



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

Illinois

2023-2024 Series
General Orders No. 6
December 2023

STATE HEADQUARTERS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The State Headquarters will be closed on the following days:

December 25th Christmas Day

January 1st New Year's Day

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AUDIT REPORTS

Just a reminder. Quarterly audits must bear the signatures of the Commander, and 3 Trustees. A Trustee Pro-tem can be appointed to sign the audit if an elected Trustee is not available. Audits can be submitted by fax, mail, or emailed to State Headquarters.

REMINDER - STATE OF ILLINOIS VFW FUNDRAISERS

Sales representatives of Golden Rule Publishing - located in Indianapolis - will be contacting businesses statewide to sell advertisement for our Mid-Winter Voice of Democracy Book, Fall Program Book and State Convention Program Book; this is a legitimate fundraiser arranged by our State Headquarters. Businesses or individuals may find their advertisement in the back of our program books. If you have any questions or concerns, call State Headquarters (217) 529-6688. We ask that you support this very important fundraiser!

POST COMMANDERS AND POST TRUSTEES

It is the duty of the Post Trustees and the Post Commander to insure that proper deductions have been made and that taxes have been submitted for employee withholding, sales tax, pull-tabs and bingo taxes at state and federal levels. It is crucial to insure these requirements have been met.

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE AT DISTRICT MEETINGS

Once again we are drawing your attention to the provisions of our *National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, Section 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations*, which states in part under Commander's Duties and Obligations - "assure that the Commander or their representative attend all properly called District conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable)." Each State Commander is mandated to uphold the National By-Laws. Post Commanders can appoint any of his members to attend in his/her place if they are not able to attend. *District Commanders are directed to forward a list of Posts that did not attend the District Meeting to Headquarters immediately after the meeting.*

POST MEMBERSHIP AWARD

- Post membership percentage must be at 98% by December 31st, 2023. The Post will receive a special engraved plaque
- Post reaching 100% by February 28th, 2024: The Posts will receive a \$200 Visa Gift Card for a post membership celebration meal recognizing the post efforts.

PEARL HARBOR DAY - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

Since Public Law 103-308 passed in 1994, December 7th is designated as *National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day* and requests the United States Flag be flown at half staff from sunrise to sunset in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on December 7, 1941. *You can find a Pearl Harbor Day Speech on the National VFW website.* After logging in, it can be found under Patriotic Holiday Speeches.

AWARDS AND CITATIONS COMMITTEE

Please submit your recommendations for following to State Headquarters:

Nominations for Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighter, Paramedic of the Year, 911 Dispatchers, and EOD Technician must be submitted to State HQ by January 1, 2024

Nominations for Educators, Outstanding in Industrial Field, Legal Professionals, Athletic Field, Governmental Service, Clergy, News Media, Outstanding Citizen, Employer and VFW Special Award must be submitted to State HQ by April 1, 2024

The individuals recommended cannot be VFW members.

We do not have a form for nominations. Please send a resume and/or letter describing why this individual should be considered as well as how they are qualified for the award. Please include their contact information! Without your support of this program, it wouldn't be success!

VFW EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINATION

For any Post or District that did not have a Teacher of the Year nomination, here is another way that you can earn credit on the dashboard for participation. You can submit an Employer of the Year to receive credit on the dashboard.

The Purpose of Award: To confer recognition on one employer for outstanding records in the hiring and retention of veterans.

Deadline: The deadline for submission of nominations of employers of veterans is no later than March 31. Nominations received after that date will not be eligible for consideration for the national award.

Procedure: Nominations from Departments must be sent to National headquarters. Nominations that arrive without supporting information will not be eligible for the national awards.

Only those nominations that include adequate documentation on the nominee's employment practices concerning veterans will be considered for the National VFW Employer of the Year Awards. The

nominator should provide a copy of the company's written policy on employment of veterans if available, a description of how the employer supports veterans' activities in the community, and any other reasons why the nominee should be selected to be the Employer of the year Award winner. **Governmental agencies are not eligible for award.**

Award: The National Winner will receive a plaque to be presented by the National Commander at the Annual National convention and will receive a trip to travel to the convention city to accept the award.

