

MARCH 2025

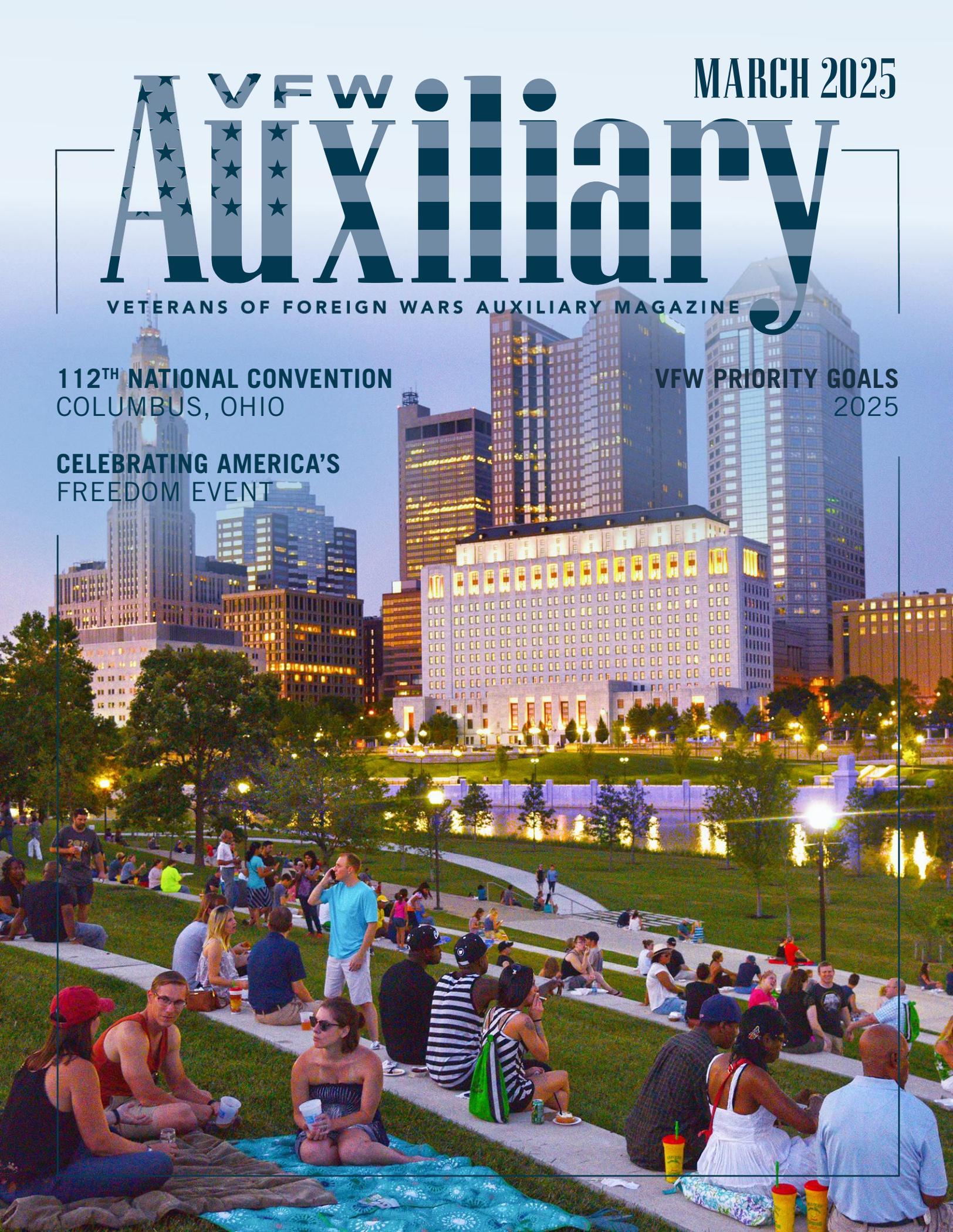
VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

112TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
COLUMBUS, OHIO

VFW PRIORITY GOALS
2025

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S
FREEDOM EVENT





READY TO TAKE RECRUITING TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Now you can with the Red Auxiliary Keychain featuring our Membership QR code! It's available now.

The QR code will take anyone, anywhere to our digital "recruiting kit" that includes information about our organization - what we do, our Fact Sheet, Membership application and brochure and an Auxiliary locator. This tool makes recruiting new members easier and more convenient; it's especially great for digital natives (the younger generations) we encounter who don't necessarily want to carry around hard copies of our resources.

These keychains cost \$4.

FIND THEM HERE:

<https://www.vfwstore.org/products/32640>



DATES & DEADLINES

March

For Program awards deadlines for March and April, see the 2024-2025 National Program Book online in MALTA Member Resources.

MARCH 1-6 VFW Legislative Conference/Voice of Democracy Scholarship winners, 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 and Illustrating America - Student entries must be submitted to a participating sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for judging.

April

APRIL 5 Gold Star Spouses Day

APRIL 20 Easter

APRIL 15 Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art contests and Illustrating America - One winner from each VFW Auxiliary advances to the VFW Auxiliary District (optional) then Department (state) for judging.

APRIL 20-26 National Volunteer Week

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FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



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About the Cover

About the Cover: Residents enjoy a summer evening along Scioto Mile, named one of the 10 best riverwalks in 2024. *Photo by Randall L. Schieber, Experience Columbus*

TUESDAYS ARE FOR

TRIVIA

ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



Check out Facebook and Instagram every Tuesday to test your knowledge of our organization.

As we comb through our archives reading more about the origins and past of the Auxiliary, and as we are already working on next year's Program Book, we are learning more and more about our organization and we hope to share that with you. We also know that our members have good memories and an abundance of knowledge, so we've decided to start a new regular segment on social media - Trivia Tuesdays!

