



**Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars**
P.O. Box 1106 OKC, OK 73101-1126
(405) 850-0815 / www.vfwoklahoma.org

November 2023-2024 Series

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

**DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA HEADQUARTERS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

General Orders No. 5

2023-2024 Series

1. A thorough program of Post inspection is necessary to ensure compliance with National and Department Bylaws and directives. District and Department Inspectors, to include Assistant Inspectors, shall make every effort to inspect every Post under their cognizance on an annual basis and correct such discrepancies as may be disclosed.
2. The VFW National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual establish that Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority on procedural matters not governed by VFW Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The newly revised Robert's Rules of Order is readily available at local bookstores and online retailers such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

BY ORDER:

ATTEST:

o/s

o/s

Erica L. Traxler
State Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Michael L. Merit
State Adjutant
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



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State Commander

Erica Traxler

**Department Convention Co-Chairman
Student Veterans of America Liaison
Citizenship Education Chair**

Comrades,

Hello Comrades. I hope this month's general orders finds you well. We completed the OKC State and Tulsa State Fairs, and we had a very successful Southern Conference at the River Spirit Casino and Hotel in Tulsa. We have had a very busy couple of months. These events could not have been accomplished without the support of the committee members, appointees, and volunteers. Oklahoma was represented well at the Southern Conference and the Cooties did a great job in the hospitality room. I cannot express enough my gratitude towards the effort that was put into making sure this event went off without a hitch, or as little as possible. Thank you again to all the committee members and volunteers.

Most of the post inspections should be completed or pretty close to being completed. Remember to make All-State they need to be completed by November 30th. All District inspections need to be completed by December 31st or All-state. Please get with your district inspectors and Bradly Blume to get these finished up. Getting these completed gives you the knowledge of what you have and what you need to fix. Many posts are finding themselves deficient of one thing or another and this can be used as a tool to show you what those deficiencies are and allow you the time to get them fixed. We are still working on redistricting, so please be patient as this is not a quick and easy process. VOD, PP, ToY entries should have been accepted. They are due to the district by 11/15/2023 and due to the department on 12/15/2023. The ToY should go directly to the department unless you are going to give a prize or certificate of appreciation and you need to grade them at the district level.

There are three topics we need to consider moving forward. We have a wonderful Auxiliary, but we are down on our numbers of active posts and members. What can we do to help them build their members up as well as build up the people that want to volunteer and be active? Our Auxiliary does so much for us, and we would not be the organization we are today without them. Next, I want to talk about the Cooties. They



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have a very specific mission within our organization. Do you know what it is? Are you already doing the work of a Cootie? How many Veteran Homes do we have in the state? Are you visiting any of the veterans in these homes? How about in your community? Do you know any veterans that are homebound and cannot leave? Have you visited them or sent them a package or letter to let them know you are thinking of them? Have you visited one of the VA Hospitals and the veterans there? All of these things are what the Cooties do for veterans. They go out, have fun, and spend time with veterans to show them love, appreciation, and that they are not forgotten. If you are already doing this in your community, you could always join a Cootie Pup Tent or start a new one in your area. If you have any questions, please reach out to Ron Albert who is the MOC Grand Commander at: (580) 512-0510. Lastly, I would like to talk about our VFW Riders group. Comrade Billy Stone was the President for years and it has now switched over to Comrade Kevin Simmons. Both are also very active in Operation Daily Battle which will be hosted next year in September at VFW Post 5263 in Lawton. We do not have a very large presence of riders in Oklahoma, but Kevin, myself, and the other members of the Riders would like to change that. If you are a motorcycle rider or someone who would like to support by using your vehicle in the rear to pick people up if their bike breaks down, please reach out to Kevin at (580) 304-3884.

I want to thank everyone for their hard work so far this year. You are working your programs, membership, getting out into your communities, and supporting veterans and their families in the best way possible. You are doing amazing things. Please be safe over the holidays that are upcoming. I look forward to attending more district meetings and I hope to see people at the upcoming Mid-Winter in February.

