

SUNSHINE E-NEWSLETTER

2026-2027 August - Issue # 2

Team Florida



FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



GROWING STRONGER FOR OUR VETERANS 2026-2027

Dear VFW Auxiliary members,

Thank you for the privilege of representing you at the VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada. The Florida delegation had a wonderful time from the beginning to the end. Congratulations to past Department President Mike Yates on his Circle of Excellence award. Also, his program chairmen were shining stars on Monday as Florida cleaned up with 8 first place awards and 5 second place awards. It was exhilarating to see their hard work rewarded. But don't forget that their awards reflect what you as members have done. You make it possible and so those awards are yours also!

Another highlight was the presentation of the Department Presidents with the Colors on Wednesday. Special thanks to Department Sr. Vice President Margaret Rementer and Department Guard Sherri Golder for escorting me. Also on Wednesday was the election of officers, and that made me realize just how powerful our department is. I had the responsibility of casting the vote for Florida's 377 delegates, which represents 1 delegate for 35 members. Our department had the most delegates. That reflects our secretaries who submitted their delegate lists, and our Department Secretary Debbie Tilley encouraging them. Florida rocks!

It was voted at the National Council of Administration on Thursday that the VFW Auxiliary will build a house at the National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. It will be next door to the second Florida House. Currently there are 12 families on the waiting list. It's a new chapter for the Home with 2 new houses being built.

I am so looking forward to our School of Instruction on August 14-15th at the Florida Hotel in Orlando. Friday is packed with workshops for secretaries, treasurers, trustees, and membership applications. The chairmen will have a Program Fair on Friday from 5-7 P.M. Also don't forget the Buddy Poppy contest and your watering can entry which will be displayed on Saturday. See www.vfwauxfl.org for all the details.

Loyally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Wright".

VFWA President

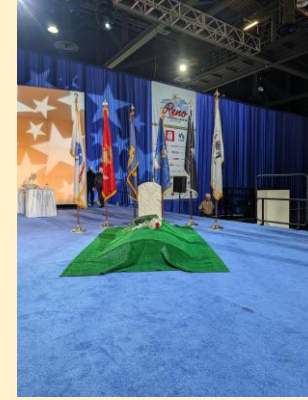
Department of Florida



2025-2026 National Convention



Great job to Department President Mike Yates for making Nationals Circle of Excellence!



Hospital/V.A.V.S.

CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER

Christmas in October donations are now part of the Circle of Champions.

Our VAVS Representatives and Deputies can use your financial support this holiday season.



