



Americanism

October 2026



Department President's Theme
"Growing Stronger for Our Veterans"

National President's Theme
"Serving America's Heroes"

Honoring Those Who Served

November is America's opportunity to say "Thank You" to our Veterans.

Veterans Day Planning

Ideas for your Auxiliary:

- Host a Veterans Day breakfast.
- Visit nursing homes and VA facilities.
- Present appreciation certificates to veterans.
- Organize a community flag display.
- Invite schools to participate in patriotic programs.
- Recognize military families and Star Families.

Teach:

- Proper Flag etiquette
- Folding the Flag
- Respectful disposal
- Correct display procedures

Flag Education

Recognize businesses with outstanding Flag displays by presenting a Certificate of Appreciation.

Auxiliary Americanism Challenge:

Honor one veteran or veteran-owned business in your community.
Share their story using
#AmericanismFL



Looking Ahead

December brings
Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day,
Bill of Rights Day, and
Wreaths Across
America.
Begin planning now.

10/1 - International Coffee Day
10/10 - World Mental Health Day
10/12 - Columbus Day
10/28 - National First Responders Day
10/31 - Halloween



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida
President
Kathy Wright



Lanaie Reed
Americanism Chairman
Dept of Florida 2026-2027
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#AmericanismFL





Patriotic Instructor



October 2026

Department President's Theme
"Growing Stronger for Our Veterans"

National President's Theme
"Serving America's Heroes"

"Honoring Our Nation's Traditions"

Every meeting is an opportunity to strengthen respect for our traditions and preserve the customs of the VFW Auxiliary.

Patriotic Instructor Spotlight

Review proper meeting protocol:

- Respectful conduct
- Speaking during meetings
- Proper floor work
- Assisting the President
- Maintaining the meeting room according to Ritual

Monthly Education Topic

History of the American Flag Share:

- Evolution of the Flag
- Meaning of the stars and stripes
- Why the Flag represents freedom

Community Activity

- Conduct a Flag retirement ceremony with your Post or local Scout organization.

Auxiliary Challenge

- Read one section of the Bylaws during meeting this month.

Recognition

- Present a Certificate of Appreciation to another business displaying the Flag properly.

"Traditions survive because someone chooses to teach them."



Days to remember

October 1: International Coffee Day
October 2: World Smile Day
October 5: World Teachers' Day
October 10: World Mental Health Day
October 16: Boss's Day
October 28: National First Responders Day
October 31: Halloween

Approved by:
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"Buddy" Poppy Educate Your Community

October 2026

Involve & Engage our Youth with the "Buddy" Poppy

1. Start with a story: explain how the "Buddy" Poppy started and what it means to our Veterans and how it provides for the VFW to assist all Veterans.
2. Share "In Flanders Field", have them read the poem and you explain the history behind it.
3. Make it interactive: crafts-make poppies or plant a garden.
4. Storyteller-short story about a veteran and how poppies helped them.
5. Connect to service: explain that poppies are not sold (donation only)
6. Reinforce values: gratitude, community care, patriotism.
7. Extend the learning: invite a Veteran or VFW rep to speak with the children

Start planning your "Buddy" Poppy distribution event

VETERANS DAY *November 11th*

- ★ Visit Veterans in the nursing homes (give a poppy)
- ★ Participate in your local Veterans Day parade and hand out poppies
- ★ Ask your local Scout troops or JROTC to help you distribute Poppies
- ★ Create a Poppy Pledge for kids to sign- committing to help a Veteran in some way and hand out during your Poppy drive
- ★ Distribute "In Flanders Field" poem to the community during poppy drive

Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright

Mary Conkle
"Buddy" Poppy Chairman
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EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION

www.vfwauxfl.org



October 2026

Program Goals

Maintain & Strengthen Current Auxiliaries * Present to Unaffiliated Posts

Establish New Auxiliaries

How Well Does Your Auxiliary Work Together?