Erica Traxler

State Commander

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

989-239-5999

ericatraxlervfw@gmail.com

<https://vfwoklahoma.org/>



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*State Senior Vice Commander
Dan Fuller*

*State Junior Vice Commander
Jeff Harris*

*State Adjutant
Mike Merit*

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

I know that a lot of people are frustrated concerning the Department Dashboard. Comrade Randy Traxler is working diligently to fix all of the issues that are going on. Last month, I worked on everyone's login, but there are still some with issues. Until we figure out what the issue is, please try this process to login in for reporting.

1. www.vfwoklahoma.org
2. Login drop-down, select Members Only, NOT Report Entry.
3. Member ID#: Your VFW member number.
4. Password: Your last name. (It is not case sensitive.)
5. Once you are logged in, select Program Reporting to continue to enter your reports.
6. If you are still having issues, please let me know at:
vfwokadj@outlook.com



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State Surgeon Tony McGrew

Comrades, Last month I encouraged you to take charge and know where you are as far as your health is concerned. I stated no one knows your body better than you, not even your doctor. Taking charge of your health now will set you up for success in the coming months.

Eating healthy not only sustains you through the day physically, we can also add mentally. A balanced diet can and will work wonders with your body and mind.

Brain health is especially important for seniors, who become prone to many serious cognitive diseases as they age. That's why it's important to be proactive about eating the right foods to support cognitive function.

Here are a few recommended by nutritionists:

Salmon. is rich in two different types of omega-3 fatty acids, which are great for brain health. Eating salmon and other kinds of fatty fish at least twice a week is the best way to get the benefits of these acids.

Leafy greens. Leafy greens contain high amounts of B vitamins, beta carotene, folate, vitamin E, and vitamin K. In addition to boosting energy, B vitamins help to protect the brain from stress- and aging-related damage. Beta carotene, folate, and vitamin E help to prevent cognitive decline associated with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while vitamin K helps to sharpen memory. To get these benefits, seniors should eat plenty of spinach, lettuce, kale, and arugula.

Coffee. Coffee helps to improve concentration and focus, and in moderate amounts, it can even lift your mood. It's also good for your liver and heart and for preventing chronic physical and mental diseases.

Dark berries and cherries. Dark berries like blackberries, blueberries, and blackcurrants as well as cherries have plenty of antioxidants, which help to protect against cognitive diseases.



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Eggs. Eggs contain nutrient-rich, low-fat protein. They're also high in choline, which boosts brain function, and tryptophan, which helps to form the feel-good hormone serotonin.

Nuts. Various kinds of nuts offer different brain health benefits. Walnuts are the best, as they contain more antioxidants than other nuts, along with omega-3 fatty acids. Other great options are almonds (which help to improve memory), pistachios (which help to preserve fatty acids), and macadamia nuts (which boost normal brain function).

Dark chocolate. Besides being decadently delicious, dark chocolate is another food rich in brain-protecting antioxidants as well as flavonoids and caffeine. Flavonoids support blood circulation to the brain, which helps with memory, and caffeine improves short-term brain function.

Other foods. There are many other foods that are excellent for promoting cognitive function. Examples include avocados, Greek yogurt, cruciferous vegetables, and colorful fruits and vegetables in general.

As always I want to encourage you to **KEEP MOVING.**

We were not made to sit still.

Respectfully,

Tony

State Chaplain
Jason Burns

Comrades,

I wanted to introduce to the membership the 1st "Chaplain Of The Year Award". I presented this to Commander Traxler and she has decided to make this part of her program this year. I will give you all the Criteria's and how to nominate them.



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Chaplain of the Year Criteria

1. Performance of Duties:

A. Exemplary conduct of normal duties: e.g., attendance, dependability, punctuality, timely submission of Chaplain's Reports, etc.

B. Exemplary performance above and beyond the normal expectations of the position and duties.

2. Personal attitude which is positive and professional in all contacts with others and which represents the VFW and Post in the best possible way.

3. Commitment to the ministry and duties of the Chaplain, as reflected by service to comrades and their families and responsiveness to needs.

