

VFW
Auxiliary
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

**NATIONAL CONVENTION
KANSAS CITY**

**2022-2023
NATIONAL GUARD
KIM HARNEY**

**WELCOME
AUXILIARY 2485
MANILA, PHILIPPINES**

**VETERANS CRISIS LINE
988, PRESS 1**

NEW SIGN-IN PROCESS FOR 990-N FORM

It is especially important to plan ahead when filing your 990-N postcards this year, as the IRS now requires an ID.me account. Read on to learn more.

Smaller charities that are eligible and choose to file Form 990-N, Electronic Notice for Tax-Exempt Organizations (e-Postcard), must sign into the IRS modernized authentication platform using either their active IRS username or create an account with ID.me, the current IRS credential service provider.

When accessing the Form 990-N submission page, Form 990-N filers have three options:

1. Sign in with their active IRS username: Users with an active IRS username have the option to access the Form 990-N submission page using their existing IRS credentials or they can choose to create a new account with ID.me.

2. Sign in with their existing ID.me account: Users who have an ID.me account to access other IRS online services or from a state or federal agency can sign in using their existing ID.me account.

3. Create a new ID.me account: Users who don't have an active IRS username credential must register and sign in with ID.me.

ID.me account creation requires an email address and multifactor authentication. Form 990-N filers who have an existing IRS username and register for an ID.me account must use the same email address.

Treasurers, please remember to submit your 990-N (e-Postcards) to the IRS no later than November 15, 2022. This is important because it allows Auxiliaries to maintain their tax-exempt status. So, if you haven't already, take action to get this filed now to avoid problems later.

DATES & DEADLINES

November

- NOV 11 Veterans Day
- NOV 15 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Post judging complete
- NOV 24 Thanksgiving
- NOV 30 See the *2022-2023 National Program Book* for Membership awards deadlines.

December

- DEC 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- DEC 15 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen District judging complete
- DEC 25 Christmas
- DEC 31
 - Circle of Excellence goal: Paid Officers - Auxiliary Officers MUST have dues paid by this date
 - New Year's Eve

For more information on awards see the *2022-2023 National Program Book* online in Member Resources behind MALTA login.

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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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GET DIGITAL

We are happy to report that the first phase of moving the Member Resources from our website to behind MALTA is complete!

HERE'S HOW YOU NOW ACCESS ITEMS BEHIND LOGIN:

Go to [vfwauxiliary.org](https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org) and click MALTA Member Login or follow this link:

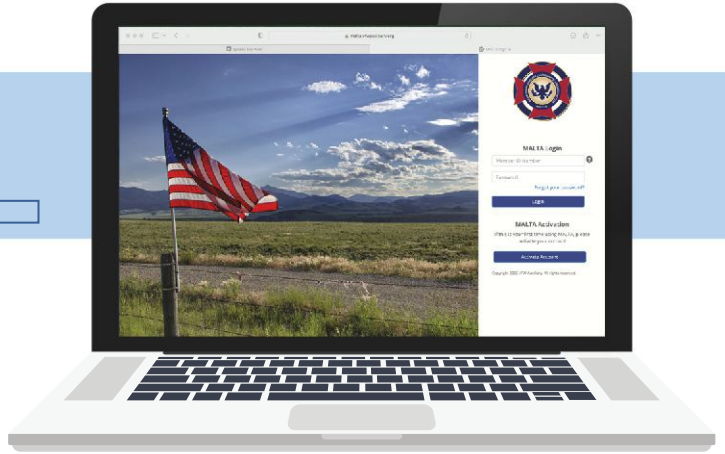
<https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/Account/NewLogin>

To log in, you must have activated a MALTA account (If you haven't already, you may activate your account by following the directions on the site.)

Next, log in to MALTA.

On the blue toolbar, you will now see two added features, Cancer Grants and Member Resources.

All members will be able to click on Cancer Grants to see and print the form to request a cancer grant. This form must be filled out by the member and the physician and have the original signatures of both the physician



and the member (or a copy of death notice if the member is deceased). Therefore, this is not a fillable form.

All members can also click on Member Resources where they will see the *Program Book, the Podium Edition Bylaws and Ritual 2023* and *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation*. To the left side of that screen is the list of all the Programs and miscellaneous resources.

If you click on a file with a link, it will take you to that link. If you click on a file with a document, the document will appear at the bottom (or top) of your screen; click on the box to open.

