



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Illinois

*2021-2022 Series
General Orders No. 6
December 2021*

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AUDIT REPORTS

Just a reminder: Quarterly audits must bear the signatures of the Commander, Quartermaster 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!

2022 CONVENTION RAFFLE AND PURPLE HEART TICKETS

Tickets for the 2022 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.

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.*

FEBRUARY COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

February 11-13, 2022
Crowne Plaza
3300 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703.

All persons assigned or called-in to report during the February Council of Administration will receive two complimentary room nights from State Headquarters. It is their responsibility to cover any additional expenses – such as additional nights and incidentals, etc. Those called-in are expected to be in attendance for all meetings and to purchase a banquet ticket for the Voice of Democracy Banquet on Saturday, February 12, 2022.

FEBRUARY HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

ATTENTION: The special room rate of \$95.00/night + 13% tax will be available until **January 12th 2022** or until the group block is sold-out, whichever comes first. You may call Department Headquarters or the hotel directly at (217) 529-7777 to book your reservation. Make sure to mention the group code: **VOD.**

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings will begin on Friday, February 11, 2022 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 and Budget & Finance Committee will follow.

Members of the Veterans Service Committee are as follows:

Dave Stout, Past State Commander, Chairman
Laurie Emmer, Jr. Past State Commander
Bobby Welch, State Commander
Bobby Edwards, State Senior Vice Commander
Brett Nila, State Jr. Vice Commander
Jeff Hastings, Past State Commander
Brad Gould, Past State Commander

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

Laurie Emmer, Jr. Past State Commander – Chairman
Barbara Wilson, Illinois VFW News Editor
Ray Rigsby, Past Fifth District Commander
Bobby Welch, State Commander
W. Dave Stout, State Adjutant-Quartermaster

The Budget & Finance Committee will meet after the *Illinois VFW News* Committee...

Phil Maughan - Director
Todd Latham - Assistant Chairman

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The Council of Administration will meet on Friday, February 11, 2022 and Saturday, February 12, 2022 at the Crowne Plaza Springfield. The meeting will begin Friday at 2:00 pm until approximately 5:00 pm. It will reconvene at 8:30 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, 2022 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

The following state officers and program directors are called to be at Council of Administration Meeting.

Reverend Donald Meeks, State Chaplain
Duane Hisel, State Chief of Staff
Eugene Blackwell, State Surgeon
Clarke Christiansen, State Inspector
Philip Maughan, National Council Member
Derek Giffin, State Service Office Director
Ryan Higginbotham, State Membership Director
Georges Sanon, State Student Veterans Liaison
Sean Conner, State Americanism Director
Robert McLeod, State Blood Donor Director
Charles "Chuck" Ingle, State Community Activities Director
Paul Bezazian, State Homeless Veterans Director
Harold Olsen, Jr., State Hospital & VAVS Director
Jayson Hoffman, State Legislative Director
Mike McGrath, State National Home Director
Barbara Wilson, State Public Relations Director
John Metzger, State Veterans and Military Support Programs Director
Stephanie Kirksey, State Poppy Director
Clarence Caraker, State POW/MIA Director
Les Durov, State Safety Director
Dave Edwards, State VFW/MOC Coordinator
Dave Darte, State Voice of Democracy Director
Kyna Simpson, State Aide de Camp, Assistant Voice of Democracy Director
Robert McLeod, State Youth Activities Director
Dave Stout, Veterans Service Committee Chairman, PSC
Laurie Emmer, Illinois VFW News Committee Chairman, PSC
Sam Scaife, State Sergeant-at-Arms
James Danielson, State Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Maurice Bridges, State Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
William "Roy" Johnson, State Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Jack Lamont, State Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Jeff Britt, State Officer of the Day
Phil Maughan, Advisor to the State Commander
Dave Kunz, State Assistant Adjutant

Lee Morgan, State Assistant Quartermaster
Dutch DeGroot, State Photographer

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY BANQUET

The 75th Annual State of Illinois Voice of Democracy Banquet will be honoring the District Voice of Democracy Champions and the top three Patriot's Pen Champions! This event will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2022. That night we will announce the state winners of the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Programs! The doors will open at 6:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield.