4. A member of the VFW in good standing with the Post, District, and Department.

Procedure

The following procedure is recommended for receiving and reviewing nominations:

I, the State Chaplain, shall solicit nominations from all District and Post Commanders beginning at the Mid-Winter Conference in February. I will personally hand out at Mid-Winter and send out nomination forms to all District and post addresses on file.

All nominations from District and Post should be submitted to the State Chaplain by April 1st. Return Address will be on the Form.

A nomination shall address the above criteria and shall not exceed one type written page.

The Appointed committee shall review each nomination according to the selected criteria and recommend a recipient by April 15th.



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I, The State Chaplain, will review the Committee's recommendation for Chaplain of the Year with the Department Commander by April 30th.

Then I, the State Chaplain, will notify the recipient, Post and District Commander of the nomination and request attendance at the Annual State Convention in June to receive the award.

The Chaplain of the Year Award will be presented at the Annual State Convention Banquet.

Comrades, I encourage each one of you to look at your Chaplain and if they are meeting what it takes, please submit their names. We as Chaplains do not do this for awards or Glory but because it is our calling. But we do deserve to be recognized from time to time.

Also, Comrades continue watching the General Orders for more things that are coming out of the Chaplains Council. Chaplain's keep up the good work and keep the reports coming. Feel free to reach out any time.

God Bless,
Chaplain Jason Burns
Dept Of Ok Chaplain
(580)439-4627
vfwokchaplain@outlook.com
Matt 11:28-30

Youth Essay Programs *Mike Devenitch*

Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen & Teacher of the Year

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS: The deadline is here, and the hard work begins of judging! The deadline was to the VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. For judging VOD: Originality, Content and Delivery. PP Judging: Theme Knowledge, Theme



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Development and Clarity of Ideas. Make sure you take a picture of the winners and send the awards presentation to your local newspaper.

Judges should be from outside your Posts/Auxiliaries and should represent your community. Leaders from education, broadcasting, corporations, small business, and other fraternal and civic groups are ideal. Judges must not be connected in any way with the students in the competition. For reference I have attached the VOD/PP Guide. If you have any questions or need help, please contact me! Don't forget to get your auxiliary/post involved. See <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships> for more info.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR (ToY): 2023-2024 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award: Be sure to build a team (school/town/post) to work on the package! VFW has 3 different categories annually: Elementary, Junior High and High School teachers who teach citizenship education topics and promote America's history and traditions. Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are great candidates for this award. Remember, nominations can be submitted by fellow teachers, supervisors, you, or other interested individuals. The deadline at the local VFW Post was Oct. 31. Submit all nominations to me, not district competitions. Remember: Help make your teacher, your post, district, and the state shine with a win! National has requested supporting documents be limited to 5 pages. SEND ALL ENTRIES TO ME AT STATE LEVEL!
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year>

VOD/PP/ToY CONTACT: Michael H. Devenitch, (405) 819-9914. 4224 Manhattan Dr. Moore, OK, 73160 sentrymike@yahoo.com

Training and Development *Jim Bassett & Randy Traxler*

What is motivation (the boring explanation)

To be motivated means to be moved to do something. Yet, even brief reflection suggests that motivation is hardly a unitary phenomenon. People have not only different amounts, but also different kinds of motivation. That is, they vary not only in

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level of motivation (i.e., how much motivation), but also in the orientation of that motivation (i.e., what type of motivation). The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.

Motivation made simple (I hope)

As a much more complex concept that many give credit for, I will use the picture below to walk through the motivational spectrum. Understanding this concept can help facilitate enhancement of your leadership style, help with conflict, and even recruitment.



Task that needs motivation: Moving a member from inactive to active within Post events

Bucket 1 contains motivation provided by rewards and punishments. Most of us are familiar with this style. Motivation here can sound like: “If you come to this event, we will provide your lunch for free” or “If you don’t become active we should evaluate your membership”. The challenge with this style is it requires an “instrument” to apply motivation (this is person offering reward or punishment) and it is often short-lived as offering a reward or punishment large enough for long term change is unlikely.

