

# SUNSHINE E-NEWSLETTER

*In this Issue:  
Department Presidents  
Homecoming, the National  
Presidents Visit, and the  
Veterans Village Picnic!*



April 2026 Issue NO 10

Team Florida

## *Building Bridges For Veterans*



### FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



Greetings,

We had a fantastic Anne at the Veterans Village picnic, especially with our National President, Lois Callahan's, visit. She extends her heartfelt thanks to each one of us for your generosity and kindness during her stay in Florida.

As we approach the end of our year, let's remember that volunteering means committing to show up repeatedly—not just once—for our veterans and fellow members but again and again. This department stands proud for all the accomplishments we have made in support of our veterans, families, and communities.

Now it's election time, please take a moment to revisit Article III to ensure that you comply with the bylaws.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the support and hard work of this department. Your dedication does not go unnoticed, and it makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our veterans, families, and communities. You all have humbled me on many occasions.

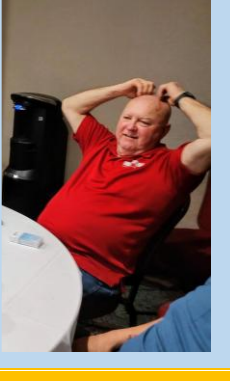
We have continued in **Building Bridges for our Veterans** through our membership, and then we are **Bridging the Gap for Our Veterans** through our programs and support. Now let us **Be the Lighthouse in Somebody's Storm**.

Michael Yates  
President



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

# Department Presidents Homecoming



# Veterans Village Picnic



# National President Lois Callahan's Visit



## VFW Auxiliary 3282 Hosts Successful Annual Garage Sale, Donates Proceeds to VFW National Home

On February 14, 2026, VFW Auxiliary 3282 of District 19 held its annual garage sale at the Post, drawing strong community participation and support. The event proved to be a tremendous success, raising a total of \$2,000.

Following the sale, members of the Auxiliary voted unanimously to donate the full amount to the VFW National Home, an organization dedicated to supporting military and veteran families in need.



### HOW TO LOVE A VETERAN

Greetings,

It is a true honor to address the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary—a remarkable group of individuals whose service may not always wear a uniform, but whose impact is just as powerful. February is the perfect month to speak of LOVE.

When we speak about loving veterans we are not speaking about a simple feeling. We are speaking about action. We are speaking about dedication. We are speaking about commitment.

The Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was built on the understanding that no one serves alone. Behind every service member stands a network of family, friends, and supporters who sacrifice in their own ways. You represent that unwavering support. You represent LOVE in motion.

The brave individuals who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force answered a call that demanded courage, sacrifice, and resilience. They served on land, at sea, in the skies, and now in the space domain. But their strength was never theirs alone. It was strengthened by the support of people like you.

Loving veterans means ensuring that when they come home, they are not alone. It means advocating for their healthcare, their education, their benefits and their dignity. It means organizing programs, visiting hospitals and nursing facilities, supporting military families, mentoring youth and preserving patriotism in our communities. These are not small acts. These are powerful expressions of LOVE.

You, as members of the Auxiliary, turn gratitude into service. You ensure that the mission continues long after the deployment ends. You stand beside veterans in times of celebration and in times of struggle. You remind them that their sacrifices are not forgotten.

Loving veterans also means remembering them, not only on Veterans Day, not only on Memorial Day— but every day, through steady support and faithful presence.

To you the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary: Thank YOU. Thank you for your compassion. Thank you for your service. Thank you for proving that LOVE is not passive—it is active, organized, and enduring.

Susan Graham Alcock  
VFW Auxiliary District 19 Chaplin



# April

Learn how you  
can support the  
VFW National  
Home today!



### April Begins the Month of the Military Child

Today marks the start of the Month of the Military Child, a time to honor the strength and resilience of children in military families. These young heroes face unique challenges—frequent moves, long separations, and constant change—yet continue to show courage and adaptability every day. One meaningful way to support military families this April is by becoming a supporter of the VFW National Home. For more than 100 years, the National Home has provided vital assistance to the children and families of military veterans. From housing orphans during and after World War II to welcoming entire families onto its campus as they work to rebuild their lives, the National Home has remained a steady source of hope and support.

There are many ways you can help. Visit their website to learn how to become a donor, a member, or a Home Front Hero this month.

VFW National Home: <https://vfwnationalhome.org/you-can-help/>

- #MonthoftheMilitaryChild
- #VFWNH
- #VFW
- #VFWAuxiliary
- #MilitaryChild



## Department Officers 2025 – 2026

### President

Michael Yates  
1620 W. Evergreen Drive  
Citrus Springs, FL 34434  
(330) 233-2133  
[Brusdtwice1@gmail.com](mailto:Brusdtwice1@gmail.com)

### Senior Vice President

Kathy Wright  
5867 111<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32244  
(757) 685-1837  
[Kathy\\_wright@bellsouth.net](mailto:Kathy_wright@bellsouth.net)

### Junior Vice President

Margaret Rementer  
22161 Olean Blvd  
Port Charlotte, FL 33952  
(941) 286-2688  
[Bashibee4@yahoo.com](mailto:Bashibee4@yahoo.com)

