

MARCH 2026

# VFW Auxiliary

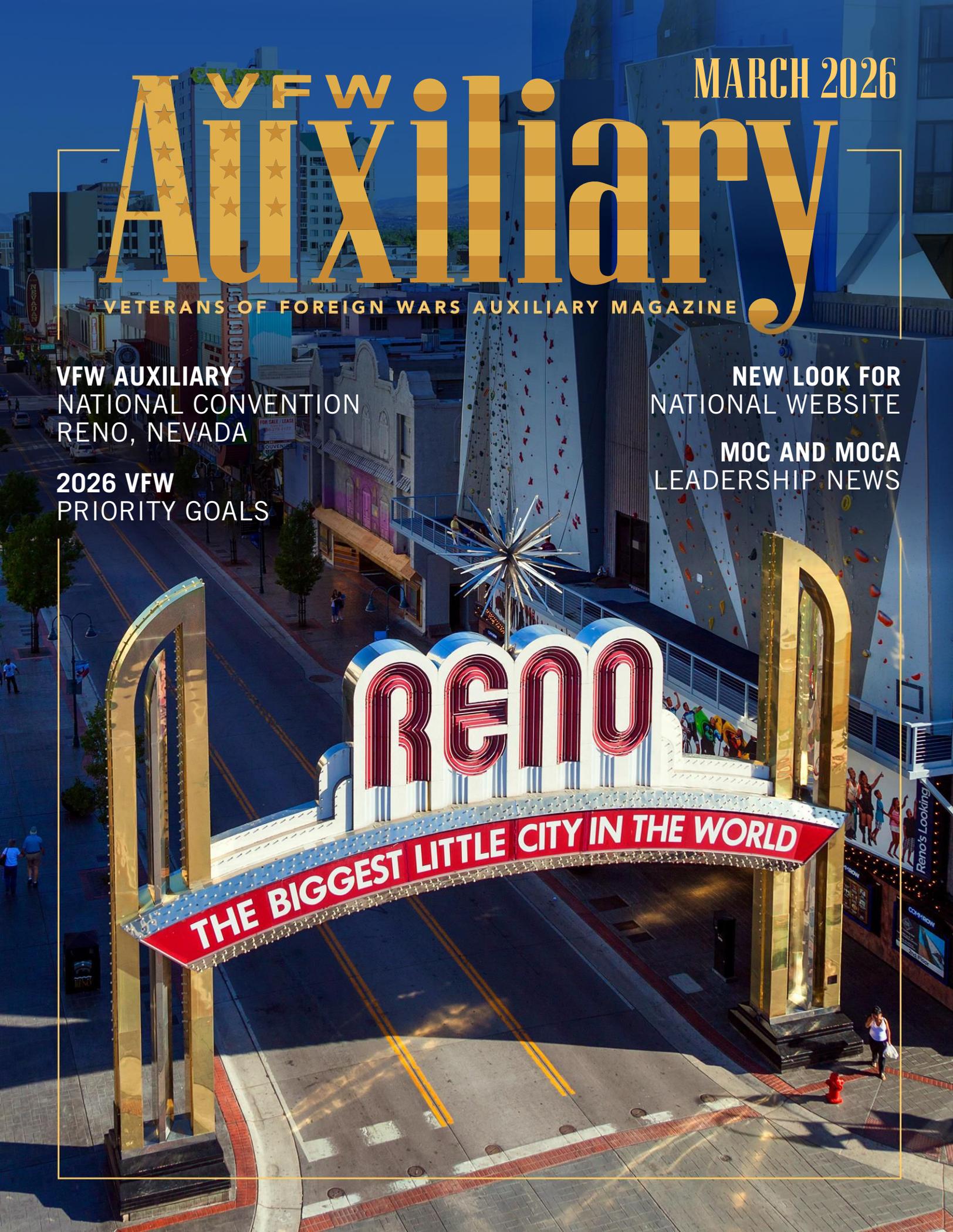
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

VFW AUXILIARY  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
RENO, NEVADA

2026 VFW  
PRIORITY GOALS

NEW LOOK FOR  
NATIONAL WEBSITE

MOC AND MOCA  
LEADERSHIP NEWS



RENO  
THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD

# SCHOLARSHIP

## *deadlines are coming up!*

Don't forget, the deadline to submit student art contest entries to sponsoring/participating Auxiliaries is at the end of THIS month, March 31! This is for our high school-age contests, Young American Creative Patriotic Art (2-dimensional pieces) and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art, as well as our K-8 Illustrating America Contest.

Find more information [here](#) about the contests, deadlines and rules or in MALTA Member Resources.

If you're helping a young artist or their family submit a piece, be sure to read all of the rules and criteria carefully and check that the entry has met the requirements BEFORE the deadline. We want as many students as possible to participate and be included should their artwork advance to the next level of the contest they've entered.



# DATES & DEADLINES

## *March*

FEBRUARY 28- MARCH 4	VFW Auxiliary Celebrating America's Freedom Event followed by the VFW Legislative Conference/VFW Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
MARCH 17	St. Patrick's Day
MARCH 29	Vietnam War Veterans Day
MARCH 31	Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art contests, Illustrating America - Student entries must be submitted to a participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging

## *April*

APRIL 5	• Easter • Gold Star Spouses Day
APRIL 11	Voice of Democracy Scholarship winners presentation livestream
APRIL 15	Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art contests, Illustrating America - One winner from each VFW Auxiliary advances to the VFW Auxiliary District (optional) then Department (state) for judging
APRIL 19-26	National Volunteer Week

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UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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## About the Cover

The Reno Arch, an iconic landmark originally built in 1926, welcomes visitors with the city's motto.

## GET DIGITAL

# GET DIGITAL

Let's get YOU... on YouTube!

"What's YouTube?" you ask? YouTube is a social media and online video sharing platform founded in 2005, the second most visited website in the world, with more than 2.7 billion active users!

National HQ uses YouTube to share videos with our followers and to repost them on other sites, like Facebook, or to embed them within our E-Newsletters for easy viewing. We recently updated our YouTube page to make it more user-friendly, adding playlists to better organize our content and archiving old videos.