****Your donations will provide needed items that the VA cannot supply.**

****Holiday gatherings with the residents of the CLC and the Domiciliary.**

****In-patient and out-patient events.**

****Food for Veterans and Veteran families with financial insecurities.**

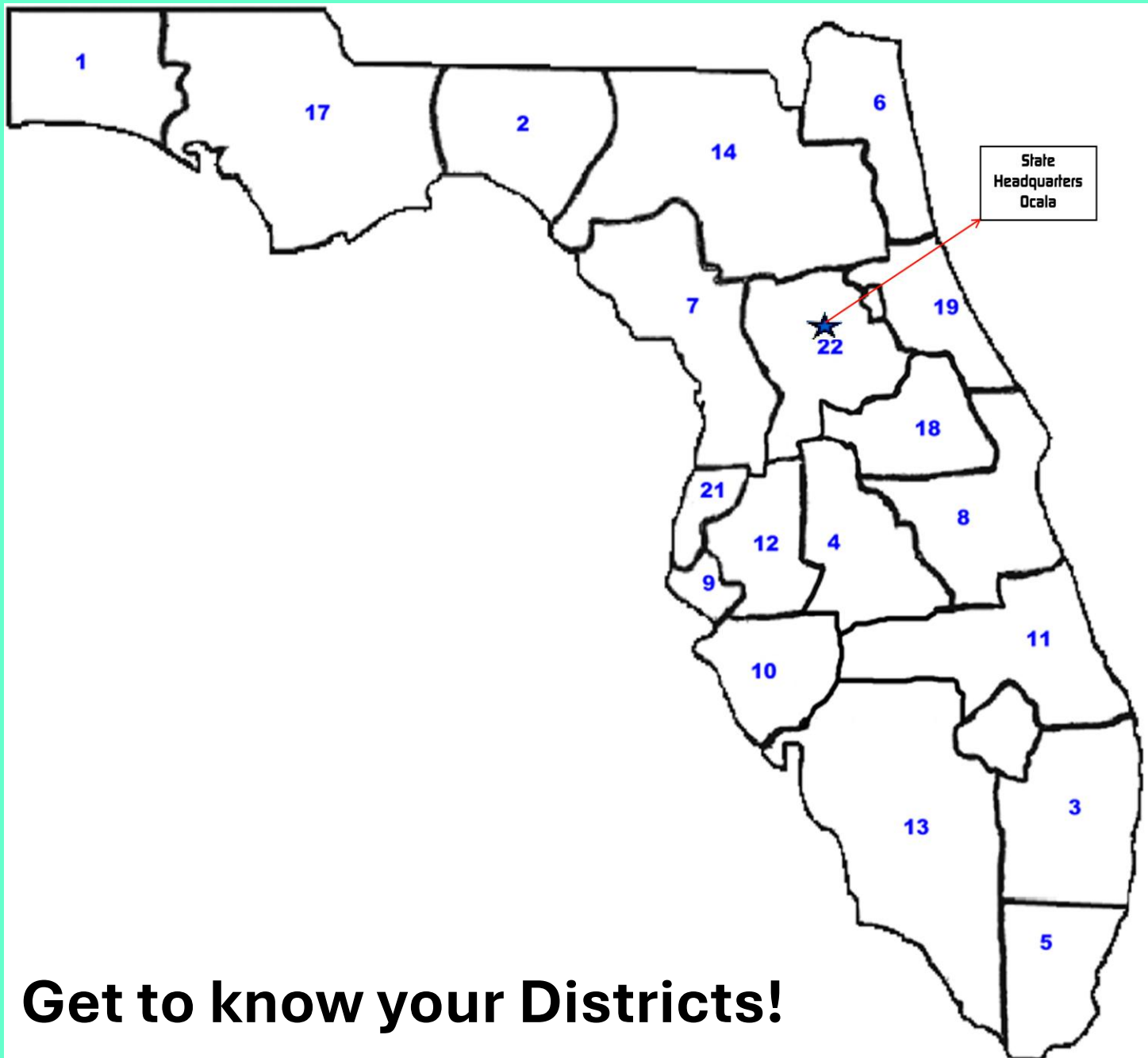
****Checks payable to the Dept. of Florida**

Use contribution worksheet (available on Dept. website)

Treasurer Cindy Estell, P.O. Box 55850

St. Petersburg, Fl. 33732-5850

Must be paid by October 31, 2026



Get to know your Districts!

Groundbreaking Begins for Collier County Veterans Long-Term Care Facility

On July 10, 2026, VFW Post 7721 members joined state and local leaders to break ground on the new **Collier County Long Term Care Veterans Facility**, Florida's **10th state veterans nursing home**.

The project comes after **eight years of work** by local, state, and national representatives to secure funding and make this long-envisioned facility a reality. Designed as a place where veterans can not only live but thrive, the new center will expand care beyond the nine FL/VA facilities currently serving veterans across Florida.



Results of the National Program Award Winners!

Americanism – Chairman Michelle Butler

Award #1 – 1st Place

Award #2 – 1st Place

Auxiliary Outreach – Chairman Becky Kieffer

Award #1 – 1st Place

Award #2 – 1st Place

Buddy Poppy – Chairman Jennifer Holland

Award #1 – 1st Place

Award #2 – 1st Place

Extension/Revitalization – Chairman Sherri Golder

Award #2 – 1st Place

Historian/Media Relations – Chairman Kathy

Ingall Award #2 – 1st Place

Hospital – Chairman Viki Stripling

Citation: Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year Florida – Gina Perrone Auxiliary 3270

Award #2 – 2nd Place

Legislative – Chairman Pam Monroe

Award #2 – 2nd Place

Membership – Chairman Holly Evans

Award #2 – 2nd Place

Scholarships – Chairman Carrie Messer

Award #2 – 2nd Place

Veterans and Family Support – Chairman Ryan Harris

Citation

Youth – Chairman Lanaie Reed

Award #2 – 2nd Place

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING CHAIRMEN FOR A JOB WELL DONE!



Community Comes Together for July Fourth Veteran Thank You Picnic

This year's July Fourth *Veteran Thank You Picnic* was a heartfelt success, thanks to the incredible support of volunteers and partner organizations. Approximately 25 volunteers came out to serve and celebrate with our veterans, helping create a day filled with gratitude, good food, and camaraderie.

