



Department of Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars

P.O. Box 1106 OKC, OK 73101-1126
(405) 850-0815 / www.vfwoklahoma.org



September 2023

2023-2024 Series

"In the face of leadership flaws, too many people assume cynical perspectives, rather than do the hard work of building relationships in which they can have more positive influence."

-- Ira Chaleff

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

General Orders No. 3

2023-2024 Series

1. The attention of all units is called to Section 1101 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides for the formation and jurisdiction of the Auxiliary. This section provides that each unit of the Auxiliary shall be under the jurisdiction of the corresponding unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but shall be permitted to function in accordance with the National Ritual, Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary. In addition to provisions of Auxiliary Bylaws, solicitation of funds or donations by Auxiliary units, including contracts with fund-raising organizations for greeting cards, calendars and/or label programs shall be subject to approval and ratification by the governing body of the corresponding unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

2. Sections 219 and 704 of the Manual of Procedure outline the various things for which the Post Relief Fund can be used. Several years ago, the phrase, "To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs," was added to this section. This allows the Post to use the relief funds for the Voice of Democracy program or other Americanism programs that are educational. This does not include Post building projects, hall remodeling, color guard uniforms or any other expenditure that does not follow these guidelines.

BY ORDER:

ATTEST:

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. So far, we have conducted two Schools of Instruction. They have gone well, and participation has increased. Thank you for taking the time to come and learn. There is one left on 9/9/2023 at the Fort Sill post in Lawton from 9am to 5pm. We also have Officer Training School on 9/30 – 10/1 in OKC at the Wyndham Garden Hotel. We are diligently looking for a hotel to host Fall Festival. We are looking at a couple options that will be in the best interest of all. Southern Conference is less than two months away. If you have not registered and secured your room, please do so soon.

EPIC Charter Schools just reached out to us and have opened their doors for the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year. They are located all over the state of Oklahoma with 1000 teachers and many students. The two POCs are Mark and Lauren Williams. Their email addresses are as follows:

Mark.williams@epiccharterschools.org; lauren.williams@epiccharterschools.org I hope that you find many more teacher and student applications this year and for many years to come.

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 and I look forward to seeing what the rest of the year brings.

I am excited to see everyone at the upcoming events we have scheduled. Be safe and I'll see you soon!



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Erica Traxler

State Commander

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State Senior Vice Commander Dan Fuller

Comrades,

I would like to start by thanking all the VFW members and Auxiliary members that have attended one of the Schools of Instruction. We have one more at Ft. Sill on Sept 9th. Also, I hope to see many of you at the Officers Training in OKC Sept 30th and Oct 1st. I have attended several District meetings and want to commend the members and line officers for their work getting the VOD, PP, Teacher of the Year and 1st Responders Programs off to a great start.

I will continue to provide the Relocation list for Post and Districts that want to work them, I am still getting some of the previously requested list out as the response has been tremendous. THANKS.

Let's work the State Fairs with as much effort as we can and continue to push to our goal of 102%.

Keep up the Good Work! And wear your own kind of hat.

Respectfully,

Danny Mack Fuller

State Senior Vice Commander

Department of Oklahoma



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State Junior Vice Commander Jeff Harris

Greeting comrades,

I hope everyone is staying is staying cool and not overheating as the weather has not been very friendly. Hopefully it will cool off soon, so please stay safe. The schools of instruction are going well, hopefully you are going to one near you. I myself have learned a few things. Past State Commander Jim Bassett is doing great work with his power point video and State Sr. Vice Commander Dan Fuller is helping with membership, with a zip code he can provide you with a list of unpaid members near you. So, the school of instruction really helps everyone that attends.

As the State Jr. Vice Commander, I have been to some District meetings around the state, and we have a lot of good District Commanders. If a post or district needs help with membership or anything else just ask and we will help. The Oklahoma State Fair and the Tulsa State Fair are coming up and there will be recruiting tables at both fairs. So, if you can volunteer at either fair, please call Derek Duncan for Oklahoma State Fair or Frank Whitlock for the Tulsa State Fair.

So, comrades help when you can and please stay cool, avoid the heat. Have safe travels when you are out, and I will be seeing you soon.

Jeff Harris
State Jr. Vice Commander

State Surgeon Tony McGrew

Comrades,

One of the duties of the State Surgeon is to be aware of the health and welfare of our members as well as opportunities to improve our health. With this in mind, I would like to relate to you how I have, over the last few years taken charge of my own health



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and welfare. Two years ago, I found a doctor who accepted Medicare and I began to schedule quarterly visits with her as my family physician. At least once every three months we had blood drawn and tested as well as a urine test. We would go over the test results and develop a plan to better improve my health. An unexpected bonus occurred during the first year. I noticed my doctor started to show a vested interest in me by asking numerous questions on how I viewed my health and as time went on, I shared more and more of how I was feeling. This made a huge difference in my quality of life and overall welfare.

It seems that men have a hard time opening up and talking about their health, talk to your doctor, even the smallest detail can improve your life. I encourage each of you to find a family doctor to help manage your health.

Quick Tip: Here's a good tip on how to keep glucose spikes down after meals. Eat your veggies first, then proteins and lastly carbs & deserts.

Tony McGrew
State Surgeon
Depart of Oklahoma

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities abound throughout Oklahoma and our VFW is uniquely qualified and able to make a difference to our comrades and our neighbors and our communities. As winter closes in around us there are Veterans who are suffering from cold and hunger. How can we help? Food banks need volunteers to help in preparing food baskets, homeless shelters need clothing, bedding, blankets, and food and toiletry items. The VA needs people to transport veterans to and from their hospital appointments. I'll wager every Post in the state has one or more Veterans that are unable to attend Post meetings for various reasons. How much of a blessing can we be to them just by spending a few minutes on the phone with them or sitting in their kitchen or living room and letting them share their story. Sometimes all a troubled Veteran needs is someone to listen.

