

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

Illinois

2024-2025 Series

General Orders No. 10

April 2025

IMPORTANT: REPORT OF ELECTION FORM

National Headquarters has mailed all Post Quartermasters a packet, including the 2025-2026 Report of Election Form with instructions on submitting their report online using the Online Membership System (OMS). A blank Post Election Report can also be found in the "Document Repository" section on the Online Membership System (OMS). Also included in that packet is information on registering your Post for the National Convention and a room reservation form. The 126th VFW National Convention will be held August 9-13, 2025, in Columbus, OH. Post Election Reports must be submitted to the National Headquarters following the post-election of officers in April and no later than June 1st. We encourage all the Post Quartermasters to use the Online Election Report filing process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to Department Headquarters.

REMINDER: STATE BYLAW CHANGES

Resolutions affecting the Bylaws of the Department must be received in State Headquarters by no later than **May 15, 2025**, so they can be circulated to all Posts within the prescribed time before the State Convention. Resolutions affecting Department Bylaws received after that date cannot be considered at this State Convention. ALL RESOLUTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN PROPER FORM. Any Resolutions received that are not in proper form will be returned for correction.

NOTE: For your resolution to be included in the State Convention Resolutions Book, it must be received at State Headquarters no later than **May 15, 2025**.

NOMINATION, ELECTION, AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Section 216 and 416 of the National Bylaws is quoted below for your information and necessary action. Please note paragraph c.

Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The Post shall elect the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three (3) Trustees.
- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chaplain, and Service Officer.*
- (c) The Post may elect, or the Post Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day, and/or Guard if required by Post Bylaws.*
- (d) The Post Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Post or as may be required by Post Bylaws.*

Several posts have bylaws stating that the Post Officers shall be elected in accordance with the National Bylaws or are silent on the election of officers as the National Bylaws have precedence. With the change to 216c, they should review their bylaws and decide if they wish the positions in 216c to be elected or appointed. Part 416 of the National Bylaws is quoted below for your information and necessary action. Please note paragraph c.

Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of each District shall consist of a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three (3) Trustees.
 - (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chaplain, Service Officer and an Inspector
 - (c) The District may elect or the District Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if required by the District Bylaws
 - (d) The District Commander may appoint other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the district's affairs or as may be required by District Bylaws.
- Paragraph c allows Districts to choose between electing or appointing the listed officers. Should the District wish to appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff, or Officer of the Day, they need to have this reflected in their bylaws.

Section 417 of the Manual of Procedure

Sec. 417 - Nomination, Election, Installation, and Term of Office. Order of nominations and elections.

The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Judge Advocate, Surgeon, and Trustee(s).

Nomination: Any member may be nominated and elected although not present at the meeting. A member nominating an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the nominated member before the closing of nominations. Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline the nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. Nominations shall remain open until the District Convention is ready to vote.

Election: In balloting for District officers, a majority of all the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

Challenging Election Results: If irregularities are claimed in the election to any office, the challenge must be made before the close of the meeting.

Installation: District officers shall be installed before the meeting adjournment at which elected. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing who holds or has held an office equal to or higher than District Commander. The District Commander-elect shall select the installing officer. An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.

Term of Office: Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year except that three trustees shall initially be elected for a term of one (1), two (2), and three (3) years.

District officers shall take office upon the conformation of election and installation of the Department Commander by the Department Convention.

INSTALLING OFFICERS

Installing officers will see that the provisions of Section 216 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure are properly carried out and that all officers are members in good standing and qualified to hold office before installing Post officers for the current year. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and adequately reviewed. Post Election Reports must be submitted to the National Headquarters following the post-election of officers in April and no later than June 1. We highly encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

The District Convention is held for the purpose of electing your officers for the upcoming administrative year. Any member who is not a member of the District Convention (Refer to Section 404 of the National Bylaws) may attend the Convention. However, they shall have no voice in business discussions unless requested by the Commander and shall have no voting privileges. The Commander shall recognize those on official business for the conduct of business. (Article IV, Sec. 403 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees).

PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED FOR ALL ELECTED

AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

Officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and adequately reviewed. Proof of eligibility shall be open to review by the District Commander, Adjutant, and Quartermaster before installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within thirty

(30) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws. **Proof of Eligibility for District Commanders, District Senior Vice Commanders, and District Junior Vice Commanders MUST be furnished to the State Adjutant within thirty (30) days of Election.**

COMMANDERS-ELECT AT ALL LEVELS

Your attention is directed to the fact that the State Commander does NOT ASSIGN a Past Post, District, County Council Commander, or a State Officer to be an Installing Officer. This is something that is between you and the Officer you choose.

REMINDER – POST/DISTRICT OFFICER CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS

Please note that Post or District Officer changes must be reported to State Headquarters immediately. Changes in addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses should also be reported immediately—even if they are made on the Online Membership System (OMS). **These changes are not always transmitted to State Headquarters; please help us keep our records current.**

ELECTION OF POST DELEGATES

Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual

Article II - Posts, Section 217

Nomination, Election, Installation, and Term of Office of Post Officers

Post officers shall be elected in April. Balloting for Post Officers may be conducted by open vote or written secret ballot (handwritten or printed) at a regular Post meeting, or, if required by Post Bylaws or authorized by Post vote before the opening of nominations, by a poll system. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited. A majority vote of all votes cast, except where otherwise designated, shall be necessary to elect. If there is no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped, and so on, in successive ballots until an

election is made.

Article II - Post, Section 222

Delegates, District Conventions & Meetings, Department and National Conventions

Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at an April meeting. Delegate Strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st. Delegates shall not be recognized at the National Convention unless they personally register their completed delegate card with the National Credentials Committee.

