

VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2023

REMEMBERING
SANDY GERMANY

10TH CAFE
FLIGHT 93
NATIONAL MEMORIAL

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S
SPECIAL PROJECT
UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

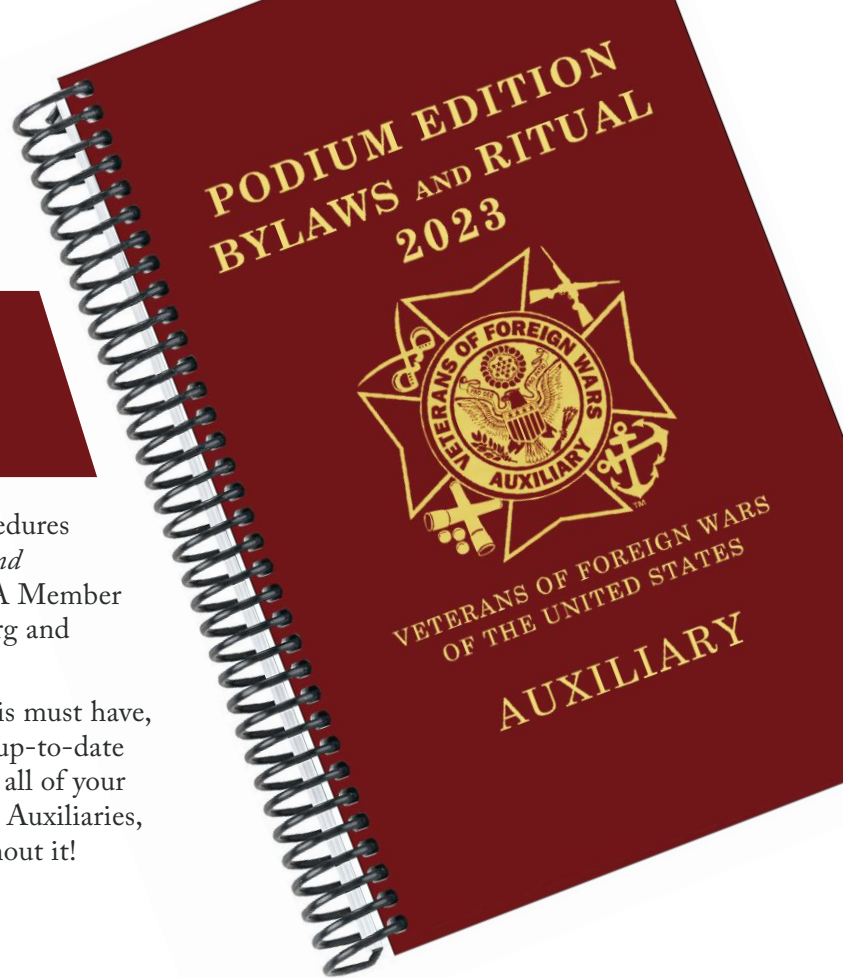


PODIUM EDITION:

BYLAWS AND RITUAL 2023

Quickly reference the VFW Auxiliary's rules and procedures with the most current of the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual* – available digitally behind login under MALTA Member Resources or in print from the VFW Store, vfwstore.org and 1-833-VFW-VETS.

Published annually following National Convention, this must have, go-to reference book contains the organization's most up-to-date rules and regulations. In it you will find the answers to all of your questions, from how to run a meeting to guidelines for Auxiliaries, Districts and Departments. Don't go to a meeting without it!



DATES & DEADLINES

January

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| JAN 1 | New Year's Day |
| JAN 15 | Annual Joint Reviews (AJRs) for VAVS representatives due at National Headquarters |
| JAN 16 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| JAN 22-27 | National Mid-Year Conference |
| JAN 31 | See the <i>2022-2023 National Program Book</i> for January 31 Membership Award deadlines. |

February

- | | |
|--------|--|
| FEB 14 | Valentine's Day |
| FEB 15 | Continuing Education Scholarship applications due at National Headquarters |
| FEB 20 | Presidents Day |

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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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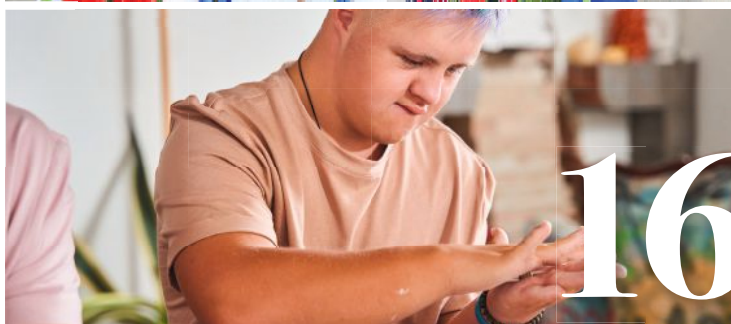
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About the Cover

A view of the flight path and impact site at the Flight 93 National Memorial. A common field one day...a field of honor forever. *Photo by Stanley Borusiewicz.*

REMINDERS



• Member Resources are now behind MALTA. If you are looking for documents and links specific to our National Programs, you'll find them here:

Go to [vfwauxiliary.org](https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org) and click MALTA Member Login or follow this link: <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/Account/NewLogin>.

To log in, you must have a MALTA account. Next, log in to MALTA.