We will share a trivia question about the VFW Auxiliary – though we may even throw in the occasional question about U.S. history, the VFW, the VFW National Home, the Military Order of the Cootie, American government and more to keep it interesting. Questions will be posted to Facebook and Instagram on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. CST with the answers shared (along with recognition of the winner) on Thursdays and in the second E-Newsletter each month.

We urge you not to google or look up answers – if you aren't sure, that's okay, give it a guess! And be sure to share with fellow members.

get SOCIAL

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

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

 **Facebook**
[vfwauxiliary](#)

 **Pinterest**
[vfwauxiliary](#)

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





I have been privileged to meet some of the most outstanding members as I travel around.

Dear members —

When we began planning for this year, I asked the Department Presidents to introduce me to their members, and that is exactly what they are doing. I have been privileged to meet some of the most outstanding members as I travel around. At each Post we stopped in, I learned about the amazing and creative ways our members are helping our veterans. I have seen some of the most beautiful and heartwarming monuments at your veterans' parks and memorial gardens. You have taken this year's theme, *From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans*, to heart and I could not be prouder of the members of this organization.

Congratulations to National Membership Ambassador Linda Roloff and her Conference Chairmen for continuously working so hard on membership. As this year moves along, we need to check on any member who has not paid their dues. It is our goal to not leave any members behind, so call or stop by their home and find out why they haven't paid their dues yet. If we want to continue having a strong and effective voice in Congress, then we must keep growing.

It is my honor to represent the VFW Auxiliary in Washington, D.C. the first week in March, where we will hear our National VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt address Congress at a special joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. Plus, I will have the added privilege of handing the well-deserved checks to the outstanding winners of the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay contests. Each of us should be proud of the work we are doing to spread patriotism in our communities.

Please make sure you register for the 2025 National Convention in Ohio. This National Convention will be one day shorter, so be prepared to have your running shoes on, because we have many exciting things for you to see. I am ready to applaud you as we celebrate all the accomplishments you have completed so far this year. But our work is never done, so do continue with the outstanding projects you are working on.

My heart is filled with all the love you have given me as I travel around to your Departments. May God bless each of you.

Loyally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Bryant". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

BRENDA BRYANT
National President



“
Now that
we're back from
Mid-Year Conference
in Cancun, we can
dig in to the final
half of the Program
Year leading
up to our 112th
National Convention.”

Dear members —

Now that we're back from the business and fun in the sun of Mid-Year Conference in Cancun, we can dig in to the final half of the Program Year leading up to our 112th National Convention in Ohio.

Look for more information about Mid-Year and a story about National Guard candidates in an upcoming edition of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*.

In this edition, we'll take a look at the VFW's 2025 Priority Goals, important issues that we, along with the VFW, work on for our veterans and service members through our relationships that influence legislators, lawmakers and government officials.

Also read about [MALTA](#), our membership database that is truly for the benefit of every member. If you aren't familiar with MALTA, this is a good time to learn about it. Make sure you have an active profile that includes your phone number and email address (which is how we send you our National E-Newsletter and magazine). Also find information about the MALTA app.

Members will visit Columbus for National Convention August 9-13, where members will cast their votes for our newest National Line Officer. Note: Convention is one day shorter than it was last year. Read more about our host city, sometimes called the City of Arches, on page 9. Register online in MALTA or by mail beginning March 18.

We look forward to seeing you in a few months!

AMANDA COOK
Editor-In-Chief

VOLUME 88 NUMBER 5

Editor-In-Chief
Amanda Cook

Contributing Writers
Nicole Panteleakos &
Kris Baker

VFW Auxiliary Magazine

is published six times per year – January, March, May, July, September and November – by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary, 406 West 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111.

Editorial Office

Address all communications for publication to The Editor, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111, (816) 561-8655, Fax (816) 931-4753. Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by return postage and no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. Poetry submissions are not accepted. Or email info@vfwauxiliary.org.

