

SUNSHINE E-NEWSLETTER

National Convention Edition!



September 2025 Issue NO 3

Team Florida

Building Bridges for Veterans



FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



Greetings,

Congratulations to all the Award winners from the National Convention, you made Florida and Past Department President Ginger very Proud!

August has been very exciting. We had our National Convention, what a great time! There were many ideas passed around by many members. The best idea was how we, as an organization, can and should reinstate, recruit, revitalize, and retain our members. We know in Florida that we have many resources in this department. I believe at the time I am writing; we have 35,485 paid members. We know many at-large members, reach out to some of these at-large members, and explain some of the new and exciting things that are happening in our auxiliaries; it just might bring some of the at-large members back to the active member status.

Next, let's consider recruiting. This is an easy one. Many of us go out to dinner, and when they bring the check, I always ask, "Do you give a military discount?" If they say yes, now is the time to start recruiting by asking, "Do you have a member of your immediate family who has served or is serving in the military?" Then explain the membership wheel. Oh, and make sure you have a membership application and offer assistance in filling it out. This simple gesture may help you recruit a new member.

Now it's time to revitalize. Look at some of the new members you have recruited and ask them how they might work on one of our programs and projects. By doing this, you may bring a fresh energy into your auxiliary. They have many fresh ideas, so keep them within the guidelines of our bylaws and always have fun with your new talented members.

Last, and most importantly, is to retain these members. This should be a no-brainer. We all have been new at some point, and now many of us are seasoned members. Remember the fun things you did when you first started and the exciting things you assisted in, such as dances, picnics, and maybe a dual membership drive with your post. As we look at these possibilities, this is how we can continue:

Building Bridges for Our Veterans, we will be the Lighthouse in Someone's Storm.

Loyally,
Michael Yates
President

VFW Veterans Village Annual Golf Tournament

Juliette Falls

6933 SW 179th Avenue Road
Dunnellon, FL 34432
352-522-0309

Price \$300.00 Per Team /
\$75.00 Per Person
Meal & Awards to Follow

Saturday October 4, 2025 – 8:30 AM Start Time

VFW VETERANS VILLAGE ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT GOLF REGISTRATION FORM

Juliette Falls Golf Course
Saturday, October 4, 2025

7:15 A.M. Registration / 8:30 A.M. start time

Please Print Names

4 – Person Team - \$300.00

Player 1. _____
Player 2. _____
Player 3. _____
Player 4. _____

Single Player - \$75.00

Name: _____

Hole Sponsor - \$75.00

Name: _____

Check or cash must accompany registration form.

**Make checks payable to: VFW Veterans Village
Mail checks to: Department of Florida VFW
543 NE Sanchez Avenue, Ocala FL 34470**

Post 10093 & Auxiliary on Parade

Post & Auxiliary participated in conjunction with the American Legion Post 238 for the 4th of July Parade. The VFW had approximately six veterans in the parade which made for an exciting day.



Dist. 1 President takes part in Kids on Campus Program

Steve Gouthro, District 1 President and Treasurer of VFW Auxiliary 7674, Fort Walton Beach participated in a Kids on Campus program at Northwest Florida Community College. Their Auxiliary sponsors the local rugby team and provided volunteer support to introduce Rookie Rugby as part of the Kids on Campus program. Over 30 young boys and girls in grades 3-7 were introduced to the sport of rugby. Main teaching points emphasized working together as a team and respect for teammates and sports officials.



Auxiliary 7909 Make Cards for Veterans

Auxiliary 7909 members and youth volunteers created 4th of July cards for our Veterans in a local nursing home. A total of 102 cards were given out.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Dept. Commander & President
Joint Homecoming

March 13 - 14, 2026

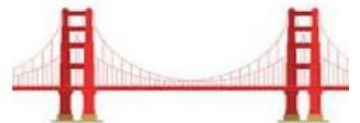
Florida Hotel - Room rates \$139



1500 Sand Lake Rd.

Orlando, Fl.

Phone: 800-588-4656



(Must mention VFW Homecoming)

Hotel Reservations Cut-off

February 16, 2026

Reservations for Banquet on March 14, 2026

Must be sent to Debbie Tilley

904-460-9345 or cell 904-495-3622

dktilley@comcast.net

cut-off February 27, 2026

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!"