We hope you all like this new way to view and access our resources.

get SOCIAL

 **Instagram**
@vfwauxiliaryhq

 **LinkedIn**
VFW Auxiliary

 **Facebook**
vfwauxiliary

 **Pinterest**
vfwauxiliary

 **YouTube**
VFW Auxiliary National Organization





“
***My theme is
Hands that Serve,
Hearts that Care.
Those are
just words if
we don't live
by them.***
”

Dear members—

My Special Project is 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art. Past National President Sandi Kriebel opened up the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest to include three-dimensional art in addition to two-dimensional pieces. I have separated both media (2-D and 3-D art) into two different contests, with the objective of creating an even playing field. I have included the awards in my budget for the first year with the hope that with donations, the amounts to fund this scholarship contest will increase over the years. I am excited for the students who create three-dimensional artwork and will now be recognized in their own category.

My VFW counterpart, National VFW Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland, and I have a little friendly competition with a joint project to see who will raise the most money to support a Voice of Democracy Scholarship in honor of the VFW and VFW Auxiliary class of 2022. We decided it's a great way to demonstrate teamwork within our VFW and Auxiliary family.

On September 10 in commemoration of the 21st anniversary of 9/11 we held a very moving and solemn ceremony at the sight where Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers and crew fought to thwart terrorists on board. We were joined by VFW and Auxiliary members from all over our country. It was an honor to remember the heroes of Flight 93. They gave up their own lives to save hundreds, if not thousands, of other lives. Their bravery and selflessness shall never be forgotten.

My theme is ***Hands that Serve, Hearts that Care.*** Those are just words if we don't live by them. How do we do that? It's very simple, and with little effort we can accomplish this. It involves a cultural change and a change in attitude. We know how to be kind but sometimes we don't put it into practice. My mother always told me, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything." I urge you to remember that when you are at your meetings, working together or interacting with other members, be kind and considerate. We can be our own worst enemies. Let's not let that happen.

I also want to share about Cancer Grants. Did you know that your Auxiliary can donate to the Cancer Grant program directly through MALTA, Treasurer Duties, Make a Gift? Members are eligible for Cancer Grants - up to two \$550 grants per member in good standing - provided they meet the necessary criteria even if the Auxiliary they belong to does not donate. Cancer Grant forms are now available in MALTA; see the Cancer Grants tab on the toolbar as soon as you log in.

I look forward to my visits and meeting our members. God bless each and every one of you.

Loyally,

JANE REAPE
National President



*For the first time
in its 81 years,
VFW Auxiliary
Magazine
will become a
digital-only
periodical.*

Dear members—

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our 10th-annual Celebrating America's Freedom Event at the Flight 93 National Memorial. What a moving tribute this was to the crew and passengers who perished more than two decades ago protecting our country from terrorism.

We'll have much more to share about this day in the next edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* in January.

Ahead of the next edition, we have news about a big change to your member magazine.

For the first time in its 81 years, *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* will become a digital-only periodical. It will no longer be printed and mailed to members. This was a decision made by the National Council of Administration to save the organization a substantial amount of money.

Read more about the pros and cons and what members can and should do to prepare for this on page 16.

This final print edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* is filled with National Convention news as well as stories about our newest foreign-based Auxiliary in the Philippines and 988 – a recently-launched veterans crisis line number.

For those of you joining National President Jane Reape in January for the Mid-Year Conference aboard the Norwegian Bliss, we look forward to seeing you!

In the meantime, enjoy your holidays, however you celebrate them, with friends, loved ones and your VFW and Auxiliary family. Remember to keep our veterans, service members and their families in your thoughts, particularly this time of year when not having friends and family to surround us can be especially difficult. Think of how you can include Auxiliary members you haven't seen in a while and veterans in your holiday cheer. Even a card, call or visit could do so much to brighten their lives.

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

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

VOLUME 84 NUMBER 3

Editor-In-Chief
Amanda Cook

Contributing Writer
Nicole Panteleakos

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Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by return postage and no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. Poetry submissions are not accepted. Or email info@vfwauxiliary.org.

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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. Be sure to furnish your old address and your Auxiliary number when requesting address change. To ensure accuracy, please clip and enclose your present address as printed on a recent copy of VFW Auxiliary Magazine. 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.

In my life (this) is a story about two old clubs making a new one. I am still a member of Auxiliary 1170 (at age 86).

I read your news of Marion Watson passing this year. In the early years of the Auxiliary at the Newman Post, my husband made me a member of the Auxiliary. I did not know anything about being a member. I was busy at home with six babies (with my husband, Dennis).

Now for the real story. It is about Marion and Hardy Watson. We were very good friends in the early years. One day my husband was at the Headquarters of the VFW; he was there to talk about a new VFW Post he and a few others were talking about. The old post of Bear Grass was going downhill, and they wanted a new VFW Post in Middletown. Marion and Dennis were at Headquarters at the same time. They all were talking about the new club. They were trying to think of a number for the Middletown club, so Dennis turns to Marion and asked her what her house number was, and she said 3302. So, the new VFW club of Middletown became 3302 VFW Club of Middletown, Kentucky in Louisville, Kentucky. In the meantime, Bear Grass club of St. Matthews was losing their club - not enough parking - so the two clubs got together and formed one new club in Middletown, Kentucky. The new club is known as 1170 Middletown VFW. They forgot Marion's house number, but it should be in the records.