On the blue bar at the top of the page, you will now see two added features, Cancer Grants and Member Resources.

Click on Member Resources where you will see the *2022-2023 National Program Book*, the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual 2023* and *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation*.

To the left side of that screen is the list of all the Programs and miscellaneous resources. If you click on a file with a link, it will take you to that link. If you click on a file with a document, the document will appear at the top or bottom of your screen; click on the box to open.

• **Note:** The *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual 2023* is available in MALTA Member Resources! If you'd like to order the print version, contact the VFW Store at vfwstore.org or 1-833-VFW-VETS.

- Update your contact details in MALTA, including a valid email address. This is how we send a link to *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* directly to members' inboxes.
- Do not unsubscribe from or forward any emails from National Headquarters, including VFW Store and health benefits emails. Why? Because unsubscribing from one unsubscribes you from all Constant Contact emails from HQ— even the E-Newsletter, magazine and event updates.

Also, if you forward any of these emails and even one person to whom you've forwarded it unsubscribes, you are also unsubscribed. We recommend copying and pasting the body of the email into a new email and sending that instead.

If you haven't received an email from HQ in a while, you probably need to get back on our mailing list. Email us at info@vfwauxiliary.org. We know we're missing some members because our mailing list has about 20,000 fewer names since we last updated it. That's a big percentage.


get SOCIAL

 **Instagram**
[@vfwauxiliaryhq](https://www.instagram.com/vfwauxiliaryhq)

 **LinkedIn**
[VFW Auxiliary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/vfw-auxiliary)

 **Facebook**
[vfwauxiliary](https://www.facebook.com/vfwauxiliary)

 **Pinterest**
[vfwauxiliary](https://www.pinterest.com/vfwauxiliary)

 **YouTube**
[VFW Auxiliary National Organization](https://www.youtube.com/VFW-Auxiliary-National-Organization)





*I am so moved
by everything
you do every day
to support our
mission with a
great attitude.*

Dear members—

Thank you to all who have welcomed me into their Departments. It has been an honor. You have given me memories I will cherish forever.

I'm so excited to host the annual Mid-Year Conference on the beautiful Norwegian Bliss for a five-day cruise on the Mexican Riviera. I can't wait to see you there. Department Presidents, on the cruise I have a surprise for you at our port of call in Ensenada - you may not want to plan an excursion - just sayin'. All members from the Conference with the highest percentage in membership as of Dec 31, 2022 will receive special recognition on the cruise.

Can you guess who is in the lead?

New with this edition is the first all-digital magazine. By going digital we have saved much needed funds to support our veterans. We know this is a big transition, and we are committed to make the magazine the best we can considering our current setup, including looking into more printer-friendly formatting so we can share with fellow members who are not on computers or smartphones.

Our members have been so very generous to support both the 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest and the joint project with the VFW, a Voice of Democracy Scholarship named for the 2022-2023 class of Commanders and Presidents. The standings will be announced at the Council Meeting later this month. Hopefully I will not be the one with pie on my face in Phoenix!

I have enjoyed my travels thus far, and I look forward to seeing the rest of our great country as I make my way to the rest of our Departments, learning about the history of our communities, celebrating milestones together like Auxiliary birthdays and having so much fun! How many people can say they tried vinegar-topped ice cream (it's good) or ski jumping like an Olympian (on a simulator) when they've gone out of town? The best of all, though, is the time I get to share with you, our members.

I am so moved by everything you do every day to support our mission with a great attitude that really demonstrates my theme of ***Hands that Serve, Hearts that Care.***

Loyally,

JANE REAPE
National President

"Friendship is the source of the greatest pleasures, and without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious." *St. Thomas Aquinas*



Dear members—

The last time I sat at my desk to write a letter for *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*, your magazine, I was also working on an article about the National magazine going digital-only.

We've heard from some of you about this via USPS letters and comments on social media. Don't hesitate to let us know what you think. You'll see a sampling of this feedback in Reader's Voice on page 6.

We understand how disappointing this is and that going digital, which was a cost-savings measure voted on by the National Council of Administration to bolster investments, means it will be quite difficult for some of our members who are not online to access their member magazine. We hear you.

We've been asked, "What about subscriptions?" Unfortunately, we don't have the staff, as this would require adding an entire full-time team to our modest group of 12 HQ staffers, to manage everything including a name and address database as well as the accounting aspect. Again, the budget.

What we can do is print and share our magazine with fellow "non-digital" members. And we are looking into how we can make this the best reader experience possible given our new parameters. We also urge those of you who would like to receive a link to the magazine via email to update your contact information in MALTA. We use email addresses in your profiles to distribute the magazine via email. Members may also see this issue and past issues on our National website under Media.

In this edition, you'll learn about VFW legislative victories from 2022 and grant opportunities. You'll find a feature story about our 10th Celebrating America's Freedom Event at the Flight 93 National Memorial, get an update on National President Jane Reape's special project that will grow the new 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest escrow fund and learn more about how best to navigate social media.

Don't forget to send us your submissions for VFW Auxiliary Magazine's Member Spotlight and My Veteran stories as well as "throwback" photos for Our History from 2000 and earlier. Also submit your letters to the Editor either at info@vfwauxiliary.org or via mail. Is your Auxiliary doing something really unique and meaningful in your community or are you getting extra creative promoting one of our National Programs? Tell us about it, please! Send us your photos. If it is something that will work well for one of our communications outlets, we'd love to share your ideas with our membership.