Bucket 2 contains motivation provided by feelings of shame/guilt or pride. This style might sound like “You are letting the post down and creating more work for those who are actually active” or “People really look up to you and you being active will inspire others”. Much like bucket 1 this style requires an instrument to continue to leverage this source and it often can feel manipulative.

Bucket 3 contains motivation derived from the individual identifying value in completing the task. This source does not require and instrument as it moves into the



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internal side of the extrinsic spectrum. Motivation here often relies on the individual building competence, exercising autonomy, or experiencing a relationship building event. Any one of these 3 areas can be of value and experiencing more than 1 is likely to increase the level of motivation and overall performance. We can facilitate this by asking them questions or providing information on how completing this task can build competence, allow autonomy, or build connection. A method is to share how you built competence, or how you made decisions on your own, or about the relationships you built and let the individual connect the dots for themselves i.e., reinforce autonomy.

Bucket 4 is the closest we can get to intrinsic motivation. This is the bucket of Self Identity. Individuals do tasks because it aligns or affirms who they see themselves as. If you asked a person motivated from this bucket, why they are active they might reply "I served my country and as a veteran that service does not stop". These individuals and those intrinsically motivated are already active, likely even board members. This bucket is the goal when motivating individuals. Both internal means of extrinsic motivation are long lasting.

So What Randy?

We often are charged with motivating others to serve in our great organization. Our members have a whole life to balance with the continued service requirements of being an active member. Understanding how we communicate with others and how to leverage motivation to overcome challenges is vital to ensuring we stay 1 million strong for us to both have a legislative voice but more importantly we will have a million people around the globe who can provide support, knowledge, and comradery to our Veterans and Families.

Southern Conference
Mike Merit

All,

I want to thank everyone that made the 2023 Southern Conference such a resounding success. I have no words to express how thankful I am to all our volunteers and especially our chairs. Without all of you, none of it would have



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been possible. To our dear Auxiliary, thank you for all you did, being a huge part of the effort to make everything happen.

It's been a long four years of planning and bringing everything together. But I'm glad it's done. My hat's off to the next Chair in thirteen years.

Thank you all!
Mike

District Meetings

- District 1: October 28th @ 1100 Stillwell Post 10829 SV Fuller, JV Harris
- District 3: October 28th @ 1000 Muldrow Post 8384 CDR Traxler, COS Bates, SG McGrew
- District 4: November 18th @ 1100 Antlers Post 3658 SG McGrew, JV Harris
- District 5: November 12th @ 1400 Claremore Post 2976 ADJ Merit
- District 7: October 7th @ 1100 Eufaula Post 8798 CDR Traxler, COS Bates
- District 8: October 29th @ 1100 Sapulpa Post 1320 SV Fuller
- District 9: November 18th @ 1000 Edmond Post 4938 SV Fuller, SG McGrew
- District 10: January 20th @ 1000 Moore CDR Traxler, SG McGrew
- District 13: November 18th @ 1030 Fairview Post 6141 CH Burns, COS Bates
- District 14: October 7th @ 1100 Lawton Post 5263 JV Harris, SG McGrew
- District 15: January 13th @ 1100 Lawton Post 1193 CDR Traxler, CH Burns

Commanders,

Starting Monday 11/6/2023 to 12/31/2023 we will have a contest, The 8 Weeks of Christmas. Each week we will have 2 mystery bags and 2 other items from the VFW store up for grabs. To see the prizes and receive Keywords for this contest you must follow the VFW Membership Facebook page or vfwmembership on Instagram. The link to register for this contest is <https://mixerproduction.com/entry/q4-2023>

This is the 4th contest we have run using the Mixer, this is intended to engage posts and their members. Last month's contest we had 100 posts participate and over 1000 comrades in various departments register. Please get the word out to your posts so that they can participate.

The top 10 posts that have the most entries will be entered into a drawing to win \$1000 towards a recruiting event of their choosing along with a VFW table cover, swag items and recruiting materials for the event. So, motivate your post members to participate in this contest.

Unfortunately, the mixer only covers North America, so Europe, Pacific Areas and Unaffiliated will not be able to participate. We are working diligently to be able to include these areas in future contests.