If you can read this, it is a true story. Marion will be missed by all and her friend of many years.

MARY H. MILLER

Madison, Indiana

Auxiliary 1170 | Middletown, Kentucky

The National magazine means a lot to me because from the news in the magazine, I learn how to be a better VFW Auxiliary member. I learn what others are doing and how I can help my Auxiliary sisters. I give sewing bibs to all the nursing homes. I write notes and send Christmas cards to the soldiers overseas and also to the veterans' home here in Louisiana. I do projects for children in the area schools around the city.

I am proud of the magazine, for old and new members to have information on what others are doing and ways we can inform our Auxiliary. At my age of 90-plus, I am limited to what I can do, but am trying to help others as much as I can. I have gone through the Chairs, and am still an Officer at my age. I wish my sisters the best of everything and continue the good work of our Auxiliary. I am sorry I have to write this - I have no internet or smartphone.

BETTY GASPARD

Lake Charles, Louisiana

Auxiliary 2130, Lake Charles

SPOTLIGHT

WOMEN VETERAN APPRECIATION



Inspired by National VFW Auxiliary stories and blogs, one Arizona Auxiliary organized a tribute to their local women veterans.

In March, the VFW Auxiliary E-Newsletter included an article about Women Veteran Appreciation Day and then-Veterans & Family Support Ambassador Nelda Clifton shared a blog posting about honoring women veterans.

Clifton's blog post focused on the history of women in the military and ways to help women veterans receive the benefits and recognition they deserve, while the E-Newsletter article focused on recognizing dual members – those who joined both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary prior to 2015. *(Note: if you are eligible for both, you now must join only the VFW; these members were grandfathered in.)*

G. Elaine Lorenzen is one of these women.

Now in her 90s, Lorenzen served in Okinawa, Japan, in the U.S. Army about 20 years before women were allowed to join the VFW (in 1978); she has been a Life Member of the Auxiliary since the 1960s. Though she is no longer active, she served as Auxiliary Secretary and Trustee and as VFW Post Adjutant. Some of her fondest memories include serving in the Auxiliary beside her daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughters.

It was Sheila Lee-Eiler, Past Department of Arizona President and Secretary of Sandy Coor Auxiliary 1433 in Glendale, Arizona who reached out to VFW Auxiliary Headquarters before anyone else to answer the call for women veterans stories, and it was Eiler and her Auxiliary who were so inspired by Auxiliary communications they decided to find a way to pay tribute to their local women veterans.

Members discussed and decided to host a high tea. They began researching locally and learned that there had been a Governor's Proclamation of the day in 2021, but there hadn't been an event held to recognize and honor Arizona's women veterans. Theirs would be the first in the state, according to

Arizona State Women's Veteran Coordinator and Arizona Department of Veterans' Services Director Col. Wanda Wright. Planning commenced, and on June 12, 2022, Channel 12 Phoenix was there at the Post home during the tea and luncheon to share the story with viewers, ensuring even those who weren't in attendance knew of their sacrifices and service.

Attendees included approximately 30 women veterans and several special guests, including Wright, Department President Johnnie DeBoard, Auxiliary 1433 President Lorna Lindert and Eiler, who served as Mistress of Ceremony. Lorenzen was highlighted as their matriarch veteran.

National Senior Vice-President Carla Martinez (then Junior Vice-President), a Navy veteran who served for 13 months in Korea, was unable to attend in person, but sent greetings by video.

In the Channel 12 interview, Wright referred to women veterans as an "underserved demographic." She noted it's not only important for us to recognize them, but for women to "recognize themselves as veterans."

Each of those honored also received a special women veterans pin.

"Please remember to thank every (veteran) that you see every day," Martinez requested of those Auxiliary members in attendance. "Because every day is Veterans Day." 🇺🇸 NP



TOP: G. Elaine Lorenzen when she served in the U.S. military. **ABOVE:** Three generations of service - From left, Lorenzen's granddaughter, Elena Revious, (U.S. Navy), Past Department of Arizona President Johnnie DeBoard, Lorenzen and Lorenzen's daughter (retired, Navy) and Auxiliary 1433 President Lorna Lindert. All were among celebrated women veterans at an Auxiliary special event hosted in their honor.

Q and A



My MALTA

WHAT IS MALTA?

MALTA stands for Membership Auxiliary Leadership Technology Access. It is an online database on which members can pay their dues, change their addresses, convert to a Life Membership, find Auxiliary report forms, purchase a bond for your Auxiliary, watch training videos, access Member Resources and more! From the initial announcement regarding MALTA in 2017: MALTA is a system designed with YOU in mind the whole time. Not only does National Headquarters want to be more efficient but we also want to engage with every member through MALTA.

