



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

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Illinois

2025-2026 Series  
General Orders No. 1  
July 2025

### **STATE HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE**

State Headquarters will be closed on July 4<sup>th</sup> in observation of Independence Day.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT- QUARTERMASTER**

**QUARTERMASTERS:** If you have not yet created an account on the Online Membership System (OMS), please visit <https://www.vfw.org/login.aspx>. Below you will see a link to *create an Account*. After following the instructions, you will be identified as the Post Quartermaster.

National Headquarters will mail a PIN to the address registered for the Quartermaster on your Post Election Report to complete your registration as Post Quartermaster. Once you enter the PIN, you'll be able to update information for members of your Post, revise your Post Election Report, etc.

**Important note:** The Online Membership System will be unavailable beginning on Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. for end-of-year membership processing. All membership transactions should be entered before that time. Check back frequently for availability.

Be sure to visit our state website at <http://www.vfwil.org>. You'll find upcoming events at the District, State, and National levels. You can also view the new Commander's Leadership Manual, Illinois VFW submit/view online reporting for programs, etc! Please do not hesitate to call State Headquarters with questions - (217) 529-6688.

## **ALL POST AND DISTRICT ADJUTANTS**

Keeping proper meeting minutes is one of the most crucial responsibilities you have in your position or district. There have been recent incidents of post-meeting decisions, such as the membership approving the sale of property, not being recorded in the minutes. If it is not in the minutes, it did not happen. For further information on how to properly record meeting minutes, please refer to Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) Section 48, paragraphs 1 through 8.

## **DISTRICT AND POST COMMANDERS**

**REMINDER:** Print each month's General Orders to take them to your Post and District Meetings. Please read them to your members so they are aware of what is going on within our department. Each month's General Orders can be viewed and downloaded from <http://www.vfwil.org>.

## **ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS**

Your attention is drawn to Section 218 of the National By-Laws... Among the Duties of a Post Commander, the Commander shall:

Assure that the Commander or one of their representatives attends all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable).

## **APPLICATION FOR POST QUARTERMASTER'S BOND**

Bond applications for Post Commanders and Quartermasters are available online. Ordering poppies and registering as a Convention Delegate can also be done online. **NOTE:** The maximum amount of bond that can be purchased through State HQ is \$1 million. This bond only covers the Commander and Quartermaster. If a post requires a bond exceeding \$1 million or requires coverage beyond Commander and Quartermaster, it must be purchased from an outside source and a copy provided to State Headquarters. All current bonds through State Headquarters will expire on August 31, 2025.

## **POPPIES - IMPORTANT!**

Although Buddy Poppies are emphasized on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is essential to remember that distribution should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Poppies should be



present as a fundraising tool and to recognize our fallen comrades.

The price of poppies is \$280.00 per thousand for traditional poppies and \$140.00 per thousand for metal poppies. An order form is attached to these General Orders as well as at [www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org). **Please allow a minimum of six to eight weeks for processing and shipping** when ordering your poppies. Be sure to specify a date by which the poppies are required; **do not use "ASAP"**. Poppies can be paid for by check or by credit card. Please submit payment with your order or pay promptly upon receipt of the invoice.

### **ELECTED OFFICERS**

Below are the State Officers who were elected during our 106th Annual State Convention.

- Commander: Eugene Blackwell, Post 311-16
- Senior Vice Commander: Robert Bailey, Post 7452-19
- Junior Vice Commander: Ryan Higginbotham, Post 4226-13
- Quartermaster: Scott Swinford, Post 4168-11
- Judge Advocate: Jayson Hoffman, Post 4763-10
- Surgeon: Doug Jameson, Post 1739-14
- Chaplain: Gary Holmes, Post 2955-06

### **APPOINTMENTS**

Below are the State Commanders' appointments for the 2025 - 2026 year.