Monthly Program Focus: Buddy Poppy & VFW National Home

VFW "BUDDY" POPPY - A PROCLAMATION

A GREAT Idea to not only educate your local government about what the "Buddy" Poppy means to the VFW, but you can also ask them to issue a Special Proclamation to urge the community members to not only recognize the merits of this cause but by also supporting this symbol of appreciation for the sacrifices of our honored dead. This can be achieved by donating on a day set aside for the distribution of the "Buddy" Poppy. Under the Proclamation, this day is when your Post & Auxiliary can set up in the community hosting "Buddy" Poppy drives. The Proclamation Template that you may print or email to your mayor can be found using the QR code below, VFW "Buddy" Poppy Program link.

- Additional Ideas to raise money for the Relief Fund through "Buddy" Poppy donations: Hold a contest to guess how many Poppies are in the jar. Donation to enter. Give out a Prize.
- Print "Buddy" Poppies out and for a donation people can write their names on the Poppy, create a green field and "plant" the poppies on the field.
- During parades or community events, set up a table or walk around the event wearing your Auxiliary attire & hand out Poppies & Flags be sure to carry a Donation basket/bucket.
- Display "Buddy" Poppy "take one donate one" on tables if you are hosting a dinner or event.



VFW NationalHome

The VFW National Home assists military, veterans and their families with children by creating a foundation of services and resources to achieve their personal and family goals in order to move forward in a positive safe & healthy environment.

Celebrate the VFW National Home Centennial in style with a personalized engraved brick in their 2025 Centennial Garden. Whether it's to honor a loved one, commemorate a special event, or simply leave your mark on this historic occasion, the 8x8 engraved bricks offer a timeless way to do just that.

And for a limited time only, you can secure your place in history for an unbeatable price of only \$500.

Not only will your brick be a lasting tribute to your contribution to celebrate our 2025 centennial anniversary, but it will also add to the beauty and legacy of the garden for years to come.

You can shop and order Centennial keepsakes at
vfnationalhome.org/shop

How can our Auxiliaries help?

- Vote to donate your Silver Drill to the VFW National Home.
- Purchase a Tribute Brick in your Auxiliaries Name.
- Auxiliaries can become Life Members
- Amazon Wish List
- Home Front Hero
- 2025 – 2026 Whitmore's Warriors "Stock the Store"

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vfnationalhome.org/shop



Jennifer Holland
jenniferholland72@comcast.net
Auxiliary 10100 Labelle
Buddy Poppy/
VFW National Home

Buddy Poppy / VFW National Home – Jennifer Holland

jenniferholland72@comcast.net

Spotlight on Auxiliary 3283 Member Linda Feister

Linda Feister has been an active member of VFW Auxiliary 3282, District 19, since 12/29/15. Over the years, she has served in multiple roles, including as Department Deputy Representative for Veterans and Family Support at the state level. Linda has been the chairperson for Veterans and Family Support and Hospital for years and mentors new members, educating them on the Auxiliary's work for veterans.

Linda is the backbone of Auxiliary 3282's Veterans and Family Support and Hospital Programs. Each month, she and her team pack "snack" bags for veterans visiting the Daytona Beach VA Outpatient Clinic and deliver them, along with bags to the Emory Bennett Nursing Home and Barracks of Hope. They also pack "Getting Started Buckets" for veterans moving into new apartments, Thanksgiving baskets for veterans in need, and organize events like the VA Clinic's "Drive By" Baby Shower, a Christmas family adoption, and a Valentine's Day bag initiative. They also manage craft fairs to raise funds for veteran-related projects, collect toiletries for the VA Clinic, and decorate the VA Clinic Christmas tree annually. Our Auxiliary frequently receives thank-you letters from OVAHCS-Daytona Beach OPC for Linda and her team's efforts.

In addition to her work with the Auxiliary, Linda volunteers at the Post, helps with dinners, fundraising, and Buddy Poppy promotions. She dedicates countless hours each month to serving veterans. VFW Auxiliary 3282 is proud to have such a dedicated and generous member.



Sarasota Sunshine Post 3233 Auxiliary Hosts Sprinkles for School Supplies!