Tickets are \$35 each and may be purchased by mailing a check to State Headquarters, calling the office with a credit card number or going online to the [State of Illinois VFW Website](#). Click on the "Donation" tab. Please make sure to *allocate* your order to the Voice of Democracy Banquet. Tickets are numbered and will be sold on a first come-first serve basis. Payment must be made when you order your tickets. **No tickets will be sold at the door.**

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 11, 2022, 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, Old State Capitol, Illinois State Capitol, Lincoln's Tomb and the Illinois State Military Museum. Only Students and assigned personnel will be allowed on the bus. Following the 75th 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.

AWARDS AND CITATIONS COMMITTEE

Please submit your recommendations for following to State Headquarters: Police Officers, Firemen, Educators, Outstanding in Industrial Field, Legal Professionals, Athletic Field, Governmental Service, Clergy, News Media, Outstanding Citizen, and VFW Special Award. The individuals recommended cannot be VFW members. Entries must be entered by April 1, 2022!

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!

PEARL HARBOR DAY – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021

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.

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

OFFICIAL:



W. DAVE STOUT
State Adjutant-Quartermaster

BY ORDER OF:



ROBERT WELCH
State Commander

December 2021 Program Information

Community Activities
Chuck Ingle

Thanks, and Congratulations to Commanders: Rick Hobbs & District 11, Dustin Dixon & District 12, and Ronald Milton & District 14 for being 100% reported in Community Activities! Department added 8% in November.

VFW 2021-2022 Community Activities, Dept. of IL

<u>District</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Posts Reported</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Community Activities Chairman</u>
3	Richard Luemen	3	23%	Israel Becerra
4	Stephen MacInnes	7	54%	Richard Wojewnik
5	Dwane Lungren	10	56%	Daniel Pearson
6	Ruben Hernandez	7	41%	Gary Holmes
7	Adam Lau	7	35%	Robert Sable
8	Arthur Munos	6	38%	Mark W. Sowers
9	Christopher Rush	6	32%	
10	Anthony Bellin	7	44%	Joseph H. Bartley
11	Rick Hobbs	13	100%	Glen Goodrich
12	Dustin Dixon	17	100%	
13	Christopher Hatcher	6	50%	Elmer McDuffee
14	Ronald Milton	17	100%	Terry Grime
15	William Hatfield	3	23%	Gary Fravel
16	Fred Cagle	3	27%	
17	Sean Conner	9	64%	Dan R. Swaner
18	Todd Latham	8	67%	Alejandro Gutierrez
19	Robert Bailey	19	79%	George R. Cramer

◆ Assistant State Chairman

Total Posts
265

X-Sheet Data
29-11-21

Department Percentage
56%

Compiled by
Chuck Ingle

Issued Grants in the first two months of the new Grant Cycle

POST/AUX NUMBER	CITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	REQUEST TYPE	AMOUNT AWARDED
3455	Anna	Distribution of Gift Cards for Needy Families for Christmas	Direct	\$ 1,000.00
9153	Waltonville	Veteran/Elderly/Disabled Christmas gifts	Direct	\$ 1,000.00
11456	Arthur	Donations to Various Nonprofits	Support	\$ 1,000.00
2698	Sparta	Donations to Various Nonprofits	Support	\$ 1,000.00
2698	Sparta	DARE Donation	Support	\$ 1,000.00
5815	Lombard	Food Pantry Donation	Support	\$ 1,000.00
6632	Red Bud	Youth Shooting Program	Support	\$ 1,000.00

Source: VFW Foundation

**National Home,
Michael McGrath, Director
37 Sussex Ct., Naperville, IL 60540
Phone: 630.357.2680
Email: mackcav1@sbcglobal.net**

**Paul Zinck,
Assistant Program Director**

***Merry Christmas to all of our Illinois Comrades** from the National Home and thank you for your great support!**

Santa will soon be coming to see the kids with toys in his sleigh as we are all especially thankful to our military and their families during this holiday season.

Covid Safety

Covid safety continues to be of paramount importance during these challenging times as our National Home continues to serve our veterans and their families. We thank the dedicated staff at the home for their great work and look forward to the homes 97th anniversary in March 2022.