- State Adjutant: Scott Swinford, Post 4168-11
- Assistant Quartermaster: Bobby Edwards, Post 10302-10
- Assistant Adjutant: Jonathan Cooper, Post 8821-03
- Chief of Staff: Robert Welch, Post 2791-16
- Inspector: Cathy Stubbs, Post 7710-14
- Emblem & Supply Chair: Duane Hisel, Post 4763-10  
Jimmie Waters, Post 454-07
- Marketing/Public Relations: Barbara Wilson, Post 3455-15
- Illinois VFW News Editor: Barbara Wilson, Post 3455-15
- Sergeant-at-Arms: Raymond Bachewicz, Post 2298-05
- Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms: Roy Johnson, Post 5220-03  
Steve Noodwang, Post 2791-16
- Officer of the Day: Jeff Britt, Post 6865-14
- Membership Chair: Mathius Carter, Post 12014-05
- All-State Program Chairman: Steve Eller, Post 7710-14
- Student Veterans Liaison: Georges Sanon, Post 311-16
- Blood Donor Chair: Rob Bland, Post 1461-06
- Community Activities Chair: Steve Eller, Post 7710-14
- Homeless Veterans Chair: Paul Bezazian, Post 8322-03

- Legislative Chair: Jonathan Copper, Post 8821-03  
John Lawson, Post 1739-14
- Assistant Legislative Chair: Dave Marsh, Post 755-10
- National Home Chair: Kyna Simpson, Post 311-16
- Assistant National Home Chair: Mike McGrath, Post 3873-19
- MAP/Military Services Chair: Bill Bowne, Post 311-16
- Veterans Service Chair: Bobby Welch, Post 450-16
- Parliamentarian: Fritz Michelcic, Post 2698-14
- Photographer: Arnold Taylor, Post 311-16
- Buddy Poppy Chair: Stephanie Kirksey, Post 6504-14
- POW/MIA Chair: Clarence Caraker, Post 3455-15
- Safety Chair: Glen Goodrich, Post 4495-11
- Voice of Democracy Chair: Dave Darte, Post 3912-12
- Assistant VOD Chair: Kyna Simpson, Post 311-16
- VAC Liaison: Doug Jameson, Post 1739-14
- Youth Activities Chair: John Davin, Post 5917-18
- Assistant Youth Activities: Michelle Ramlow, Post 1756-10
- Scouting Chair: Ron Milton, Post 4183-14
- Historian: Bobby Welch, Post 450-16
- District Inspectors
  - ❖ District 03:
  - ❖ District 04: Eric Morales, Post 2868
  - ❖ District 05: Raymond Rigsby, Post 7448
  - ❖ District 06: Charles Ingle, Post 2955
  - ❖ District 07: Jimmie Waters, Post 454
  - ❖ District 08: Iris Miller, Post 5117
  - ❖ District 09: John Finnegan, Post 550
  - ❖ District 10:
  - ❖ District 11: Scott Swinford, Post 4168
  - ❖ District 12: Christopher Miller, Post 1308
  - ❖ District 13: Christopher Hatcher, Post 2006
  - ❖ District 14: James Page, Post 1739
  - ❖ District 15: Robert Owen, Post 9763
  - ❖ District 16: Ermon Davis, Post 311
  - ❖ District 17:
  - ❖ District 18: Felix Ramos, 5917
  - ❖ District 19: Bryan Kelsey, Post 1197

### **PROGRAM CHAIRS**

All reports to the Council of Administration will be typed and forwarded to Headquarters no later than **Monday, August 4, 2025**. These will be presented to the Council in the form of a **Book of Reports**; you will be given two minutes to highlight any changes or important information contained within your written report.



As a reminder, any action items requiring Council of Administration approval will be listed after you provide the information for your program report. District Commanders will be required to present these reports at their District meetings.

### **DISTRICT COMMANDERS/PROGRAM CHAIRS**

Committee members for Committee meetings must be present. All other Officers and Program Chairmen are expected to be in attendance for all Council of Administration meetings. The committees being called into the August Council of Administration will meet on Friday, August 22, 2025, at 1:00 pm, and the August Council of Administration Meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m. The meetings will take place at the Even Hotel- Tinley Park. All Program Chairmen are expected to be present and introduce themselves, outlining their programs and providing instructions on how to achieve program goals.