Judging Criteria:

Identify and describe the employer's programs and or benefits designed to recruit veterans, including innovative business practices used to increase veteran recruitment (10 points)

Describe the employer's policies that give a preference to hire veterans, referring veterans, or any other veteran policy (VA veteran sick leave hours). Provide the positive and significant impacts these policies have on the employer's business results. (10 Points)

Describe the employer's policies or initiatives that improve the current and future veteran employer's career opportunities. (10 points)

Provide the number of veterans employed, the total number of employees, and the percentage of veterans employed during a set time period: 1 January 2023 to December 31st, 2024. (20 points)

Describe collaborative efforts with business organizations , educational partners, and community organizations that improve veteran employment opportunities. (10 points)

Explain why veterans would choose this employer over other employers. (10 points)

Provide documented endorsements, newspaper articles, awards, or letters of support highlighting the nominee's contributions to veteran friendly employment or retention. (10 points)

Provide the number of veterans employed with the employer for over one year. (10 points)

Provide the number of veterans employed with the employer for five years. (10 points)

2024 CONVENTION RAFFLE AND PURPLE HEART TICKETS

Tickets for the 2024 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 our State Convention in June, for the following: \$10,000 grand prize, \$3,000 second prize, \$2,000 third prize, \$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.

PODIUM EDITION

The new VFW Podium Edition which contains the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, manual of Procedure and Ritual is available online at vfw.org or through the VFW Store. In accordance with Section 218(a)(6)e the Adjutant of each Post is to "maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars... "

Hard copies can be purchased from state Headquarters for \$10 plus shipping.

ILLINOIS FACT SHEET

The members, Posts, and Districts in the IL VFW are doing some great things in community service, veterans assistance, youth programs, and legislative efforts. We have developed an IL FACT SHEET that displays the impact the IL VFW is having in Illinois. This fact sheet is similar to the National VFW Fact Sheet but it only displays the data from the IL VFW for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

As you are out in your communities and spreading the word about the VFW to your community members, other organizations, and elected officials, use the IL FACT Sheet to show them the impact that the IL VFW has in Illinois over the last program year. This will help them to understand the value of the IL VFW. The current IL FACT SHEET is attached to this General Orders

FEBRUARY COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The February Council of Administration Meeting and 78th Annual Voice of Democracy Banquet will be held February 9-11, 2024 at the Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, Illinois 62703. To make a reservation for February, you may call the hotel directly at (217) 529-7777 and give them our group code: **V4W** or you may reserve a room online - go to our website at www.vfwil.org, under News, go to the Events page, click on the link for "**VOD and February Council Meeting Room Reservations**". The room rate is \$94 a night plus tax.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings will begin on Friday, February 9, 2024 at 1:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. All meetings will run consecutively beginning with the Veterans Service Committee at 1:00 pm. The *Illinois VFW News* Committee, Budget & Finance Committee, and The Foundation Committee will follow.

Members of the Veterans Service Committee are as follows:

Brad Gould, Past State Commander, Chairman
Laurie Emmer, Past State Commander
Robert Welch, Past State Commander
Bobby Edwards, Past State Commander
Bobby Nila, Commander
Maurice Bridges, State Sr. Vice Commander
Eugene Blackwell, State Jr. Vice Commander
Joe Bartley, State Adjutant-Quartermaster

The Illinois VFW News Committee will meet following the Veterans Service Committee...

Laurie Emmer, Past State Commander - Chairman
Barbara Wilson, Illinois VFW News Editor
Robert Welch, State Historian
Brett Nila, State Commander
Joe Bartley, State Adjutant-Quartermaster

The Budget & Finance Committee will meet after the *Illinois VFW News* Committee... Phil Maughan, Past State Commander, Chairman
Joe Bartley, State Adjutant-Quartermaster, Assistant Chairman

The Foundation Committee will meet after the Budget and Finance Committee...

Dave Stout, President
Todd Latham, Vice President
Barbara Wilson, Secretary
Joe Bartley, Treasurer
Brett Nila, Member
Maurice Bridges, Member
Eugene Blackwell, Member

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The Council of Administration will meet on Friday, February 9, 2024 and Saturday, February 10, 2024 at the Crowne Plaza Springfield. The meeting will begin Friday at 3:00 pm until approximately 5:00 pm. It will reconvene at 8:15 am on Saturday.