Q: How do I create a login?

A: Easy! All you need is your member ID, your Auxiliary number and ZIP code. Go to malta.vfwauxiliary.org to enter your information. You can do this on a desktop computer, smartphone or tablet. You could also go to vfwauxiliary.org and look for "MALTA Member Login." From either web address, follow the instructions on-screen to get started.

Q: What should I do first?

A: First, look at your profile and update any information we may be missing. The more we know about our members, the better we can serve them. Next, if you are an annual member, pay your dues! Get it done quickly and efficiently. We will mail your membership card, but a digital version (a picture) will be available right away. Just show that or your receipt from MALTA as proof of membership.

Q: If I change my address in MALTA, will that change my address with the VFW National Home for Children?

A: No, you must contact the National Home directly to change your address with them.

Q: How can I learn more about how MALTA serves me?

A: Visit the Online Auxiliary Academy and click on the section entitled MALTA. Access it at: vfwauxiliary.org/online-auxiliary-academy.



VFW AUXILIARY'S 109TH

NATIONAL CONVENTION

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

It's not often a National President's term comes full circle like it did for Jean Hamil, who was elected to the VFW Auxiliary's top National office in Kansas City in August of 2021, and received her Past National President's pin in Kansas City in July of 2022.

In many ways, the same statement holds true for National Convention in general, getting back to where we were, now three calendar years into an enduring pandemic. Attendees - nearly 3,000 of us combined with the



VFW - gathered for what looked a lot like business as usual, and much more.

Members celebrated and welcomed special guests. They learned in training and business sessions, elected new National Officers and received the latest news about the 2022-2023 Program Year from National Ambassadors. The VFW's Patriotic Celebration was back, as was the Joint Memorial. Convention kicked off with Circle of Excellence inductees and festivities; other outstanding members were awarded for their achievements on day three.

The Auxiliary featured the art of our top Young American Patriotic Art Contest and Illustrating America winners, including one three-dimensional piece, in the exhibit hall. Kansas City's own Hallmark Cards generously provided contest judges this year and they were a Convention sponsor. Members were treated to incredible performances of the "Star-Spangled Banner" from 6th grader Abigail Lord of Georgia and high school senior Micah Woods of California, both of whom took first place in their divisions of the Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! national anthem signing contest.

For those who could not attend in person, Convention was available via livestream courtesy of Amwins, Auxiliary benefits provider and Convention sponsor.

Saturday evening, then-National President Hamil welcomed Circle of Excellence inductees. These individuals joined a premier group of leaders – for life – for their impressive work to achieve goals of improving communications, working National Programs, enhancing training and more.

Thirty-seven inductees joined the Circle for 2021-2022 in a ceremony that was well-attended by an audience of Auxiliary and VFW supporters.

Hamil welcomed many esteemed special guests including a prerecorded message from Gordon B. Logan to accept the Better World Award for his VFW "Sport Clips Help a Hero"® Scholarship and the Gratitude Initiative that provides scholarships to children of fallen military and law enforcement families.



PREVIOUS PAGE: Circle of Excellence inductees (above) and (below) members celebrate at the VFW's Patriotic Celebration. (photo by Bob Knudsen). See captions for pages 10, 11 and 12 on page 14.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Other guests included Al Lugo of the VFW Veterans Village in Florida; representatives from the VFW National Home for Children - Executive Director Michael Wilson and "Buddy"® Poppy Child Aurora*; and Warrior Horse Founder and Executive Director Kevin Russell. Warrior Horse is a nonprofit that "transforms the lives of veterans, one horse at a time" through an equine assisted method called the bonding process that assists veterans who experience PTS. Also joining Russell were then-Department of Louisiana President Ramel Fields and her husband, veteran David Fields, whose recovery process has included Warrior Horse.

Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary Supreme President Debbie Thie and Nancy Fox from The Jackson Laboratory were among Hamil's guests. Fox accepted \$25,000 from the Auxiliary. Another \$75,000 in Auxiliary donations went to other cancer centers.

Then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic presented Hamil with the VFW's Gold Medal of Merit.

"Jean, I will remember this year forever," he said before the Auxiliary Delegation. Mihelcic spoke about a great year of working together with the Auxiliary and commended all for a job well done supporting our mission and the successes for veterans and service members that stemmed from this dedication.

In her final speech as National President, Hamil said, "This has been an incredible journey serving as your National President. This year has far exceeded my expectations."

Hamil cited the \$100,000-plus that members donated to her special project that will fund more scholarships for more students, membership in excess of 100% and retention at more than 92%, and the institution of a new foreign-based Auxiliary in the Philippines (see the story on page 17).

She thanked members, mentors, Department leadership, family and friends and her veteran and life partner Jim Antoine for this unforgettable time.