**PROGRAM CHAIRMEN:** If you require a PowerPoint presentation or any other visual aid, please get in touch with State Headquarters as soon as possible to arrange for its preparation. If you have documentation you would like to hand out, please forward it to State Headquarters by Monday, August 4, 2025!

### **VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE**

The Veterans Service Committee will meet at 1:00 pm.

- Robert Welch, Chair
- Eugene Blackwell, State Commander
- Robert Bailey, State Senior Vice Commander
- Ryan Higginbotham, State Junior Vice Commander
- Scott Swinford, State Adjutant-Quartermaster
- Maurice Bridges, Past State Commander
- Brett Nila, Past State Commander
- Bobby Edwards, Past State Commander

### **ILLINOIS VFW NEWS COMMITTEE**

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

- Brett Nila, Chair, Past State Commander
- Barbara Wilson, *Illinois VFW News* Editor

- Eugene Blackwell, State Commander
- Scott Swinford, State Adjutant-Quartermaster
- Bob Welch, Historian

### **BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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

- Phil Maughan - Chair
- Scott Swinford - Assistant Budget and Finance Chair

### **COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING & COMMANDER'S HOMECOMING**

The first Council of Administration Meeting and Commander's Homecoming will be held August 22-24, 2005.

#### **Hotel Information**

Even Hotel - Tinley Park  
18501 Convention Center Dr  
Tinley Park, IL 60477  
(708) 444-1100

The room cost is \$169.00 plus tax. The room block is **IVE**, cut off for room reservations is **August 1, 2025**

The meetings and Banquet will be held at:

Tinley Park Convention Center  
18451 Convention Dr  
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Homecoming Banquet tickets are \$50 per person. Order through State Headquarters. The cut-off for banquet reservations is **August 15, 2025.**

### **COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING**

The Council of Administration will meet at the Tinley Park Convention Center on Friday, August 22, 2025, at 3:00 pm. This meeting is scheduled to adjourn at approximately 5:30 p.m. and reconvene on Saturday, August 23rd, at 8:30 a.m. The following State Officers and Program Chairmen should be prepared to report on Friday, August 22, 2025.

- Matt Claussen, National Council Member
- Robert Welch, Chief of Staff
- Cathy Stubbs, Inspector
- Doug Jameson, Surgeon
- Jay Hoffman, Judge Advocate
- Gary Holmes, Chaplain
- Arnold Taylor, Photographer
- Mathius Carter, Membership Chair

- Steve Eller, All-State Program Chair
- Barbara Wilson, State Marketing/Public Relations Chair
- George Sanon, Student Veterans Liaisons
- Robert Bland, Blood Donor Chair
- Stephanie Kirksey, Buddy Poppy Chair
- Steve Eller, Community Activities Chair
- Paul Bezazian, Homeless Veterans Chair
- Jonathan Cooper, Legislative Chair
- John Lawson, Legislative Co-Chair
- Kyna Simpson, National Home Chair
- Clarence Caraker, POW/MIA Chair
- Bill Browne, MAP/Military Services Chair
- Nekohl Johnson, Women's Veterans Chair
- Bobby Welch, VFW News Committee Chair
- Barbara Wilson, VFW News Editor
- Glen Goodrich, Safety Chair
- Dave Darte, Voice of Democracy Chair
- John Davin, Youth Activities Chair
- Ron Milton, Scouting Chair
- Doug Jameson, VAC Liaison
- Brett Nila, Veterans Service Chair
- Phil Maughan, Budget & Finance Committee Chair
- Sean Conner, Service Office Chair
- Jeff Britt, Officer of the Day
- Ray Bachewicz, Sergeant-at-Arms