### Secretary

Debbie Tilley  
22 Surfcrest St.  
St. Augustine, FL 32080  
(904) 460-9345  
(904) 495-3622 (cell)  
[dktilley@comvcast.net](mailto:dktilley@comvcast.net)

### Treasurer

Cindy Estell  
P.O. Box 55850  
St. Petersburg, FL 33732  
(727) 417-5450  
[dflaux.treas@gmail.com](mailto:dflaux.treas@gmail.com)

### Chaplain

Jason Estell  
5396 63<sup>rd</sup> Street N  
St. Petersburg, FL 33709  
(352) 584-4960  
[Jason211983@gmail.com](mailto:Jason211983@gmail.com)

### Conductor

Pauline Riddle  
451 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Chuluota, FL 32766  
(407) 682-2452  
[Fireballs44@hotmail.com](mailto:Fireballs44@hotmail.com)

### Guard

Robert “Bob” Kabala  
1006 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33703  
727-308-8508  
[rkabala@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rkabala@tampabay.rr.com)

### Chief of Staff

Leona McDermott  
4444 Royal Fern Way  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
33410  
(561) 386-6108  
[leemvfw@comcast.net](mailto:leemvfw@comcast.net)

### Know your Department Chairmen:

- Americanism – Michelle Butler [American.patriotic.2526@gmail.com](mailto:American.patriotic.2526@gmail.com)
- Auxiliary Outreach – Becky Kieffer [bkiso2012@gmail.com](mailto:bkiso2012@gmail.com)
- Buddy Poppy / VFW National Home – Jennifer Holland [Jenniferholland72@comcast.net](mailto:Jenniferholland72@comcast.net)
- Extension Revitalization & Mentoring – Sherri Golder [sherrigolder@gmail.com](mailto:sherrigolder@gmail.com)
- Historian / Media Relations – Kathy Ingall [shanily.05@gmail.com](mailto:shanily.05@gmail.com)
- Hospital – Viki Stripling [wikiplottsdistrict11@yahoo.com](mailto:wikiplottsdistrict11@yahoo.com)
- Legislative – Pamela Monroe [Anamcarax2@icloud.com](mailto:Anamcarax2@icloud.com)
- Membership & Mentoring – Holly Evans [hadams1221@hotmail.com](mailto:hadams1221@hotmail.com)
- Scholarships – Carrie Messer [messerca@gmail.com](mailto:messerca@gmail.com)
- Dept. President’s Special Project – Kelly Barr [Flpresproject2526@gmail.com](mailto:Flpresproject2526@gmail.com)
- Veterans & Family Support – Ryan Harris [ryan.harris.cisa@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.harris.cisa@gmail.com)
- Youth Program – Lanaie Reed [lanwileth@gmail.com](mailto:lanwileth@gmail.com)
- Program Advisor - Debbie Tilley [dktilley@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:dktilley@comcast.net) or call 904-460-9345**

**DO NOT USE THE CONTACT US BUTTON!”**

## Safety Harbor VFW Post 10093 Participates in Bay Pines Stand

Safety Harbor VFW Post 10093 proudly participated in the Bay Pines Stand Down held on March 28, 2026. The Post was represented by dedicated Auxiliary members who helped support veterans in need by providing resources, assistance, and compassion throughout the event. Auxiliary President Melisa Weldon provided the photos and information.



## VFW Auxiliary 3282 Hosts Successful Annual Garage Sale, Donates Proceeds to VFW National Home

On February 14, 2026, VFW Auxiliary 3282 of District 19 held its annual garage sale at the Post, drawing strong support from members and the community alike. The event was a tremendous success, raising a total of \$2,000.

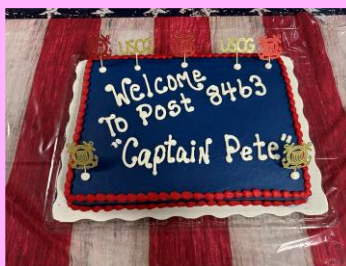
Following the fundraiser, the Auxiliary voted to donate the full amount to the VFW National Home, continuing their commitment to supporting military and veteran families. Pictured in the accompanying photo are Gigi and Diane, proudly staffing the Auxiliary table and helping ensure the success of this meaningful event.



## Cape Coral VFW Auxiliary Honors a True American Hero with Special Induction Ceremony

Cape Coral Post 8463 recently welcomed a remarkable new member: Petro "Pete" Kurkimilis, a 99-year-old veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Recognizing the unique honor of inducting a member of the Greatest Generation, the Post Commander asked the Auxiliary to organize a special ceremony for "Captain Pete." The Post was decorated with Coast Guard and Marine Corps themes to reflect Pete's service in both branches, and members prepared cakes in his honor. The ceremony opened with an emotional tribute from his granddaughter, a retired Marine, whose recounting of his four decades of service moved the entire room. Family, local dignitaries, Auxiliary officers, and the Post Color Guard attended as Pete was officially sworn in. It was a proud and memorable day for the Post, honoring a true American hero.

Randy & Gabrielle Thomas  
President & Secretary/Treasurer  
VFW Auxiliary 8463, Cape Coral



## 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. From now on send your submissions to:

[vfwauxflssenl@gmail.com](mailto:vfwauxflssenl@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

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.