During official business, members considered Resolutions listed below left.

In other discussion, the Council of Administration voted in favor of a digital-only National magazine beginning with the January 2023 edition. Read more about this news on page 16.

Delegates elected Kim Harney, Department of Arizona, as National Guard. Read her story on page 15. All National Line Officers, led by National President Jane Reape, were installed with all appointed Officers. To learn more about 2022-2023 National Officers, visit our website at vfwauxiliary.org.

We hope to see even more members in Phoenix, Arizona for National Convention in 2023.

★ AC

**Last name omitted for privacy.*

FOR FULL RESULTS, visit *Member Resources in MALTA, Miscellaneous, or visit Events, National Convention.*

- **Resolution to amend Section 602-2022 PDP Transfers**
(Bylaws and Resolutions Committee) **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**
- **Resolution to amend Sections 810A/813A-2022 Debit Cards**
(Bylaws and Resolutions Committee) **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**
- **Resolution to amend Section 909-Children-Service Dogs Caregivers**
(Bylaws and Resolutions Committee) **ADOPTED AS AMENDED**
- **Resolution to amend Section 813C-Signatory on Department Bank Accounts** (Department of New Hampshire) **ADOPTED**
- **Resolution to amend Sections 810A/813A-Credit/Debit Cards**
(Department of New Mexico) **NOT ADOPTED**



RIGHT: National Officers from left - Guard Kim Harney, Chaplain Lois Callahan, Junior Vice-President Brenda Bryant, President Jane Reape, Senior Vice-President Carla Martinez, Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, Conductress Donna Mills and Chief of Staff Sharon Connelly. See page 14 for captions for the rest of this page.



MEMBER SOARS ABOVE & BEYOND BY RECRUITING 160!

For Mary "Ellen" Reilly of Auxiliary 7234 in Delaware, a friendly demeanor, starting conversations about our veterans and a great location were the magic behind her success story.

The Life Member recruited 160 members during the 2021-2022 Program Year - double the amount of the next-highest number of members recruited. She will receive a plaque with the name of her veteran on it in addition to the cardinal pin and citation.

"It has been a year of many new applications," wrote Reilly. "We have the advantages of being in a resort town with many new developments coming to the area." Reilly has been Auxiliary President for two consecutive years and as such spends a lot of time at her local Post. Through that, she has had "the pleasure of speaking to many people weekly" who are excited about joining the Post and Auxiliary "and taking advantage of our beautiful facility."

When asked what advice she would give to other members who would like to recruit, she said, "Greet everyone with a smile and be totally knowledgeable about the procedure we must follow." While membership drives weren't the crux of her recruitment efforts, she espouses the benefits of them as they allow members to get out in the public and educate them about the Auxiliary.

"People are looking for an outlet to volunteer," Reilly said. "I try to stress that everyone has something to offer, whether it be helping at events or becoming involved in the many Programs the Auxiliary has... I also try to remind new applicants that the service of their relative (under whom they are eligible) did so much for them that they may want to say 'thanks' by becoming involved in the VFW Auxiliary."

This definitely gets the attention of prospective members.

"A lot of times they start a conversation by saying they are indeed grateful for the service of their veteran," said Reilly.



ABOVE: Mary "Ellen" Reilly, who received the Soaring Above & Beyond Award for recruiting the most new members in 2021-2022. Left: Reilly's veteran, Clifton "Wally" Lillie.

The veteran through whom Reilly is Auxiliary eligible was her father, Clifton "Wally" Lillie. She doesn't recall the World War II veteran discussing his service, but she does have pictures of him taken during that time. She encourages members to ask their veterans for their stories, though she acknowledges that some don't want to talk about what they went through.

She wishes to give credit to her partner of 11 years, Dean Levering, a three-term VFW Past Post Commander and Vietnam veteran. "He was the one who encouraged me to get involved after seeing my father's DD214. We work together on a lot of the projects at our Post and support each other's efforts."  NP

PHOTOS FROM PAGE 10 CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Then-National President Jean Hamil and then-Conductress Lois Callahan stand before the Delegation; Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! Contest winners Micah Woods, a high school senior from California, and Abigail Lord, a 6th grader from Georgia; members prepare for the Opening Business Session; Hamil receives her Past National President's pin from her veteran and partner, Jim Antoine. VFW Past Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic presents Hamil with the Gold Medal of Merit. (Medal of Merit photo by Bob Knudsen).

PAGE 12: Members gather to watch the Presentation of Flags. Pictured are Fred Jennings and Susan Dinon, Department of Virginia President and Guard.