On YouTube you can find our National President's special monthly greetings, past episodes of HQ Roundtable, video explanations of our traditions and history, tutorials, interviews and more! We even have a playlist called VFW, which we use to share their content, and another called Legislative, where you will find hearings that relate to veterans' and veterans' families' issues. In the playlist Who We Are & What



We Do, we have shared a variety of videos, some made by us and some originally posted by news organizations or other users, that introduce our individual members and Programs to the general public. With Facebook deleting our content, including videos, without warning, we intend to increase our YouTube presence by adding new videos throughout the year. If you have content you think would be a good fit, let us know! 🇺🇸 NP

[Find us here.](#)

## get SOCIAL

 **Instagram**  
[@vfwauxiliaryhq](#)

 **LinkedIn**  
[VFW Auxiliary](#)

 **Facebook**  
[vfwauxiliary](#)

 **Pinterest**  
[vfwauxiliary](#)

 **YouTube**  
[VFW Auxiliary National Organization](#)





*I believe that the legislative process is one of the most important and effective ways to advocate for our veterans.*

Dear members —

It is already March, and we are quickly sailing toward the finish line of the 2025-2026 Program Year. While I recognize and appreciate all your great work, remember, there is still time to reach goals and continue serving America's military, veterans, families and communities.

It was all hands on deck aboard the Celebrity Reflection for Mid-Year Conference as we appreciated a productive Council of Administration meeting, received much-needed training, enjoyed catching up with friends and had time for fun in the sun.

The 2026 Celebrating America's Freedom Event was everything I had hoped it would be. The ceremony in front of the Vietnam Memorial evoked a full spectrum of emotions, from reverent tears of remembrance to the joy of celebrating the men and women who gave so much to ensure our freedom. Thank you to all who were in attendance.

I believe that the legislative process is one of the most important and effective ways to advocate for our veterans. This year, the Auxiliary proved to be a true Force Multiplier for the VFW through our strong support on Capitol Hill at the Legislative Conference that followed CAFE.

Many thanks to those of you working so hard to grow our organization's membership and congratulations to the Auxiliaries and Departments that have reached 100% in paid membership. In order to maintain the stability of our organization, it is important to reach 100% current membership, so keep up the great work.

Until we meet again: Continue to be the Lighthouse in Someone's Storm.

With love and respect,

LOIS CALLAHAN

*National President*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lois Callahan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



It was incredible to see a sea of blue turning out not only to celebrate our nation's freedom, but to be a strong voice on Capitol Hill.

Dear members —

Wow, what a wonderfully busy and productive February we had! It was great seeing many of you in person at two National events – Mid-Year Conference aboard the Celebrity Reflection and at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for our Celebrating America's Freedom Event in Washington, D.C. that was followed by the VFW's Legislative Conference, and we were very pleased to see our members representing us there working to improve the lives of our veterans and service members.

Mid-Year is for connecting and learning and importantly, it's where our National Council of Administration happens at the halfway point of the Program Year. CAFE was especially poignant, as VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callhan's husband and father served in Vietnam. It was incredible to see a sea of blue turning out not only to celebrate our nation's freedom, but to be a strong voice on Capitol Hill alongside the VFW to advocate for our heroes. We truly emulated Callahan's theme, *From Sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*. We will follow the VFW's lead on their 2026 Legislative Priority Goals to take action. Find a story about this on page 17.

This issue is full of news and features about: our host city for National Convention 2026, meaningful ways Auxiliaries are promoting patriotism and awareness in their communities, how you can help members access this issue of the magazine and sadly, a story about the Military Order of the Cootie and its Auxiliary's loss of their National leaders.

Look for more information from Guard candidates in upcoming editions of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* and the National E-Newsletter as well as on social media ahead of the 113<sup>th</sup> National Convention in Nevada where members will cast their votes for our newest National Line Officer in July.

Members will visit Reno, Nevada for National Convention July 25-29. Read more about this city, also known as the Biggest Little City in the World, on page 9. Register online in MALTA or by mail beginning March 16.

We look forward to seeing you out West!

AMANDA COOK  
*Editor-In-Chief*

**VOLUME 90  
NUMBER 4**

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Amanda Cook

**Contributing Writers**  
Nicole Panteleakos &  
Kris Baker

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# READER'S VOICE

This is the space for comments regarding your *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*. Mail your submissions to National Headquarters or email them to [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org), marked "Letter to the Editor." We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor should not be interpreted as the opinion of the National Organization.

I am writing to tell you how absolutely wonderful the latest edition of the *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* is!!!!!!  
I am thrilled with this edition and I'm reading it cover to cover —wonderful topics and this is definitely a keeper.  
I absolutely LOVE IT!!!

**DONNA K. MILLS** | VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT

This issue of the *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* is absolutely excellent! Thank you so much for an outstanding product! I loved the article on the Paris, France, Auxiliary. The quotes and pictures were wonderful. And thank you very much for the article on chain of command.

**CORTINA BARNES** | VFW AUXILIARY PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT & Director of Administrative Services, VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

Our Auxiliary was close to folding. We elected a younger President who had some great new event ideas and we are thriving. We're out with the "way we've always done it" and in with the new, attracting younger members with new ideas and letting us burnt out members relax and enjoy their new ideas.

**DIXIE NORRIS** | AUXILIARY 6445 | HARLEM, GA.

Love the Chain of Command article! Great flowchart!!

**KAREN KAYLOR** | AUXILIARY 4008 | BELTON, TEXAS

Auxiliaries' members need to remember why we are here. Bottom line. We are here for our veterans. Not to look good or play upon the hierarchy. Ladies and gentlemen, if you feel yourself getting pulled into the occasional drama, remind yourself why you are here. I know why I am here. I am here to serve my veterans.

**CHARLIE FIELDS** | AUXILIARY 4207 | MONETT, MO.

## COMMENTS ABOUT THE PRINCESS TEA PARTY STORY:

I love this so much!

**JACQUALYNN BRYAN POFF** | AUXILIARY 1142 | NORTH WILKESBORO, N.C.

Our girl made her way into the National *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*.