Does your President give you positive reinforcement and support?

Does everyone listen to other new ideas and thoughts?

Are there different or new people volunteering?

Are you getting new members involved with programs?

Are you bringing in new members?

Are you laughing and having fun at your events?

Does your President delegate or do they have to control everything?

Is the President picking on or singling out certain members?



If you answer no to any of these questions – maybe it's time to ask the Department leadership for assistance.

We are a friendly, veteran loving, cooperative team where bullying is not tolerated!

Does everyone share their toys in the sandbox?



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright

Debbie McCollum, Dept. Chief of Staff
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Navigating Social Media in the
Digital Age

Social Media Etiquette

In today's digital world, social media is essential for community engagement, advocacy, and promoting organizational missions of the Auxiliary.

Think before you post / Show respect

It is crucial for all members, volunteers, and representatives to communicate online in a responsible and effective manner.

Share Accurate Information

Verify facts and sources/check dates

DO:

- ✓ ***Use courteous and professional language***
- ✓ ***Encourage constructive conversations***
- ✓ ***Respect different viewpoints***
- ✓ ***Support a welcoming online environment***

DON'T:

- ✗ ***Use offensive, abusive, or discriminatory language***
- ✗ ***Engage in personal attacks or arguments***
- ✗ ***Harass, bully, or ridicule others***
- ✗ ***Respond emotionally to criticism***

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Use:

Albums, Reels,

Membership Testimonials,

Spotlight Community partnerships,
Hospital visits, Community Outreach

Ensure that your History will be here for the next generation of Auxiliary members

- Research your past by talking with your more seasoned and knowledgeable members.
- Record what you are doing today while researching the past. Go to the library and search old newspapers to see what your Auxiliary and Post has done
- Utilize digital platforms for proper storage
- Reach out to members via social media for help in recovering your auxiliaries past.
- Continue using the few hashtags that you have been utilizing.

"People connect with stories more than statistics"



Historian Reminder:

Every smiling face represents service worth remembering.

Approved by:
Dept. of Florida
President
Kathy Wright



Kathy Ingall
2025-2026 Dept of Florida
Historian / Media Relations
vfwauxflhistorian25.26@gmail.com

HOSPITAL PROGRAM

OCTOBER 2026

***Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition *VAVS (CDCE)**

***Women Veteran's Health Care *Honors Escort**

Breast cancer among younger military women has been found to be 20% to 40% higher than the general population. When compared with historical averages in U.S. women, this is nearly 3 times as many women veterans that are at an increased risk for breast cancer.



Esophageal Cancer may be connected to their military service, especially if they were exposed to radiation, Agent Orange, burn pits or lived at Camp Lejeune during their service.

*Auxiliary hospital volunteers want to help our veteran patients in any capacity that is needed. Visit the cancer patients and brighten their day.

*Ask the specialist at the cancer center or Volunteer Services what the patients might like or need. Bring them shawls, lap blankets, or throw blankets, "thinking of you" cards or game books. It is your caring and compassion that helps them heal.

"Together, we can be the change in a veteran's day and help make an often-difficult journey of recovery a little easier".

Don't forget to send in your Christmas in October donation to Dept. Treasurer Cindy Estell by using the Contribution worksheet.

This is a requirement for attaining Circle of Champions

Deadline is October 31st.

Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright



Karen Heikkila
Hospital Chairman
VAVS Representative
Hospitalauxfl@yahoo.com

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services

Center for Development and Civic Engagement

October 2026



Program Goals:

***Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition *VAVS (CDCE)**

***Women Veteran's Health Care *Honors Escort**

"Growing Stronger for Our Veterans"

"Gardening with Grace and Goals"

Support the Veterans Administration by:

1. Honoring America's veterans by providing caring, compassion, and comfort that improves their health and wellbeing. Our visits to the VA Hospitals, non-VA hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, Community Living Centers, and Domiciliary let them know they are not forgotten.
2. Help the veteran patients participate in recreational and other fun activities.
3. Volunteer at the facilities on traditional and non-traditional holidays, or in any capacity needed. Create special celebrations for them to brighten up their day.
4. Women veterans like to have their hair and nails done when they can. Gifts of feminine toiletries like shampoos and conditioners, or hair supplies, like combs, brushes and barrettes or head bands are always appreciated.
5. Seek out those veteran patients who may not get visitors and celebrate them.
6. Veteran's Day is soon coming. Delivering a card to a veteran patient can make a big difference.