Good luck to all of you and Happy Holidays!

Ed Stefanak Jr
Eligibility Coordinator
VFW National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64111
Office: 816.968.1138

Commanders, Comrades and VFW Staff,

Please see message from Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento about Claim Sharks

Greetings Comrades:

As you know, the VFW has been a vocal opponent of predatory claim shark companies who charge veterans illegal fees for sub-par VA benefit claims assistance. Make no mistake, the proliferation of these illicit organizations is a threat not only to the VFW's cornerstone Veterans Service program, but an even greater threat to the VA benefits system as we know it. Over the last few months, we have ratcheted up the pressure on these companies by passing legislation to crack down on their practices at the state level and working to help veterans bring litigation against them. We have trained your service officers to know how to handle claim sharks and continue to seek out veterans who need help getting out of these predatory contracts.

The Claim Sharks felt the pressure from the VFW and this week launched their latest salvo, trying to normalize and legitimize their financial exploitation of our nation's disabled veterans – they even named VSOs like the VFW as their “threats.” While we should be flattered that they recognize the threat we pose, now is the time where we come together to decisively defeat this scourge. Like the VFW said last year before Congress, “any group that fails to adhere to VA's well-established standards of accreditation and fee arrangements should be greeted at the door by Capitol Police, not offered a seat at the same table as VA-accredited representatives who are held to certain professional and ethical standards.”

Bottom line: Predatory claim shark companies are engaging in illegal activities. There is no gray area here, no matter how much money they want to throw at it. Their latest collusion is a desperate attempt to avoid accountability.

Your VFW has aggressively pursued this issue in all corners of government, solidifying the veterans' community's stance on this issue. You will see more from the VFW in the coming weeks, asking you to take action with your Congressional representatives, your state legislatures, and your communities. In the meantime, please read up on the facts and familiarize yourself with this issue, if you have not already. I have attached a branded VFW Fact Sheet on claim sharks for you to use and distribute widely to veterans. Please feel free to post the dark version on your social media and print off the light version for use in your community.

For more than a century, your VFW has been on the forefront of advocating for veterans and their earned benefits. In the last year alone, more than 550,000 veterans received more than \$13 billion in benefits from VA through the diligence and professionalism of the VFW's global network of VA-accredited service officers. Not a penny of this \$13 billion went to line the pockets of the VFW. It all went to the veterans, as the law requires.

Comrades: This fight may get a little messy in the coming weeks, but we will uphold the principles of our charter “to assist worthy comrades...and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans.” The VFW will stop Claim Sharks and we are eager to serve alongside you in this fight.

Yours in Comradeship,

Duane Sarmiento

Commander-in-Chief

Attest:

Dan West

Adjutant General

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

406 W. 34th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64111

816.968.1110

www.vfw.org

Join at www.vfw.org/join/eligibility



DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



DontFeedTheSharks.org

What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

Who are the Claim Sharks?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 🦈 Trajector Medical | 🦈 Patriot Angels |
| 🦈 Vet Benefits Guide | 🦈 Veteran Care Services |
| 🦈 Veterans Guardian | 🦈 VetComm |
| 🦈 VA Claims Insider | 🦈 VA Claims Academy |
| 🦈 Telemedica | 🦈 Vet Assist |

Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp Lejeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees



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DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



DontFeedTheSharks.org

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Who are the Claim Sharks?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Trajector Medical | • Patriot Angels |
| • Vet Benefits Guide | • Veteran Care Services |
| • Veterans Guardian | • VetComm |
| • VA Claims Insider | • VA Claims Academy |
| • Telemedica | • Vet Assist |

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MR/MRS/MISS VFW AWARD

This recognition award is the most prestigious award that can be received from the Department of Oklahoma and is designed as a Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is to honor a member of the Department of Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars who has gone above and beyond to help and assist their fellow veterans and the betterment of the VFW organization.

This award was established by Past State Commander William Beane after his candidacy attempt for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. This recognition is merit based and not required to be awarded annually.