**DARLENE CARNEAL HART** | AUXILIARY 5066 | COLLIERVILLE, TENN.

## REGARDING THE NEW AUXILIARY (PARIS, FRANCE) ARTICLE:

Congratulations to Auxiliary (to) Post 605! We look forward to seeing more of you in the new year!

VFW DEPARTMENT OF EUROPE

MEMBER

# SPOTLIGHT

TALITHA BING

## PATRIOTISM 'ROCKS'

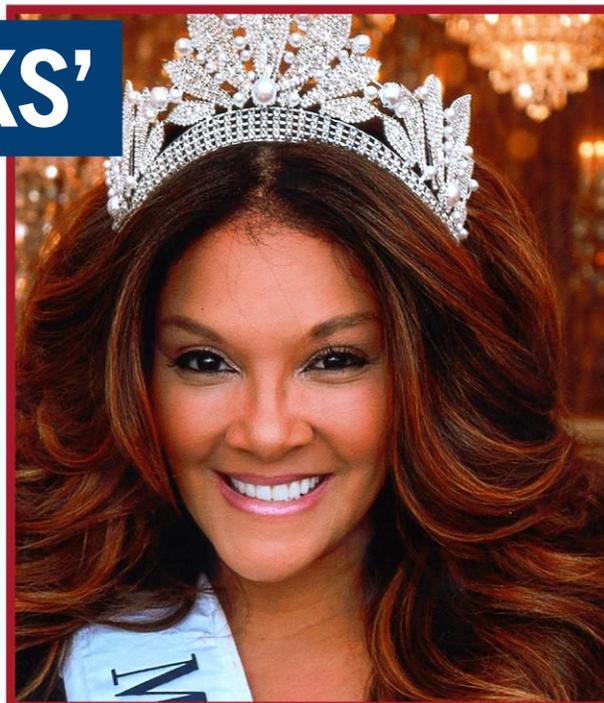
### SOUTH CAROLINA MEMBER SEES HER LOVE OF AMERICA TAKE MANY SHAPES

In the mid-2000s, some interesting sights started popping up at gas stations around southwest South Carolina. Rocks painted red, white and blue were found in between the gas pumps, rocks with messages of kindness were discovered by entrances and rocks encouraging patriotism were picked up by drivers in the parking lot.

All these tokens had been carefully positioned and placed to be found by Auxiliary 7607 in Fairfax, South Carolina member Talitha Bing. She was inspired by ones she had seen and wanted to spread messages of kindness and patriotism in a quiet, subtle way. As more of these rocks were placed she wanted to reach more people. She created a Facebook page to display and promote the kindness rocks.

"The page kind of took off somewhat by itself," Bing said. "People seemed truly interested in the rocks. I wanted to incorporate more that our Auxiliary was doing, so it grew into a page for random patriotism. More Auxiliaries' posts about their events were shared to the page, and Auxiliaries started following. It's a quid pro quo now — I like sharing what other Auxiliaries are doing well, and they follow in return."

Every week, Bing adds new posts to Auxiliary 7607's Random Acts of Patriotism page. The page has more than 1,500 followers.



"There are all sorts of people, military branches, and companies following, and I feel that anytime people can get together and promote patriotism while enjoying themselves, it's a beautiful and worthwhile thing," Bing said.

Anything with a patriotic message can make the page. Bing says her favorite posts are about veterans becoming homeowners for the first time.

"I honestly share what patriotic posts I find worthwhile, and those page and profile owners take an interest that way and find people who are like-minded, so they follow the page," Bing said. "Sometimes when I started out, I (used) my own funds to promote a few posts so that people could see them, but it's really a matter of 'one good follow deserves another.'"

Finding new ways to spread messages of patriotism and freedom is what led Bing to the Auxiliary. In 2004,

Bing decided to take some local children to a “freedom event” Auxiliary 7607 was hosting. She was so impressed with the Auxiliary’s hard work and cooperation she asked whether she would be eligible to join. She was and 7607 welcomed her without hesitation. Now Bing is a Life Member.

“If it weren’t for that one event and these few people, my life would not have the purpose it has now,” Bing said.

She has found several ways to realize that purpose. Bing has kept busy creating initiatives for her Auxiliary including Take a Veteran Fishing and making patriotic clothes for children. As the local Auxiliary Secretary, Bing ensures that reports are completed in every Program every month. She also initiates and organizes opportunities to promote "Buddy"® Poppy, Membership, Youth Activities and Scholarships Programs for her Auxiliary and the community.

“Talitha is an inventive Auxiliary leader in every sense,” said Barbara Schuler, Department of South Carolina Senior Vice-President. “She is a 20-year Life Member who still soaks up mentoring from older members so that she can mentor new members.”

The Program-sharing table events are organized by first finding places where the Auxiliary is allowed to have their table. Their small town does not have many events, so an organization with the Auxiliary’s reputation is welcome at these gatherings.

“We have a faithful few who are present at every event, mainly our President, Sharon Forester, and our Junior Vice-President, Patricia Pinckney, so I know that if there is an event happening in our community we are able to have a table,” Bing said. “I can call on Sharon and Tricia, and when it is presented at the meeting, we have the power to carry it out.”

The table events have become an anticipated gathering for their community.

“We work and we have fun at the same time,” Bing said. “We truly enjoy each other and that is one thing I was looking for in life, solid relationships where I could share my passion to help.”



## BLUE CLOTHES AND BEAUTY PAGEANTS

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of every month, Bing goes blue. She dresses in blue on that day every month to show support for military awareness. She will then post the photos online. She does this to honor her cousin, Maurice Smith, a veteran who lost his battle with PTS(D).

“If any one veteran who is considering suicide can look online and see the value that is placed on his or her life, then it is completely worth the fashion choice,” Bing said. She also wants it to be a monthly reminder for her cousin’s mother that her son is remembered.

Bing exhibits her interest in fashion in another way as she competes in local beauty pageants. She has competed since she was very young and has found it a useful forum to talk about Auxiliary issues.