SPRING POPPY DISTRIBUTION

Commanders on all levels should be organizing their 2025 Memorial Day Poppy Distribution. Promotional material is available from the VFW Store Catalog. Every Post is urged to order and distribute Buddy Poppies; poppies can be ordered and paid for from our website – www.vfwil.org, using the “donate now” button. A poppy order form can be printed out and mailed with a check to State Headquarters. It is under the “resources” and then go to “reports and forms”. They are available in multiples of 500. All other accessories, such as caps, aprons, cans, etc., can be ordered directly from the VFW Store at National Headquarters.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PARADE OF WINNERS

Every year, nearly 26,400 of our nation’s youth compete in the VFW’s Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen audio essay competitions for their chance to win a portion of more than \$1.4 million in college scholarships and awards. The competitions culminate with the Parade of Winners event to celebrate and recognize the contests’ top national winners.

Congratulations to our Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy winners from Illinois.

Our Patriots Pen winner, Georgia Roscoe, sponsored by Post 2245, District 5, finished 22nd Place at the National competition and received \$1,000.

Our Voice of Democracy winner Joseph Martinez, sponsored by Post 4724, District 9, finished 30th Place at the National competition and received \$2,000.

Themes for 2025-2026 Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy have been announced. Information is on the vfwil.org web page and attached to these General Orders.

STATE CONVENTION

The State Convention will be held on June 5-8, 2025. The hotels for the State Convention are:

Presidential Abraham Lincoln Double Tree Hotel
701 E Adams
Springfield, IL 62701

Wyndham City Center
700 E Adams
Springfield, IL 62701

The VFW meetings will be held in the BOS Center at 1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701, conveniently adjacent to both hotels. The VFW Auxiliary meetings will be held in the Presidential Abraham Lincoln Double Tree Hotel. The Hotel reservation links and codes are posted on the vfwil.org web page under "Events".

COMMANDER AND PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

On Saturday, June 7, 2025, join the newly installed Illinois VFW State Commander and Auxiliary State President for the Commander and President's Reception. More information in the General Orders next month.

2025 DISTRICT COMMANDER-ELECT TRAINING

Once District Elections are held, an invitation will be sent to newly elected District Commanders for 2025-2026. Department Headquarters will provide rooming accommodations for 4 nights (Wednesday-Sunday) for incoming District Commanders at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre, 700 E. Adams Street in Springfield.

Mandatory District Commander training will be held on Thursday, June 5th, at 8 am in BOS Center.

PLEASE NOTE: District Commanders-Elect should be present during the Council of Administration Meeting on June 6th, 2025. The dress code is a suit, coat, tie, and cap to

have your photograph taken. They must also be present on Saturday, June 7th, 2025, during the installation of officers!

On Sunday, June 8th, there will be a brief Council of Administration meeting at 9 am to pass an interim budget until the next meeting in August.

ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS

Under the Department of Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars Bylaws, Article V -

Convention Section 8:

“Each Post shall register, in advance or at the Convention, at least one delegate to the Department Convention by payment of the advance registration fee in effect for such Convention, which fee shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials. Post failing to comply with this requirement shall be considered delinquent and in arrears.

STATE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

These general orders include the advanced registration form for the State Convention. Delegates can also register online at www.vfwil.org. The registration fee is \$20.00 until May 31, 2025, and \$22.00 afterward. After the proper registration fee has been paid, registration confirmation letters will be mailed to registrants. Registrants must present this confirmation when they check in at the convention registration desk at the BOS Convention Center.

REMINDER: Delegates **will not** be allowed to vote until such issues have been resolved if the Post is in arrears for supplies, poppies, or any financial obligation to the Department. The Post must be bonded and passed inspection, have an election report on file with the Department and National Headquarters for the ensuing year, and have all audits approved, including the March 31, 2025, audit.

The convention's delegate strength is based on one delegate and one alternate delegate per thirty members or a fraction thereof.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AD BOOK

The Program Book Order Form for the 106th Annual State Convention is included in these General Orders. Full-page ads are \$200, half-page ads are \$125, and quarter-page ads are \$75. Ads on the inside front cover are \$350, the inside back cover is \$300, and the outside back cover is \$300. (Contact Headquarters Office for availability of Cover Pages) Please mail your ad form, picture (*if applicable*), and payment to the Editor, State Convention Program Book, 3300 Constitution Ave, Springfield, IL 62711, or e-mail vfwil@vfwil.org.

Ads must be received in State Headquarters no later than **April 15, 2025**.

PAYMENT FOR ADS MUST BE REMITTED AT THE TIME OF PLACEMENT!

2025 CONVENTION RAFFLE AND PURPLE HEART TICKETS

Tickets for the 2025 Purple Heart and Convention raffle went out in the December issue of the Illinois VFW newspaper. Included were 2 sheets of 5 tickets (\$20 each) and two Purple Heart tickets (\$5 each). Winners will be randomly selected at the State Convention in June for the \$10,000 grand prize, \$3,000 second prize, \$2,000 third prize, and \$500 awarded to fourth through tenth place winners. Purple Heart Raffle: \$2,000 grand prize. If you have any questions or would like to request more tickets, please contact VFW Department Headquarters.

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Your respective Programs end on **April 30th, 2025**. As soon as your program winners are determined, please send that information to Department Headquarters.