****No Government Funding****

Because the National Home receives no government funding, our donations are very important and greatly appreciated. A donation idea and a great way to thank hard-working Post and District members is to reward them with a National Home life membership (only \$50) or with a commemorative brick (\$100.00). It is also a great way to get your program x on the x-sheet! Forms and information are available on the National Home's [website](#)

*Reach out if you have a question or want to help someone in need. *

The number for the helpline is 800.313.4200 or you can contact your Program Director for assistance.

Thank you, blessings to all and may God Bless our National Home.

Voice of Democracy Program

Dave Darte, Chairman

Email: ddarte@yahoo.com

I hope that the turnout for the PP/VOD programs was strong in Posts across the state. Thanks to all involved in any way to promote and administer these contests! Posts that have not submitted their student entries or have some missing essential documents required for entries, please respond quickly to your District Chairmen. District Chairmen, please conduct your judging ASAP and submit your District Winner to Department and State Chairmen. The deadline is December 20th but sooner is greatly appreciated!!

Remember that the PP/VOD Banquet is to be held at the Crowne Plaza February 12, 2022. Tickets are on sale at Department Headquarters.

Comrades, I Hope you had a great Thanksgiving and wish you a Merry Christmas!

Scouting/ Assistant Youth Activities

Ron Milton, Chairman

Email: usafret1@att.net

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 1 MARCH – DEADLINE TO THE POST. THIS IS ALSO THE TIME FOR THE DISTRICT TO SELECT THEIR WINNER.

- 1 APRIL – APPLICATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT.
- 1 MAY – DEPARTMENT WINNER SUBMITTED TO NATIONAL

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR SUBMISSION:

- Prior National Scout of the Year winners are ineligible.
- There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria has been met. The maximum age requirement for applicants is 18 years old. If an applicant reaches their 18th birthday during the nomination year, they remain eligible as long as they are still in high school at the time of the submission deadline.
- A Scout may enter through only one VFW Post. A local Post can be identified by zip code at <http://www.vfw.org/findapost>
- APPLICATIONS CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT <https://vfworg-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/Youth-and-Education/Scout-of-the-Year/ScoutoftheYearBrochureandEntryForm.pdf?la=en&v=1&d=20170706T144306Z>

YOU CAN DIRECT YOUR QUESTIONS TO RON MILTON AT USAFRET1@ATT.NET.

Desk of the Department Surgeon
Eugene Blackwell
eugene.blackwell@comcast.net

SITUATION:

- • Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. It was responsible for more than 47,500 deaths in 2019, which is about one death every 11 minutes.
- • The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2019, 12 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.5 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.4 million attempted suicides.
- • Veterans have an adjusted suicide rate that is 52.3% greater than the non-veteran US adult population. People who have previously served in the military account for about 13.7% of suicides among adults in the United States.
- • In 2019, 1.6% of former active-duty service members aged 18-25 years reported making a suicide attempt during the previous 12 months. This was an increase from 0.9% in 2009.

MISSION: To educate and minimize the risk factors associated with suicides based on information presented by the Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

EXECUTION: Refer to the attached Surgeon General Report.

SERVICE AND SUPPORT: Refer to the attached Surgeon General Report. Each Post Commander and/or Service Officer at each Post should reach out and present the "Signs" at a Post meeting. Every Veterans' family needs to know these, and every Veteran should use the "Buddy System", and the A.C.E. systems.

COMMAND AND SIGNAL: VFW Department of Illinois, 3300 Constitution Drive, P.O. Box 13206, Springfield, IL 62791-3206. Telephone: (217) 529-6688; email at vfwil@vfwil.org.

Have a safe and blessed holiday season.

Suicide

Suicide- a very dark subject. One which a lot of people feel extremely uncomfortable speaking about it. Just like in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's speaking about breast cancer, until First Lady Betty Ford brought it out in the open. Today, many lives are being saved because we talk about breast cancer. We have walking and running fund raisers that help with awareness, as well as pink t-shirts and the media talking about it.

We need to start making suicide apart of the conversation. We need to be talking about the "Signs". Knowing the "Signs" can help save the life of a friend or even a loved one. Veterans' families especially need to know the "Signs". Veterans and active-duty military still have extremely high rates of suicide in all age groups. Veterans struggle with the experiences they had while serving our country. Ageing veterans can be dealing with the loss of a spouse and/or health issues.