We review everything we receive, though it can take us time to work submissions in to our rotation of six (6) issues per year. Bear with us.

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

We are looking into how we can make this the best reader experience possible given our new parameters.

**VOLUME 84
NUMBER 4**

Editor-In-Chief
Amanda Cook

Contributing Writers
Nicole Panteleakos &
Maria Royer

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Editorial Office
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Change of Address
Forward address changes to: Circulation Department, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111. Be sure to furnish your old address and your Auxiliary number when requesting address change. To ensure accuracy, please clip and enclose your present address as printed on a recent copy of VFW Auxiliary Magazine. Or email info@vfwauxiliary.org.

Website
www.vfwauxiliary.org

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, 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.

The responses below were mailed to HQ and posted on the Auxiliary's National Facebook page following news that *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* will go digital beginning with this issue and will not be mailed to members' homes. Members may access the digital edition either on our National website under Media or receive a link to the magazine directly in their inboxes. To receive via email, members must have a valid email address in MALTA.

Petition to KEEP *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* going to Auxiliary members who don't have an email address or internet. The military has a saying, "Leave no man behind!" Well, I feel the same way with the Auxiliary. Just because a member does not have an email or internet does not make them any more unimportant to this organization.

DARLA LOWE

Castalia, Ohio

Auxiliary 2529, Sandusky

The petition was signed by 27 fellow members from multiple Auxiliaries.

Needed, time to enter the 21st century digital age. Too costly with Pony Express method of old.

Albany, Ga

Auxiliary 2785

I appreciate hearing this as emails are becoming a way of the future.

ROBIN D. CARTER

Texarkana, Ark.

Auxiliary 4562

I think this is a terrible idea. I am an older member and always read the articles in the magazine. If this is just to save money, then shame on you. We pay dues always for many years to be in this organization. I think we should at least get the one benefit of having a published *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* sent to us. We do many official Auxiliary benefits for this organization without payment, a lot from our own pockets. I have been a member for 20 years, and my Gold Star mother was a member before me. Do not make us lose the magazine that keeps us in touch.

Hillsboro, Ohio

Auxiliary 9094

I see the reasoning and understand. I'm just concerned that some of our older members will lose out. After all their years of service to our organization, I don't think they need to be excluded.

DIANNE RYAN

Woodstock, Ga.

Auxiliary 2681, Marietta

I think it's a terrible thing for members who are older and unable to make meetings get left out. More distance between the organization and the members.

BONNIE SEVERANCE

Colton, N.Y.

Department of New York

MY VETERAN

WILLIAM SOWERS

Sue Sowers, Life Member of Auxiliary 392 in Virginia Beach, Virginia, well remembers when her husband, William (Bill), was first assigned to the aircraft carrier *USS Oriskany*. It was 1973 and their third child was a newborn when they transferred to California and Bill, a chief boatswain in the U.S. Navy, was attached to the catapult crew. This group of men who served together under Bill's leadership would meet again half a century later to reminisce with their Chief about an unforgettable time aboard a remarkable ship.

From 1973-1976, when not in its homeport of Alameda, California, the *USS Oriskany* spent much of the time off the coast of Vietnam providing planes for defensive maneuvers. Chief Sowers' crew worked well together and boasted a record of zero accidents. He said this was the best crew he ever had. The catapult crew works on the deck of aircraft carriers performing the dangerous job of safely launching planes off the deck.

In 1976, Sowers was transferred and that same year, the *USS Oriskany* was decommissioned.

However, the *USS Oriskany's* story doesn't end there. In a joint effort between the U.S. Navy, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Escambia County, the aircraft carrier was sunk off the coast of Pensacola in 2006 to serve as a reef. The *USS Oriskany* was the first naval warship to be purposely sunk and now serves as the largest artificial reef in U.S. coastal waters.

Over the years, the Sowers stayed in contact with a few members of the catapult crew, and in April 2022 a reunion was held in Sowers' home of Virginia Beach. Ten members of the *USS Oriskany* crew traveled to Virginia Beach from locations throughout the United States to catch up, tell stories and show their love and appreciation for a man who was a "father figure" to them during their service.

Chief Sowers excelled in all aspects of his job, while keeping his crew safe and leaving an indelible impression, so much so, that after nearly 50 years, the crew continues to hold him in high regard. 🌟 MR



LEFT: The *USS Oriskany's* 1973-1976 catapult crew reunited in April 2022. **MIDDLE:** Chief Boatswain Sowers in uniform. **RIGHT:** Sowers and his crew launch an airplane off the ship.

Remembering

PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Sandy Germany 1948-2022



From Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is Not Free

Among the many fond words that come to mind when friends, mentees and fellow members recall Past

National President Sandy Germany are kind, warm and approachable.

"She loved her Seashells and always told us she was, 'proud of all y'all.' She would encourage us in any way she could," said Vivian Bernatos, one of Germany's Department Presidents. "There will never be another Mama Seashell like Sandy; she was truly one of a kind." Germany, a Life Member of Auxiliary 5658 who joined the organization in the late 1960s, passed away on November 15, 2022.

Members also recall her many successes, even as our nation weathered natural disasters and war. One of Germany's initiatives was to grow membership, which she worked toward through her "Global War on Terrorism Campaign" that rewarded top-performing Auxiliaries for their recruiting efforts.