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida
President
Kathy Wright



Karen Heikkila
Hospital Chairman
VAVS Representative
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LEGISLATIVE - Florida

October 2026

Advocate for Veterans Issues ★ Be Informed- know important Issues ★ Engage- Plant seeds of information ★ Help members grow with information to educate everyone on Veterans Issues



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

How to Sign up for VFW Action Corps Newsletter

- Website: VFW.Org
- Scroll down to **Advocacy**
- Click onto **Legislative Priorities**
- Go to **Action Corps Weekly**
- Sign up today – enter First Name, Last Name, Email, Mobile Number, Address

Each week you will receive a newsletter highlighting areas of importance that you can click on to learn what top action to take for Veterans benefits.

EXAMPLE AREAS:

- Budget
- Disability assistance
- Education employment and transition
- Healthcare
- Military readiness
- National security

BE INFORMED. TAKE ACTION. SUPPORT VETERANS.

Are you planting the seeds?

For Legislation?...Please share this how-to sign up to Action Corps Newsletters

To qualify for Circle of Champions a report must be done in Legislation

Department Auxiliary Award:

Citation and a monetary award to one Auxiliary in each Membership Class with the largest increase in new VFW Action Corps Weekly sign-ups from the community and new VFW Auxiliary members. Entry form is required and can be found on the Department website under the LEGISLATIVE Program. It is also available in MALTA under Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

National Auxiliary Award

Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the largest increase in new VFW Action Corps Weekly sign-ups from the community and new VFW Auxiliary members.

ELECTION DAY – November 3, 2026 7am-7pm

Report – Any volunteering at the polls, sharing with members the importance of voting for their candidates, attending any town hall meetings for candidates. **Drive a Veteran to the Polls**

Remember Auxiliaries do not endorse any candidates

Did you know: Florida has 120 House members? Know your district representative. Invite them for an educational meeting at your post

#vfwflauxlegislation #AuxiliariesinAction

Help keep President Kathy's garden growing with new ideas to share with others on social media and send to me so I can S.W.A.P.



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright

Betty A. Bailey, Chairman
bann652@aol.com



Department of Florida
Membership/Mentoring
October - Ignite and Invite

The upcoming fall months are full of possibilities...

What activities do you have planned over the next few months? Do you have football watch parties? Halloween parties? Fall Festivals? Thanksgiving feasts? Create fun events your Auxiliary members will want to volunteer, attend and invite guests.

Encourage and challenge your members to bring in guests and show off what we do for our Veterans. Let's expand our membership. Put out a challenge to each member prior to your next meeting to make at least one new membership connection. Invite new members, remind those that have let their membership lapse why they joined in the first place. Let's renew and rejoin!

During our Fall Conference; Friday, October 29th-31st we will be celebrating those Auxiliaries and Districts with 95% and 100% in membership!

Looking forward to seeing everyone when we turn the fountain pink at the Florida Hotel on Saturday morning at Fall Conference at 8:30am. Invite those attending our conference to participate in this annual event which the hotel raises money for Breast Cancer.



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida
President
Kathy Wright



Each Auxiliary has the opportunity to receive a Bloomin' Buck for a well written report in each program. At June convention, each Auxiliary will be placed in a drawing for a \$250 Visa card for each Bloomin' Buck received.