“When I am asked what my plan for my platform is, I always say that I will start by working with the VFW Auxiliary’s Programs, because the Programs are aimed to help very nearly everyone in different capacities,” Bing said.

“She participates in most all of the local events throughout our county and surrounding counties,” Forester said. “She has used her experiences in beauty pageants (and) through social media to increase awareness of the VFW Auxiliary and how they can assist veterans.”

When she competed in 2021, she used the theme “Stars and Strikes: Striking Back Against Veteran Disadvantages.” With that platform she won the Leaving Your Legacy award at the Miss Legacy USA 2021 Pageant.

“As the winner, I was given the floor to present my veterans’ work platform to the entire pageant audience, and that had greater value to me than winning the pageant did.”

To see more visit VFW Auxiliary 7607’s Random Acts of Patriotism page on Facebook. 🌟 KB

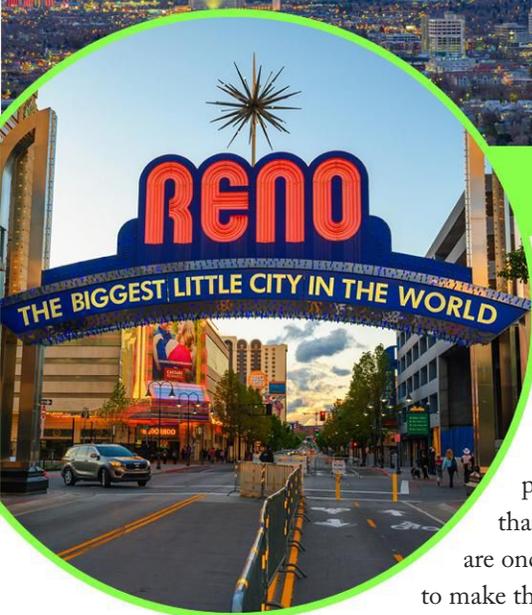
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**ABOVE:** Talitha Bing, Secretary of Auxiliary 7607 in Fairfax, South Carolina (left) and South Carolina District 9 President Barbara Shuler (right) present Hampton Mayor Robert J. Brown (center) with a "Buddy"® Poppy Proclamation and Good Job Award.

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Bing competes in local beauty pageants and uses that platform to share the Auxiliary’s message.

**VFW**  
AUXILIARY'S  
**113<sup>th</sup>**

# NATIONAL CONVENTION



## IN 'THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY...'

...And we're back! After an unexpected detour from our 2020 Convention plans via a pandemic that went global, we are once again on track to make the Biggest Little

City in the World even bigger when members join us for the VFW Auxiliary's 113<sup>th</sup> National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

Nestled along the Sierra Nevada Mountains in a high desert valley known as the Truckee Meadows, Reno, (it adopted its nickname in the 1920s), attracted gold seekers and then gandy dancers who laid tracks that formed the first transcontinental railroad line.

Later, visitors lured by Lady Luck visited Reno for its casinos; at one time, Reno was home to the world's largest casino. And just a day trip away is the stunning beauty of North America's largest alpine lake— Lake Tahoe, about 40 miles from town.

This July, Reno will host the VFW Auxiliary's 113<sup>th</sup> National Convention July 25-29. See page 13 for more details and must-attend happenings this year. Many members will stay in an area





called the Row at the Eldorado, Silver Legacy and Circus hotels. The Reno-Sparks Convention Center. a 4-mile jaunt from downtown Reno, where tourists can shop, dine, visit the famous Reno Arch, take in some culture and stroll along the scenic Truckee Riverwalk. And, for those who like to game for entertainment, Reno is also known for its [casinos](#).

Reno-Tahoe is a destination of great contrast, where the scenery, amenities and activities change as rapidly as the elevation. Read on to learn all about Reno from the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority (RSCVA). The RSCVA acts as a marketing organization for the county to promote tourism and business.

## HISTORY:

Throughout Northern Nevada, there are side roads that trace countless journeys through an age of exploration and discovery. You can discover preserved buildings, historic landmarks and even a city that continues to hold onto its Wild West roots. When visiting Reno-Tahoe, prepare to see and experience a variety of cultures that make up Reno history, from its Native American and Basque cultures, to evidence of its silver mining background and Western traditions.

[Northern Nevada's History and Culture in Reno and Lake Tahoe](#)

Humans have been in this geographic region called the Great Basin for at least 10,000 years. Paleo-Indians were the first inhabitants followed by the four contemporary Nevada tribes—Washoe, Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute and Western Shoshone. Native American background is still a huge part of Reno-Tahoe and residents strive to preserve and celebrate it.

## THINGS TO DO & SEE:

Did you know that 3.8 million people visited Reno-Sparks last year? Below are a few options and links to help you tailor your visit to best suit your vacation style and palate.

For easy, walkable, free things to do in Reno, downtown delivers. Its energy really

shows up, especially when live music and public art take center stage. Or, if you go a few minutes north, the University of Nevada, Reno has more free arts and culture activities in store.

- **Live music events:** Outdoor shows and community concerts make it easy to catch live music without planning ahead.
- **Art installations:** Bold murals, sculptures, iconic landmarks and interactive pieces are built right into the downtown streetscape.

According to the RSCVA, “We’ve always been a pretty artsy bunch. And being the home of Burning Man has only increased our love for public art installations. In the heart of downtown Reno is the iconic Reno Arch—you know, the landmark you see on all our postcards? Swing by at night to take a picture of it in all its glory.”

“There are 20 blocks throughout downtown that show off art installations - it’s called J Resort’s Reno Neon Line. Spice up your river walk by turning it into a scavenger hunt. See how many pieces you discover.”





- For the entire month of July, Reno is **Artown!** Combining the vibrant feel and live performances of a music festival with outdoor art exploration and creativity,

Artown features a packed calendar of more than 500 activities including live music and dancing from headlining artists at stages throughout the city, theater performances, art walks featuring visual arts from famous artists to local creators, workshops where you can create your own art and much more. Visit the [Artown](#) website for a schedule of activities and performances.