Under her leadership and theme, *From Sea to Shining Sea, Freedom is Not Free*, Auxiliary members rallied to aid those devastated by Hurricane Katrina and also shipped more than 1,600 care packages to U.S. troops. One of Germany's own sons, Curtis, was deployed to Iraq while she was ascending the Chairs to National Presidency.

During her year, the Auxiliary made headway with technology, launching a new computer system (MALTA's predecessor) and offering online applications for the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest. Germany built the art contest's escrow fund to a self-sustaining level. Every year, you will see one amazing youth art entry accompanied by her name and home state: the Sandy Germany Department of Alabama Scholarship. She also initiated the Auxiliary's Continuing Education Scholarship that helps members and their immediate family members realize their career goals with funds for post-secondary studies.

Germany was a true Southern lady, said Past National President Armithia "Sissy" Borel.

"She was such a kind and giving person," she said. "She was courteous enough to listen to what others had to say, however she held to her convictions. During my journey in the National Chairs, she was always a listening board and then gave soft, loving but firm advice. But most of all Sandy was a very loyal friend (whose loss) leaves a hole in many hearts."

Past National President Linda Meader said of Germany, "Just such a terrific lady. Unique, wonderful, positive, great to be around, fun-loving and just the best person ever. I was thankful I got to follow her through the Chairs. I wish there were more people like (her). The Auxiliary has lost a lot losing Sandy Germany."

Germany joined the Auxiliary on the eligibility of her brother, Ronald, who served two tours in Vietnam in the U.S. Air Force. She came from a family of veterans; her father, Pete Frauenhoffer served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and son Curtis retired from the U.S. Army having served in Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Over the decades, she served the organization at many levels, including Auxiliary President, and gave many years to her Department as their Secretary and Treasurer. As District and Department President, she earned Runner-Up Outstanding President of the Year.

She retired in 2014 after 23 years as Elberta, Alabama's town clerk and court magistrate.

Back in the summer of 2005, describing the cover of her National Program Book featuring artwork of a mother and child standing on a beach gazing at the horizon where distant clouds form the face of a service member brought tears to Germany's eyes.

"There's somebody over there who's ready to give the ultimate sacrifice," she said at the time, "and there's somebody waiting on them at home. They should always be in our hearts and minds. From sea to shining sea, freedom is not free. That about says it, doesn't it?"

★ AC



10th CELEBRATING AMERICA'S FREEDOM EVENT

Flight 93 National Memorial

SHANKSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

A Common Field One Day... A Field of Honor Forever



Vacations, reuniting with family, work: All were reasons for 40 people to board a plane bound for San Francisco on September 1, 2001. To all of them, it was just another normal day. A summery September morning with clear blue skies. Passengers William Cashman, who served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army, and his friend Patrick Driscoll had plans to hike in Yosemite National Park. Twenty-year-old Deora Frances Bodley volunteered with the Special Olympics and was studying to become a child psychologist. Jane C. Folger, a Gold Star Mother who lost her son in Vietnam, was on her way to go sightseeing in California with her sister-in-law.

Four other passengers boarded Flight 93 with a completely different objective. The al Qaeda terrorists were intent on hijacking the plane. And as the terrorists emerged, these ordinary people on an ordinary day banded together with extraordinary purpose. They had to do something. And they did. Brave crew and passengers overcame the terrorists; as a result, a diabolical mission to attack the nation's Capitol failed. But not without an enormous cost.

All 40 passengers and crew perished on 9/11 when Flight 93 crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania. Their heroic actions saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

On September 10, 2022, nearly 200 VFW Auxiliary, VFW members and their guests gathered at the crash site, now known as the Flight 93 National Memorial, to honor these 40 individuals – this group of strangers from different states and generations with different hopes and dreams, who showed unimaginable bravery in the face of unfathomable evil.

“It’s OK for us to cry for them,” said National President Jane Reape on a blustery, overcast September morning. “We cry for Colleen Fraser, who helped draft the Americans with Disabilities Act. We cry for Donald and Jean Petersen, who’d just welcomed their first grandchild. And we cry for John Tagliani, a World War II veteran from Brooklyn...and we know it is better to cry as we remember them than it would be to forget.”



ABOVE: Flight 93 National Memorial visitors lay flowers and mementos for those who perished at this site on 9/11.



PREVIOUS PAGE: VFW Auxiliary National Senior Vice-President Carla Martinez and National Junior Vice-President Brenda Bryant place American Flags around an angel statue as each Flight 93 passenger's name is read aloud. RIGHT: 2022-2023 National Flag Bearer Caroline Gelatt and National Banner Bearer Mary Reape prepare for CAFE to begin at the memorial's arrival court.

CAFE

And while we can never fully show our gratitude, we can keep them in our hearts. Today, tomorrow and always.”

VFW National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt remarked that gathering at the site was humbling, noting the gravity of the memorial’s Tower of Voices monument with 40 wind chimes and marble Wall of Names forever etched with Flight 93 passengers and crew.

“It is fitting that we have this event here, the final resting place of Flight 93,” he said. “We have come together to celebrate America’s freedom and the bravery and heroic acts of these 40 souls should stand as a true reminder of the high cost of freedom. Today we must also think about all of the brave men and women who have courageously

served our nation. These men and women put their lives on the line to ensure that America truly is the land of the free.”