NOMINATIONS FOR AWARDS AND CITATIONS

We are accepting nominees to be considered by our Convention Awards & Citations Committee for our State Convention. The deadline for award nominations for our State Convention is **April 30, 2025**, for the following categories:

- Outstanding Legislator of the Year

- Outstanding Patriotism of the Year
- Outstanding Governmental Service of the Year
- Clergy of the Year
- News Media Professional of the Year
- Outstanding Citizen of the Year
- JROTC Cadet of the Year
- Employer of the Year
- Life Saving Award

There is no form to fill out. Just write down the name, address, sponsoring post number, contact person, and the reason why you feel this individual deserves to be recognized. THE DEADLINE DATE IS April 30th, 2025.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES RECORD BOOK

Community service, as defined by the National Community Service Trust Act, "encompasses any human act serving the common good; in the interest of the community." Community service is further defined as "a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions."

Annually, we ask all VFW Posts to submit record books detailing their Community Service Projects. We encourage Posts to gather pictures, newspaper clippings, letters, receipts, etc., and compile this vital record of their activities in their community. We receive fewer and fewer entries each year for judging; ask for volunteers in your Post to assemble this essential part of your Post's history. Please get in touch with State Headquarters if you have any questions.

When the Community Activity Record Books are submitted for judging, they must have the official entry form attached to the inside front cover. The Official Entry Form is in the Commander's Leadership Manual. At the end of these orders, your record book must be at State Headquarters by **May 2, 2025**, for judging on **May 6, 2025**.

LOYALTY DAY, May 1st

Posts and Districts are urged to start planning now for Loyalty Day (May 1, 2025) observations in their community. Visit the VFW Store for Loyalty Day Posters, Award Citations, and Brochures, and Patriotic Holiday Speeches are available at www.vfw.org.

VFW DAY OF SERVICE, May 3RD

In 2020, the VFW launched the #stillserving campaign to highlight the countless ways veterans continue to serve in communities across America. This year, the VFW is introducing VFW Day of Service. The VFW Day of Service kicks off on Saturday, May 3, 2025, marking the start of veteran-led community service projects that will take place throughout the month. We're asking VFW Posts, members, community advocates, and veterans of every stripe to band together to host one community service event on May 3rd or at another point during the month to make a meaningful difference in your community. Posts can sign up to participate or express interest by visiting <https://todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/>. Service projects can be any size. After completing your project, please send information and pictures of your participation to the State and National Headquarters.

ALL-STATE POST AWARDS

The All-State Program runs through June 15th, 2025. To receive All-State Awards at the State Convention, the deadline to complete All-State Criteria is April 30, 2025. All

State Post Commanders will receive an All State Post Commanders Cap and Distinguished Service lapel pin. All-State Post Quartermasters can purchase an All-State Post Quartermaster Cap and receive a Distinguished Service lapel pin. All-State Post Members have the option to purchase an All-State Team Member cap.

The 2024-2025 All-State Program is designed to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork in Membership, overall Post/District development, and VFW Programs. If a Post qualifies as "All-State", ALL Post members will be recognized for this achievement

because THEY ARE A TEAM. The All-state Team of Post Commanders and Post Quartermasters will be made up of Post who achieves:

- Membership greater than 101%
- Post must hold 1 membership drive/events and submit report to Program Reporting Dashboard
- Post must be 100% reported on the Department Programs Reporting Dashboard
- Post must have submitted all 4 quarterly Trustees Audits and audits were approved
- The post must be in compliance with all questions on the National and Department Inspection Sheets.
- Post must order at least 3 poppies per member with a minimum of 1,000 poppies
- Each post must have one nomination for each of the programs of Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy, and Teacher of the Year or Employer of the Year submitted to the district for judging. Donations to Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen as stated in this manual will be accepted if a Post does not have a nomination
- Post must have one nomination in the following programs: Teacher of the Year or Public Safety (police, fire, EMT, dispatcher, EOD). Donations to any of these programs DO NOT receive credit towards All State Awards
- Post must have representation at all properly called District Conventions and meetings
- Post must have representation at any of the Commanders Calls (Roll Call will be taken)
- The post must make a \$50 donation to the Service Office Support Program (SOS). This is separate from the Red, White, and Blue Program donations

ALL-STATE DISTRICT CRITERIA

All State District Commanders will receive an All-State District Commander's Cap and a Distinguished Service Lapel Pin. There will be no limits to the number of Districts that can achieve All-State status. The criteria are as follows:

- Membership greater than 101%
- Districts must have 100% of Posts inspected, and the State inspector must clear the inspections by April 30, 2025
- Districts must hold a minimum of one School of Instruction and submit a report to State Headquarters
- District must hold or participate in 1 membership drive/events and submit report to Programs reporting dashboard
- Districts must submit 1 of each of the following to Department Headquarters for judging:
 - Patriots Pen
 - Voice of Democracy
 - Teacher of the Year
 - Public Safety of the Year (police, fire, EMT, dispatcher, EOD)
- The district must forward a record of the Roll Call of Officers and Posts of each District meeting to State Headquarters.

ALL-AMERICAN POST LEADERSHIP CRITERIA

- Membership greater than 102%
- Post Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Meet all of the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2025:
 - Voice of Democracy - Minimum of one entry advanced to District judging
 - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging
 - Donate to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services (Minimum of \$125)
 - A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-March, and April-June. One of these community service activities must be for the VFW Day of Service
 - Buddy Poppy – Purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies

ALL-AMERICAN DISTRICT CRITERIA

- Membership greater than 102%
- District Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters
- Meet all of the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2025:
 - Voice of Democracy - Minimum of one entry advanced to District judging
 - Patriots Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging

126th VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION

Columbus, OH, is the host city for the 126th VFW and 111th Auxiliary National Conventions, which will be held August 9- 13, 2025. Convention housing opened on March 17, 2025. Hotel reservations can be booked on the VFW website, www.vfw.org.

