

SUNSHINE E-NEWSLETTER



May 2026 Issue NO 11

Team Florida

Building Bridges For Veterans



FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



As we finish up our year and elect our officers for the incoming year, these individuals will be instrumental in driving our department's growth. As we grow as a department, we will always remain committed to supporting our Veterans and families, while also working to make the community more aware of the sacrifices our Veteran heroes made for the freedom they enjoy.

As auxiliary members, we possess the power to make a significant impact each day by promoting our mission of patriotism in schools and at community events. These gatherings can enhance our visibility and potentially boost our membership.

Remember, fun is not a distraction; many times, it becomes a multiplier. It becomes an accessory; it often acts as a catalyst for deeper connections and greater engagement. Together, we can transform our collective efforts into meaningful change. Let's embrace this opportunity!

We have a great start to the new year in June; let us continue advancing toward making the lives of our veterans and their families a success.

Michael Yates
President



Scan the above QR code for the Sunshine E. Newsletter video presentation featuring photos of Auxiliaries from across the state.

VFW Post & Auxiliary 12046 Hosts First Annual Spring Fling

VFW Post & Auxiliary 12046 celebrated a milestone with their first annual Spring Fling, held at the Jackson County Agriculture Center. The event brought together members, friends, and distinguished guests for an evening of camaraderie, reflection, and celebration. The local high school JROTC acted as the Honor Guard.

Among those in attendance were Department President Mike Yates; Lisa Batchelder; Department Historian Kathy Ingall; and Sunshine E. Newsletter Editor Roger Ingall.

President Yates addressed attendees with an inspiring message, highlighting both the challenges faced by the Auxiliary and the unwavering fortitude and dedication of its members. His remarks resonated deeply, honoring the spirit of service that defines the Auxiliary's mission.

Following the program, guests enjoyed a wonderful meal and lively dancing. The atmosphere was warm and joyful, creating an opportunity for members to relax, connect, and celebrate their shared purpose. The evening concluded on a high note, with all in agreement that the inaugural Spring Fling was a resounding success. Spirits were high, smiles were plentiful, and a great time was truly had by all.



Department President Mike Yates Attends District 2 Meeting

Department President Mike Yates recently attended the District 2 meeting, where members gathered to conduct business, elect new officers, and hear updates from department leadership. District President Sherri Golder opened the meeting, guiding attendees through the agenda and leading the election process with confidence and enthusiasm.

During the program, Department Historian Kathy Ingall was invited to speak about the Historian Program, highlighting its role in preserving the Auxiliary's legacy and documenting the meaningful work carried out throughout the year.

Sunshine E. Newsletter Editor Roger Ingall also addressed the attendees, sharing information about the newsletter's purpose and encouraging members to submit articles. He provided contact details to make the submission process easy and accessible for all.

Following the elections, President Yates administered the oath of office to the newly elected officers, marking an important moment of leadership transition for District 2.

To close out the gathering, attendees enjoyed a delicious fish fry complete with all the traditional sides, offered at a nominal charge. The meal offered a warm and welcoming opportunity for members to connect, reflect, and celebrate their continued dedication to service.



New VFW Auxiliary Sworn in at Chiefland Post 5625



A new VFW Auxiliary has officially been established in Chiefland, marking an exciting moment of growth and renewed commitment to serving veterans and their families. VFW Post 5625 celebrated the occasion with the formal swearing-in of its Auxiliary members, conducted by Extension, Revitalization & Mentoring Chairman Sherri Golder.

The ceremony was well attended by key leaders from across the Department and District. Department President Mike Yates, Department Historian Kathy Ingall, and Sunshine E. Newsletter Editor Roger Ingall were present to support and welcome the new Auxiliary. District 7 was also represented by Commander Shawn Howard, Auxiliary President Pricilla Reisinger, Immediate Past Auxiliary President Deb Wilson, and Treasurer Carol Franker.

Following the swearing-in, the newly formed Auxiliary held its first official meeting, setting the foundation for its mission, goals, and plans for future service projects within the community.

The formation of the Auxiliary at VFW Post 5625 marks a meaningful step forward for Chiefland's veteran community, bringing new energy, dedication, and support to the work ahead.

Department President Mike Yates Visits - Our Central Florida Homestead



On his way back from Districts 2 & 17 recently, Department President Mike Yates stopped by Our Central Florida Homestead for a tour of the garden, and to check out the animals.



Department Officers 2025 – 2026

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Know your Department Chairmen:

- Americanism – Michelle Butler American.patriotic.2526@gmail.com
- Auxiliary Outreach – Becky Kieffer bkiso2012@gmail.com
- Buddy Poppy / VFW National Home – Jennifer Holland Jenniferholland72@comcast.net
- Extension Revitalization & Mentoring – Sherri Golder sherrigolder@gmail.com
- Historian / Media Relations – Kathy Ingall shanily.05@gmail.com
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- Legislative – Pamela Monroe Anamcarax2@icloud.com
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- Scholarships – Carrie Messer messerca@gmail.com
- Dept. President’s Special Project – Kelly Barr Flpresproject2526@gmail.com
- Veterans & Family Support – Ryan Harris ryan.harris.cisa@gmail.com
- Youth Program – Lanaie Reed lanwileth@gmail.com
- Program Advisor - Debbie Tilley dktilley@comcast.net

Keep up to date with the monthly promotions from your chairmen!

TAKE NOTE: “FOR ASSISTANCE LOGGING ON TO OUR REPORTING WEBSITE:

CONTACT DEBBIE TILLEY @ dktilley@comcast.net or call 904-460-9345

DO NOT USE THE CONTACT US BUTTON!”