Following the presentation, Reape and Lipphardt laid a wreath at the site and National Senior Vice-President Carla Martinez and National Junior Vice-President Brenda Bryant placed small American Flags around an angel statue as National Secretary-Treasurer Ann Panteleakos read the names of each of the 40 aboard Flight 93.

On this gray, somber day, the sun shone briefly as National soloist Mary Touve Kackman sang “Amazing Grace.”

Reape, on behalf of the Auxiliary’s 475,000 members, presented Flight 93 National Memorial Superintendent Stephen M. Clark with a check for \$2,000. Clark said the funds will go toward the Western Overlook Transition Project, an enhancement of the place on the memorial grounds where families got their first glimpse of the 9/11 crash site. ([Read more here in Renatta Signorini’s article from TribLIVE](#))



LEFT: Charlene Hooper, Department of New York Guard, and other members react to VFW Auxiliary National President Jane Reape’s CAFE speech that honored those those aboard United Flight 93. **BELOW:** Reape accepts a Flag and proclamation from Robert Franz, National Park Ranger and Special Use Permit Coordinator. **RIGHT:** A CAFE attendee takes a photo of the impact site through the hemlock gate that separates it from the marble Wall of Names.



Of CAFE and taking in the memorial grounds and visitors' center, Susan Dinon of Auxiliary 621 in Virginia said, "It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever attended." It was this Life Member's first Celebrating America's Freedom Event. "I look forward to future CAFE events. Thank you, Madam National President, for selecting Flight 93 National Memorial."

For Pat Baldwin, 2022 marked her fifth CAFE. She, too, said she felt moved by attending and experiencing the event and memorial.

"I had similar feelings at the Punchbowl," she said. Punchbowl is the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii which hosted the Auxiliary's 2020 CAFE. Punchbowl is the final resting place of soldiers from across the Pacific Theater. Baldwin's husband, Joseph, whom she refers to as her treasure, is a World War II veteran who, at 96, is still active at his Post.

To see more images from the latest CAFE, visit our National website: vfwauxiliary.pixieset.com. Stay tuned for information to come in future editions of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* and the National E-Newsletter for news about the 11th-annual Celebrating America's Freedom Event. ✨ AC

Nicole Panteleakos, Staff Writer & Social Media Content Creator, contributed to this story.

Photos by Amanda Cook and Stanley Borusiewicz

RIGHT: A member listens to the CAFE presentation. **BELOW:** National Guard Kim Harney, VFW National Junior Vice Commander in Chief Al Lipphardt, Reape and National Conductress Donna Mills lay a wreath at the memorial site.





SPOTTING & SCAMMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

If you're following us on Facebook, you may have noticed that we've launched new features, diversified content and are posting more pictures from the National President's travels, postcards, Auxiliaries in Action, Throwback Thursdays, the VFW National Home and others sent in by you - our members!

As a result, our engagement is up and interactions between individual members, the general public and with Auxiliary Headquarters happen frequently. This is great! But the dark side is attracting even more spammers and scammers than usual. Some of these are very clever and while we try our best to delete their comments before anyone responds to them, sometimes they slip through. We've therefore been alarmed to see many members engaging with these "phishing" accounts. Below are some tips on spotting and avoiding them.

HEARTSTRINGS & FLATTERY

It used to be that spammers and scammers on Facebook generally either took the form (and profile pictures) of beautiful young women or men in lab coats, but our recent influx has been from accounts that have used the pictures of (likely real) military men and women in uniform, making them harder to spot while evoking empathy. Some even claim to be currently deployed and in need of assistance. This makes us feel compelled to respond, as they seem like the veterans and soldiers we help every day. If you are reasonably certain this is a scam, block the user without engaging. If you are unsure, direct them to either our website or that of the VFW, but do not do any more than that. Offer no personal information or assistance, and do not give out your personal email address or phone number.

Recently, most of the scammers we see on our page reply to comments our members have made on our Facebook posts. They generally start with a compliment and end with a plea to send them a friend request, or wording similar to "I've been so moved by your words, I would like to get to know you better."

SPAMMER VERSUS SCAMMER

Spammers post many messages on Facebook that are all the same (think copy/pasted). While spam is generally posted by bots (computer programs/robots), spam is often created by real people or businesses, then mass shared with the intention of getting attention or making sales. It's best to report and ignore online spam or delete it in your email inbox.

Scammers are people or bots looking to harm real people in some way. Many are phishing attempts - think "fishing for information" - as they try to steal your password protection question answers, credit card numbers and other personal information. These include the more obvious, asking for gift cards or cash, and the subtle, including "games" that ask for your favorite holidays, first cars, high school mascots or things like "combine your mother's maiden name with the first street you lived on to get your Hollywood stage name!"

WAS I HACKED?

If your account or email address is sending out messages you didn't write, this is a sign you were hacked. The most common way is through phishing. In addition to what is described above, this can happen when a Facebook user receives a message or email telling them there is an issue and they need to follow the link to log in now. The person clicks the link, puts in their login information and has no idea it has just been handed over to a scam artist. Sometimes these links are sent by friends with messages like "I just found this picture of you online! Click here to see it." Do not click on any potentially suspicious links. If from a friend, verify that they sent them by calling them or asking in person, not through Facebook. If from a stranger, delete.