We all have triggers that can affect how we manage everyday stressors. Stressors such as the Afghanistan withdrawal. How this event was handled by our military and our government affected veterans of all wars. For Vietnam veterans it reminded them of the fall of Saigon. For all post 9-11 veterans they wonder what all the sacrifice was for. Families who lost loved ones are affected.

Another big stressor for many veterans is the holidays. Those veterans that are self-isolated are particularly vulnerable. Some dates or anniversaries of trauma are hard but if they fall during the holidays, it may become more than they can bear. We need to constantly check in on our "buddies" and if they need help get them the help they need. I recently heard a Director of a VA hospital say we are down to 17 a day from 22 a day committing suicide. I did the math; 17 a day adds up to 6,205 a year! When we were losing 22 a day that added up to 8,030 a year. To put this in perspective we lost 7,000+ in 20 years in the middle east. Better than half of all veterans have never been in the VA system. To me that means there is a lot of work to be done getting veterans connected to the programs that can help. We need to build partnerships to serve the needs of our veterans and their families, for their physical wounds as well as their invisible wounds. The National VFW, along with other service groups, and state Veteran agencies, all provide training and resources to Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) to help veterans directly create a road map and identify resources to give hope for the future. Programs such as Unmet Needs, employment training, and scholarships for education are just a

few examples. Getting every veteran set up at the VA for evaluation of medical and psychological needs is critical. Along with these programs the VSO's can obtain benefits to help stabilize the veteran's finances and give each veteran time to seek support groups. Support can be found at Vet Centers, the VA, and other non-profit groups. Support might be found in another veteran, perhaps that older vet that has managed to make it through to a productive life.

One group of veterans that is often overlooked is our National Guard units. They only meet once a month. They are sent back home after deployment. Sometimes they got out after deployment and are entirely overlooked and fall through the cracks in the system. The VFW in each state needs to make sure our National Guard troops know about and understand what is out there for them. Their families need to know what is out there for them. Too often both National Guard and Active-Duty military that wish to remain in the service do not want to ask for help as it is still a stigma, and they feel it will affect their ability to obtain promotions.

Many VFW Posts have already adopted National Guard units. Checking with the Commanding Officer, the 1st Sgt., as well as the family readiness person to make sure they are using the "Buddy System" can help save lives. The "Buddy System" is simply checking on and talking with those you served with. You were with them when they had good days and when things did not go so well. Talking, listening, and knowing the "Signs" can help.

So, getting back to lowering the number of suicides: It means making sure veterans, their family and friends understand the "Signs" and what to do if they see one or more of these signs is particularly important.

- 1) Thinking about hurting or killing themselves,
- 2) Looking for ways to kill themselves,
- 3) Talking about death, dying, or suicide,
- 4) Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.,
- 5) Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out,
- 6) Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings,
- 7) Feeling like there is no reason to live,
- 8) Rage or anger,
- 9) Engaging in risky activities without thinking,
- 10) Increasing alcohol and drug abuse,
- 11) Withdrawing from family and friends.

We have a National Crisis line 1-800-273-8255, or chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net, or text to 838255.

Some states also have a "hot line". We need to get these out and keep pushing them. Family and friends need to use the A.C.E. system:

A Ask directly, "are you thinking about hurting yourself?"

C Care – comely control the situation. Listen and show concern. Talk to them and let them talk, **LISTEN**.

E Escort- do not leave this veteran alone to take care of problems! Get help from a professional. Remove all firearms or other things from this veteran which could be used to harm himself or herself.

These are but a few of the things to look for. Veterans are incredibly good at hiding emotions and saying everything is ok. They have learned to push through to complete the mission. It is when things become so overwhelming that we as friends and family need to help. It is critical to step in and provide the support and professional help necessary at this point.

I was asked, "What should we do?" This is a very good question and I put it back to you, What can we do?

We can get involved, we can educate veterans and their families to know the "Signs". At our VFW Post we can hand out the cards from the VA with the signs and the Crisis Line information. We can offer to speak at different civic groups. Veterans are everywhere. Just saving ONE life is a huge accomplishment!

Please call me or email me with your questions, ideas, or what has worked for you. Thank you for all you do for our veterans.

Dennis Guthrie
Surgeon General 2021-2022
541-280-5161
75crazyhorse69@gmail.com