Troop Care Packages Sent to Africa for Army Unit 200

VFW Post 7721 is proudly supporting Army Unit 200 with a shipment of troop boxes sent to their deployment location in Africa. The unit is being formally adopted by the post, with the effort led by Auxiliary Senior Vice President Mary Ellen Cash and VFW Senior Vice Commander Randy Cash. The project holds special meaning for the Cash family, as their grandson is currently stationed with the unit.

The troop boxes reflect the post's ongoing commitment to caring for service members



VFW Auxiliary 7721 Announces 2026–2027 Officers

A group photo was taken of the newly elected 2026–2027 officers of VFW Auxiliary 7721. The leadership team for the upcoming year includes President Betty Bailey, Senior Vice President Mary Ellen Cash, Treasurer Theresa Mook, Chaplain Patricia Benvenuto, Conductor Margaret Finnerty, and Guard Jerry Tooze.

Trustees Georgia Pinto, Linda Motola, and Traci Lyn Rydzenski were unable to attend the photo session but remain an important part of the Auxiliary's leadership for the year ahead.



Attention!

Take Note: Please ensure that your installation reports are entered into MALTA **before the June Convention.**

If you experience any issues or need assistance with the process, please contact **Debbie Tilley** at: dktilley@comcast.net or by phone at **904-460-9345**. She is happy to help with any questions or technical difficulties you may have.

Attention!

This is a reminder to submit your Auxiliary's delegate information to **Cindy Estell** at dflaux.treas@gmail.com no later than **May 31**.

Additionally, please be sure to enter your delegates into **MALTA** for the National Convention, even if no one from your Auxiliary is attending. Thank you for your attention to these important requirements.

Dates to Remember for 2025 – 2026

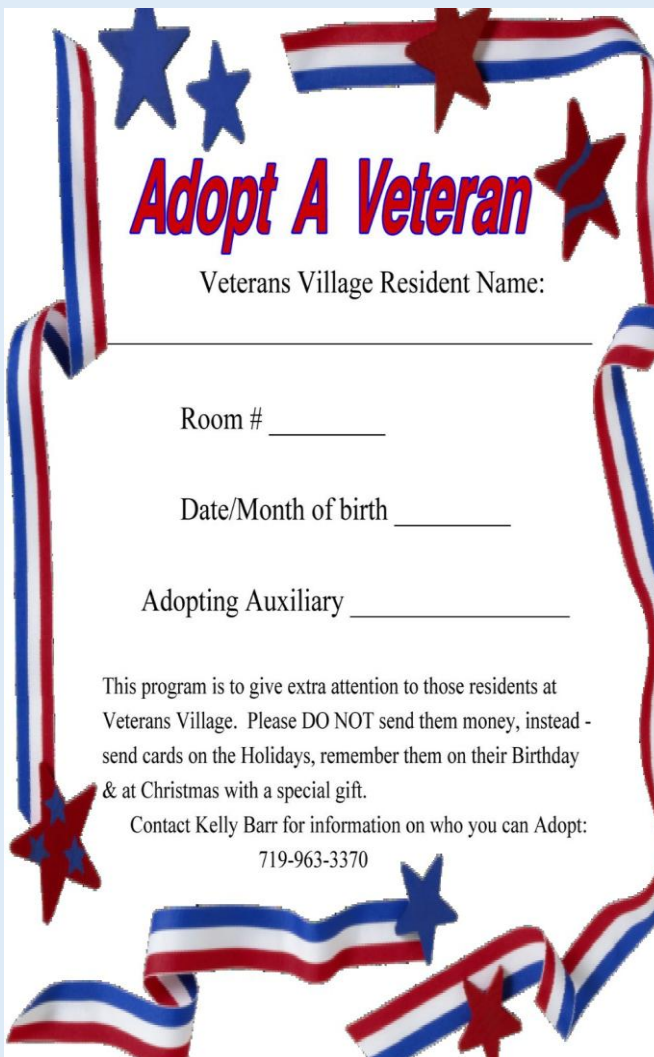
• School of Instruction	Florida Hotel, Orlando Fl	July 31 – August 3, 2025
• National Convention	Columbus, Ohio	August 9 – 14, 2025
• Department Fall Conference	Florida Hotel, Orlando Fl	October 16 – 19, 2025
• Southern Conference	Montgomery, Texas	November 6 – 9, 2025
• National Mid-Year Conference	Cruise – Key West & Bahamas	February 9 – 13, 2026
• Department Mid-Winter Conference	Florida Hotel, Orlando Fl	February 12 – 15, 2026
• C.A.F.E National	Washington D.C.	February 28, 2026
• Legislative Conference		March 2-4, 2026
• Dept Commander & Auxiliary	Florida Hotel, Orlando Fl	March 14, 2026
• Presidents Homecoming		
• National Sr. Vice Conference	TBD	March 19-22, 2026
• National Presidents Visit (Fri – Mon)	Various	March 20-23, 2026
• Veterans Village Picnic	Fort McCoy, Florida	March 21, 2026
• Planning Meeting for Kathy Wright (May change)		April 4, 2026
• Department Judging		April 29-30, 2026
• National Jr. Vice Conference	TBD	May 14-18, 2026
• Department Convention	Renaissance Orlando, Fl	June 11-14, 2026
• National Convention	Reno, Nevada	July 24-30, 2026

Attention!

The Sunshine E. Newsletter has a new Email Address. Please submit your pictures and stories to the link below or click on the QR Code for a direct link.

vfwauxflssen@gmail.com





Adopt A Veteran

Veterans Village Resident Name: _____

Room # _____

Date/Month of birth _____

Adopting Auxiliary _____

This program is to give extra attention to those residents at Veterans Village. Please DO NOT send them money, instead - send cards on the Holidays, remember them on their Birthday & at Christmas with a special gift.

Contact Kelly Barr for information on who you can Adopt:
719-963-3370