Graphic Design

Braden Design
jaclynn@bradendesign.co

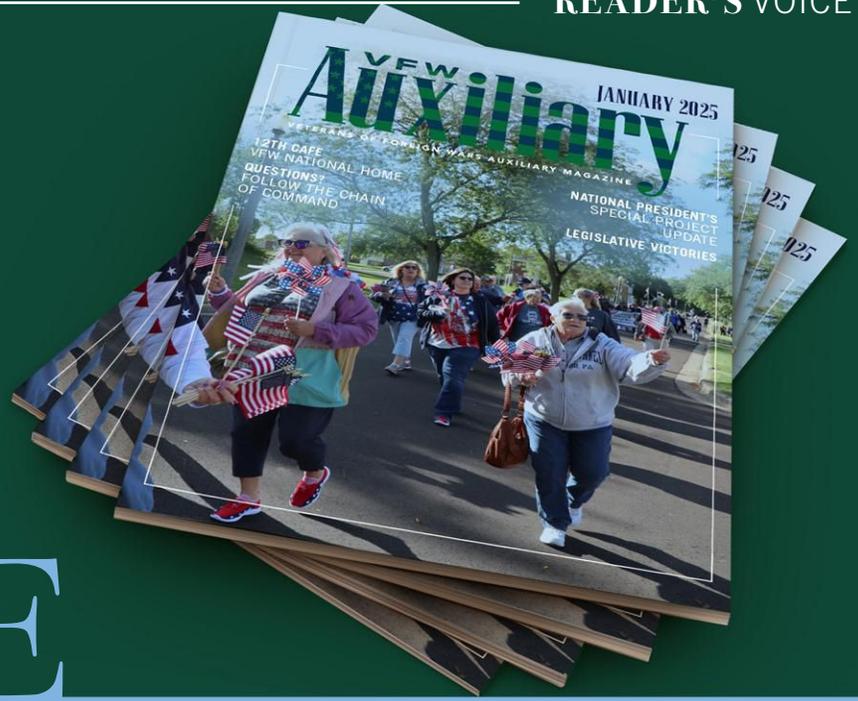
Change of Address

Forward address changes to: Circulation Department, VFW Auxiliary Magazine, 406 W. 34th St., 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111. Members may also change their own address or email address in MALTA. 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 following note came to us in response to a From the Archives Friday post on our social media in January. It is from Past National President Hedwig Olson's granddaughter, Abby Hull. Olson served as National President in the mid-1950s. While HQ did not find Sgt. Warren Olson's original letter to his mother in its archives, we were able to track down an excerpt from his letter that was published in the Celebrate 75 Years Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW book as well as other photos, stories and press releases about Olson that we could share with Abby.

Good morning. My name is Abby Hull. My grandmother was Hedwig Olson, who was a past National President of the VFW Auxiliary (1955-1956). Just a few weeks ago, I saw that you were remembering a letter that my father, Warren L. Olson wrote to his mother, asking for her to show her support for the Korean children's fund. My brother told me that 20 years before, it had been part of the 50th anniversary issue of the Auxiliary's magazine. I am wondering if you have the complete letter. If so, I would love to see and read the entire letter if possible. The Auxiliary was a big part of my grandmother's life; I have vivid memories of being a child and spending time putting

Poppies on the gravesites of so many veterans. Just thought I would take a shot and see if you have anything that would satisfy my interest. Thank you.

— ABBY HULL

FROM THE EDITORS: Abby, thank you for contacting us! It is wonderful to hear from readers and so interesting to hear from the families of our members who have such fond memories - such a unique perspective.

If you would like to share your thoughts about a story you've seen (or would like to see) in *VFW Auxiliary Magazine*, email us at info@vfwauxiliary.org with the subject line: Letter to the Editor.

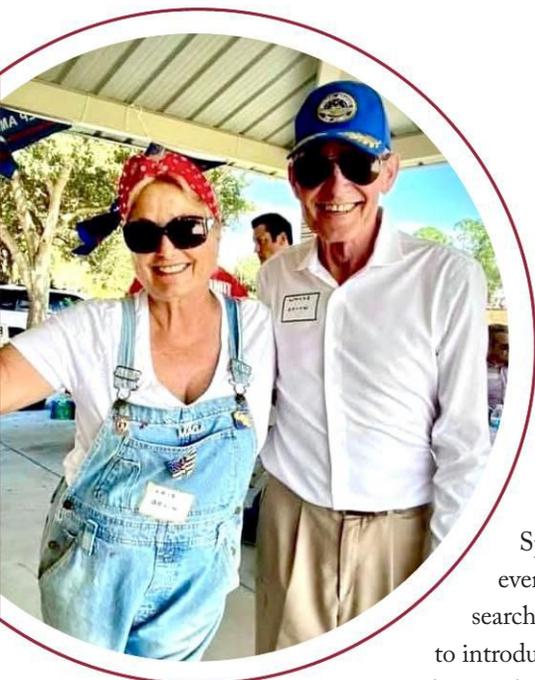


Olson takes her oath of office at the 1955 National Encampment at the Auxiliary's first formal night installation in Boston, Massachusetts.

MEMBER

SPOTLIGHT

LOIS BOLIN



AUXILIARY MEMBER'S PATH OF SERVICE LEADS TO

LOVE, FRIENDSHIPS AND GRATITUDE

When Lois Bolin attended a Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive event in 2012, she was searching for someone to introduce one of her speakers at the upcoming Greatest Generation Breakfast. Bolin, current Junior

Vice-President of Auxiliary 7721 (Naples, Florida) had arranged for a World War II Prisoner of War (POW) speaker at the breakfast and now she needed to find someone with the right gravitas to introduce him. A politician she had hoped would speak passed her over with a respectful nod. Witnessing this, a man standing in the corner called out, "Hey, you need to listen to this lady."

"When I asked who the guy was, some of the participants were aghast that I did not know POW Wayne Smith," Bolin said. Hearing his story of how he was an Air Force veteran who had spent five and a half years as a POW during the Vietnam War, she knew she had found someone with that gravitas. Smith agreed to do the introduction.

A year later, Bolin's path of service would reunite her with Smith. Bolin established the Honor Flight program for southwest Florida, which transports veterans to Washington, D.C. to be honored at memorial services.

She needed an honorary veteran to head up this campaign, so she suggested Smith. After choosing Smith for the campaign, she decided to make a more life-altering choice.

"I said to him, 'Before you make any decision of who you'd like to spend time with, I want you to know that I'm putting my hat in the ring and I would like a seat at your table,'" she said. "He laughed and took hold of my hand and we've been together since." Bolin and Smith married in 2015.

Now each year Bolin leads the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) ceremony at her Post. It is a cause special to her as well as Smith.

"Of course, I think she is wonderful and am incredibly proud and grateful for all the efforts she puts forth for our veterans and especially the POW/MIAs," Smith said. "She does this not just for me, but for all our POWs."

SERVING IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

Bolin first joined the Auxiliary after attending a few meetings. Since then, she has become the member who always reminds everyone of upcoming military holidays, as well as local events the Auxiliary can be involved with.



THIS PAGE: Smith reads to students at a local school in Naples, Florida. He and Bolin read history-related books to children as part of a community literacy program.

PAGE 7: Auxiliary 7721 member Lois Bolin wears her Rosie the Riveter garb alongside husband and Air Force veteran Wayne Smith.