- **Farmers markets** - [Riverside Farmers Market](#) is a year-round community event, where you can meet various vendors, sample some goodies and enjoy live music.
- **Malls** - Window shop, people-watch and take a break indoors at [Meadowood Mall](#), or get some fresh air at the [Outlets at Legends](#) or [Shayden Summit Mall](#).

## MUSEUMS:

Want to wander among exhibits at the only accredited art museum in the state of Nevada? [The Nevada Museum of Art](#), located right in the heart of Reno, has you covered. Want to stroll the “streets,” immersed in the sights and sounds of a bygone era as you feast your eyes on more than 200 eye-popping cars? Reno’s [National Automobile Museum](#) is the place for you. If science is more your style, you can find hands-on [The Discovery Museum](#).

## EXPLORE THE TRUCKEE RIVERWALK DISTRICT DOWNTOWN:

“Take a stroll along the Riverwalk and savor Reno’s exciting urban renaissance. You’ll find shopping, restaurants, bars and taverns, entertainment, lodging, even a whitewater park – all in a safe, fun, friendly area that celebrates Reno’s arts, culture, and history 365 days a year.” [The Riverwalk District](#).

## DINING:

The landscape of places to eat in Reno and Lake Tahoe restaurants is rapidly growing, offering a large variety of delectable cuisine choices. The quality of the food in Reno has created a flourishing local [food scene](#).

## SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL FAVORITES:

The best places to eat in Reno include some amazing local spots that are sure to leave an impression on your appetite. If you’re after some great food and beer, try [Great Basin Brewing Company](#)—this local restaurant and brewery is perfect for any occasion. If you’re looking for something unique, stop by [Liberty Food and Wine](#) for some shareable plates. Or maybe brunch is calling your name? Try [Two Chicks](#). They’ve got a delightful traditional breakfast menu and a variety of specialty grilled cheese sandwiches. For wood-fired pizzas and seasonal small plates, [Dopo](#) is a cozy must-try. Craving Japanese-inspired fare? [Kauboi](#) serves up bold flavors and creative dishes in a stylish setting. [Centro](#) is perfect for tapas-style bites and a vibrant evening out, while [Araio](#) offers an elegant dining experience with a focus on fresh, high-quality ingredients.



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## LAKE TAHOE:

Located about an hour away from Reno by car, Lake Tahoe is a popular day trip where visitors will experience breathtaking, clear blue water and soaring mountain views. Some fun facts - Lake Tahoe is around two million years old. It is one of the purest large lakes with visibility up to 70 feet deep and its water absorbs red light, which is what makes its cerulean hue appear so vibrant.

Reno will be warm at Convention time, but evenings are cooler. And typical Convention Center “weather” can get pretty chilly. Dress for summer but prepare for layering on cool nights and during business sessions.

See you in July, when members dock in Reno after a productive year of *Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free, From Sea to Shining Sea* and supporting the VFW Auxiliary’s important work of serving veterans, service members, their families and communities.

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**BEGINNING ON PAGE 9:** Downtown Reno in the glow of sunrise with Mt. Rose in the distance. The Reno Arch in Reno, Nevada. The original arch was built in 1926 to commemorate the completion of the Lincoln and Victory Highways. Spectators watch the balloons during the Reno Balloon Races at Rancho San Rafael Park. The Riverwalk along the Truckee River. A stunning view of Lake Tahoe. A larger-than-life neon sign beckons to pedestrians near Circus Circus. A walking bridge with vibrant flowers. The Reno skyline against the mountains. One of numerous creative public artworks glows at night in downtown Reno.





# 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

*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 meeting dates and are subject to change. Check the National website for updates as we get closer to Convention.*

### **FRI, JULY 24**

**10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Early packet pickup at the Eldorado Resort · Casino

### **SAT, JULY 25**

**8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

**10:00-11:30 a.m.** Conference Meetings

**Noon-1:30 p.m.** 45-Plus Club Luncheon  
*(Reservations required)*

**5:00-6:00 p.m.** Circle of Excellence Ceremony

### **SUN, JULY 26**

**8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

**9:00-10:00 a.m.** Joint Memorial Service

**10:45-11:30 a.m.** National District Council Member Training

**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** Past Councilors' Club Luncheon

**1:00-4:30 p.m.** Programs Seminar

**6:00-10:00 p.m.** VFW Awards Banquet, Reno Ballroom, Silver Legacy Resort · Casino

### **MON, JULY 27**

**8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

**8:00 a.m.-Noon** Joint Opening Session

**1:00-5:00 p.m.** Auxiliary Opening Business Session

### **TUE, JULY 28** *(Last day for exhibits/registration)*

**8:00 a.m.-Noon** Exhibit Hall Open/Registration

**8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** Auxiliary Business Session

**1:30-2:30 p.m.** Amwins Presentation

**6:00-8:00 p.m.** VFW Patriotic Celebration

### **WED, JULY 29**

**7:45 a.m.** Presentation of Department Presidents with Colors

**8:10-11:30 a.m.** Officer Election, Installation and Closing Session

**3:00-5:00 p.m.** Joint Reception for Commander-in-Chief and National President *(Ticketed event)*, Convention Center

## **POST-CONVENTION**

### **THURS, JULY 30**

**9:00 a.m. - Noon** National Council of Administration meeting, Silver Legacy Resort · Casino

## REGISTRATION FORM

**National Convention: Advance Registration \$25**

**45-Plus Luncheon** (Complimentary)  **Year Member Joined**

Name  Membership No.