Your Program Chairmen love reading your reports. Keep mentoring other members on how to write great reports, include the five W's... who, what, when, where and why. We want to hear how you are making a difference in your Auxiliaries!



Holly Evans
Membership/Mentoring
Chairman
Hadams1221@hotmail.com

VFW NATIONAL HOME

October 2026

WE LOVE READING YOUR REPORTS

Reason?

**It lets the Department of Florida know
your auxiliary cares and has a passion to
help and support our VFW National Home.**

Tell your story

Use the tool of the 5 W's

We can't wait to hear the wonderful

Work that y'all are doing .



Vfwnationalhome.org

1-800-424-8360

If you or someone needs help.

3573 S. Waverly Rd. Eaton Rapids, MI. 48827

Building Brighter Tomorrows

One Child. One Family. One Future

Let's Help fundraise Early Education Center Playground Project

Funding Goals \$3500.00 Total project cost.

How your Auxiliary can HELP Build a Playground

- **Make a financial Donation**
- **Sponsor equipment or a specific area**
- **Become a corporate or organizational partner**
- **Help spread the Word**



Approved by
Dept. President
Kathy Wright



Happy Fall Y'all from Florida

Fundraisers for our VFW National Home 2
Craft Sale, Bake Sale, Pumpkin Sale,
Halloween Party. Raffle 50/50 Tickets, Raffle
a Fall Basket.

Send your Donation for to VFW Dept of Fl.
Cindy Estell Treasurer. Fill out Contribution
form when sending any monies in.



Donations can be made online in
Malta or by Mail. Making a gift
in Malta is very easy.

To make a Gift in Malta on behalf
of yourself: Simply login – go
to gifts and make your
selection

List of other ways to Give & Support

- Become a Home Front Hero.
- Purchase a Tribute Brick or a Centennial Garden Brick.
- Purchase an item for the Tribute Park.
- Gifts from your IRA, stocks, and securities.
- Amazon wish list.
- Create awareness by wearing VFW National Home apparel and distributing promotional materials.
- Verbally sharing + social media.

Jeanne F Laurine
VFW National Home Chairman
Jeannelaurine8@gmail.com



DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECT

October 2026

HEY THERE FLORIDA FAMILY... Fall is here and what better time to organize a HUGE fundraiser for the Department President's Special Project Esophageal Cancer Research, and the National President and the VFW National Commander in Chief's Joint Special Project "Operation Bring Them Home"!

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and also Halloween !! You could organize a "SPOOKTACULAR" Fundraiser with a Halloween theme!

The Esophageal Cancer official color is **PERIWINKLE** (think light lilac) and the National President's chosen color is **YELLOW!!** Purple and Yellow just SCREAMS Halloween, don't you think??? Again, if you need help with ideas for fundraisers, **PLEASE** reach out to me!! It's one of my favorite things to do!!

REMINDER: THERE WILL BE NO CHECK PARADE AT FALL CONFERENCE.

DEPARTMENT AWARD LEVELS ARE:

DAISY \$100 - \$499

CARNATION \$500 - \$999

ROSE \$1000 - \$1000 - \$1599

RED HIBISCUS \$1600 +

ALL MONIES raised goes to Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa with 100% going towards Esophageal Cancer Research and Patient Care.

National President Donna Mills and VFW National Commander in Chief Cory Geisler's Joint Special Project "Operation Bring Them Home" is reported under Veterans and Family Support and monies may be sent through MALTA or by check to National with "Joint Special Project" noted.

"Operation Bring Them Home" works to bring ALL of our unaccounted for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action home to their Families and Loved Ones.

LET'S KEEP "GROWING STRONGER FOR OUR VETERANS" AND "SERVING AMERICA'S HEROES" BY ROCKING THOSE FUNDRAISERS FOR BOTH THESE PROJECTS! NO ONE IN THIS FAMILY FIGHTS ALONE!!