PAGE 13, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP FAR RIGHT: Then-National Soloist Juliet Kennedy shares a patriotic song with members; 2021-2022 Department Presidents Bernice Delorme, North Dakota, and Teresa Singh, Ohio, enter the main hall for the Circle of Excellence Ceremony; Linda Misuraca, Indiana, and Jeanette Henry, Iowa, celebrate after the ceremony; Hamil welcomes special guest Kevin Russell of Warrior Horse, thanking him for the work he does with equine therapy to treat veterans' PTS; "Buddy" Poppy Child Aurora makes her way to the stage; then-National Assistant Soloist Willa Watts performs at the Circle of Excellence Ceremony; Officers are installed on the final day of Convention; 2022-2023 California Department Senior Vice-President Diana Russell-Milton and President Mary Anne Kreutz join the Presentation of Flags. Middle: Hamil proudly displays her Circle of Excellence medallion and below: Hamil with Gordon B. Logan's Better World Award for his VFW "Sport Clips Help a Hero" Scholarship. All Convention photos unless otherwise noted taken by Nicole Bissey.



VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN

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

2022-2023 NATIONAL GUARD

KIM HARNEY

If you heard from Kim Harney on the campaign trail, you know this: Plans change. Which is how her journey to National office began.

"I started out in the Junior Girls and my parents were involved in the VFW and the Auxiliary," she said. "I had no plans beyond that."

But when she turned 16 and wanted to get her driver's license, her parents said she could on one condition. She had to join the Auxiliary first.

She joined on the eligibility of her father, Allen "Gunner" Kent, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968 and 1975. A Life Member of James R. "Bob" Currie Auxiliary 9972 in Sierra Vista, Arizona, she has served the organization in many capacities including Auxiliary, District and Department President, National District Council Member, National Recruiter and Western Conference Membership Coach.

Being raised in a military family, she said, it was natural to be invested in what the Auxiliary stands for.

"I have been around veterans my whole life," she said. "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."

For her first year as a National Officer, Harney looks forward to hearing from members.

"I am very excited to be National Guard," she said. "My plan for this year is to meet the members, talk with them and listen to their ideas or suggestions for our organization. When I traveled to the different Conferences while I was campaigning, I enjoyed learning how each Conference does things just a little different. As I meet more members in the different Departments, I am excited to continue to learn how everyone does things and to share that with others. By sharing what we do with each other, it allows us to incorporate new ideas in our Departments without reinventing the wheel."

Since the plan became the Auxiliary, she couldn't imagine her life without it.

"The more involved I became, the more I wanted to do more," she said. "I love who we are and what we do; the friendships I have made during my time in the Auxiliary are special to me. I couldn't imagine not being an Auxiliary member; it's like a second family."

★ AC



LEFT: National Guard Kim Harney with her mother, Becky Kent, in the early 1980s at a POW/MIA event. Above from left: Harney's aunt, Elaine Stringer; Kent; Harney and husband Jim Harney, a Life Member of Post 9972. Harney, her aunt and mother are all Auxiliary 9972 Life Members.



NATIONAL MAGAZINE IS GOING **DIGITAL**

VFW AUXILIARY MAGAZINE WILL BID FAREWELL TO PRINT BEGINNING WITH THE JANUARY 2023 EDITION. Members will no longer be able to receive a hard-copy/paper magazine in the mail. Instead, members will receive the digital version, either by adding a valid email address to their MALTA profile or by visiting the National website—vfwauxiliary.org.

BUT WHY? WE'VE ALWAYS HAD A PAPER MAGAZINE.

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 475,000 members. We are sorry to see our printed magazine go, but it was a decision based on cost savings. Printing and mass mailing became very expensive.

HOW CAN I GET A DIGITAL MAGAZINE IF I DON'T USE OR HAVE A COMPUTER?

This is where we run into the major cons on the pros and cons list. The short answer is you will not be able to directly access the digital editions without a smartphone, tablet or computer. We realize that unfortunately, this means some of our members will not receive their magazine the way they used to. We also understand there are members who use and have computers and still prefer the printed version of our magazine.

Members who do have computer access may consider printing a copy of the digital magazine for fellow members who don't use or have computers or Auxiliaries can vote to print a copy to take to local nursing homes.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Tell us what you think! Write us letters or email us at info@vfwauxiliary.org. We want to hear from you about this.

For those who do have smartphone, computer or tablet access, it is important that your MALTA profile includes a current email address to so you can receive the *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*. Also important - do not unsubscribe from any Constant Contact emails, including emails from HQ that feature the magazine, E-Newsletter and the VFW Store because unsubscribing from one of these emails will unsubscribe you from all Constant Contact (the system we use to distribute mass emails to members) email.

After January, members will receive an email with the magazine link in their inboxes. Members may also view current and past issues of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* at vfwauxiliary.org, Media, Magazine.

Your National magazine will remain the same length, have the same content about our events and members, including news and feature stories, and will be delivered to members' inboxes still six times per year. It will be the same magazine – but digital. 🌟 AC



VETERANS CRISIS LINE



NEW NUMBER. SAME SUPPORT.