Address  City  State  ZIP

Department  Phone  Email

Check enclosed  Money order enclosed **DO NOT SEND CASH.**

*This form and all payments must be received at National Headquarters by May 31.*

*No exceptions or refunds after this date.*

**DO NOT ENCLOSE DELEGATE LISTS WITH THIS FORM.**

**NOTE: Being preregistered for National Convention does NOT mean that you are registered as a Delegate.**

## SAVE \$15!

**Advance registration is \$25.**

**On-site registration is \$40.**

Members may register in MALTA and pay via credit card beginning March 16; otherwise fill out the form above and mail a check or money order to:

**VFW Auxiliary**

406 W. 34<sup>th</sup> St., 10th Floor,  
Kansas City, MO 64111

Attn: National Convention Registration

*Registration must be received by May 31. Registrations received after May 31 will be rejected.*

*Member must be present at time of registration to receive packet.*

## 45-YEARS PLUS CLUB LUNCHEON

**Have you been a member for 45 years or more?**

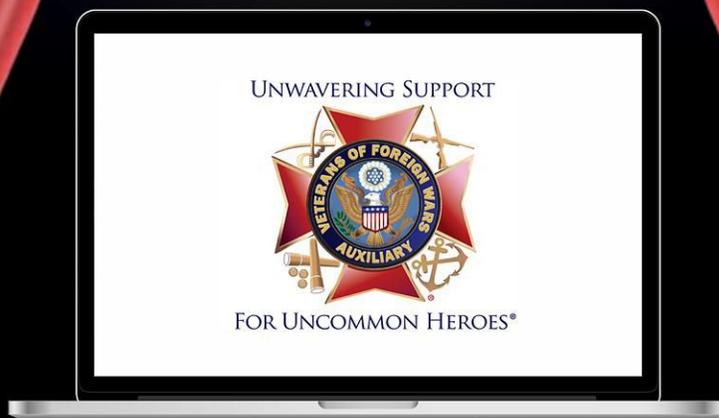
Come join the 45-Years Plus Club at National Convention.

The luncheon will be at noon on Saturday, July 25 at the Convention Center.

Register online or fill out form (above) and mail to National Headquarters. Registration is required to attend.

*Note: To register for the 45-Years Plus Club Luncheon, you must have been a member prior to June 30, 1981, and maintained continuous membership since that date.*

COMING  
SOON



# NATIONAL WEBSITE MAKEOVER!

In just two months, you'll notice a new look for our National website. We hope to go live with the website redesign sometime in May. Rest assured, the new look will include all of the same information you're used to accessing, like Program details, forms and information sheets, events, the National magazine and member benefits. Plus more!

The new appearance will feature photos of "real members" and their families working our Programs, a more modern layout and ADA accessibility.

While it will be organized differently, larger photos and a scroll-down-for-more content flow, it should be easier to navigate. While we realize it will take some getting used to, we hope you enjoy the redesign. Once launched, feel free to hop on the site, look around and get familiar with it!

Questions? Email [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org).

# HELP

## US SHARE THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE

All too often, when we post the latest National magazine on our social media channels, we hear more “I don’t ever read this anymore... I want the printed magazine...” than feedback about the publication itself, which is such a shame.

Members are missing out on exclusive content. Like stories about the unique and creative ways our very own Auxiliary members are supporting our mission and improving the lives of veterans, service members and their families and communities. And photos not shared elsewhere, like in-depth spreads from National events, magazine-only features and Member/Auxiliary Spotlight/My Veteran pictures.

The truth is, the very same members posting to Facebook that they can't find the digital magazine actually CAN read it. If you can access Facebook, you can access the digital magazine link from the same device you're using for Facebook.

We understand that you miss the printed magazine. We do, too! But it was a final decision made by the National Council of Administration to save the organization the

\$1 million per year (yes, a million bucks!) it cost to print and mail it to every one of our 470,000 members. It was not made lightly. Cut to more than two years later, the expense of paper, ink and postage is only going up. Unless we are gifted more than \$1 million for the magazine per year, we cannot bring the printed version back.

(We explored print on demand, too, but that was also not cost-effective. Subscriptions? Yep, we looked into that also but the cost per issue would skyrocket with smaller print runs and we don't have the staff to manage a subscriptions department, which is what it would take to deliver.)

Alternatively, we understand why our members don't want to take on the cost of printing, either. Some of our members bring their laptop, tablet or smartphone to members who don't have internet/computer access and read the magazine to them. However, if you do want to print one issue, you can easily download the PDF by clicking the zoom out button, then click anywhere on the page; you'll find the PDF button with the arrow atop the right side of the page. Or click on the left “hamburger menu,” the one with three horizontal bars at the top left of the page to print individual articles instead. Choose economy printing mode to save ink.

And please, next time you see the magazine link on Facebook, consider reading it, even though it's not a tangible, paper publication. We encourage you to comment on the Facebook post with what you liked, didn't like or would like to see featured. We always want to hear about that! ✨AC



# 2026 VFW PRIORITY GOALS



## BUDGET

To fully fund relevant programs for veterans, service members, and their families, Congress must:

- Hold leaders accountable to "Honor the Contract" and uphold their end of the military service contract by opposing any effort to cut or reduce veteran benefits.
- Ensure sufficient, timely appropriations and proper budget oversight for VA.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.
- Modernize and reform VA and DOD programs that do not meet the needs of service members, veterans and families.

## DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Implement the VFW's recommendations to improve the VA disability claims process, specifically appeals, digital claims, DBQs and disability examinations.
- Crack down on unaccredited claims consultants known as Claim Sharks.
- Study all toxic and environmental exposures, and implement programs to ensure health care and benefits are provided to all exposed service members and veterans.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, burial allowances and other benefits for survivors.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.

## EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD and DOL must:

- Improve education benefits through modernized student housing and supply allowances, child care stipends, parity for National Guard and Reserve members and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Improve the delivery of the Veteran Readiness and Employment program to include administrative support for counselors and standardized training.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Expand small business, hiring preference, tax incentives, and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.
- Conduct oversight of VA's Transition Assistance Program to ensure compliance with the law, and require the inclusion of accredited claims representatives.
- Protect the VA Home Loan Guaranty program and expand it to the reserve components.
- Eliminate red tape preventing effective use of education and employment benefits.

## NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA

To fully support the all-volunteer force, protect our nation's citizens, and defend American interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Ensure DPAA is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.
- Deter threats to our national security by supporting our allies in Ukraine, Israel, Korea and Taiwan.
- Ensure all service members who served in harm's way — to include foreign nationals, translators and allies — receive the recognition, care and benefits they may have earned.