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING

The 126th National Convention housing opened on Monday, March 17, 2025. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website, accessed through the main VFW website at vfw.org/convention. The convention website will also have general convention information, including the registration form and links to other convention-related information for Columbus, OH – August 9-13, 2025, and a tentative agenda.

NATIONAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention Registration Fee of \$25 - which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Please note that each additional delegate attending the National Convention must pay an additional \$10 delegate fee. Information on delegate registration will be available at a later date.

NEW CENTURY RAFFLE

The New Century Raffle has officially started and will run through June 30, 2025. The tickets are just \$10.00 each. Each ticket entitles you to a weekly drawing of \$100 from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. Drawings will be held each Friday beginning July 1, 2025, with each week's winning ticket being returned to the barrel for future drawings. This means each ticket has multiple chances to win. The seller of each ticket also has a chance to win \$10.00. If the seller prints their name on the ticket, they will receive \$10.00. If the seller does not sign the ticket, the \$10.00 will be automatically donated and split between the Department's Unmet Needs Program and Children's National Home. Winners will be announced monthly in the General Orders and posted on <http://vfwil.org> website.

WEEKLY WINNER

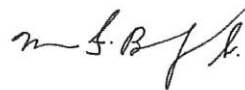
<u>Date of Drawing</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Seller</u>
03/07/25	Gus Tallo Jr.	No Seller Listed
03/14/25	Maurice Theriac	No Seller Listed
03/21/25	Robert Brown	No Seller Listed
03/28/25	Robert Westfall	Robert Westfall

By Order of:



Joseph "Scott" Swinford
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Official



Maurice Bridges
State Commander



20__-__ POST ELECTION REPORT

DATE OF ELECTION:

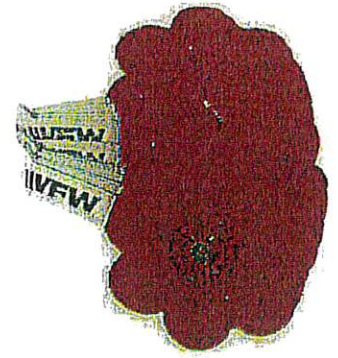
POST #	DISTRICT #	DEPARTMENT	POST NAME	POST DUES AMOUNT Includes National and Department Per Capita	\$
POST MEETING LOCATION (PHYSICAL ADDRESS)			POST MAILING ADDRESS		
BUILDING NAME (IF NOT POST NAME)			STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
STREET ADDRESS			ADDRESS LINE 2		
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
POST E-MAIL ADDRESS			POST MEETING DAY/TIME		
POST WEBSITE			CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:		
POST PHONE #			<input type="checkbox"/> OWN <input type="checkbox"/> RENT <input type="checkbox"/> NO POST HOME <input type="checkbox"/> CANTEEN/CLUBROOM <input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDE HALL RENTALS <input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDE MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS		
COMMANDER					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
SENIOR VICE COMMANDER					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
QUARTERMASTER					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
CHAPLAIN					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
JUDGE ADVOCATE (APPOINTED)					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
SURGEON (APPOINTED)					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
1 YEAR TRUSTEE					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
2 YEAR TRUSTEE					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
3 YEAR TRUSTEE					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
ADJUTANT (APPOINTED)					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
SERVICE OFFICER (APPOINTED)					
MEMBERSHIP #	NAME		STREET ADDRESS or PO BOX #		
PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE



Traditional Poppy

POPPY ORDER FORM

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.
3300 CONSTITUTION DRIVE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62711
FAX: 217-546-3415



Metal Poppy

ORDER DATE _____ DATE OF POPPY SALE _____

POST/AUX NAME _____ NUMBER _____ DISTRICT _____
(Do not leave blank)

PLEASE PLACE OUR ORDER FOR THE FOLLOWING:

_____ TRADITIONAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$280.00 PER THOUSAND)\$ _____
_____ METAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$140.00 PER THOUSAND)\$ _____
(ORDER IN INCREMENTS OF 500 ONLY)

(POPPY CANS, POSTERS, ETC. CAN BE ORDERED DIRECTLY FROM THE VFW STORE AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS)

SHIP THE ABOVE TO: _____

(Name - PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE) (Title)

(Poppies can only be ordered using a person's name, not the name of the Post or Office)

ADDRESS (UPS Address - **Please no P.O. Box No.**) (City) (Zip Code)

AMOUNT OF ORDER\$ _____

SHIPPING AND HANDLING\$ _____

AMOUNT INCLUDED WITH ORDER\$ _____

BALANCE DUE\$ _____

For Department use only:

Date Received	Date Recorded on X Sheet	Date Ordered	Date Shipped or Picked Up	Date Invoiced	Date Paid

PLEASE ALLOW 8 WEEKS WHEN ORDERING YOUR POPPIES! YOUR POPPY ORDER WILL BE PROCESSED BY STATE HEADQUARTERS THROUGH THE PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS. ONLY RUSH ORDERS WILL BE SHIPPED FROM STATE HEADQUARTERS IF AVAILABLE.

YOU MAY ALSO ORDER ONLINE AT www.vfwil.org

2025-2026 Theme

“How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?”

Student Entry Deadline: Oct. 31, 2025

Patriotic Audio Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$35,000 Award

What is the Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 26,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, “How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?”

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. National winners will be notified of their scholarship & placement.

The Rules

Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio essay on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. Inappropriate use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is not allowed. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at youthscholarships@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to your name, school, city, state, race or national origin) although the recording and typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership.

Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries begin at the VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: First, visit this website vfw.org/FindaPost to “Find A VFW Post.” If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link vfw.org/ContactUs and look for “Find a State Contact” to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org

What Is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31, 2025. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?

Originality is worth 30 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content is worth 35 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

2025-2026 Official Entry Form Voice of Democracy Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

()

Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

Jacket Size

School Name, City, State

Teacher's Name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

(Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

()

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian Email

Participant Agreement for Students Advancing to National Level

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Founding Forward Spirit of America Leadership trip to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania as a guest of the VFW National Organization. In consideration for permission to participate in the National Voice of Democracy Competition ("Competition") I do hereby, for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees, waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the Competition and/or arising out of any travel related to the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my audio file, essay, name and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

I Have Read and Understand the Rules and Participant Agreement

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have not inappropriately used any AI tools or Chat GPT. I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant

Date

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Voice of Democracy Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature

Post #

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (if applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email

No. of students participating

No. of winners advanced to District

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship awards \$

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) \$

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Departments.

District Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

()

Phone

Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Voice of Democracy Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

()

Daytime Phone

Email

The winner has been will be (check one) notified that they are the first place Department winner on _____.

For assistance contact:
816.968.2787
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Best Time To Call: _____

Alternate Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Best Time To Call: _____



2025-2026 Theme

“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2025

Patriotic Written Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$5,000 Award

What is the Patriot's Pen Program?

Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme.

We invite you to join the more than 60,000 students who participated last year in this contest.

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (state) winners receive a portion of \$55,000 in national awards. National winners will receive at least \$500. **The first place national award is currently \$5,000.**

The Internal Revenue Service requires a recipient awarded more than \$599 be given Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable income. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

How Does the Contest Work?

All entries begin at the VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The first place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition.

Who Can Enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th, 7th and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Homeschooled students also are eligible. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students are ineligible.)

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing contest.
- Contact a participating VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.

- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its VFW Auxiliary.

- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Oct. 31, 2025. You can submit your essay and entry form by email upon the Post's approval. Entries sent to the VFW National Headquarters directly will be returned.

How Am I Judged?

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points:

You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 35 points:

Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points:

Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

What Is the Theme?

The VFW Commander-in-Chief chooses the year's theme.

The 2025-2026 theme is:

“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”

Deadline Information.

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by midnight Oct. 31, 2025.

Note:

If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions:

First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to “Find a VFW Post.”

If you don't have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble contacting them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) headquarters office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/ContactUs to look for “Find a State Contact” to get your VFW state office's phone number and email.

**For assistance contact
the VFW National Headquarters
at 816.968.2787
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org**

2025-2026 Official Entry Form Patriot's Pen Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

(____) _____
Phone Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy) Grade in School Essay Word Count

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian (Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

(____) _____
Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian's Email

What Are the Rules?

• You must write your own essay.

• All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.

• In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay (including, but not limited to, your name, school, city, state, race or national origin.) Do not put your name on the essay. The entry form is your essays cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once each year if otherwise eligible (one Post competition).

• The essay must be contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. Inappropriate use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is not allowed. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to the use of your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

• At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.

• ***I Have Read and Understand the Contest Rules***

Signature of Student Participant

Date

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature Post#

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (If applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email

No. of participants _____ No. of winners _____

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarships awards \$ _____

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (Banquet, Pins, etc.) \$ _____

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department.

District Chairperson Signature Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

(____) _____
Phone Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Patriot's Pen Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

(____) _____
Daytime Phone Email

The winner has been will be (check one) notified that they are the first place Department winner on _____.

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____

Alternate Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____



**106th ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES**

TO: Department Adjutant-Quartermaster
Department of Illinois V.F.W.
3300 Constitution Dr.
Springfield, IL 62711

POST NO: _____

Please register below listed Comrades for the Department Convention being held the week of June 05-08, 2025 in Springfield, Illinois. The registration fee of \$20.00 per Comrade is enclosed.

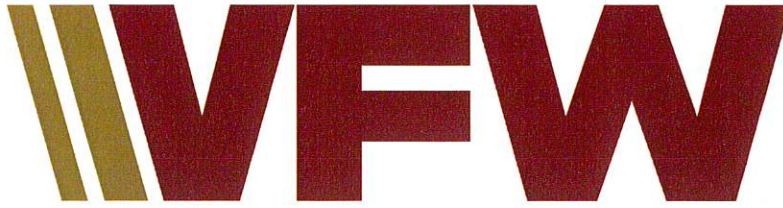
NOTE: REGISTRATION FEE AFTER WEDNESDAY, MAY 01, 2025 WILL INCREASE TO \$22.00 PER PERSON, SO REGISTER EARLY!

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

	NAME	STREET	CITY	ZIP
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____

This form may be photo-copied for additional names if needed.

STATE OF ILLINOIS



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

106th

Illinois State Convention Program Book Order Form

Our Post/District/Auxiliary would like to purchase the ad size selected below in the 106th annual Illinois VFW Convention Program Book.

The only ads in color will be inside and back cover ads

- Inside Front Cover - \$350.00
- Back Cover - \$300.00
- Half Page - \$125.00
- Inside Back Cover - \$300.00
- Full Page - \$200.00
- Quarter Page - \$75.00

PLEASE ENCLOSE PAYMENT IN FULL OR
PAY VIA CREDIT/DEBIT CARD AT www.vfwil.org

BOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE JUNE 2025 STATE CONVENTION

Mail ad copy and any photos your Post/District wants included in the ad, along with appropriate payment to:

Ad copy must accompany order form

*Editor, State Convention Program Book
3300 Constitution Dr.
Springfield, IL 62711*

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS APRIL 15, 2025

Questions? Contact State Headquarters at (217) 529-6688



Community Activities Record Book Entry Form

1. This Form must be filled out and attached to the inside cover of the Community Activities Record Book that your Post enters in the Department Community Activities Record Book Contest.
2. All Record Books submitted for Department Judging will be returned to the Post Commander following judging.
3. The Post Commander must sign this form.
4. Your book must be in State Headquarters by May 2, 2025 for judging on May 5, 2025.