### **FALL PROGRAM AD BOOK**

The Illinois Fall Program book will celebrate the election and installation of our State Commander, Eugene Blackwell, and Department President, Diane Ahrens. The Program Book order form for the fall program book is included in these general orders. Full page ads are \$200, half page ads are \$125, and quarter page ads are \$75. Please mail your ad form, any picture you would like included, and payment to Editor, Illinois VFW Fall Program Book, 3300 Constitution Dr., Springfield, IL 62711, or email to [barb.wilson2@outlook.com](mailto:barb.wilson2@outlook.com). Deadline for submission is **July 15, 2025**. Please enclose payment in full or pay via credit/debit card at [www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org). The program books will be distributed at the Department Commander's and President's joint homecoming on August 23, 2025.

### **ILLINOIS VFW NEWS**

The Illinois VFW News committee met June 5 to discuss the future of the Illinois VFW News. The committee recommended converting the Illinois VFW News to a digital-only



product effective with the new fiscal year, July 1. The Council of Administration voted June 5<sup>th</sup> to adopt the committee's recommendation. The Illinois VFW News will be published in July, September, November, January, March, and May, and will be available on our website at [www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org).

Items to be included in the Illinois VFW News should still be submitted to Editor, Barb Wilson, at [bwilson@vfwil.org](mailto:bwilson@vfwil.org). The deadline for each issue will be the 20th of the month preceding publication.

Any questions can be directed to Barb at [bwilson@vfwil.org](mailto:bwilson@vfwil.org)

### **ILLINOIS VFW 2026 CALENDAR**

The Illinois VFW 2026 Calendar is now in the hands of our District Commanders. We are asking Posts and Districts to assist in selling the calendars. As a reminder, Posts and Districts selling Calendars can keep \$2 for each calendar as an incentive. The calendars are \$20 each, and the daily drawing begins January 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a fundraiser that the Council of Administration approved in August 2024.

### **126<sup>th</sup> VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Columbus, OH, will host the 126th VFW and 111th Auxiliary National Conventions, scheduled for August 9-13, 2025. Hotel reservations can be booked on the VFW website, [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

### **NATIONAL CONVENTION-ADVANCE REGISTRATION**

A reminder that **every** Post must register a delegate to the 125th National Convention. Section 222 of the National Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure states - Each Post shall register, in advance, at least one delegate to the National Convention, by the payment of a \$25 fee, which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials. Posts failing to comply with this provision shall be considered delinquent and in arrears.

If your Post has not registered a delegate, DO SO NOW! We still have a good number of Posts from Illinois who have not registered. If you are unsure if your Post is registered, contact National Headquarters. If you registered online, you must still fill out the paper form and mail it to our National Headquarters. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a \$10 delegate fee. A delegate



registration form is included in these General Orders.

### **NATIONAL CONVENTION CREDENTIALS**

National Convention Delegates will receive a letter acknowledging their registration for the 126th National Convention. This letter must be presented to the Credentials Committee at the Registration Booth in Columbus, OH. Post Commanders, District Officers, and State Officers are not automatic delegates. They must attend as Post Delegates and carry credentials.

### **DISTRICT MEETINGS DATES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE**

All District Meetings have been posted to the State of Illinois VFW Website. Click on the tab for "News" and then click on "Calendar". Commanders, please verify that your events are listed correctly on the website. District Commanders are reminded that if a date or location needs to be changed after submission, they should contact State Headquarters to provide the updated information. Please be advised that no State Officer will be assigned to District Conventions.

### **2025-2026 TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

State Commander Eugene Blackwell will hold five Town Hall Meetings. All meetings begin at 9:00 am.

**ALL** VFW officers and members are invited to attend and participate.

For a Post to be All-State eligible, a Post Commander or representative must attend at least one Town Hall Meeting.