“Lois recognized the need to acknowledge the World War II veterans in our community, starting a Salute to Veterans event and getting the community involved. Many of the World War II veterans are gone but the tradition continues each year to honor all veterans,” said Betty Bailey, President of Auxiliary 7721 “Our community had some original ‘Rosie the Riveters.’ Lois arranged a special luncheon to recognize and honor these women and continued (the tradition) until the last Rosie (in their community) passed away.”

“It is a labor of love,” Bolin said of her work with the Auxiliary. “Every time I call on the Auxiliary they always answer. They give every project a much bigger platform and make it more special than I even thought it could be.”

Bolin has found several projects that speak to her varied interests. As an avid reader she joined a literacy program that goes into schools and reads history-related books to children. During this past year she has read to more than 100 children.

“I really enjoy reading to the kids,” Bolin said. “I give them Flags to help get them engaged. We want them

to remember the experience. These are America’s next generation, and we want them well read and informed.”

Bolin is a writer as well and contributes to a local lifestyle magazine called *Life in Naples*. She has written more than 345 articles for the publication, including many on veterans and military history. Her interest in

military history also led her to create the “Keep The Spirit of ‘45 Alive” celebration. This event honors the sacrifices of those from World War II.

“Seeing the smiles on the veterans’ faces makes it fun,” Bolin said.

Bolin never expected her journey to honor veterans would lead her to a husband, as well as the many friends she has made in the Auxiliary.

“I love the ladies of the Auxiliary,” she said. “Our Auxiliary has so many

seriously accomplished members. I love the ‘double take feeling’ I get when I connect the dots to learn of my ‘sistas’ amazing accomplishments.” ♦ KB

FOR MORE INFORMATION on southwest Florida’s Honor Flight Program go to swflhonorflight.org.

**“EVERY TIME I
CALL ON THE
AUXILIARY
THEY ALWAYS
ANSWER.”**

2025

NATIONAL

YES, ★ COLUMBUS, OHIO

We're headed to Ohio's capital city for the VFW Auxiliary's 112th National Convention – also the town where our parent organization was born 125 years ago. Columbus is the geographical prologue of our origin story; it represents the roots of our family tree. We, the VFW Auxiliary, the family members of veterans and service members, would not exist without the VFW.

HISTORY

The sisters (VFW Auxiliary) joined this family of service in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with its first Encampment in 1914 with just 47 members. Today our membership is nearly 480,000 strong and represented by men and women across the United States and the world.

Belonging to the Auxiliary is a lifelong “thank you” to every veteran who has ever served in uniform. It is a way of life that says, “I can never pay you back for what you have done for me.” Both the VFW, America's oldest major overseas combat veterans' organization, and the Auxiliary “have stood the test of time despite all obstacles, internal and external. That means something. That points to a strong thread of commonality pulled through the fabric of our country's history without breaking.” – *100 Years of Our Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars*

In August we'll converge on the site where it all began, a metropolitan area founded in the early 19th century at the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy rivers and named after Italian explorer Christopher Columbus.

THINGS TO DO

Columbus is known for its museums (from science to veterans' memorial to fine art), culinary scene, botanical gardens, unique neighborhoods, historical districts and more.

“Columbus is a place where new experiences and ideas thrive. We're a city that refuses to rest on our laurels. Together, we push forward every day to make our city great — and we've been quietly stacking up accolade after accolade for our collective can-do spirit... It's time for the world to know Columbus as we do: a top destination with more than meets the eye.”

With Yes, Columbus, (a campaign that promotes tourism) “We're claiming our rightful place alongside the world's marquee cities. Get ready to say to yourself, ‘Really, that's Columbus?’ Yes.” - [Experience Columbus](#), the city's nonprofit destination marketing organization.

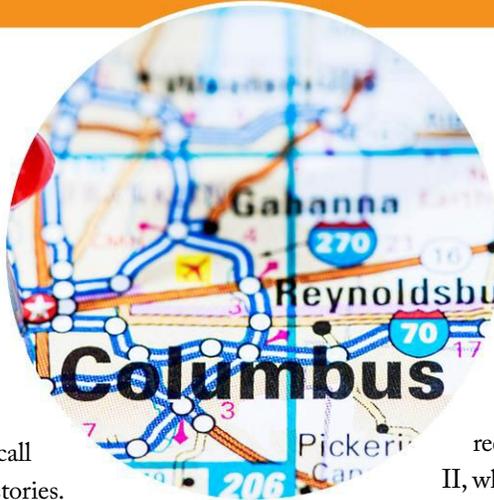
Read on to find out about "must do" activities and destinations, all from Experience Columbus.



CONVENTION

NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum is the only museum in history dedicated to honoring all the courageous men and women who answered the call of our country. Hear their stories. Honor their service. Located one mile from the Convention Center.



THE SCIOTO MILE

Late in 2015, the Scioto Mile created 33 new acres of parkland in downtown Columbus. Named one of the 10 best riverwalks in the nation in 2024 by *USA Today*, the area has miles of multi-use trails stretching from Bicentennial Plaza in the south to North Bank Park in the north, making it a great spot to take a stroll and enjoy both the city and nature. COSI (Center of Science and Industry, voted best science museum in the nation for three consecutive years) flanks the park to the west, and artsy Franklinton lies just beyond that.

FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

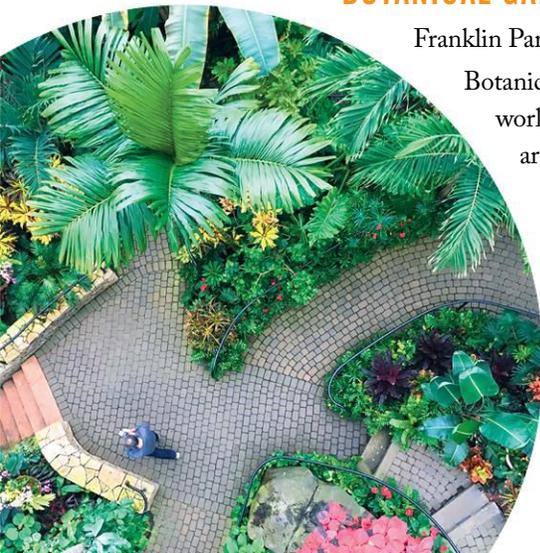
Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers world-class horticulture, art and nature-based exhibitions and educational

programs for all ages. Situated on 40 acres on the eastern side of Franklin Park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House; 83,000 square feet of glasshouses; botanical gardens including the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden; and meeting and event spaces. The Conservatory owns the largest collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly in a botanical garden and is home to internationally recognized light artist James Turrell's Light Raiment II, which illuminates the John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS

Located just south of downtown Columbus across the Scioto River, you'll find the historic neighborhood of Franklinton. **Franklinton** is known for attractions and experiences big and small, with business owners drawn to the community for its supportive nature. The neighborhood is home to creatives of all types, with galleries, public art and more.

Just south of downtown Columbus lies **German Village**. Built by German settlers hundreds of years ago, the area is defined by its brick homes and shops, as well as brick-lined streets. Historic charm and modern tweaks exist side by side here. Peruse local businesses that include delicious pastry and coffee shops and the truly unique 32-room Book Loft. With its historic lighted arches lining High Street, the **Short North**, the "art and soul" of the city, got its name back in the day because of its position



EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS

north of downtown Columbus and short of the University District. Today, it's home to 300-plus businesses, many of which are locally owned or headquartered, including restaurants, boutiques, coffee shops, DIY food and fun experiences, rooftop bars and entertainment options. Stop in at one of the area's women-owned, LGBTQ+-owned and Black-owned shops, businesses and culinary spaces. Art enthusiasts are sure to note the eye-catching street art and sculptures spread throughout the neighborhood.

DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS — “Everybody’s neighborhood” — boasts inventive culinary concepts, cultural and educational institutions, historic theaters, waterfront activities and plenty of community green space (with concerts, food trucks and group exercise sessions). You’ll also find beautiful architecture (the local library branch is one of *Fodor’s Travel’s* “11 Most Beautiful Libraries in the U.S.”) and one of the most unique parks in the world, the Topiary Park.

FOOD

Columbus offers visitors dining to please any palate, from locally owned restaurants to coffee shops and bakeries to Instagrammable entrees from the German Village. Among “must-try” food and drink items are the Buckeye doughnut, the Thurmanator burger and Bottoms Up Rainy Day Coffee served with a cotton candy “cloud” that slowly and beautifully sweetens your cup of joe. And did you know

that Columbus even has its own pizza style? They do; it is square-cut, has thin crust and is known for its dense toppings and sweet sauce. Click [here](#) to learn more about these and other foodie destinations.



WEATHER

Summer weather in Columbus is relatively mild, typically in the upper 70s to low- to mid-80s.

THIS PAGE ABOVE: The National Veterans Memorial and Museum. This unique building is circular. **TOP:** Diners enjoy an evening out in the German Village. (Photo credit: Laura Watilo Blake/Experience Columbus) **PREVIOUS PAGE:** An aerial view of the Franklin Park Conservatory and live music in the Short North Arts District. (Photo credit: Levy Ely/Experience Columbus)



We look forward to seeing many of you this summer. Don't forget to get registered for Convention, and keep an eye out for important news and updates about this event on our National website and in upcoming editions of *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* and in the National E-Newsletter. Fun fact: The last time the VFW Auxiliary held its National Convention in "Arch City" was 1938! [★ AC/Experience Columbus]

To read more about the VFW's 125 years of history, find the September 2024 edition of *VFW magazine* linked [here](#).

RIGHT: Each year, VFW and Auxiliary members in the Department of Ohio celebrate the organization's origins during Founders Day; in 2024, VFW Auxiliary National President Brenda Bryant and National Chaplain Sandra Uzell joined VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt for the festivities. **ABOVE:** A giant gavel sculpture greets visitors at Columbus' Hall of Justice. **TOP:** An LED wall in the Greater Columbus Convention Center. (Photo credit: Fienknopf Photography, Brad Fienknopf/Experience Columbus)





2025 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.

LS = Livestream

FRI, AUG. 8

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Early packet pickup at atrium between the Hyatt Regency Columbus and Hilton Columbus Downtown hotels.

SAT, AUG. 9

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 (LS)

SUN, AUG.10

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

8:30-9:30 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 (LS)

MON, AUG. 11

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 (LS)

5:30-10:00 p.m. VFW Awards Banquet, Battelle Grand Ballroom, convention center. Online registration information to be announced.

TUE, AUG. 12

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

8:00 a.m. - Noon Auxiliary Business Session (LS) *(Last day for exhibits/registration)*

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

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

WED, AUG.13

8:00-8:15 a.m. Presentation of Department Presidents with Colors (LS)

8:30-11:30 a.m. Officer Election, Installation and Closing Session (LS)

1:00-3:00 p.m. National District Council Meeting, Hyatt Regency Columbus

4:00-6:00 p.m. Joint Reception for Commander-in-Chief and National President *(Ticketed event)*, Convention Center

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 Credit card

DO NOT SEND CASH.

Credit Card No. Visa MasterCard

Name on card Discover American Express

Billing address for card

City State ZIP

Expiration date

3-digit CVV code on back of card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover)

4-digit CVV code on front of card (Amex only)

(Cardholder's signature)

(Date)

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.