Approved by:
Dept. President
Kathy Wright



Becky Kieffer
Chair
Dept. Pres. Special
Project
bkiso2012@gmail.com



Dept. of Florida VFW Auxiliary Scholarships Program October 2026

Plant the Seeds. Inspire the Voice. Create the Future.

**October Focus: Harvest the Entries. Finish Strong.
Celebrate Every Voice.**

June planted the seeds. July watered them. August built connections. September followed up. October is harvesting time. Stay close to your VFW Post, educators, students and families, use your tracker, and help every interested student cross the finish line before the October 31 deadline.

October Action Challenge: Harvest Every Entry

- Open your school tracker and contact every student, teacher or counselor on it by October 10.
- Confirm the VFW Post Scholarship Chairman, current entry forms and exact local submission method.
- Ask how your Auxiliary can help with certificates, publicity, participant recognition and the next scholarship push after October 31.

October 31 - Harvest Day!

Voice of Democracy

Grades 9-12

3-5 minute recorded audio essay
plus a written copy
National first prize: \$35,000

Patriot's Pen

Grades 6-8

300-400 word written essay
National first prize: \$5,000

2026-2027 Theme: "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries must reach a participating local VFW Post by midnight October 31, 2026. Follow the submission instructions approved by that Post.

A Simple October Countdown

Oct. 1-10	Contact every prospect; verify forms and submission.
Oct. 11-20	Check progress; reinforce school reminders.
Oct. 21-27	Final outreach; check signatures, limits and files.
Oct. 28-31	Last call! Confirm receipt; thank students and educators.

Recognition Starts with the Entry

Thank every student who submits, keep a list of participants and schools, and begin planning certificates, photos and a Red-Carpet recognition event.

Every entry deserves to be celebrated!

After October 31: Recognize & Report

Recognition: Begin your Red-Carpet celebration plan now; Department and National Red-Carpet entries are **due March 31, 2027**.

Reporting: Record school contacts, promotions, number of entries, photos and recognition plans. Ask the Post for final Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry totals so your report tells the full story.

Keep Every Scholarship Seed Growing

- **Continuing Education** applications remain open for eligible Auxiliary members, spouses, sons and daughters age 21 or older; four \$2,250 scholarships are awarded and applications are due **February 15, 2027**.
- **Patriotic Art** entries for grades 9-12 are due to a participating Auxiliary **March 31, 2027** - November is a great time to reconnect with art teachers.

Prepare for November Now

- Count Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries and schools represented
- Thank educators and schedule participant recognition
- Shift your educator tracker to Patriotic Art outreach
- Share Continuing Education with eligible members and families
- Report October activity and save photos, emails and flyers

This is harvest month: every completed entry represents a student whose voice was encouraged to grow.

Approved by:

Dept. of Fl. President
Kathy Wright



Scan for Department
resources



Please reach out to me if you have any questions!

Stoney Lawrentz-Edwards
Scholarship Chairperson
StoneyLawrentz@gmail.com



Veterans & Family Support

October 2026



Unmet Needs

(National Military Service & National Veteran Service)

Mail Check to:

Veterans of Foreign Wars
406 W. 34th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64111

Where to make your Donations

When mailing a check, make sure notate in the memo line where you would like the money to go.

Your donation helps with:

VA Claims & Separation Benefits



Owned and operated by the VFW. Helps Veterans with VA disability Benefits and Pension Claims. All Funds donated to NMS & NVS helps Veterans and Veteran Family households.

VFW Accredited Service Officers helps with:

Writing up the Claims and filing Claims

VA Hearing and Appeals

Pre-Discharge filing of claims

A lifetime of advocacy from first claim to survivor benefits.

A little knowledge can go along way in helping our Veterans.



Disaster Relief

When mailing a check, make sure notate in the memo line where you would like the money to go.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Disaster Relief

406 W. 34th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64111

What can you do with your post to help with disaster relief?