If you are hacked, try to recover your account as quickly as possible. Change your password and, if possible, your email address, and enable two-point authentication, which would require anyone trying to log in to your account to enter a code texted to your phone or sent to your email address. If it is too late for this, get messages to your friends and contacts through a means other than Facebook (phone, email, at a meeting) to tell them what happened and whether you have created a new account. Make sure they know which is yours and not the cloned account. Cloned accounts look like a friend's real account - most are copied from individuals active on Facebook - and will try to draw you in with private messages, often say things like, "I had to create a new account" to trick friends into communicating with them. Before accepting, check to see if you're already friends; if you are, this is likely from a cloned account.

For even more on this topic, refer to the October 6 edition of the National E-Newsletter.



HOW DO HASHTAGS

If you follow the National Auxiliary online, you have probably seen us using several hashtags, including #vfwauxiliary, #patrioticholidays, #vfwauxcafe and #vfwaux, among others. Popular hashtags in the U.S. and beyond include #summertime, #amreading, #WisdomWednesday, #loveislove, #catsofinstagram, #dogstagram, #ThrowbackThursday or #tbt, #YOLO and #SundayFunday.

Hashtags are words, phrases or short sentences without spaces between words or punctuation, written after the pound sign, usually tacked on to the end of a post or picture caption on social media.

It is a label or keyword/phrase that makes it easier to find information online, especially on sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They work by bundling similar content. For example, if you are looking for ideas about youth activities, you might use the hashtag #VFWAUXYOUTH. If you write a post using that hashtag, you or others can click on it to find more posts about it. Capitalization does not matter, so #VFWAuxTBT works just the same as #vfwauxtbt, but make sure not to put any spaces between words.

Recently, we have asked you to share your photos on Facebook and Instagram using hashtags, which makes them easy for us to find. We may even want to use your photo in a newsletter, magazine article or social media post in the future (don't worry, we ask permission from the poster before sharing.) If using photographs of children at your events, ensure you have a release and/or express permission from the parents or guardians or take pictures that don't show children's faces (try backs of heads, hands on artwork, etc.)

Below are a few of the hashtags we may use and what they mean:

#vfw, #vfwauxiliary or #vfwaux – these are used for anything relating to the VFW and VFW Auxiliary that you would like to share with others.

WORK?

#vfwauxcafe – this is for photos from Celebrating America's Freedom Events.

#tbt or #throwbackthursday – this is used to share old photographs, often with captions.

#vfwauxtbt – this stands for VFW Auxiliary Throwback Thursday (see above). We would love to repost your old Auxiliary pictures on our social media on Thursdays, so if you have great ones you'd like to share, please make sure your post audience is set to public and use THIS hashtag so we can find it!

#vfwauxyouth, #vfwauxyouthactivities, #PatrioticArt, #VoiceofDemocracy, #VOD, #IllustratingAmerica, #FamilyFreedomFest, #PatriotismThroughLiteracy, #vfwnhc or #vfwnationalhome – these are hashtags you can use to share pictures or information relating to these scholarships or Programs.

#JanesJourney – We use this when posting pictures and postcards from National President Jane Reape's official visits to each Department.

#AuxiliariesinAction – We use this when sharing pictures and stories from your recent events, activities, fundraisers and the like.

#AuxSwap – SWAP stands for "Sharing Wonderful Auxiliary Projects & Programs," so we use this hashtag when Auxiliaries share their successful projects with other Auxiliaries.

#WisdomWednesday – this is used to share words of wisdom; on our pages, we typically use this hashtag each week when sharing a quote from a great American.

We hope this helps. And we hope to see more of your posts and photographs in the coming weeks and months, thanks to the use of HASHTAGS! ✨ NP

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECT UPDATE

Halfway into the Program Year, members have generously donated nearly \$36,000* to National President Jane Reape's special project, 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art. As members donate to this project, we can grow funds for this scholarship contest and award more money to more students who place at National level in the years ahead.

Reape created a separate contest exclusively for three-dimensional entries to "level the playing field," ensuring 3-D art like pottery and woodwork is judged with other 3-D art and 2-D art is judged with like media as well. "I am excited for the students who create three-dimensional artwork and will now be recognized in their own category," she said.

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art and Young American Creative Patriotic Art will have separate entry forms. However, a qualified student may enter both contests in the same year. In this case, two entry forms must be completed (one for each contest). Visit vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships to find them along with other resources including an information sheet and brochure.

The 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest has its own scholarship amounts. Current National awards are:

- 1st Place: \$2,500
- 2nd Place: \$1,000
- 3rd Place: \$500

District-level judging is optional for either art scholarship contest. Winning entries advance from the Auxiliary level to the Department to National.

* Total funds raised as of press time in December of 2022.

TO SUPPORT:

Log in to MALTA. Click on "Make a Gift." Select National President's Special Project.

Mail checks earmarked 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art to: VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters Attn: Scholarship Fund 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor Kansas City, MO 64111.

Student submission deadlines for both Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art are identical at all levels. Auxiliary deadlines also remain the same. Eligibility, rules and judging criteria remain unchanged.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

The student entry deadline to Auxiliaries is March 31. There's still time to promote this in your communities!



*117th Congress
Passes Historic
Veterans
Legislation*

VFW ADVOCACY in ACTION





ABOVE: President Biden signs the PACT Act into law in August of 2022. VFW National Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland looks on. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Veterans' advocate Jon Stewart speaks at a PACT Act press event at VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City.