SAVE \$15!

Advance registration is \$25.

On-site registration is \$40.

Register in MALTA, pay with a credit card (form above) or mail a check to:

VFW Auxiliary

406 W. 34th 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, Aug. 9 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, 1980, and maintained continuous membership since that date.



SAVE THE DATE:

13TH CELEBRATING AMERICA'S FREEDOM EVENT

TENTATIVE LOCATION:

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL | WASHINGTON, D.C.

Join incoming VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callahan and fellow members in Washington, D.C. to Celebrate America's Freedom at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on February 28, 2026.

This site, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, is the most-visited memorial on the National Mall in Washington, attracting more than 5 million people each year. The most prominent feature of the memorial is a massive wall that lists the names of the more than 58,000 servicemen and servicewomen who lost their lives during the Vietnam War.

Callahan's husband Terry is a Vietnam veteran, and her father, Ruben Tamariz, under whose eligibility she joined the VFW Auxiliary, served in the U.S. Army in Korea and Vietnam.

The memorial also features the Three Servicemen statue, the Vietnam Women's Memorial, the In Memory plaque and a flagpole with an etching of the insignia of what were then the country's five military branches. Click [here](#) to learn more about the location.

Look for registration to open in MALTA around December. The registration fee will cover transportation only to and from the hotel. More details will be available as we get closer to this event.

Note: Because the National Parks Service will sign event contracts no sooner than one year in advance (after press time), details may be subject to change.



ABOVE: The Three Servicemen statue at the memorial. **TOP:** The Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is engraved with the names of the more than 58,000 service members who gave their lives during the war.



CHECKPOINT



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

Email your name and email address to magazine@vfw.org. Then watch your inbox for this newsletter — which is emailed 10 times a year — highlighting the good work of VFW Posts and Auxiliaries around the world.

VFW 2025

PRIORITY GOALS

The VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed since the beginning of the 20th century. Everything the VFW does on Capitol Hill is with the VFW's Priority Goals and veterans' well-being in mind. With the strength of the more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, our voice on Capitol Hill cannot be ignored.

BUDGET

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

- 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:

- 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.
- Properly oversee and update the modernized appeals process, digital claims processing and antiquated examination process.

- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, burial allowances and other benefits for survivors.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.
- Ensure that earned VA benefits are never unjustly reduced.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

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

- Improve education benefits through modernized online student housing allowances, child care stipends, parity for Guard and Reserve members and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Enhance outreach and counseling to veterans eligible for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program.
- 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.
- Eliminate red tape preventing effective use of education and employment benefits.

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.
- Reform the dysfunctional community care program at VA.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research the efficacy of plant-based 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.
- Modernize care for veterans outside of the United States.

MILITARY READINESS

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

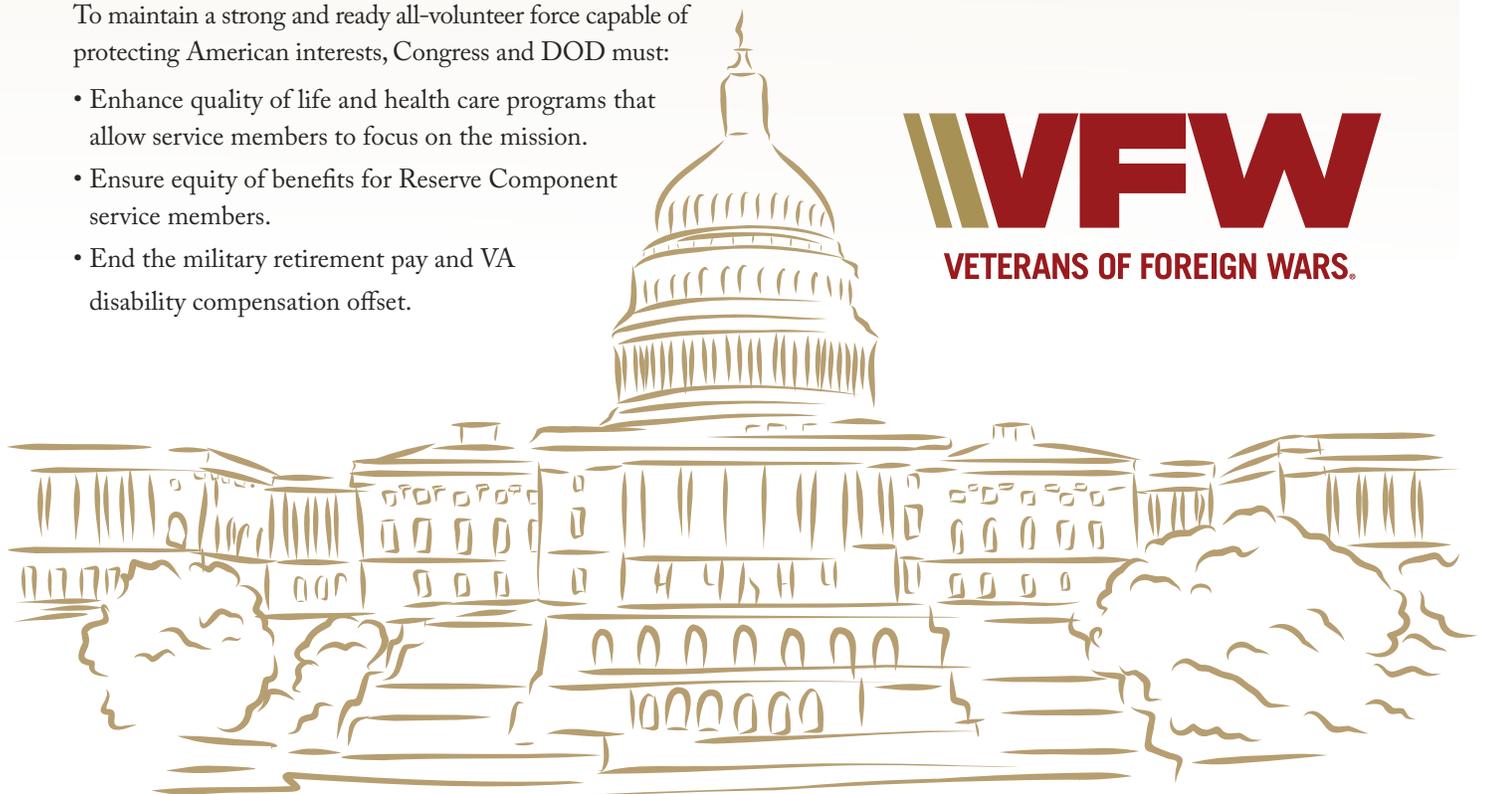
- Enhance quality of life and health care programs that allow service members to focus on the mission.
- Ensure equity of benefits for Reserve Component service members.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.