Post # _____ City: _____, State: _____ Zip: _____

Total Projects	Total Hours	Total Funds
----------------	-------------	-------------

Since 5/1/24 _____ Volunteered _____ Used/Donated \$ _____

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN:

Post Chairperson _____ Auxiliary Chairperson _____

JUDGES, NOTE THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Page # _____, Project Name _____

Post Commander Signature _____

Post Commander's Name (print) _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State: _____ Zip: _____

JOIN US FOR OUR VFW DAY OF SERVICE EVENT

A veteran-led community service event.



POST #

EVENT:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION

TENTATIVE AGENDA

VFW 126th National Convention Columbus, OH Greater Columbus Convention Center August 9-13, 2025

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

Friday, August 8, 2025

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VFW/Auxiliary Pre-Registration
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. National Veterans Service Advisory Committee

Saturday, August 9, 2025

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VFW Registration/Exhibits
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Workshops (TBD)
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Budget and Finance Committee
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VA Claims Clinic
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Workshop (TBD)
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Uniting to Combat Hunger
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Vander Clute Memorial Ride
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. First Time Attendees Welcome Orientation
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. National Council of Administration Meeting
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Eastern Conference
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Southern Conference
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Big Ten Conference
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Western Conference

Sunday, August 10, 2025

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VFW Registration/Exhibits
9:00 a.m. Joint Memorial Service
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VA Claims Clinic
10:30 a.m. Workshops (TBD)
11:00 a.m. Update on VFW Legislative Priority Goals
11:00 a.m. VFW Post Service Officer Training
1:00 p.m. National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual
1:00 p.m. Finance and Internal Organization (200 series)
1:00 p.m. General Resolutions (300 Series)
1:00 p.m. National Security and Foreign Affairs (400 series)
Sub Committee – POW/MIA

TENTATIVE AGENDA

VFW 126th National Convention Columbus, OH Greater Columbus Convention Center August 9-13, 2025

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

Sunday, August 10, 2025 (cont'd)

- 1:00 p.m. National Veterans Service Resolutions (600 series)
Sub-committee – Health
Sub-committee – Benefits
Sub-committee – Economic Opportunity/Other
- 3:00 p.m. VFW Programs Town Hall
- 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Department Adjutant/Quartermasters Association Meeting
& Reception *(by invitation only)*
- 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Cornhole Tournament

Monday, August 11, 2025

- 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VFW Registration/Exhibits
- 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Joint Opening Session
(Business session will resume after lunch break)
- 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. VFW Business Session
- 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. VA Claims Clinic
- 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Cornhole Tournament Championship
- 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. 126th VFW National Convention Awards Banquet-Cocktail
Hour
- 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. 126th VFW National Convention Awards Banquet

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

- 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. VFW Registration/Exhibits
- 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. VFW Business Session
- 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. VA Claims Clinic
- 1:00 p.m. Department Commanders Luncheon – *(by invite only)*
- 1:00 p.m. 2024-2025 Senior Vice Commanders, Senior Vice
Presidents Luncheon *(by invite only)*
- 1:00 p.m. 2024-2025 Junior Vice Commanders, Junior Vice
President's Luncheon *(by invite only)*

TENTATIVE AGENDA

**VFW 126th National Convention
Columbus, OH
Greater Columbus Convention Center
August 9-13, 2025**

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

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 (cont'd)

1:00 p.m.	Update on Federal Benefits and Services for Veterans
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Workshops (TBD)
1:00 p.m.	Chaplains Workshop
5:15 p.m.	Parade Line-up
6:00 p.m.	Patriotic Rally & Entertainment <i>(concession available for purchase)</i>

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

8:00 a.m.	VFW Business Session: Nominations/Election/Installation of National Officers
TBA	National Council of Administration Meeting <i>(Following business session)</i>
1:00 p.m.	All American Commanders Luncheon <i>(ticketed event)</i>
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Commander-in-Chief's and National President's Reception

Have you heard the news? There's a lot happening at the National Home (NH). Here are a few events to mark on your calendars:

April 12, 2025:

April is the Month of the Military Child! The National Home partners with the Michigan Army National Guard Child and Youth Program and will transform the NH community center's gym into a full-blown carnival with games, face painting, and treats. This celebration on April 12, 2025 will recognize all military children for the sacrifices they've made. Come out and have fun with us.

June 28, 2025

All are welcome to attend the VFW National Home Community Celebration, a special event on June 28, 2025, honoring our 100th anniversary of dedicated service to military and veteran families.

From 11 AM to 4 PM, the grounds will come alive with free carnival rides, a car show, and engaging family activities, ensuring fun for attendees of all ages. A diverse selection of food trucks will be on-site, offering a wide variety of food for purchase.

As the day transitions into the night at 4 p.m., the atmosphere will shift to one of lively entertainment featuring talented musicians, including The Bronk Brothers—Michigan's Country Hall of Fame 2024 Inductees. Enjoy a refreshing selection of beverages at our beer tent, and prepare to be dazzled by a spectacular laser light show to cap off the evening.