All officers and directors are expected to be in attendance for all sessions of the Council of Administration. Past Department Commanders who are receiving Department paid rooms are highly encouraged to attend all sessions of the Council of Administration

All Program Directors will forward their written reports to State Headquarters by Wednesday, January 24, 2024 so it can be added to the book of reports to be passed out at the meeting. All Program Directors are expected to be present to highlight any changes or important information contained within your written report when called upon. Please mail, fax (217-546-3415) or e-mail (vfwil@vfwil.org) your reports to this office.

ASSIGNED TO THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the Top 3 Chairs and the 17 District Commanders, the following State Officers and Program Chairmen are called to be at Council of Administration Meeting...

Gary Holmes, State Chaplain

Robert Bailey, State Chief of Staff

Ryan Higginbotham, State Surgeon

Robert Welch, State Inspector

Joe Bartley, State Adjutant-Quartermaster

Jay Hoffman, State Judge Advocate

Matthew Claussen, National Council Member

John McGlynn, State Membership Chairman

Georges Sanon, State Student Veterans Liaison
Rob Bland, State Blood Donor Chairman
Steve Eller, State Community Activities Chairman
Paul Bezazian, State Homeless Veterans Chairman
Jay Hoffmann, State Assistant Legislative Chairman
Kyna Simpson, State National Home Chairman
Evamarie Duff, State All-State Chairman
Barbara Wilson, State Public Relations Chairman
Robert Welch, State Veterans and Military Support Programs Chairman
Stephanie Kirksey, State Poppy Chairman
Clarence Caraker, State POW/MIA Chairman
Les Durov, State Safety Chairman
Josh Seed, State Yellow Ribbon Chairman
Robert Welch, State Historian
C. Maurice Theriac, State VFW/MOC Coordinator
Dave Darte, State Voice of Democracy Chairman
Kyna Simpson, Assistant Voice of Democracy Director
John Davin, State Youth Activities Chairman
PSC Brad Gould, Veterans Service Committee Chairman
PSC Laurie Emmer, Illinois VFW News Committee Chairman
Ray Bachawicz, State Sergeant-at-Arms
Jeff Britt, State Officer of the Day
Ron Milton, State Scouting Chairman
Josh Seed, State Assistant Quartermaster
Michelle Ramlow, State Assistant Youth Activities Chairman

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY & PATRIOT'S PEN WINNERS' TRIP TO SPRINGFIELD

Each student will receive accommodations for two nights at the Crowne Plaza, 3300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703. If the student would like to stay longer than two nights or would like to book additional rooms, the District should assist in making these arrangements and help cover the costs. District Commanders or Chairmen may call State Headquarters to have these arrangements made.

Upon the students' arrival on Friday, February 9, 2023, State Headquarters will be hosting a pizza party! The following morning, the students will meet in the lobby of the hotel at 8:45 am for the Land of Lincoln Tour. The tour will make the following stops: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Stabb Funeral Home, Lincoln's Tomb and the Illinois State Military Museum. Only Students and assigned personnel will be allowed on the bus. Following the 78th Annual State of Illinois Voice of Democracy Banquet, the students will be invited to enjoy an ice cream bar arranged by State Headquarters.

LINCOLN PILGRIMAGE

The Lincoln Pilgrimage will take place at Lincoln's Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery at 2:00 pm on Saturday February 10, 2024.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY BANQUET

The State of Illinois VFW will be celebrating its 78th Annual Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Banquet on Saturday, February 10, 2024 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. Tickets are available for \$45 per person. Tickets may be ordered online by making a donation at <http://vfwil.org/> - and allocating the funds to the *Voice of Democracy Banquet*. You may also call State Headquarters (217) 529-6688.

District Prime Tables will once again be available for \$450; they are to be ordered by and paid for by the District Commanders who will decide who will be seated at

these tables. *Reminder - these are tables of ten.*

Special Thank You to Humana for being a major sponsor of the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Banquet.