A special thank you goes to the Auxiliary groups from **VFW Post 4643**, **VFW Auxiliary Rocket Post 4534**, **8191 Post On The Hill**, **VFW Post 10131 Auxiliary**, **VFW Auxiliary Post 4228**, and **Kissimmee Memorial Post VFW 4225** for their hands-on help, donations, and enthusiasm throughout the event.

An extra shout-out to **Judy's Mini Donuts** and **Tiki Time Slushie Co**, who brought their trucks and treated our veterans to delicious sweet bites that added a festive touch to the celebration.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this year's picnic memorable for the veterans we proudly serve.



Veteran and Auxiliary Free Breakfast Membership Drive Held at VFW Post 10127 Auxiliary

VFW Post 10127 Auxiliary recently hosted a Veteran and Auxiliary Free Breakfast Membership Drive, bringing together local veterans, family members, and community supporters for a morning of good food and fellowship.

The event offered a complimentary breakfast to all veterans and Auxiliary members, creating a welcoming space to learn more about the Post's mission, ongoing programs, and the benefits of Auxiliary membership. Volunteers from the Post worked together to greet attendees, share information, and encourage new members to join and strengthen veteran support within the community.



Patriots Pen & Voice of Democracy 2026-2027 Theme:
"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Deadlines:

Local Post Submission:
October 31, 2026

District VFW Chairman:
November 15, 2026

Department VFW Chairman:
December 15, 2026



Digital Submission Transition: VFW National has updated promotional materials and flyers with QR codes directing students to submit their essays and audio recordings electronically via the Scholarship APP platform.



AUXILIARY PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today with grateful hearts, thanking You for the privilege of gathering together in fellowship and service. Thank You for each member here and for the unique gifts You have given them.

Lord, remind us why we first joined this great organization. May our purpose always be greater than ourselves. Help us remember that we are here to honor, support, and serve our veterans, their families, our military, and our community with compassion, dedication, and love.

Guide us as we carry out the many programs of the VFW Auxiliary. May every project, every volunteer hour, every visit, every donation, and every act of kindness bring hope, comfort, and encouragement to someone in need. Let our work be a reflection of Your love and a blessing to those we serve.

Father, help us to be kind to one another. Teach us to speak with gentleness, listen with understanding, forgive quickly, encourage often, and always treat one another with respect. May we work together in harmony, remembering that we are one team united by a common mission.

We ask Your special protection over all who have worn the uniform of our nation and those who continue to serve today. Watch over our veterans, our active-duty military, our National Guard, and our Reserve forces. Keep them safe, strengthen their families, comfort those who are hurting, and bless the loved ones who faithfully stand beside them.

Grant wisdom to our leaders, strength to our volunteers, and grateful hearts to each of us. May everything we do bring honor to our organization, our country, and to You.

We thank You for the freedoms we enjoy because of the sacrifices of so many brave men and women. Help us never take those blessings for granted.

In Your holy name we pray.

Amen.

2026



2027

PAYING YOUR AUXILIARY / DISTRICT BOND

Per the National Bylaws your Bond must be at least **1.25%** the amount of funds and value of property for which, so far as can be anticipated for the 2026-2027 year in your bank accounts.

(The President and Treasurer may be accountable)

Page 89, Sec. 814, letter E, # 1

For example: you have \$10,000 in your account you would need to set your bond for \$12,500.

ALL BONDS MUST BE PAID BY AUGUST 31, 2026 in MALTA or the Auxiliary and or District will be put into suspension!



VFW Auxiliary
Department of Florida

250TH BIRTHDAY MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL!

Let's celebrate our Nation's birthday with a special for our annual members to convert to Life!

25% OFF



At your May or June Auxiliary meeting discuss with your members to offer a 25% off converting to life sale! Promote the sale in your Post, email your annual members, call and make sure they are aware what the cost would be to convert! They could save money!

LET'S RETAIN!

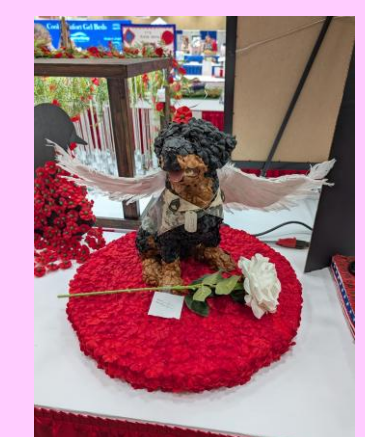
For example... If you have a member that is between 61-65 their Lifetime membership is \$161, with the discount it's just \$120.75. This is a great way to help retain your members. Run this from July 1st through August 31st.