#### **Schedule**

October 11, 2025

Fox River Post 4600  
3002 W. IL Route 120  
McHenry, IL 60051

October 25, 2025

Cronin Brothers Post 1756  
915 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lincoln, IL 662656

October 26, 2025

Princeton Post 4323  
1549 W Peru St.  
Princeton, IL 61356

November 29, 2025

Cox Post 4753  
302 W. Coal St

Sesser, IL 62884

April 5, 2026

John H. Kraus Post 454

1006 E. Lincoln St

Bloomington, IL 61701

### **Poppy Display Winners**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

##### Category 1: Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign

100 to 750 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary Post 4549-17

751 to 1500 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 7980-14

1501 and Up Poppies: Auxiliary Post 5422-18

##### Category 2: Memorial or Inspirational Display

100 to 750 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 2801-19

751 to 1500 Poppies: Post 2955-6

1501 and Up Poppies: Auxiliary 2955-6

##### Category 3: Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies

100 to 750 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 5762-17

751 to 1500 Poppies: Post 4183-14

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

##### Category 1: Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign

100 to 750 Poppies: Post 3480-14

751 to 1500 Poppies: No Winners

1501 and Up Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 5117-8

##### Category 2: Memorial or Inspirational Display

100 to 750 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 5079-3

751 to 1500 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 2729-3

1501 and Up Poppies: Auxiliary 5691-12

##### Category 3: Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies

100 to 750 Poppies: Post and Auxiliary 4226-13

751 to 1500 Poppies: Post 1336-18



## **2024-2025 ALL-STATE TEAM OF DISTRICT COMMANDERS**

### **DISTRICT #**

### **CMDR.**

District 14

Doug Jameson

## **2024-2025 ALL-STATE POSTS**

### **POST #**

### **CMDR.**

### **QM.**

#### **DISTRICT 3**

Post 5079  
Post 8821

Antonio Munoz  
Jonathan Cooper

Carlos Alarcon  
Felix Grzelinski

#### **DISTRICT 4**

Post 2868  
Post 5151

Robert Tinson  
William Lunsford

Theodore Borst  
Patrick Fissette

#### **DISTRICT 5**

Post 2298  
Post 12014

Daniel Pierson  
Josh Deron

Scott Webb  
Mathius Carter

#### **DISTRICT 6**

Post 342  
Post 1461  
Post 8739

Gary Holmes  
Bernadette Bland  
Matthew Alford

Eric Willard  
Rob Bland  
Stanley Asp

#### **DISTRICT 7**

Post 2608

Adam Goetsch

Chuck Roach

#### **DISTRICT 10**

Post 11463

Kyle Blumhorst

Larry Miller

#### **DISTRICT 11**

Post 99  
Post 5346

Ron Boomer  
Seth Floyd

Jeff Urquhart  
Gordon Lawrence

#### **DISTRICT 12**

Post 5691

Alonzo Skipper

Sam Farrah

### **DISTRICT 13**

Post 9153	Ryan Shurtz	Benjamin Newborn
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### **DISTRICT 14**

Post 805	Kipp Reed	Roger Witek
Post 1739	John Lawson	James Page
Post 2698	Kenneth Eddy	William Epplin
Post 3480	Valerie Young	Jeannen Flemings
Post 5596	David Gladney	Steven Elliott
Post 6504	Michael Douglas	Paul Braun
Post 6865	Michael Shaw	Jeff Britt
Post 7710	Billy Tucker	Cathy Stubbs

### **DISTRICT 15**

Post 9763	Albert Dagner	Robert Owen
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### **DISTRICT 16**

Post 2791	Fred Cagle	Robert Baisa
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### **DISTRICT 17**

Post 4549	Perry Graves	Butch Spindler
Post 5975	Jeremy Deckard	Jason Edwards

### **DISTRICT 18**

Post 725	James Hogan	Paula Graser
Post 5422	Kenneth Piehl	John Ericksen
Post 5917	Gregory Palmer	Herschel Nelson

### **DISTRICT 19**

Post 3873	Staci Boyer	Phil Maughan
Post 7446	Randolph Boryscka	Charles Harrell

## **NEW CENTURY RAFFLE**

The New Century Raffle has officially started and will run through June 30, 2025. Tickets are \$10.00 each. Each ticket entitles you to participate in 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 they print their name on the ticket. 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 each month in the General Orders and posted on the <http://vfwil.org> website.

