FLAGS

- 4 x 6" cotton U.S. flag.
9 1/2" staff. Safety ball tip.
- * 2199 1 dozen \$6.00
 - 6 dozen \$33.00
 - 12 dozen \$63.00

* Must be ordered by the dozen



POW-MIA FLAGS

- Double-sided
- 2233 3 x 5' \$60.00



RED AND BLACK CAP Cotton twill, structured, medium profile, six-panel cap with white sandwich bill. Embroidered with VFW Auxiliary. Hook-and-loop back strap.
7197 \$16.95



Front



LIFE MEMBER T-SHIRT

Black 100% preshrunk cotton screen printed front and back. Unisex sizing. Made in USA.

- 7790 With Pocket**
- S-XL \$25.95
 - 2XL-4XL \$31.95
- 7320 No Pocket***
- S-XL \$14.00
 - 2XL \$16.00
 - 3XL \$18.00
 - 4XL \$20.00

* While quantities last.

GRAVE MARKERS For use with 3/8" dowel flag. Flag is sold separately. Made in the USA.



5 1/2" cast aluminum emblem with 24" rod.
3200 \$41.95



4 3/4" rugged plastic emblem with 16" rod.
3505 \$14.00



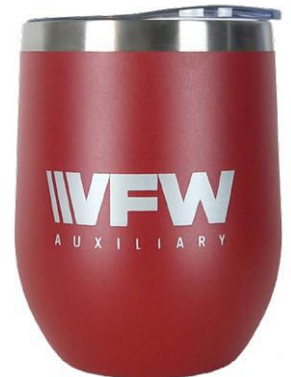
AUXILIARY BRACELET Black braided leather. Laser engraved stainless steel. 8". 1677 \$7.95



U. S. FLAG WITH AUXILIARY EMBLEM PIN
Gold tone, clutch back. 1/2 x 1".
1716 \$5.00

12 OZ. TUMBLER

Double wall, vacuum sealed, stainless steel with copper lining. Press-in, drink-thru clear slider lid. Hand wash.
3140 \$15.95



GRAVE MARKER FLAG

12 x 18" flag. For use with the above grave markers. Made in the USA.

- 2493 1-11 \$15.00 each
- 12-49 \$14.00 each
- 50+ \$13.00 each



WREATH 20".
Made in the USA.
9221 \$47.00