988,

then Press 1, launched in July of 2022 as a universal entry point that connects veterans in crisis with expert responders. This short series of numbers is also a powerful addition to the Department of Veterans Affairs' arsenal of resources that combat another number—the rate of deaths by suicide among veterans and service members. A number that, in 2019, averaged 17.2 veterans per day.

“Dial 988 then Press 1 ... is an unprecedented opportunity to further strengthen crisis care for our veterans,” said Dr. Lisa Kearney, Executive Director, Veterans Crisis Line, Veterans Health Administration. “Just like we learn 911 when we are young, 988, (Press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line) makes it just as easy for individuals to reach out in times of crisis. Together with each of you, we are working to make sure all veterans and their supporters know about the new number. Connecting people to hope during the most challenging times they face does save lives. You are a critical part of sharing the news with others about the new line and reminding people of the hope that is present 24/7/365.”

In a crisis, Kearney said, every moment matters.

“We know from prior studies that individuals who call the Veterans Crisis Line are five times more likely to have less distress and less suicidal ideation from the beginning to end of the call,” she said. “Dial 988, then Press 1 provides easier access for veterans in crisis and the hope is that veterans will continue to utilize the services of the Veterans Crisis Line. We encourage everyone to save the number in your phones: **Dial 988 then Press 1** and to share information about 988 using resources available on the VCL's website: veteranscrisisline.net/find-resources/spread-the-word.”

The Veterans Crisis Line's new number helps make it easier to remember and share the number to access help in times of need.

Signed into law in 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. (Source: veteranscrisisline.net). The 10-digit number, (1)-800-273-8255 and Press 1 is still active and will also connect to the Veterans Crisis Line.

The signs that follow may indicate that a veteran needs help. If you or a veteran you know is experiencing any of these, contact the Veterans Crisis Line now: Dial 988, then Press 1. Or text 838255. Chat online at militarycrisisline.net.

THE FOLLOWING SIGNS REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, risky use of weapons, etc.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE:

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness or mood swings
- Feeling as if there is no reason to live
- Feeling excessive guilt, shame or sense of failure
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
- Losing interest in hobbies, work or school
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, tying up loose ends or writing a will

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Start a conversation: Mention the signs that prompted you to talk to them. Stay calm and let the person know you want to help them. Don't leave the person alone.
- Listen, express concern and reassure the individual: Let the person know you care and that you take the situation seriously. Letting the person know you care will go a long way in establishing a support system.
- Create a safety plan: Ask the person if they have access to anything that could harm them and call for help if you feel the situation is dangerous.

- Get the individual help: Provide resources for the individual. Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988, then Press 1. Or if you feel the situation is severe, take the individual to the closest emergency room or call for help.

SINCE THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE LAUNCHED IN 2007, RESPONDERS HAVE:

- Answered more than 6.5 million calls
- Initiated the dispatch of emergency services to callers in imminent crisis nearly 233,000 times
- Engaged in more than 739,000 chats
- Answered more than 253,000 texts
- Forwarded more than 1.1 million referrals to local VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) on behalf of veterans

Kearney said while it is still early to measure full post 988-launch data, "Preliminary data show an increase in phone calls and text messages, allowing an opportunity for greater reach to veterans during times of crisis."

★ AC

“The Veterans Crisis Line is free and confidential. When you call, chat, or text, a qualified responder will listen and help. You decide how much information to share. Support doesn't end with your conversation. Crisis Line responders can connect callers with the resources they need.”

Welcoming VFW AUXILIARY 2485 DEPARTMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Joining on Zoom at 8:30 p.m. on May 24 from Manila were soon-to-be Officers of Robert A. Zaher Auxiliary 2485 and on the other side of the screen, half a world away, were Installing National Officers: then-National President Jean Hamil and then-Chief of Staff Leona McDermott connecting from the U.S. at 8:30 a.m. They gathered virtually to form our organization's newest foreign-based Auxiliary.

It was a dream set in motion by a 2021 change to the National Bylaws that allowed non-U.S. citizens to join the VFW and Auxiliary and realized by a dedicated group of VFW members and spouses of U.S. veterans who had settled into life in the Philippines.

They're excited to continue and expand their work of supporting veterans, service members and their communities, now as proud Auxiliary members and Officers.

"There are many U.S. military veterans who have married Filipinas and have settled down in the Philippines," said Auxiliary 2485 Secretary, Historian and Patriotic Instructor Rowena Lancelot. "So, the change to allow non-U.S. citizens created this opportunity to create an Auxiliary here. VFW Post 2485 is located near the previous Clark Air Base, Angeles City, Pampanga, Philippines and is doing a great job assisting U.S. military veterans and their families and organizing activities, programs and various levels of assistance for veterans."