### **WEEKLY WINNER**

<u>Date of Drawing</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Seller</u>
6/6/2025	Robert Brown	No seller listed
6/13/2025	Paul Krisciunas	No seller listed
6/20/2025	Robert Grabowski	No seller listed
6/27/2025	Herbert Heinen	No seller listed

By Order of:

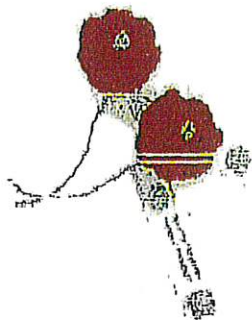


Joseph "Scott" Swinford  
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Official



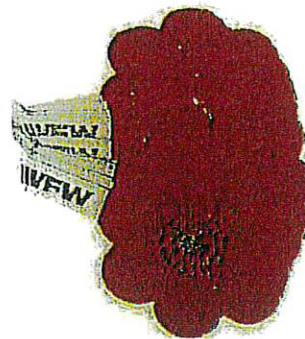
Eugene Blackwell  
State Commander



Traditional Poppy

## POPPY ORDER FORM

STATE 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 \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PLACE OUR ORDER FOR THE FOLLOWING:

\_\_\_\_\_ TRADITIONAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$280.00 PER THOUSAND) .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ METAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$140.00 PER THOUSAND).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**POPPIES CAN ONLY BE ORDERED IN INCREMENTS OF 500**

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)*

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

SHIPPING AND HANDLING.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Shipping Cost:** 500 poppies- \$15.95, 1000 poppies - \$29.95, 1500 poppies- \$34.95, 2000 poppies- 39.95,  
2500 poppies and up- \$69.95

AMOUNT OF ORDER.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT INCLUDED WITH ORDER .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

BALANCE DUE.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

For Department use only:

<i>Date recorded on dashboard</i>	<i>Date Shipped or picked up</i>	<i>Date invoiced</i>	<i>Date paid</i>

**Please allow 8 weeks when ordering your poppies.** Your Poppy order will be shipped by State Headquarters. However the Poppies will still come from National Headquarters so there is sometimes a wait period to get them shipped from National to the State Headquarters office.





## Department of Illinois Joint Homecoming Tinley Park, Illinois

**August 23, 2025**



**Eugene Blackwell**  
State Commander  
*"Serving Our Community  
With Resilience"*

**Diane Ahrens**  
Department President  
*"Life is Sweet Serving Our Veterans"*

### **Illinois VFW Fall Program Book Order Form**

**Our Post/District/Auxiliary would like to purchase the ad size selected  
below in the Illinois VFW Fall Program Book**

**☐ Full Page - \$200.00 • ☐ Half Page - \$125.00 • ☐ Quarter Page - \$75.00**

**PLEASE ENCLOSE PAYMENT IN FULL OR  
PAY VIA CREDIT/DEBIT CARD AT [www.vfwil.org](http://www.vfwil.org)**

**BOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE  
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER AND PRESIDENT'S  
JOINT HOMECOMING IN AUGUST**

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

*Editor, Illinois VFW Fall Program Book  
3300 Constitution Dr.  
Springfield, IL 62711*

or send via email to: [barb.wilson2@outlook.com](mailto:barb.wilson2@outlook.com)

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS JULY 15, 2025**

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

### SCOUT OF THE YEAR

JULY 2025

A LITTLE FOOD FOR THOUGHT AS WE BEGIN A NEW VFW YEAR AND AS MANY SCOUTING UNITS ARE RETURNING FROM SUMMER CAMPS. LET OUR SCOUTING UNITS KNOW THE BENEFITS OF EARNING THE EAGLE AND GOLD AWARDS.

- ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OF BEING AN EAGLE SCOUT OR GOLD AWARD RECIPIENT IS THE POTENTIAL FOR THE ADVANCED ENLISTMENT RANK. MANY BRANCHES OF THE MILITARY, INCLUDING THE ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, AND COAST GUARD, GRANT SCOUTS AN AUTOMATIC PROMOTION UPON ENLISTMENT. FOR EXAMPLE:
- IN THE ARMY, THE SCOUTS MAY ENTER AT THE RANK OF PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (E-3), SKIPPING THE RANKS OF PRIVATE (E-1) AND PRIVATE (E-2).
- SIMILARLY, IN THE AIR FORCE, THE SCOUTS MAY BEGIN THEIR SERVICE AS AIRMAN FIRST CLASS (E-3).
- IN THE NAVY, SCOUTS MAY QUALIFY FOR ADVANCEMENT TO SEAMAN (E-3).
- MILITARY ACADEMIES, SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT, THE NAVAL ACADEMY, AND THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY, PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON EXTRACURRICULAR ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE. BEING AN EAGLE SCOUT OR GOLD AWARD SCOUT CAN ENHANCE A CANDIDATE'S APPLICATION, AS IT DEMONSTRATES THEIR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE, PROBLEM-SOLVING, AND LEADERSHIP.

RON MILTON

STATE SCOUTING CHAIR

[USAFRET1@ATT.NET](mailto:USAFRET1@ATT.NET)



We are launching our first virtual meeting for Women Veterans across Illinois on Monday, July 7, 2025, at 7:00 PM. This meeting will be an open and welcoming space to connect, uplift, and mobilize women veterans throughout our state.

We'll also be introducing our five strategic pillars for engagement:

1. Connection – Creating sisterhood through trauma-informed, veteran-led spaces
  2. Benefits Access – Equipping women veterans with the tools to access earned resources
  3. Recruitment – Reaching out and bringing more women veterans into the VFW
  4. Safe Spaces – Ensuring every post is a place of welcome and healing
  5. Storytelling – Amplifying the voices, service, and leadership of women veterans
- A flyer is attached for reference, along with a short blurb that can be used for distribution.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to all who have served.

Warm regards,  
Nekohl Johnson  
State Women's Chairperson  
Department of Illinois, Veterans of Foreign Wars

# Benjamin O. Davis VFW Post 311 Good Ole Fish Fry

*Friday, August 22, 2025*

**5:00PM - 8:00PM**  
or until sold out

**MEAL INCLUDES**

**Catfish Fillet, Spaghetti, Corn, Coleslaw & Bread**  
Spaghetti can be substituted for Fries

**Desserts Available**

**Benjamin O. Davis VFW Post 311**

22341 Governors Highway

Richton Park, IL 60471

[www.vfwpost311.org](http://www.vfwpost311.org)

2 piece dinners - \$18

1 piece dinner - \$15

Sandwiches - \$12  
(no sides included)



**PRE-ORDERING**

**CALL 708-679-0995**



JOINT HOMECOMING HONORING

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

2025 - 2026

VFW COMMANDER EUGENE BLACKWELL &  
VFW AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANE AHRENS



AUGUST 23, 2025

TINLEY PARK CONVENTION CENTER

18451 CONVENTION CENTER DR., WEST SIDE MAIN ENTRANCE

TINLEY PARK, IL 60477

5:00PM COCKTAIL BAR

6:00PM DINNER

**Donation: \$50pp**



Tickets may be purchased via check or online at [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org). To purchase online, click on the "**Donate Now**" button and type in "Homecoming."

To purchase by mail, mail check earmarked  
"Homecoming" to

Illinois VFW  
3300 Constitution Dr.  
Springfield, IL 62711

*The Tinley Park Convention Center is connected to the EVEN Hotel Tinley Park. There is a EVEN Hotel reservations link posted on the [vfwil.org](http://vfwil.org) web page under "EVENTS." The room rate is \$169 per night plus applicable taxes.*

*All reservations must be guaranteed with a major credit card.*

*Check-In Time: 3:00pm Central*

*Check-Out Time: 11:00am Central*