On Sunday, July 27th, 2025, the Sarasota Sunshine Post 3233 Auxiliary hosted their second annual "Sprinkles for School Supplies" Back-to-School ice cream social, after a smaller turnout in 2024 due to Hurricane Debbie. The event, aimed at supporting local students, encouraged attendees to donate \$5 worth of school supplies in exchange for ice cream. Partnering with SRQ Vets, the Auxiliary reached out to younger members by offering fun activities like Ice Cream BINGO, Karaoke, and a table for youth scholarships. With a budget of \$500, the event was promoted via flyers, newsletters, and social media. Decorations and patriotic coloring books created a festive atmosphere, while a team of volunteers ensured smooth operations, serving 40 people. The event also highlighted VFW programs like Buddy Poppies, and several attendees donated supplies, making it a success filled with gratitude and community spirit.



National Convention 2025



2024-2025 National Program Award Winners

Circle of Excellence – Dept. President Virginia Brehmer

Division 10:

Veterans and Family Support – 2nd Place Outstanding Performance – Robert Kabala

Americanism - 2nd Place Outstanding Performance – Carol Franker

Auxiliary Outreach – 1st Place Outstanding Performance – Sandi Hendriks

“Buddy” Poppy/ National Home - 2nd Place Outstanding Performance – Kelly Barr

Chief of Staff/Extension/Revitalization - 2nd Place Outstanding Performance- Debbie McCollum

Historian/Media Relations - 2nd Place Outstanding Performance – Jeanne Laurine

Historian/Media Relations – Outstanding Auxiliary for promoting this program through social media: Golden Gate Auxiliary 7721 President Betty Bailey

Hospital - 1st Place Outstanding Performance -Karen Heikkila

Hospital – Top recruiter in Division 10 - Karen Heikkila

Legislative -1st Place Outstanding Performance – Melissa McKeon

Membership – Recruiter Drawing winner - \$500 Visa Gift Card – Shirley Cortese – Palm Coast

Membership - 1st Place Outstanding Performance – Betty Bailey

Congratulations Florida Team!

Sunshine Word Search

P	C	R	P	S	Y	C	A	R	C	O	M	E	D
R	F	L	O	R	I	D	A	P	D	R	E	S	E
O	A	B	U	I	L	D	I	N	G	N	T	E	N
G	S	P	P	B	T	E	C	I	N	E	N	H	I
R	N	T	S	C	O	P	O	N	O	A	B	O	H
A	J	U	U	O	U	A	N	A	I	R	A	M	S
M	U	V	S	M	R	R	V	T	T	E	N	E	N
T	L	E	T	M	N	T	E	I	A	G	Q	C	U
E	I	T	O	A	A	M	N	O	V	A	U	O	S
A	E	E	I	N	M	E	T	N	R	L	E	M	D
M	T	R	R	D	E	N	I	A	E	L	T	I	R
O	T	A	T	E	N	T	O	L	S	I	U	N	A
C	E	N	A	R	T	I	N	I	E	V	E	G	W
M	I	S	P	A	C	O	F	G	R	A	C	O	A

TEAM
BUILDING
TOURNAMENT
BANQUET
RESERVATION
VETERANS
DEPARTMENT
HOMECOMING
VILLAGE
DEMOCRACY
NATIONAL
FLORIDA
SUNSHINE
PATRIOTS
CONVENTION
JULIETTE
COMMANDER
PROGRAM
AWARDS



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

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 Jenniferlholand72@comcast.net
- Extension Revitalization & Mentoring – Sherri Golder sherrigolder@gmail.com
- Historian / Media Relations – Kathy Ingall shanily.05@gmail.com
- Hospital – Viki Stripling vikiplottsdistrict11@yahoo.com
- Legislative – Pamela Monroe Anamcarax2@icloud.com
- Membership & Mentoring – Holly Evans hadams1221@hotmail.com
- 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 – Kristy Possert goldenanchorteam@gmail.com
- Program Advisor – Debbie Tilley dktilley@comcast.net

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



Scan the Blue QR
Code to submit
stories & photos of
your Auxiliary

Deadline to Remember:

Don't Forget to Pay your District Dues!
Deadline is September 30th

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 Presidents Homecoming	Florida Hotel, Orlando FL	March 14, 2026
• 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

Patriots Pen VOD Deadlines

Local VFW Post - 31 October 2025

District VFW Chairman – 15 November 2025

Department VFW Chairman – 15 December 2025