Other sponsorships are still available on a first come first serve basis

14th Place - \$300 Sponsored by 15th District

15th Place - \$300 Sponsored by 11th District

16th Place - \$300 Sponsored by Dave Edwards

17th Place - \$300 Sponsored by Post 11463

Ice Cream Social for kids - \$300 Sponsored by Mark Miller on behalf of District 6

Pizza Party for kids - \$300 Sponsored by Dave Edwards

Lunch for kids - \$300 Sponsored by Staab Funeral Home

Tours for kids - \$400 Sponsored by Spaulding Veterans Memorial

Book Bags for kids - \$400 ½ Sponsored by Post 10302 and ½ Sponsored by District 10

VOD Bus - \$1,6000

Flowers - \$400

VOD Banquet Meals - \$945.00 Sponsored by District 5

Please contact State HQ if your District or Post wishes to sponsor any of these events.

Voice of Democracy Ad Book

If you would like to place an ad in the Voice of Democracy ad book the form is included in the back of these general orders. The costs of the ads are as follows:

Full Page \$200

½ Page is \$125

¼ Page is \$75

Please make sure to fill out the form and mail ad copy and any photos your

Post/District wants included in the ad to State Headquarters at 3300 Constitution Dr.,

Springfield, IL 62711 or send via email to: barb.wilson2@outlook.com (Please cc

vwil@vwil.org). Also please make sure to enclose the appropriate payment, you can

send a check with your ad or you may pay for your ad through the donate now button located on the state website: www.vfwil.org. The deadline for submission is December 15, 2023 and books will be distributed at the State Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Banquet in February.

NEW CENTURY RAFFLE

The New Century Raffle has officially started and will run through June 30, 2024. The tickets are just \$10.00 each. Each ticket entitles you to participate in a weekly drawing of \$100 from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Drawings will be held each Friday beginning July 1, 2023, with each week's winning ticket being returned to the barrel for the 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 seller prints their name on ticket, they will receive \$10.00. If the seller does not sign the ticket, the \$10.00 will be automatically donated and split between Department's Unmet Needs Program and Children's National Home. Winners will be announced each month in the General Orders and posted on <http://vfwil.org> web site.

WEEKLY WINNER

<u>Date of Drawing</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Seller</u>
11/3/2023	Steve Pattison	No Seller Listed
11/10/2023	Terry Muin	Terry Muin
11/17/2023	Robert Jensen	Robert Jensen
11/24/2023	Laverne Timmermann	Laverne Timmermann

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

November Veteran of the month will be announced by email. Thank you to all who submitted nominations for this month, please continue to do so and for those that did not please look for those comrades from your post who stand apart from the rest by serving the community, Veterans and embodying the purposes of our congressional charter: to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead; and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United states from all her enemies.

Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento has approved the cancellation of the Charter for John E. Connolly- Victory-Nar-Ar-Mar Post 3940. Please update your records accordingly.

Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a joyful holiday season. Merry Christmas from VFW State Headquarters!!

By Order of:



Joseph H. Bartley
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Official



Brett Nila
State Commander

VFW Employer of the Year Award Nomination Form

Nominators Name* _____

Nominators Email and Phone #* _____

Nominee's Position* _____

Post _____ District _____

Employers Business Name & Address*

Address Line 1 _____

Address Line 2 _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Employers Point of Contact Phone # and email address*

Phone # _____

Email Address _____

Why do you feel this employer deserves this award?*

(Use additional sheet, if necessary)



**State Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen
Banquet Book Ad Form
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
& AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
FEBRUARY 10, 2024**



Please place an "X" in the box of the ad size you are requesting

FULL PAGE \$200.00 • 1/2 PAGE \$125.00 • 1/4 PAGE \$75.00

If wanted, please include a color photo with ad copy.
Print or type ad copy below, or attach a separate sheet.

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

**BOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT STATE VOICE OF
DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN BANQUET IN FEBRUARY**

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

Editor, 2024 Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Program Book
3300 Constitution Dr
Springfield, IL 62711

or send via email to: barb.wilson2@outlook.com (please cc vwil@vwil.org)
Questions? Contact State Headquarters at (217) 529-6688

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS
DECEMBER 15, 2023**

As the nation's oldest major war veterans' organization, the VFW has an impeccable and longstanding record of service and stewardship. More than 4.4 million patriotic Americans, both members and non-members, entrust the VFW with financial contributions and dedicate millions of volunteers' hours.

THE VFW'S VITAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Educate separating service members about their well-earned VA benefits through private benefits counseling sessions with a VFW Accredited Service Officer.

Advocate for America's veterans and their families on Capitol Hill, ensuring promises made to veterans are promises kept.

Help cover rent, utilities or groceries for a military family struggling with the hardships of war.