- Provide benefit enrollment for all transitioning service members.
- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- Ensure that military housing and work spaces are safe and modern.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.

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.



HQ MEMO

THINK

Before electing Delegates and Alternates for your 2025 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 portion thereof at the time of election); Department (**Section 303-1** 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 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.



VOTE

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.

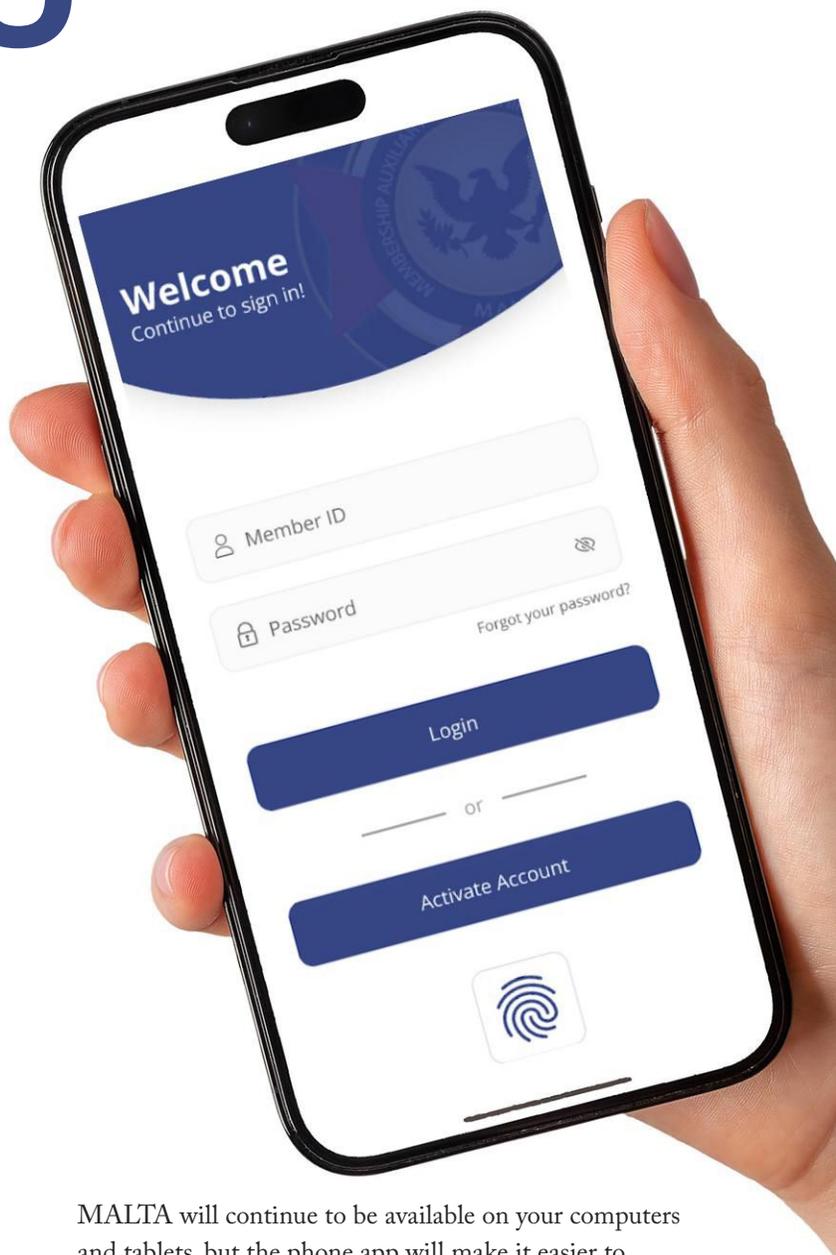
Creating a login is easy! All you need is your member ID, your Auxiliary number and ZIP code.

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 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 of 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.

THE MALTA MOBILE APP IS LIVE 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>

Our HISTORY

THE GOOD IDEAS OF EFFIE KING, PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT, SET PRECEDENTS

Past National President Effie King was a woman of good ideas.

Elected to the highest office in the organization at the National Encampment in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1924, King would go on to serve two consecutive terms. A member of Auxiliary 74 in Chicago, Illinois, believed to have joined under the eligibility of a Spanish War veteran, King also served as National President of the United Spanish War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary – it remains rare for someone to hold the highest national office in two different Veterans Service Organization Auxiliaries.

When she took office, 13 Departments were mid-formation – 16 would be formally established under her leadership in 1925. King was a staunch supporter of the VFW National Home; it was under her direction that it became the first-ever continuing Program of the VFW Auxiliary and at the National Encampment in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1925, donations for the home included more than \$450 in cash (worth \$8,116 today), plus 1,200 pieces of bed and table linens in addition to children's clothing.