Requirements for nomination for this award:

1. The nominee must be a member in good standing within the Department of Oklahoma, as well as their Post and District.
2. The nominee must have been (as a minimum) a continuous member for a minimum period of eight (8) years.
3. The nominee must be active in all levels of the VFW and whose activities have benefited their fellow veterans and their local community.
4. The nominee's activities/accomplishments should be on a continuing basis and not based on one (1) or two (2) years of involvement as other awards have been established to recognize those individuals.
5. No past or current Department Officer shall be eligible for this award unless they have been out of elected department offices for a minimum of five (5) years and have continual and substantial activity within the Department of Oklahoma, their District and Posts levels. Paid employees of the VFW are not eligible for this award.

How to nominate a Comrade:

1. Nominations shall be submitted in letter format to the Chairperson of the Judging committee who has been chosen by the Past Recipients of the Award. The nomination should be not more than two (2) typed/written pages. The nomination should include the name of the nominee, when they joined the VFW, their Post and District numbers and their activities at all levels of the VFW within the Department of Oklahoma. Please include the title for which the member is being nominated for (i.e. Mr., Mrs., Miss) and the name of the nominating member.
2. A listing of offices held by the nominee may be included but should not be the sole basis for the nomination. The nomination should include any other substantial activities the nominee has preformed.
3. The deadline for nominations will be 60 days prior to the scheduled Department Convention.
4. If a successful nomination is received the award will be presented at the annual awards banquet at the Department Convention.
5. Send all nominations to Robert "Bob" McGill at email (rdmccgill@sbcglobal.net).

NAC Volunteer of the Year Award

Dear Commanders, Adjutants, Adjutant/Quartermasters, and Hospital Chairmen:

It is time again to submit nominations to the VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) office for the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer of the Year. This is an annual Award Program that permits the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) to honor volunteer members who have given extraordinary service to our nation's hospitalized veterans.

The Executive Committee (EC) of the NAC coordinates this program and works closely with the NAC and a selection committee established for reviewing nominations.

Nominees for this award must participate in established VFW VAVS assignments, serve as a VFW VAVS Representative, VFW VAVS Deputy Representative, or VFW VAVS Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteer, and meet one of the following criteria:

- Volunteer with hospitalized Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans at Outpatient Clinics
- Volunteer with Veterans in Community Living Centers
- Volunteer with homeless Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community
- Host Veterans functions in the Lodge, Post, Chapter, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day observances, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- Host Veterans functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, i.e., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment
- Adopt-A-Veteran

Volunteers eligible for the award are NAC member organizations like the VFW with an emphasis on VAVS Representatives, Deputy Representatives, members who visit the VA Medical Centers, Community Living Centers, etc., or work at Post veteran functions either within or outside the Post. Nominees must participate in established VAVS assignments and serve as an RS volunteer.

There will be two recipients (1 male and 1 female) per year.

All nominations must be submitted in narrative format with the nominee's name in the upper left-hand corner. The narrative is not to exceed 500 words and must be submitted to VFW National Veterans Service no later than December 8, 2023. Letters of recommendation may be submitted with the narrative. VA Staff making recommendations for this award must send the nomination to the National Representative of the organizations to which the nominee is a member for preliminary judging – meaning they must submit their recommendations to the VFW following the guidelines included in this letter. Failure to do so will invalidate the nomination. The "NAC Volunteer of the Year Award Nomination Support Form" attached needs to be submitted along with the narrative as a package.

Winners and awardees selected by the NAC will be presented with an inscribed plaque at the annual meeting of the Committee, with additional recognition by the VFW for our selected exemplary volunteers.

Please disseminate this information to your VFW VAVS Representatives and encourage them to submit their nominees to your Department Headquarters for consideration by the VFW National Veterans Service.

NAC Volunteer of the Year Award

Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at mfiglioli@vfw.org or by phone (202) 608-8373, or contact James W. Moss, National VAVS Representative at jmoss@vfw.org or (202) 608-8371. All submissions should be sent to James W. Moss, VFW National Representative at 200 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002, or email at jmoss@vfw.org.