Auxiliary 2485's sponsoring Post was established in 1987, and with more than 1,700 members, is one of the largest in the Pacific Areas region.

The Post was founded by the late husband of the Auxiliary's Treasurer, Lenee Zaher. Robert W. "Bob" Zaher, who assumed command of the Post in 1991 and



VFW Auxiliary 2485's Installation ceremony and institution in May, led by Auxiliary President Irene Shaffer.

was elected in 1993 as the first District VII Philippines Commander. Zaher was the first Department of Pacific Areas Commander to earn the Triple Crown Award in 2000. He was a retired Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force who received the Airman's Medal while on active duty for a distinct act of heroism in non-combat activity.

For 2485, the Auxiliary and Post truly are family.

“Auxiliary President Irene Shaffer’s husband, Joshua Shaffer, is a retired military veteran of the Army Special Forces and is an active member of the VFW,” Lancelot said. “As for me, my sponsor is my husband Jacques Lancelot, a retired Air Force veteran who has been around the globe with many different experiences, and is a Life Member of the VFW. Irene, Lenee and I were born in the Philippines, married our U.S. citizen husbands, settled down in the Philippines and observe both Asian and Western traditions, cultures and values and pass them all to our children and children’s children. We are all honored and grateful for what we have learned about our husband’s cultures and ways of living, and we are proud to be part of it. We are not just housewives of military veterans, but proud VFW Auxiliary Officers, too. In this Auxiliary, we will do our best to support VFW members within the VFW world and hopefully recruit others who are eligible to join.”

They also proudly embrace the Auxiliary’s mission and, as such, are active with many community projects.

Said Shaffer, “We believe in the mission of the Auxiliary, which is to serve and improve the lives of veterans, service members, their families and our community, and also to spread U.S. patriotism nationwide. Military veterans risk their lives, give time and effort and are often away from their families so we can have the freedom that we cherish today. It is to show them how grateful we are for what they did for us and (that) the Auxiliary Programs are designed to bring needed services, information and assistance to these target groups.

Auxiliary 2485 members at the base of the Mount Samet Memorial Cross that honors those who died during the Bataan Death March.



Being Auxiliary Officers, we feel that it is an honor to share our knowledge, experience and ideas with this organization and devote our time and energy to help both the Post and the Auxiliary.”

They keep busy. Soon after Installation, Auxiliary members, in concert with their Post, joined a Memorial Day Flag-planting event and ceremony at Clark Veterans Cemetery followed in late May with a planting of more 16,000 American and Philippine Flags on each grave. Among their other projects are joining veterans and scouts on the Bataan Death March route; donating school bags and health and safety kits to more than 200 area students in need; a free-lunch initiative, also to benefit area youth; raising funds for a child cleft lip/palate surgery program; and taking charge of food, decorations and welcoming guests for their first large outdoor July 4th celebration since the pandemic. Next, they look forward to organizing activities for Veterans Day and their children’s Christmas party.

“The Auxiliary members are focused, united and dedicated to serving, supporting, and working together with VFW,” Zaher said. “It feels great to be a part of a group of dedicated spouses working alongside our families and friends and it also feels good to be needed in challenging roles as mothers, wives and Auxiliary Officers.”

Said Lancelot, “We are the first VFW Auxiliary in Asia with primarily non-U.S. citizens as members, so of course it is a great honor... I can speak for all the Auxiliary charter members, we are very proud, and it feels (like) WOW! We know there is a lot at stake in the Auxiliary (here). This means that we need to commit and put some of our personal time into the activities and events of the Auxiliary to include working with staff and members, being supportive, initiating and organizing Programs and having the Auxiliary mission and goals in mind at all

times... We need to learn, and understand the Bylaws, recruit members, do our best to promote and enhance Auxiliary activities and be role models to others. Furthermore, we should ...build constructive and good working relationships with the VFW Officers, Auxiliary members and supporters. It may sound like too much to handle, but we are very happy to do it all and more for our veteran and their families. We owe our veterans a lot, and it is never too late to give back and provide them assistance.”

Hamil said she was honored to install 2485’s Officers. “They worked diligently alongside the VFW to set the foundation in place for Auxiliary members to be able to assist our veterans and those in their communities,” she said. “I am confident they will work together to make a difference in the lives of others as they are eager to learn and to give of themselves.”

Their enthusiasm and warmth travel far and wide, as evidenced by Past National President Peggy Haake, who visited the “Pearl of the Orient” to offer the new Auxiliary some training as part of the Department of the Pacific Areas Convention. The Auxiliary sent Haake a certificate of appreciation in return that reads, “With our sincerest gratitude...for your amazing leadership and mentorship. You inspire the ladies to work hard and dream big.” ✦ AC



Kristin Fallon and Prima Jordan work with youth to make decorations for the Auxiliary's first large outdoor July 4th celebration. More than 200 veterans and family members attended.



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