Tony McGrew
State Surgeon
405-820-646



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State Chaplain Jason Burns

Comrades,

What a month we have had. Just wanted to give you all an update of things we have done and things we are trying to get going in the next month.

Chaplain Services has launched the Chaplain Counsel underneath the Resources tab on the Dept Page. There you will find many links for chaplain resources plus the Monthly Chaplain Report form.

We also launched the Chaplain Reporting Forms. Post & District Chaplains starting in September will need to send up a monthly Chaplain report due by the 15th of the following month.

I encourage All Chaplains & Commanders to attend Officer Training September 30th and Oct 1st at the Wyndham Garden OKC. I will be training on several things, but the most important thing is draping the charter which includes the Commander. Also, I will have the information on how to order a VFW Drape and if your Charter is missing, I will have that info on how to get a new one.

Last thing for this month is, I was approached by a Veteran who is not of the same faith as I and ask what the VFW does have as far as Resources to help members of other faiths and religions. After much thought on this I would like to put together a team of Chaplains/members of different faith and religions to build the resources so I can add them to the Page and would like to find leaders of different Faiths/Religions that are members and add them to our Chaplain team. So, if you are interested in helping with this please email me at vfwokchaplain@outlook.com.

Remember NO VETERAN LEFT BEHIND no matter Race, Creed and or Religion.



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#stillserving #vfwchaplains #okvfw #meetthechallenge #vfwmembership

Chaplain Jason Burns
VFW Dept Chaplain
Post 1192 Commander
D14 QM
All American District 14 Commander
All State District 14 & Post 1192 Commander

Youth Essay Programs *Mike Devenitch*

Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen & Teacher of the Year

VFW YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS: Kids are back in school! Now, is the time to hit the schools, print applications and get the word out in the community. Successful essay programs: Email, call and visit the schools. Find your belly-button teacher, Speech Teacher, English, Counselors or Administrators that will help you. For the 2023-2024 school year the following topics have been released: **Voice of Democracy (VOD)** audio-essay program theme is - "**What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?**" and the **Patriot's Pen (PP)** youth essay "**How Are You Inspired by America?**" Both are due to the local VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. This is our signature programs, so get out and make us proud! If you have any questions or need help, please contact me! Don't forget to get your auxiliary 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: Every school has a special teacher that is doing something extra, so built 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. Call the school principal and ask, which teacher fits this bill? Nominations can be submitted by fellow teachers, supervisors, you, or other interested



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individuals. They are to the local VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. Submit all nomination to me. Remember: Help make your teacher, your post, district, and the state shine with a

win! National has request packages 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

State Historian Patrick Eagan

Greetings Comrades,

I have recently been assigned by our own VFW Department of OK Commander Traxler as the Department Historian. I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those I have not already met. I am currently the CO of Post 577 and SR Vice CO of District 5.

The task of Dept Historian at this point is to begin collecting all of the historical records and information, including photos, of the history of the Dept, the Districts and the Posts in Oklahoma. Obviously, this is a very large task thus we need to start somewhere to begin preserving what we can. I perceive this to take multiple years to build. I will be putting out more information as well as information requests to those currently in command at all levels. If there is anyone in the organization that would like to assist with this project, please email me and let me know.

I hope to see all of you the first weekend in November at the 2023 Southern Conference in Tulsa. Make sure not to miss the Southern Conference Social Friday evening 3 NOV at Post 577. Free transportation is being provided to all of the attendees from the host hotel, River Spirit Casino and Hotel.

Patrick Eagan
at105saxon@sbcglobal.net



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Community Service Chair Aaron Smith

Hello everyone,

I am the Department Community Service Chairman. Among my responsibilities I must maintain the community services portion of the department Dashboard.

I know that many of the posts within the state (including my own) are doing a lot of things that just aren't being reported. I have heard many comrades say: "I'm not doing it for recognition." For those of you that feel that way, I agree with you completely, but it is important to know why you should report. It is about helping the reputation of VFW and to help give strength to both the state and federal legislation process.

With that being said, you are not required to add your name or even your position at your post or district. If you do not know how to report to the dashboard, please get with your commander or you may call me. Every post member should have access to the state dashboard. The minimum needed to make a report is: District number, post number, type of event, at least 1 member, and more than zero hours. The mileage that you report should be from your house to the post, to wherever you are going, back to post, and then back home. If you spend money, put that into the report. In the remarks section give a quick description, such as "Had recruiting event at Walmart."

For the All-American dashboard only the Commander, Sr Vice, Jr Vice, Quartermaster, and Adjutant for each level can report. Please note that only 1 report can be made for Patriot Pen, Voice of Democracy, and Teacher award.

I have been seeing a lot of reports going in and I am trying to keep up with them, good job at that. So far, been able to approve or reject reports within 3 days since I have been granted access to do so. If you have made a report and it is not reflected on Dashboard within 3 days, there is a good chance that it was rejected. There have been several, and some of them did not have a good email address to send it to. The most common reason for a rejection is that it does not show any members, and/or hours, after all how can anything happen is nobody spends any time on it. Another common reason is when it appears that several events were put on 1 report. When there is 1 member and 100 hours,



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make sure you specify in the comments that it is 1 event, otherwise it will appear that you did the same thing several times, which would be several events.

I know that everyone is doing the work, now prove it to national by reporting it!

Aaron Smith
VFW OKLAHOMA
Community Service Chairman
District 7 Commander