Michael Figlioli

Director, National Veterans Service (NVS)

VFW Washington Office

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.

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Fax: 202.547.3196

VA ACCREDITATION # 9208

NAC Volunteer of the Year Award

Name of Volunteer _____ Male _____ Female _____ Year _____

Organization _____ VA Facility(ies) _____

Nomination Submitted by _____ Date Prepared _____

Purpose: This form should be completed as part of the preparations for submitting a nomination for any volunteer who is being considered for the NAC Volunteer of the Year Award. This award recognizes volunteers who have given extraordinary service to our Nation's Veterans. Two award recipients (one male and one female) are selected each year by the Executive Committee of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee (NAC).

Nomination Procedure: The required format for nomination submissions is letter style, between 300-500 words. It is recommended that a completed copy of this form be attached to the nomination letter as a supporting document. Letters of support from local VA facilities are also allowed to accompany each submission. All local nominations must be submitted to the affiliated volunteer's National VAVS Representative who will select the organization's candidate to be forwarded to the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) on the national letterhead of the nominating organization.

Criteria: Nominees for this award must participate in established CDCE volunteer assignments, serve as a regularly scheduled volunteer and meet one of the criteria listed below. To assist in development of the formal nomination letter, complete each of the sections below, as applicable for the potential nominee, making sure to clearly distinguish between current volunteer activities and past volunteer activities.

Criterion	Description of Volunteer Activities in Year of Nomination (Current)*	Description of Volunteer Activities in all preceding years*
a. Volunteer with hospitalized Veterans.		
b. Volunteer with Veterans at outpatient clinics.		
c. Volunteer with Veterans in community living centers.		

*Use additional sheets if necessary

NAC Volunteer of the Year Award

Criterion	Description of Volunteer Activities in Year of Nomination (Current)*	Description of Volunteer Activities in all preceding years*
d. Volunteer with homeless Veterans.		
e. Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community.		
f. Host Veterans' functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, e.g., Memorial Day, July 4 th .		
g. Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a CDCE volunteer assignment.		
h. Host veterans' functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, e.g., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc., that qualify as a CDCE volunteer assignment.		
i. Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a CDCE volunteer assignment.		

*Use additional sheets if necessary

NAC Volunteer of the Year Award

Criterion	Description of Volunteer Activities in Year of Nomination (Current)*	Description of Volunteer Activities in all preceding years*
j. Adopt-A-Veteran.		

Additional Considerations	Description of Volunteer Activities in Year of Nomination (Current)	Description of Volunteer Activities in all preceding years
Other factors involving CDCE volunteer assignments the nominator believes are noteworthy.		

*Use additional sheets if necessary

Comrades,

My name is Tony McGrew and I am a candidate for State Junior Vice Commander. I retired from the US Air Force after 22 years 19 days, 12 hours and 37 minutes but who's counting.



I joined the VFW and Post 8706 on May 11th, 2017 and since joining I have served as Post SV for 1 year and Post Commander for 2 years and I served as District 10 Commander for one year. At the same time I was serving as Post and District Commander I was also the State Veterans & Military (V&MS) Committee Member. I can, if required chew gum and walk at the same time.

During my first year as Post Commander I discovered the Post did not have an approved set of By-Laws. I began the process and developed the By-Laws for the Post. In my second year with the hard work of Post Members we were selected as an All American Post. My time as Post and District Commander was most rewarding and afforded me the opportunity to grow in my knowledge of the VFW and how best to serve.

As the V&MS Chairman I have had the opportunity to represent the VFW to Oklahoma Guard units and US Air Force Active Duty Personnel. I attend the Yellow Ribbon and Crossroads events where I brief VFW Programs to the men and women of these units. I have been available, upon request, to visit Posts and discuss/brief the V&MS Programs.

I believe for any organization to grow and be effective all facets must work together for the Good of the Organization. This is the best and most effective way to serve our Veterans and the communities we live in.

I also believe the Posts are the root and the stable force behind all that the VFW Department of Oklahoma stands for and accomplishes.

I sincerely hope that your Post will consider my candidacy for Surgeon at our upcoming convention June 9th-12th.