Deliver morale-boosting "welcome home" celebrations for service members who have returned from combat.

\$40.8 million

The total annual amount the Illinois VFW Veterans Service Office helped veterans recoup in VA disability compensation and pension benefits.

\$318,518

Amount of academic scholarships awarded to more than 68 veterans and service members in Illinois.

\$276,690

Value of emergency financial assistance awarded by the Illinois VFW to veteran and military families to help cover basic needs in times of crisis.

\$166,886

Amount of scholarships, monetary awards and other incentives the Illinois VFW distributed to middle and high school students through two major patriotic essay competitions.

About the VFW

We trace our roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick. There was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, and they were left to care for themselves. In their misery, some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations that would eventually band together and become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Our Mission: To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.

Our Vision: Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.



Illinois VFW by the numbers

54,678

Number of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members.

255

Number of VFW Posts statewide.



Veteran Service Office activity

2,068

Number of benefit claims filed by the Illinois VFW on behalf of survivors and veterans.



Youth & Teacher recognition

7,130

Number of students participating in the annual youth scholarship programs in Illinois

121

Number of teachers nominated by 44 Illinois VFW posts for Smart-Mahar Citizenship Teacher awards.

284,000

Number of buddy poppies purchased for distribution by Illinois VFWs and Auxiliaries



Volunteerism in the community

132,905

Number of hours Illinois VFWs and Auxiliaries volunteered in their communities, an increase of 174.20 percent from the previous year.

\$1,251,421

Amount donated by Illinois VFWs and Auxiliaries to projects within their communities, an increase of 28.19 percent from the previous year.

\$38,240

Amount expended to support military assistance programs in Illinois

SCOUTING REPORT
PROGRAM SUMMARY

DECEMBER 2023

THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS ARE DUE TO YOUR POST AND DISTRICT BY **1 MARCH 2024**.

THE JUDGING WILL BE DONE IN **APRIL** OF ALL ENTRANTS AND A STATE WINNER WILL BE SELECTED. THE APPLICATIONS CAN BE LOCATED AT VFW.ORG/COMMUNITY/YOUTH EDUCATION.

<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/scout-of-the-year>

APPLICATIONS FOR SCOUT OF THE YEAR CAN BE SENT DIGITALLY TO USAFRET1@ATT.NET

R Milton

VFW Scouting Chair

Program Bulletin VOD December 2023

Comrades, hope you had a great Thanksgiving holiday and I wish you a very Merry Christmas! I hope all who participated in the Voice of Democracy program this year found it to be a personally rewarding experience. Thanks for sharing your time and talents to continue to serve our organization and country by planting the seeds of patriotism in our youth! After all they will be the next generation of citizens and leaders of our great nation. For those who have never attended a State PP/ VOD Awards Banquet, please consider. It is great to see the culmination of the efforts of so many to honor the finalists in these great youth scholarship programs. It is an event that Students and their families will never forget, and perhaps you wouldn't either. This years' Awards Program will be conducted at the Springfield Crown Plaza Hotel, February 10, 2024 at 6:00 pm. Tickets are available by calling VFW Department Headquarters (\$45 per person), and will be available until early February or until all available seating is reserved.



COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

December brings us halfway through the membership year, and we want to see our membership continue to grow! This month, Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento is issuing a challenge to our Posts to increase their membership percentage in December!



Throughout the month of December, we're going to track our Posts' membership percentages. This means new members, reinstated members, renewals, dues-paying transfers - we want to see more active paid members in the Post!

As a reminder, to figure your membership percentage you take your total current paid members, and divide it by your prior year total. Or you can just go check out Memstats and we do the math for you!

This challenge will compare the Post's membership percentage as of December 1st and compare it to where your membership percentage is at close of business on December 31st. The Post in each membership division that shows the greatest increase will receive a \$500 award plus a custom Commander-in-Chief Jacket!

We have eleven membership divisions, so that means there will only be eleven of these jackets ever made! If you want everyone to know that your Post has met the challenge for membership excellence, now is your chance!

This is a season of giving, and now is the time to give your best when it comes to strengthening our membership. We want you all to continue to build this organization, engage with our members, and to always go out there and

MEET THE CHALLENGE!

This contest will compare the Post's membership percentage from December 1 to December 31st. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.