August 13, 2025

Will you attend the VFW/Auxiliary National Convention in August? The NH will sponsor a one day bus trip from the Columbus Convention Center on August 13, 2025.

- Date: August 13, 2025
- Departure: 7:00 AM EST from the Columbus Convention Center
- Return: Approximately 7:00 PM EST to the Columbus Convention Center
- Cost: Only \$75 per person (includes round-trip transportation, lunch, dinner, and snacks)

Why You Should Go:

As VFW and Auxiliary members, we know the importance of staying connected to the causes that matter most to our community—especially when it comes to supporting those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. The VFW National Home is a symbol of our commitment to veterans and their families, and this trip offers you the opportunity to see it for yourself.

- Comfortable, Stress-Free Travel: Relax aboard a premium motor coach featuring wireless internet, reclining seats, and a restroom. Focus on the experience, not the journey, as we travel to Eaton Rapids together.
- Tour the VFW National Home: We'll spend 3 hours exploring the VFW National Home, learning about its history, mission, and the essential services it provides. It's one thing to hear about it—it's another to experience it firsthand. Come see how the National Home continues to serve veterans and their families every day.

What's Included:

- Round-trip transportation on a premium motor coach with reclining seats, wireless internet, and a restroom
- A 3-hour guided tour of the VFW National Home—an opportunity to see the incredible impact this organization has on veterans and their families
- Meals Provided: Enjoy lunch, dinner, and snacks on the road, ensuring you have the energy to make the most of this memorable day.
- An enriching experience with fellow VFW and Auxiliary members—sharing in our mission to honor and support veterans

Thanks for all you raise, donate and give to support. All contributions, both financial and otherwise are much appreciated and are received with much gratitude.

In comradeship,
Kyna Simpson - NH Dept Chair
Mike McGrath - NH Co-Chair

From the O.R.

Comrades,

As we shift into the final months of this fiscal year with district conventions, elections, and program deadlines, we need to continue to push for excellence.

From the health and wellness table, which is something our membership should always strive to excel at. The main goal this year was to push Posts, with a home, to purchase an AED machine to have as a proactive measure. Remember, sudden cardiac arrests result in a death every 2 minutes. The most expense savvy way to get an AED machine is through a grant. This can be done on your own or you can use **AEDgrants.com** which I have found to be a possible tool for acquiring these machines.

Now for the hospital/VAVS (veterans affairs voluntary service) table. We are an organization that is spearheaded by veterans' assistance, that is why it is one of our 5 program pillars. One of the main pieces of the veteran's assistance pillar is "support of VA hospital or state veterans' home," which is our IDVA veterans' homes throughout the state. Some of our Posts that are off the beaten path may not have one of these two types of facilities in their immediate area, so the program also expands to CBOC's (community-based outpatient clinics), nursing homes, or regional hospitals in general.

As of today's date 3-22-25, here is each districts reporting outlook on the "support of VA hospital - state veterans' home":

District 3 – 77%	District 4 – 50%	District 5 – 50%	District 6 – 58%
District 7 – 47%	District 8 – 14%	District 9 – 31%	District 10 – 26%
District 11 – 84 %	District 12 – 31%	District 13 – 25%	District 14 – 88%
District 15 – 27%	District 16 – 50%	District 17 – 28%	District 18 – 54%
District 19 – 72%			

This program deserves more than these numbers reflect. If you are taking part in this program, then it needs to be documented otherwise it never happened. Our veterans in these facilities need to know they are still relevant and matter as well as cared for.

The hospital/VAVS program continues through June 30th, 2025. Please report hours, dollars, and members, keeping in mind that you can include the actual cost of items you purchased to donate to our various hospitals and nursing facilities. Each year, posts and districts lose valuable credit for their effort because nobody takes the time to report.

Convention awards will be determined based on reports received by April 30th, 2025.

Awards will be given to the “top post” in each membership category in the form of a plaque.

All districts who achieve 100% in post participation in the hospital/VAVS program by April 30th, 2025, will be awarded \$50 to be used in the continuation of their hospital/VAVS program.

Ryan Higginbotham

State Surgeon

Department of Illinois

GENERAL ORDERS APRIL 2025

PROGRAM SUMMARY: **SCOUTING**

A REVIEW OF THE SCOUTING DASHBOARD FOR SCOUTING REFLECTED THAT 54% OF OUR POST HAVE NOT RECORDED ANY ACTIVITIES FOR SCOUTING.

We should not take our eyes off the objectives of the scouting program:

- a. Foster partnering with Scouting Units
- b. Enhance scout-related information within our community
- c. Introducing Scouts to VFW activities and volunteerism
- d. Provide a positive image for a new generation of potential service members
- e. Help the Scouting programs grow in our communities
- f. Support the selection of the State's Scout of the Year

If you have any questions on the Scouting Program, please contact me at usafret1@att.net

SCOUTING DASHBOARD STATS									
DISTRICT #	POST IN DISTRICT		SCOUTING INCOMPLETE		SCOUTING COMPLETE		% INCOMPLETE		
3	10		5		5			0.5	
4	12		7		5			0.583333	
5	15		11		4			0.733333	
6	17		7		10			0.411765	
7	18		9		9			0.5	
8	14		12		2			0.857143	
9	19		9		10			0.473684	
10	15		10		5			0.666667	
11	13		3		10			0.230769	
12	16		11		5			0.6875	
13	12		9		3			0.75	
14	17		0		17			0	
15	11		8		3			0.727273	
16	10		7		3			0.7	
17	14		11		3			0.785714	
18	11		6		5			0.545455	
19	22		9		13			0.409091	
TOTALS	246		134		112			0.544715	
AS OF 14 March 2025									