When an opportunity to serve presents itself I hope we would ask Why Not? And then figure out a way to do it.

All for One & One for All

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully, Tony



State

Chaplain

Jason Burns

I am seeking another term as you Oklahoma State Chaplain for 2024-2025.

If I am Elected as your State Chaplain for another term, I will continue to build the Oklahoma Chaplaincy program. Will continue helping with the spiritual care, educating, and supporting district and post chaplains with all their needs. I will continue to be considerate of our members spiritual needs & In times of crises will provide assistance to veterans and their families.

My VFW qualifying campaigns are Bosnia and Iraq

In 2017 I was Ordained Through Heritage of Faith Christian Center.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Leadership

Hugh H Cherry Post 1192 Commander 2021-2023(2022/2023 All State)
Cherry-Armstrong Post 1192 Commander 2023-Present
Post Chaplain 2021-2022

District 14 Jr. Vice 2021-2022
All State/ American District 14 Commander 2022-2023
D14 QM 2023-2024
D14 Inspector 2023-Present

State Membership Chair 2022-2023
State Chaplain 2023

Pup Tent 16 Sky Pilot 2022-Present
Pup Tent 16 Blanket Bum 2023-Present
Ok Grand Inspector 2023-Present
2023 Southern Conference Meals Chairman

Heidi Teeter

For

State Quartermaster



I joined the VFW in August 2020. I filled the vacancy of Chaplain in Post 4465, where I served until November 2022. I was then elected Quartermaster where; with the help of the membership, we have been financially rebuilding the post. In June 2021 I became District 13 Commander where I have served ever since. I have been working with Curt as assistant quartermaster learning the in's and out's of the department finances.

I served 15 years in the Oklahoma National Guard with a tour in Iraq 2007-2008. I aided in recovery after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the May 2013 Moore tornado.

I worked for Western Plains Library System 2013-2021, from 2015-2021 I helped the director with the bookkeeping work for audits and budget meetings. During my tenure at WPLS I attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University where I graduated with a Bachelors in Accounting in May 2021. In November 2021 I started working for one of the top accounting firms in Oklahoma where I stayed until June 2023. I left the firm to be able to focus more on the VFW. If I'm elected as Department Quartermaster, I would be able to combine my two passions, numbers and helping veterans.

I'm always available for questions, comments, or concerns. I can be reached by call or text at 580-515-0567 or by email at hteeter47@gmail.com

I have been endorsed by National Council Member and current State Quartermaster Curt Watts.

I hope I can gain your confidence and vote.

SEEKING YOUR ENDORSEMENT

Jason Burns For 2025-2026 National Chaplain

Matt 11:28-30



My goal as your National Chaplain is to advocate for the profession of spiritual care, educating, and supporting chaplains throughout the Departments of the VFW. While showing compassion for our members in their time of need and building our faith and trust within the membership.

Ordained Through Heritage of Faith Christian Center

Academic Disciplines

When The War Comes Home; The Combat Healing Trauma Manual; Caring for People Before, During and After Hospitalization; Spiritual Confidentiality; Ministering those Undergoing Divorce & Family crisis; Ministering those Experiencing Grief; Dealing with Depression/Suicidal Issues; Performing Funerals, Weddings; Providing comfort to the ones who's passing and to their family/friends; Making hospital visits and following up after discharge. Working with Homeless Veterans; And teaching many different bible & Spiritual Fitness classes.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Leadership

Hugh H Cherry VFW Post 1192 Commander 2021-2023(2022/2023 All State)
Cherry-Armstrong VFW Post 1192 Commander 2023-
Post Chaplain 2021-2022

VFW District 14 Jr. Vice 2021-2022
VFW All State/ American District 14 Commander 2022-2023
VFW D14 QM 2023-2024

VFW State Membership Chair 2022-2023
VFW State Chaplain 2023

Pup Tent 16 Sky Pilot 2022-
Pup Tent 16 Blanket Bum 2023-
Ok Grand Inspector 2023-
2023 Southern Conference Meals Chairman