On August 10, 2022, the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022*, known as the PACT Act, was finally signed into law. This historic, comprehensive legislation for toxic-exposed veterans underwent months of bipartisan and bicameral congressional procedures, votes, and deals, while veteran organizations led by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) fiercely advocated for its passage.

This bill was a combination of several standalone pieces of legislation intended to expand health care for generations of veterans who previously had to prove their conditions or illnesses were the result of service-connected exposure to toxic substances or environments. It includes Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provisions for 23 presumptive conditions for rare respiratory diseases and cancers, and creates a framework for the establishment of future presumptions of service connection related to toxic exposure.

For years, the VFW has called for toxic exposure reform. When VA refused to expand its list of presumptive conditions, the VFW moved its focus to asking and finally demanding that Congress pass legislation to force the issue. For generations, service members have suffered

from an array of unexplained health conditions and illnesses associated with the exposures and environmental hazards encountered during military service. Sadly, and to the detriment of recruitment efforts, military service became synonymous with toxic exposure.

Many bills had been introduced by both the House and Senate that covered certain veterans with certain conditions and illnesses. However, it eventually became clear that what was needed was a comprehensive, not piecemeal, approach to the problem. So, in early 2022, the focus shifted to taking the best parts of these individual bills to cover as many veterans and conditions as possible and roll them into a legislative package. This approach would resolve the issue once and for all, and allow veterans to receive appropriate and sufficient health care by taking the onus off of them to prove toxic exposure had occurred during service.

As more veterans were becoming ill and dying every day without proper care, the VFW was asked to testify before both the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs. In March, during a Senate hearing on toxic exposure, VFW National



Legislative Assistant Director Kristina Keenan stated the urgent need to pass comprehensive toxic exposure legislation to help millions of veterans, and to ensure VA has the appropriate staff and resources to implement this legislation. Keenan presented the challenge by saying, “To the members of this committee, you have the opportunity to be leaders in this historic moment. All eyes of the veteran community are on you right now.”

The VFW took the lead among a coalition of veteran organizations, and along with veteran advocates Jon Stewart and John Feal, started a campaign to “Pass the PACT Act.” The VFW activated grassroots advocates through call-to-action messages directed to the members of Congress. As congressional procedures including votes and amendments prolonged and stalled the bill’s movement, the VFW ramped up the tone of its Action Alerts, and advocates around the country responded. They challenged congressional leadership to do the right thing for our nation’s veterans and Pass the PACT Act immediately.

As summer approached, it became apparent there was considerable danger of the bill not passing in the 117th Congress. However, failure was not an option. The VFW held PACT Act rallies and press events in both Washington, D.C., and at VFW National

Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, that were attended by then-VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic, Jon Stewart, VFW Washington Office staff and large groups of veteran advocates. The cause gained significant media and social media attention. As interest and word spread, we were able to leverage our position on Capitol Hill.

After months of procedural delays and back-and-forth votes between congressional chambers, the fate of the bill rested on a final Senate vote. The final grassroots push was a two-day vigil held outside the United States Capitol by veterans demanding the passage of the PACT Act. Senate leadership publicly assured the veteran organization community that Congress would do the right thing and vote “YES.”

On August 2, 2022, the bill passed with a vote of 86-11, and it became Public Law 117-168 on August 10, 2022. Among those in attendance at the bill signing ceremony was VFW National Commander Tim Borland, who commented immediately following the event, “Too many of our brothers and sisters have succumbed to illnesses connected to toxic exposure. That is why this bill has been the VFW’s number one priority for the past few years, and we weren’t going to give up until it was passed.”

HQ MEMO: DUES REMINDER

PLEASE NOTE, IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR AUXILIARY DUES:

- An annual continuous member **MUST** have his or her 2023 dues received at VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters by June 30, 2023 to maintain his or her continuous years of membership within the organization. There is not a “reinstate” category for membership.
- If an annual continuous member’s 2023 dues are not received at National Headquarters by June 30, 2023, his or her continuous membership will end. He or she will then have to:
 - **REJOIN** the organization
 - **PROVE** his or her eligibility again
 - **BE READMITTED** by voting members into the local Auxiliary and
 - **START** continuous years over
- **Again, if an annual continuous member misses even a single year of paying dues on time, continuous years of membership start over at one (1.)**
- This change will also affect an annual continuous member’s eligibility for a Cancer Grant. If he or she does not maintain continuous membership, the member will have to wait one full year before they are eligible for a grant. There remains a limit of two grants per lifetime.



VFW FOUNDATION GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The VFW Foundation is offering grants to offset expenses related to community service projects and Auxiliaries, Posts and Districts may qualify for these funds.

All grants will operate on a reimbursement basis. Applicants will need to do a project and then submit an application with proof of how the funding was spent. Applicants are highly encouraged to contact the VFW Foundation prior to starting a project to ensure it qualifies. Detailed guidelines can be found on the application forms of each grant.

#STILLSERVING GRANTS – APPLICATIONS

Available at www.vfw.org/grants

1. COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT

This Community Support Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred while doing a community service project. Districts, Departments, VFW subordinate organizations, etc. may not apply. Both a VFW Post and its Auxiliary can receive funding of up to \$1,500. Applicants are limited to one Community Support Grant award during the October 1, 2022 – June 1, 2023 cycle.