If a member converts using a credit card - they will be charged the full amount and the Auxiliary will need to issue a check for the 25% discount back to the member.

Holly Evans
Membership/Mentoring Chairman
Approved by Kathy Wright, Dept. Senior Vice
for 2026-2027 year



Buddy Poppy Displays at National



Department Officers 2026 – 2027

President

Kathy Wright
5867 111th Street
Jacksonville, FL 32244
(757) 685-1837
Kathy_wright@bellsouth.net

Senior Vice President

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

Junior Vice President

Jason Estell
5396 63rd Street N
St. Petersburg, FL 33709
(352) 584-4960
Jason211983@gmail.com

Secretary

Debbie Tilley
22 Surfcrest St.
St. Augustine, FL 32080
(904) 495-3622 (cell)
dktilley@comvcast.net

Treasurer

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

Chaplain

Pauline Riddle
451 E 3rd Street
Chuluota, FL 32766
(407) 682-2452
Fireballs44@hotmail.com

Conductor

Robert “Bob” Kabala
1006 43rd Avenue N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33703
(727)-308-8508
rkabala@tampabay.rr.com

Guard

Sherri Golder
251 Levy Bay Rd.
Panacea, FL 32436
(352) 445-9993
flyouth2627@gmail.com

Chief of Staff

Debbie McCollum
5137 Scarsdale Manor Lane
Orlando, FL 32818
407-256-9387
Ucfnole21@yahoo.com

Know your Department Chairmen:

- Americanism – Lanaie Reed Amerianismfl@gmail.com
- Buddy Poppy – Mary Conkle mmac2123@comcast.net
- VFW National Home – Jeanne Laurine Jeannelaurine8@gmail.com
- Extension Revitalization – Debbie McCollum Ucfnole21@yahoo.com
- Historian / Media Relations – Kathy Ingall vfwauxhistorialn25.26@gmail.com
- Hospital – Karen Heikkila hospitalauxfl@yahoo.com
- Legislative – Betty Bailey Bann652@aol.com
- Membership & Mentoring – Holly Evans hadams1221@hotmail.com
- Scholarships – Stoney Lawrentz-Edwards stoneylawrentz@gmail.com
- Dept. President’s Special Project – Becky Kieffer bkiso2012@gmail.com
- Veterans & Family Support – Kelly Barr Kabarr66@msn.com
- Youth Program – Sherri Golder flyouth2627@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

DO NOT USE THE CONTACT US BUTTON!”



SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION



Friday - Saturday August 14-15, 2026
Florida Hotel & Conference Center

1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, Florida 32809
Phone: 800-588-4656

Room Rate: \$125 plus tax (**Mention VFW School of Instruction**)
Complimentary Self-Parking

Deadline for Reservations - July 27, 2026

Friday August 14, 2026 - Red Shirt Friday

8:30 AM District President's Meeting (Closed Meeting)
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM - Dept. Chairmens Meeting (Closed Meeting)

11:00 AM - Council Meeting
1 - 2 PM Secretary School
2- 3:30 PM - Treasurer/Trustee School
3:30 - 5:00 PM - Membership Application School
5 - 7 PM Program Fair

Saturday August 15, 2025 - Kathy's Shirt

8:30 AM - Welcome
8:40 - Mike - National Convention report
9:00 AM - Program Chairmen
9:45 AM President's Leadership School
11:00 AM - Noon - Program Advisor - Reporting
1:00 PM VFW training
2:30 PM - Questions & Answers
3:30 PM - Sunshine E-Newsletter

District President's & Commanders dinner Saturday night 6 pm

NOTICE: ALL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please check website often for updated information

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2026-2027



SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION
FLORIDA HOTEL

AUGUST
14-15,
2026



DEPARTMENT FALL
CONFERENCE
FLORIDA HOTEL
ORLANDO, FL

OCTOBER
30-31,
2026



DEPARTMENT MID-WINTER
CONFERENCE
FLORIDA HOTEL
ORLANDO, FL

FEBRUARY
4-7,
2027



VETERANS VILLAGE
PICNIC
FORT McCOY, FL

MARCH
20,
2027



DEPARTMENT
CONVENTION
RENAISSANCE
ORLANDO, FL

JUNE
17-20,
2027

2026-2027 Department Chairman Growing Stronger for Our Veterans!