## HEALTH CARE

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA and DOD must:

- Eliminate service member and veteran suicide.
- Improve the coordination of community care at VA, including CHAMPVA and the Foreign Medical Program.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health, blast overpressure and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research the efficacy of alternative therapies for PTSD.
- Improve oversight of Vet Centers to ensure adequate staffing, resources and funding.
- Enhance programs and services for women and underserved veterans.
- Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- Properly implement VA and DOD health IT systems.
- Expand nursing home eligibility and long-term care options.

## MILITARY READINESS

To maintain a strong and ready all-volunteer force capable of protecting American interests, Congress and DOD must:

- Enhance quality of life and health care programs that allow service members to focus on the mission.
- Ensure equity of benefits for reserve component service members.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Provide benefits enrollment for all transitioning service members.
- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay so that it is competitive with relevant civilian pay.
- Ensure that military housing and work spaces are safe and modern.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.

# HQ MEMO

## THINK

Before electing Delegates and Alternates for your 2026 District, Department and National Conventions, those present at the March, April and May Auxiliary meetings need to consider the following:

- Those members who have stated their interest in attending the upcoming District, Department and National Conventions;
- Those members who have attended these Convention meetings in the recent past;
- Those members who are District and/or Department Officers and/or Chairmen;
- Those members who are the spouses of VFW Officers who will represent the VFW Post at these same Conventions;
- In short, talk with your members and ask them if they are interested in representing the Auxiliary at District, Department or National Conventions.

## EXAMPLES:

- Your Auxiliary Treasurer is the Department Legislative Chairman, so yes, they would likely attend both the District and the Department Conventions and should be considered to be elected as a Delegate or Alternate to the Convention meetings.
- You know that your Post Commander will be the only member attending the District and Department Conventions; his wife, though she has not attended meetings regularly, has traveled with him around the District and Department and therefore would be present at the Conventions so the Auxiliary would have at least one (1) Representative present.

Note that Delegates and Alternates to Districts shall be elected at a regular meeting of the Auxiliary held not less than 30 days prior to the District Convention at which District Officers are to be elected.

Also, the Auxiliary needs to be familiar with the number of Delegates and Alternates to which it is entitled for District (**Section 302-One (1) Delegate and one (1) Alternate for each fifteen (15) members in good standing or fraction thereof at the time of election**); Department (**Section 303 Delegate and one (1) Alternate for each thirty (30) members in good standing or fraction thereof at the time of election**) and National (**Section 304-One (1) Delegate and one (1) Alternate for each thirty-five (35) members in good standing or fraction thereof at the time of election**).

Following the elections of these respective Delegates and Alternates, it is the responsibility of the Auxiliary Secretary to see that the Representatives chosen by the Auxiliary get to their District and Department Secretary prior to those Conventions. The Auxiliary Secretary must input the Delegates and Alternates to National Convention in MALTA no later than May 31 or mail, fax or email to [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org) the Delegates' and Alternates' names and membership ID numbers to the National Secretary.

**The Auxiliary Secretary is responsible for reporting the Auxiliary's Delegates and Alternates to the District Secretary (District Convention) and to the Department Secretary (Department Convention) by the respective deadlines and National Convention (National Secretary) or input the Delegates and Alternates into MALTA. Auxiliary Secretaries are encouraged to print out the list of Delegates and Alternates to verify that those entered were posted. Once your Secretary enters you as a National Delegate or National Alternate, this will appear in your MALTA profile. Be sure to verify this by May 31 to ensure you have time if any issues need to be corrected.**



# DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that MALTA, our membership database, was created for EVERY MEMBER to use? MALTA stands for Membership Auxiliary Leadership Technology Access. It is an online database in which members can pay their dues, change their addresses, convert to a Life Membership, find Auxiliary report forms, watch training videos, access Member Resources by Program, make a gift and much more!

From the initial announcement regarding MALTA in 2017: MALTA is a system designed with YOU in mind the whole time. Not only does National Headquarters want to be more efficient but we also want to engage with every member through MALTA.

Creating a login is easy! All you need is your member ID, your Auxiliary number and ZIP code.

Visit <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/Account/NewLogin> to enter your information. You can do this on a desktop computer, smart phone or tablet. You could also go to [vfwauxiliary.org](https://vfwauxiliary.org) and look for "MALTA Member Login." Follow the instructions on-screen to get started.

Do note that although every member may use MALTA, lapsed members will be directed to pay their dues in MALTA to regain full access once they become a member in good standing again. Also note that some areas and actions within MALTA are restricted and only accessible to certain Officers, like Treasurers, but every member is entitled to everything else that MALTA has to offer.

## MALTA MOBILE APP FOR BOTH ANDROID AND IPHONE!

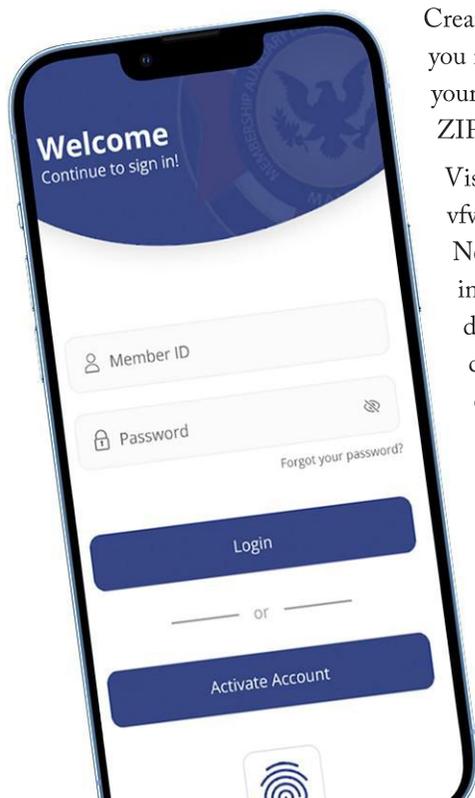
You can find the MALTA app on Android phones by searching it for in the app store, but if you have an iPhone or Apple device, you must take an extra step to find it, by going to the link to the right and downloading from there. This is due to the restrictions Apple puts on apps that are intended for members-only.

MALTA will continue to be available on your computers and tablets, but the phone app will make it easier to keep needed content right in your pocket, including your Membership card.