Among the good ideas of Effie King were the purchase and presentation of a large silk American Flag to a worthy civic official in every National Encampment (now called



Past National President
Effie King
1924-1925

National Convention) host city. Each Auxiliary pledged \$1 toward this patriotic gift. This became an Auxiliary tradition that continued for more than 50 years. Some Departments, including Connecticut, were inspired by this and continue these Flag presentations to this day.

Also new under King was the addition of a new elected Line Officer position, Judge Advocate. In 1935, it was renamed Parliamentarian and the following year it was no longer listed as a Line

Officer position, though appointed National Convention Parliamentarians remain integral to the Auxiliary.

King was concerned for the public image of the VFW Auxiliary. She believed communication across the country was key to the success of the growing organization, and so she traveled extensively to spread the word about our good works while heartily supporting the popular *VFW Auxiliary Messenger*, publication of which began just prior to her term but unfortunately ceased during her presidency due to high costs and low funding. Though the precursor to *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* was ultimately unsuccessful, her attempts at membership growth were not! There were 69 new Auxiliaries instituted in her second term alone, with thousands of new members joining the organization nationwide, and she presented prizes for membership at National Encampment.

King briefly held the title “first of the traveling presidents” because she visited nearly every Auxiliary Department during her second term, journeying only by train and

automobile (though the title was later bestowed upon National President Bessie Hanken, first to fly on official business). Still, reports of King's travels were a highlight of Encampment attendees. Members across the nation were excited to meet her in their states. King was right about the importance of meeting members in person, but now National Presidents fly when visiting all 50 Departments.

Another good idea of President King? Encampment Yearbooks! As early as 1915, the VFW had an Encampment Souvenir Book, but the Auxiliary did not. King sought to change that and spearheaded the publication of our own unique Encampment Yearbooks, full of important information. A century later, we still publish these each year, though they are now called Convention Books. These contain information about National Programs, National Ambassadors, awards, resolutions, proposed Bylaws changes, Line Officer reports and a letter from the outgoing and incoming National Presidents, plus the Convention agenda and a convention center map.

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters has Convention Books dating back to the 1960s, but unfortunately, it appears older books have either been discarded or lost to time. If you are in a possession of a National Convention Book or a National Encampment Yearbook published prior to 1960 and are interested in donating, contact us at info@vfwauxiliary.org. 🇺🇸 NP

Did you know that National Conventions were previously called National Encampments?

And did you know that before they were National Encampments, they were called... Conventions!

The first National meeting of the organization for which detailed minutes remain was in 1919. The "neatly-mimeographed, seven-page record" of the meeting, which was held in Providence, Rhode Island, is believed to be the first such report of a National Convention, and the heading reads "Report of 6th Annual Convention Ladies' Auxiliaries – Veterans of Foreign Wars." National Auxiliaries, not Auxiliary – even though there were National Line Officers leading the organization, each Auxiliary was seen as a separate unit with their own delegations, labeled an "association" rather than an "organization," and no Departments, Districts or official Bylaws yet existed.

Members at that Convention were in good spirits, as the Great War had ended the previous November and they believed a long period of peace was ahead. This was the last of the "formative years" as the National Auxiliary would be given their Charter by the VFW the following year in Washington, D.C.,

during which the business session opened as a National Convention and closed as a National Encampment.



LEFT: The First Encampment in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania more than a century ago.



NEW

NEW! CREAM SHAWL 70/30 polyester/viscose with VFW Auxiliary printed on one end. Fringe on both ends. 26 x 77". 1078 \$24.50



NEW

NEW! AUXILIARY LIFE MEMBER COIN Auxiliary Emblem on one side. U.S. flag with Auxiliary slogan on other side. Ceramic. 1 3/4" diameter. Imported. 1947 \$6.00



PONYTAIL CAP 100% cotton. Unstructured, six-panel, low profile. Makeup resistant, breathable wicking sweatband. Antique brass tri-glide buckle closure. Concealed ponytail opening. 7156 \$21.00

PATRIOTIC ART

Thank your participants!



DRAWSTRING BACKPACK Black polycanvas with drawstring, 18 x 14 1/2". 1870 \$17.95 *While quantities last.*



SKETCH PAD Spiral bound, black hardcover, 70 pages. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2" 1872 \$12.95

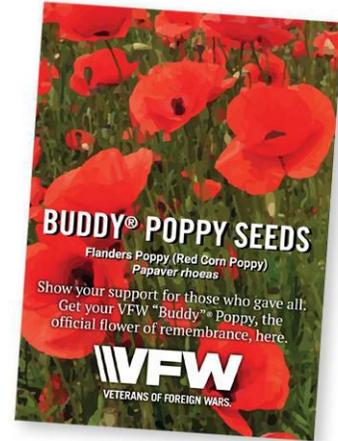


DOG TAG CARABINER 2" aluminum dog tag on a black carabiner. 1871 \$7.00



PIN Enamel with antique silver plating. Double post with rubber backs. 1 1/4". 1873 \$3.00

VFW
VFWSTORE.ORG



NEW

NEW! POPPY SEEDS Grow your own red corn poppies. This annual can grow to 12" to 30" tall. Plant in full sun. Approx. 350 seeds per packet. 1250 \$3.00



NEW

NEW! PURPLE MIST TEXTURED CREPE BLOUSE 100% polyester crepe. Side vents. Auxiliary Emblem embroidered on left chest. 7188 S-3XL \$42.00 (runs small)



SUNSHADE Blue with silver lettering. Polyester. 60" x 28". Made in USA. 1234 \$13.95