Hold a fundraiser

Have a dinner where the profits go towards Disaster relief.

It is Halloween, do a 50/50 and have the funds go towards your Disaster Relief

In the past the posts and auxiliaries have purchased clothing, food, hygiene items, water and donated money to the victims. We always help our Veterans, their families and our community during a crisis.

Approved by:

Dept. of Florida President

Kathy Wright



Kelly Barr

Veterans and Family Support Chairmen

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Veterans & Family Support Continued



October 2026



October Awareness Month

October is a month where the air should be starting to get cooler and ghouls and goblins come out to play. Here is some information for the month of October that might give you some ideas to celebrate with your Post and Community:

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and we will turn the fountain pink at Fall Conference. It is also ADHD and Down Syndrome Awareness month. Approximately 17% of military families have been diagnosed with ADHD compared to only 12% of the civilian population. 10% to 15% of military families have dependent children with special needs or special medical needs. The available support system is *Exceptional Family Member Program* (EFMP). Military families caring for loved ones with special needs can get free, confidential support through Military OneSource. Expert consultants help navigate TRICARE, EFMP, education, care resources and more. Call [800-342-9647](tel:800-342-9647).

This is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, domestic violence is higher in veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, depression and trauma. October 1st through the 7th is Mental Health Awareness week.

VFW Mental Health Awareness Campaign is a project to bring awareness to Veterans with Mental health problems while giving veterans the tools to help other veterans in crisis. Remember the Veterans Crisis line # 988.

"Socktober" is a great time to collect new socks for Veterans at the VA, homeless shelter, or veterans center.

Navy's Birthday October 13th, why not have a birthday party for all your Navy veterans.

National Day of Deployed is October 26th. It honors service members deployed overseas and recognizes the families of those that are deployed.

Halloween October 31st: do a trunk or treat and hand out flyers listing the programs that the VFW & its Auxiliary offer. This is a great time to work on your membership.

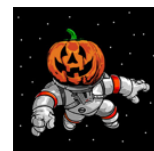
November Awareness

National Veterans and Military Month

Marine Corps Birthday November 10th

Veterans Day November 11th

Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright



Kelly Barr
Veterans and Family Support Chairmen
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YOUTH ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 2026

BOOKS BUILD BRIGHTER FUTURES



Stock Our Lending Libraries • Inspire Young Readers • Strengthen Our Communities

WHY IT MATTERS

Access to books supports reading success. Middle-income neighborhoods average about **13 books per child**, while lower-income neighborhoods may have only **one book for every 300 children**.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Collection boxes or bins
- Posters and decorating supplies
- Phone and printer
- Patriotism Through Literacy book list

PLAN & PROMOTE

- Choose a partner site: a library, shelter, clinic, hospital, school, or youth organization.
- Set a two-week to one-month timeline.
- Create posters with dates, drop-off locations, accepted book types, condition guidelines, and approved contact information.
- Promote through school, community locations, local media, and social media.

Decorate sturdy collection boxes and place them in approved locations



COLLECT & CONNECT

- Place boxes in visible entryways or lobbies.
- Empty boxes regularly so there is always room for more.
- Share updates, photos, and success stories to build momentum.
- Send a concise press release to local media and follow up.

SORT, DELIVER & CELEBRATE

- Sort books by age group and format; pack them by destination of your Lending Libraries.
- If applicable, deliver books to the different locations.
- Remove posters and collection materials when the drive ends.
- Stock your Lending Library!
- Share final totals, photos, and highlights with the community.

MAKE IT A COMMUNITY EFFORT

Invite local youth groups, schools, libraries, families, and neighbors to help.

REPORT REPORT REPORT YOUR RESULTS

Don't forget to email pictures to Department Youth Chairman

Sherri Golder

Growing stronger for our Veterans!



Approved by:
Dept. of Florida President
Kathy Wright



Sherri Golder
Youth Activities Chairman
flyouth2627@gmail.com