2. DISTRICT CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP GRANT

The District Corporate Partnership Grant is offered exclusively to offset expenses related to the community service projects of VFW or VFW Auxiliary Districts that include substantive involvement of a VFW National corporate partner's local affiliate. Posts, Departments, VFW subordinate organizations, etc. may not apply. Applicants are limited to no more than \$1,500 in funding through the VFW District Corporate Partnership Grant award during the October 1, 2022 – June 1, 2023 cycle.

QUESTIONS? Email jcouch@vfw.org.



OUR HISTORY

MOVIES from HOME FOR VIETNAM SERVICEMEN



In 1966, Sam Feeback, then-chief cinematographer at WDAF-TV, Kansas City, decided to give back to soldiers stationed in Vietnam by filming holiday greetings from soldiers' families and

sending them to Vietnam for viewing by their loved one. Feeback continued his efforts for a second year in 1967. When Auxiliary National President Lora Waters heard about Feeback's project, she decided to partner with him in 1968 and they began to plan filming opportunities to be held at Richards Gabaur Air Force Base, located in the southwest outskirts of the Kansas City metropolitan area, and encouraged Auxiliaries across the country to participate and organize filming opportunities in their communities.

Interest in the Auxiliary's National project overwhelmed Auxiliary Headquarters as they were inundated with letters and phone calls, including an inquiry from someone at the Department of Defense who had learned of the project and wanted more information.

RIGHT: *The DeMatt family sits for their opportunity to send a message to their husband/father Ralph who was stationed in Vietnam.*
TOP: *Maj. Gen. William D. Greenfield, then-commander of the central NORAD region, and accompanied by 1968-1969 National President Lora Waters, presents the VFW Auxiliary Service Award plaque to Sam Feeback for outstanding service to the armed forces.*

The Auxiliary assembled a Movies from Home "kit" providing details and tips about the project and also loaned a 16 mm filmed demonstration outlining the steps to Auxiliaries as requested. Those interested in organizing a Movies from Home event were instructed to contact a nearby military base to get the word out and to provide a location, and to call the largest television station in the area to arrange a partnership for filming, editing and compiling the greetings. By Christmas 1968 more than 3,000 Movies from Home had been filmed from 26 states and sent to service members in Vietnam.

Although the project was no longer a National effort following Waters' Program Year, some Auxiliaries and Departments continued to film and send Movies from Home until the end of the Vietnam War in 1973, 50 years ago this month. ✨ MR





LARIAT-STYLE HEART NECKLACE AND EARRINGS

Rhodium plated 1/2" open heart pendant with full color enamel charm. Necklace has 19" chain with lobster claw clasp. Earrings are 2 3/4".
1682 Necklace **\$17.95**
1683 Earrings **\$17.95**

VELVET GIFT BOX Blue velvet, hinged opening. 5 x 4 x 1 1/4".
1262 **\$10.95**



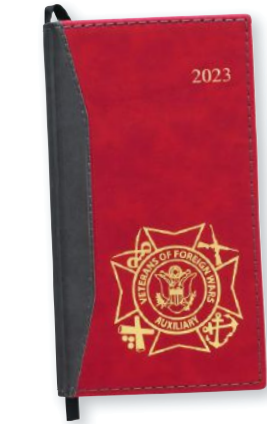
BRACELET Black braided leather. Laser engraved stainless steel. 8".
1677 **\$7.95**



ALLEGIANCE POLO

100% moisture-wicking polyester. Men's cut, three-button, no pocket. Ladies' fitted cut, two-button, feminine placket.

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|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 7771 Ladies' Red | 7876 Men's Red |
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| S-XL \$52.00 | S-XL \$52.00 |
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WEEKLY CALENDAR
 13-month, one-week at-a-glance format. 3 5/8 x 6 1/2".
1282 **\$8.00**



FLAG WITH AUXILIARY EMBLEM PIN
 Gold tone, clutch back. 1/2 x 1".
1716 **\$5.00**



STRAP WRAP PAD
 Soft micro-velour outside with lined fleece padding. Wrap around handles up to 2 3/4". Measures 8 x 3".
A. 1173 **\$17.95**

GREY TOTE Polycanvas. Large open pocket, two pen loops, inside lined with one zippered pocket and two smaller pockets. Zips closed. 21 x 14 x 7".
B. 1669 **\$20.95**

12 OZ. TUMBLER
 Double wall, vacuum sealed, stainless steel with copper lining. Press-in, drink-thru clear slider lid. Hand wash. **3140** **\$15.95**



LIFE MEMBER T-SHIRT
 Black 100% preshrunk cotton screen printed above front left pocket and back. Unisex sizing. Made in USA.
7790 S-XL **\$23.95**
 2XL-4XL **\$29.95**



PLANNER Black faux leather with debossed Auxiliary Emblem. Magnetic closure. Spiral bound weekly planner. 8 3/4 x 6 3/8 x 1 1/4".
1221 **\$21.95**

Ordering from the VFW Store is easy...

Mail: VFW Member Service Center, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111

Phone: 1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)

Online: vfwstore.org **Fax:** 1.816.968.1115

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VFWSTORE.ORG

Prices valid through 8/31/2023

Your purchase from the VFW Store supports veterans, military service members and their families!