You can access the app by clicking on or copy/pasting the links below on your mobile device:

Apple URL - <https://apps.apple.com/app/vfw-auxiliary-malta/id6482576653>

Android URL - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vfwauxiliary>



# FROM "KEEP'EM SMILING" TO SAYING FAREWELL:

## HONORING THE MEMORIES OF DAVID JOHNSON AND ERIC BELL

The Military Order of the Cootie started in 1920 as “the Honor Degree of the VFW” focusing on Hospital and, later, the VFW National Home, an idea Cooties formulated in 1923. Their purpose? “Keep ‘Em Smiling.”

For a century since they’ve visited wounded and elderly veterans, fundraised for the National Home’s athletic fields, pool, firehouse, apiary, music programs and scholarships, held annual holiday parties and more. The MOC Auxiliary, or MOCA, was formed in 1960. Each MOCA member is also a VFW Auxiliary member. In 2025, Eric Bell was elected Supreme Commander of the MOC and David Johnson was elected Supreme President of the MOCA. They shared a commitment to helping veterans, supporting the National Home and bringing positivity to those around them through special programs, hospital visits and events like Cootie Christmas.

“Cootie Christmases were wonderful,” reflected 95-year-old Betty Christian Adamson, who lived at the VFW National Home from 1929-1941 and has recalled the parties among her happiest childhood memories. Every Cootie Christmas is meant to be one of merriment, frivolity and fun. This year, though, less than a fortnight before the celebration, Johnson unexpectedly passed away. With a heavy heart, MOCA Senior Vice-President Dawn VanTassell stepped into his shoes.

VanTassell described him as a man who liked to laugh and to make others laugh.

This made him a perfect fit for the Cootie

environment where boos replace applause, seconding a motion comes first and the best days are lousy. “Dave tried to be so funny with everything,” says VanTassell. “That’s what I will take with me.”

Johnson joined VFW Auxiliary 3473, Department of Oregon, under the eligibility of his father, a three-time Purple Heart recipient who served under General George S. Patton. He was the first male MOCA President, serving at the same time as the first female VFW Commander-in-Chief, Carol Whitmore, and he’d also held the position of Auxiliary President since 2023. “He was very dedicated,” VanTassell shares. “He had a lot of compassion for veterans and was proud to serve.”

She and Bell met up at Cootie Christmas 2025 and discussed how they would honor Johnson throughout the rest of the year, which included snow-loathing VanTassell’s promise to sled down a National Home hill if \$10,000 was raised for the Home and Johnson’s special project (Camp Alma). Bell jovially vowed to do the same, but in a dress, should they hit \$20,000.

But just days after interviewing VanTassell, MOC Supreme Commander Bell, a Marine Corps veteran, also passed away, delivering a second blow to an organization already struggling with grief. “There are some people in the world you just like to be around,” VFW National Home Director Mike Wilson wrote in response, adding that Bell was one of the first Cooties he ever met. “I loved this man... Until we meet again, my friend.”

“This loss is immeasurable not only to MOC and MOCA members, but to the entire Auxiliary family,” says VFW Auxiliary National Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, also a member of the MOCA. “We should honor their memory not only through Hospital visits and National Home support, but by remembering to have fun. They will be missed.” ★ NP



One un-bee-lievable project the Cooties and MOCA support at the VFW National Home is the apiary, created through the Heroes to Hives Program which helps train veterans, service members and their dependents in beekeeping. Last summer, MOCA Supreme President Johnson (left) and MOC Supreme Commander Bell proudly showed off bottles from the first batch of honey made by National Home bees. (Johnson passed away in November, 2025; Bell passed away in January, 2026.) Photo shared to Facebook by Michael Raymond, VFW National Home Board of Directors Trustee.



**CHECKPOINT**



Would you like to receive the  
**FREE** Checkpoint e-newsletter?

Email your name and email address  
to [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org). Then watch your  
inbox for this newsletter — which is  
emailed 12 times a year — highlighting  
the good work of VFW Posts and  
Auxiliaries around the world.



Back

Front

**NEW**

**NEW! ORCHID HAZE LADIES' T-SHIRT**

- Ladies' fit
  - V-neck
  - 100% combed ring spun cotton with screened design
  - VFW Auxiliary on left chest
  - Auxiliary Emblem on back
- 7496 S-4XL \$21.00



Back

Front

**NEW**

**NEW! LAUREL GREEN T-SHIRT**

- Unisex sizing
  - 100% combed ring spun cotton with screened design
  - VFW Auxiliary on left chest
  - Auxiliary Emblem on back
- 7750 S-4XL \$21.00

**PATRIOTIC ART**

Thank your participants!



**DRAWSTRING BACKPACK**

Black polycanvas with drawstring, 18 x 14½".  
1870 \$17.95  
*While quantities last.*



**SKETCH PAD**

Spiral bound, black hardcover, 70 pages.  
5½ x 8½"  
1872 \$10.00

**PIN** Enamel with antique silver plating. Double post with rubber backs. 1¼".  
1873 \$3.00



**POPPY COIN** Brass, 2". Comes in a clear plastic envelope. Imported. 1089 \$11.00



VFWSTORE.ORG

**NEW**

**NEW! BLACK RHINESTONE USA HEART CAP**

Medium profile, six-panel structured cap. 100% cotton twill. Fabric strap with hook-and-loop closure.  
7255 \$20.00



**NEW**

**NEW! BLACK RHINESTONE TOTE**

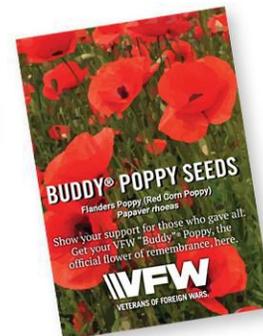
Luggage trolley pass-through on back. 14 x 19 x 7"  
1256 \$42.00



**NEW**

**NEW! RHINESTONE BLACK T-SHIRT**

Ladies' cut black T-shirt, 100% cotton.  
7302 S-5XL \$25.00



**POPPY SEEDS**  
Approx. 350 seeds per packet.  
1250 \$3.00