Dates to Remember for 2026 – 2027

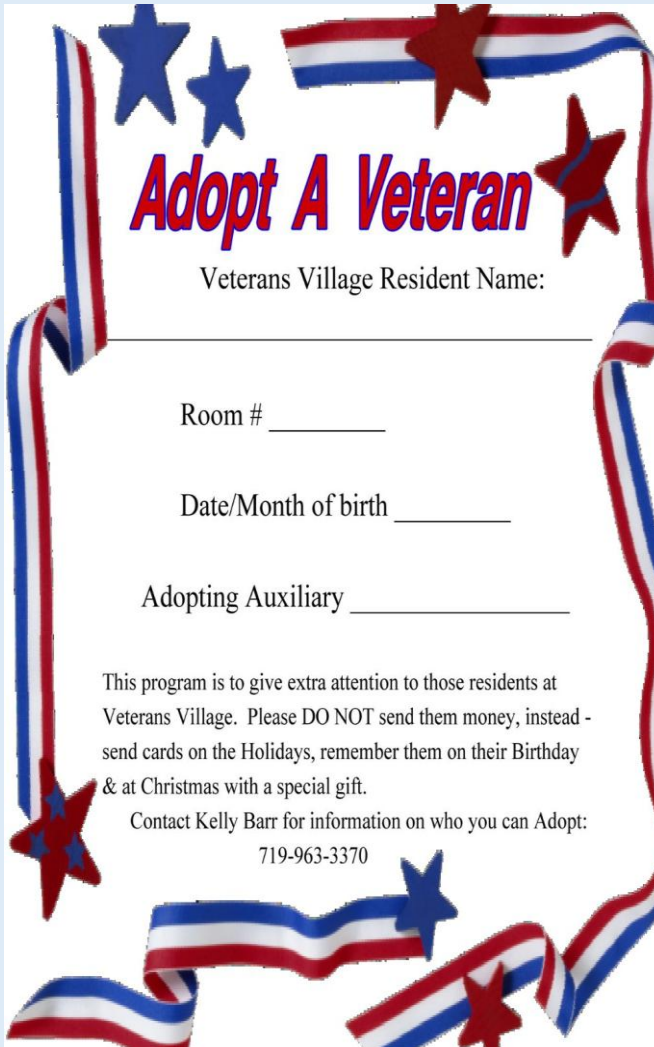
• <u>National Convention</u>	<u>Reno, Nevada</u>	<u>July 24 – 30, 2026</u>
• <u>School of Instruction</u>	<u>Florida Hotel, Orlando FL</u>	<u>August 14 -15, 2026</u>
• <u>Department Fall Conference</u>	<u>Florida Hotel, Orlando FL</u>	<u>October 30 – 31, 2026</u>
• <u>Southern Conference</u>	<u>Montgomery, Texas</u>	<u>October 22 – 25, 2026</u>
• <u>National Mid-Year Conference</u>	<u>Cruise – Majestic Mirage D.R.</u>	<u>February 2 – 7, 2027</u>
• <u>Department Mid-Winter Conference</u>	<u>Florida Hotel, Orlando FL</u>	<u>February 4 – 7, 2027</u>
• <u>C.A.F.E National</u>	<u>Washington D.C.</u>	<u>February 28 – March 4, 2027</u>
• <u>National Sr. Vice Conference</u>	<u>Kansas City Mo</u>	<u>March 18-21, 2027</u>
• <u>National Presidents Visit</u>		<u>March 18-21, 2027</u>
• <u>Auxiliary Presidents Homecoming</u>		<u>April 10, 2027</u>
• <u>Department Commander Homecoming</u>		<u>April 17, 2027</u>
• <u>Veterans Village Picnic</u>	<u>Fort McCoy, Florida</u>	<u>March 20, 2027</u>
• <u>Planning Meeting for Margaret Rementer</u>		<u>April 3, 2027</u>
• <u>Department Judging</u>		<u>April 29-30, 2027</u>
• <u>National Jr. Vice Conference</u>	<u>National Home Eaton Rapids, Mi</u>	<u>May 13-17, 2027</u>
• <u>Department Convention</u>	<u>Renaissance Orlando, FL</u>	<u>June 17-20, 2027</u>
• <u>National Convention</u>	<u>Milwaukee, Wisconsin</u>	<u>July 31- August 4, 2027</u>

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.

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