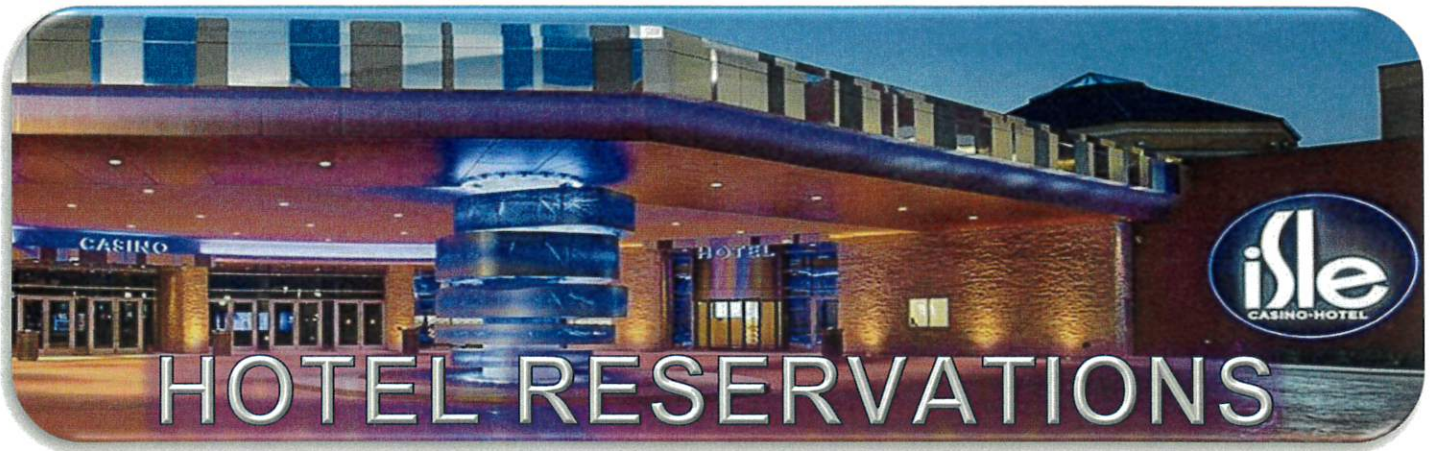


October 17-18, 2025

**VFW & AUXILIARY
BIG 10 CONFERENCE**

ISLE CASINO HOTEL, & QUAD CITIES
WATERFRONT CONVENTION CENTER





ISLE CASINO HOTEL

1777 Isle Parkway
Bettendorf, IA, 52722

Call the hotel at: **(563) 441-7000**

Tell them you are reserving rooms under Group: **VFW1025**

Or reserve online at the dedicated event site at:

<https://tinyurl.com/vfw1025>

Or scan the following QR Code with your Smart Device:



Group Rate is: **\$124/Night + taxes & fees**

SERVICE DOGS

The hotel is equipped with animal friendly rooms. Guests with service dogs, please tell the hotel that you will be bringing your service dog so they can be sure to place you in an animal friendly room. There is a \$25 additional cleaning fee if your service dog stays.

CHECK-IN/OUT

Check-in begins at **4 PM**. Check-out is at **11 AM**. If you arrive early the hotel would be happy to securely store your luggage until they are able to get you checked into your room.

HOTEL CONTACT

Ann Klundt | (563) 441-7115 | Ann.klundt@islebettendorf.com



CAESARS
ENTERTAINMENT.

TM

TRADEMARK
COLLECTION BY WYNDHAM



Registration for is only **\$165** for VFW and Auxiliary Members
\$200 for Non-Member Guests

Registration includes live entertainment and fun activities exclusively for registered Big 10 Conference attendees, including a live band, a hypnotist, murder-mystery, and more. Registration also includes heavy Hors d'oeuvres on Friday, all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) on Saturday, and numerous exclusive gifts, including \$10 free casino play for every registered guest over the age of 21!



Website



Mobile-Friendly
Registration

To register scan one of the QR Codes above with the camera on your smart phone or tablet, or visit the following site on your desktop or laptop computer:

<https://tinyurl.com/2025vfwbig10>

ADVERTISEMENTS & GREETINGS

Please consider purchasing an advertisement or sending a greeting in our Program Book. Ads can be purchased on the same website as above at the following rates:

Full-Page = \$200

Half-Page = \$125

Quarter-Page = \$75

VENDORS

Booth space can also be purchased from the same site above for \$300/6ft table area.



2025

Illinois State Fair

Sunday, August 10th, 2025

The Illinois State Fair Committee invites you
to be part of celebrating our Veterans.

“250 Years of Service”



National Defense Partner
\$500 to \$999

Ad in the State Fair Program Book
Parade opportunity
News release exposure
Name on sponsor board

Bronze Star Partner
\$2500 to \$4999

Ad in the State Fair Program Book
Parade opportunity
News release exposure
Sponsor Recognition on Stage
Exposure on IDVA Social Media
Logo & Company name on 2x4 banner

Purple Heart Partner
\$1000 to \$2499

Ad in the State Fair Program Book
Parade opportunity
News release exposure
18x24 Sign Board

Silver Star Partner
\$5000 or more

Ad in the State Fair Program Book
Parade opportunity
News release exposure
Sponsor Recognition on Stage
Exposure on IDVA Social Media
Logo & Company name on 3x5 banner

**Become a partner and enjoy a special day to
celebrate our Illinois Veterans**

**For more information please contact:
Crystal Womack @ crystal.womack@illinois.gov
or 217-557-4229**

**Checks payable to: Illinois State Fair Committee
833 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704**