



# SUNSHINE E-NEWS

## DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY



### *92nd Annual Convention*

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the  
United States Auxiliary

Department of Florida

June 15-18, 2023

Renaissance Orlando at Sea World  
6677 Sea Harbor Drive  
Orlando, FL



### End of Term Party

Saturday, June 17, 2023

Tickets must be purchased through:  
VFW State HQ, 543 NE Sanchez  
Ave, Ocala, FL 34470.

Tickets are \$50. Deadline for  
tickets is June 9. NO  
EXCEPTIONS! Tickets will be held  
for pickup...they will not be mailed  
out. Cocktails 6:30 pm and Dinner  
7:00 pm

### Tentative Agenda (Subject to change)

#### Thursday—June 15

9:45 am Floor Practice (Floor Team)  
10:00 am Registration Opens  
11:30 am Floor Practice (Officer's March)  
1:00 pm Council of Administration Meeting  
1:45 pm Opening Ceremonies  
4:30 pm VFW and VFW Auxiliary Joint Memorial  
Service

#### Friday—June 16

8:30 am Registration Open  
8:30 am Joint Opening with VFW  
9:15 am Business Session (Awards Presented)  
12:00 noon Lunch  
12:00–1:30 pm PDP Lunch (by Invitation  
Only)  
2:00 pm VFW /Auxiliary Joint Awards  
5:00 pm Patriotic Rally  
7:00–9:00 pm Reception for former and current  
"Circle of Champion" winners

#### Saturday—June 17

8:30–10:00 Registration Open  
8:30 am Business Session  
1200 noon Lunch  
1:00 pm Election of Officers  
4:30 pm Joint Installation of Officers  
6:00 pm Celebration

#### Sunday—June 18

9:00 am VFW Auxiliary Council of Administration

#### NOTE:

Registration will close at 10:00 am Saturday June 17.  
All delegates must be registered by then or they will  
forfeit their vote!

# Candidates Corner

## - Department Guard



### Jason Estell—Candidate for Department Guard

I am Jason Estell from District 9 VFW Post 6827, and I would be humbled and honored to have your support as candidate for Department Guard 2023-2024. I am a Lifetime member joining the VFW Auxiliary in 2015 under the eligibility of my father Wendell Estell a Vietnam veteran who served in the United States Air Force for 8 years. I am also a proud great-grand son of a WWII United States Navy Veteran. Prior to joining the VFW Auxiliary in 2015, I was a member of the Pinellas Park Post 4364 Men's Auxiliary for 7 years where I served in various Officer positions including Treasurer and President. In 2015, shortly after the VFW Auxiliary opened membership to male members, I joined the Pinellas Park Auxiliary 4364, where I was elected to serve as the first male Auxiliary President in 2016 and in 2018 was elected as the District 9 Auxiliary President, both leading to Circle of Champions. I have also held several Department of Florida Chairman appointments under Past Department President Maggie Gilchrist and Gail Hadley. Under Maggie, as Department Special Project Chairman we raised \$120k for Homeless Veterans around Florida. I was appointed as the Department Credentials Chairman and Program Advisor under Past Department President Tela Harbold. In 2019, I was appointed as the first male National VFW Auxiliary Patriotic Instructor and Americanism Ambassador under Past National President Peggy Haake, she appointed me. I am currently serving as the National VFW Auxiliary Membership Ambassador for 2022-2023 year under National President Jane Reape, appointed as well. It is my ambition to serve our veterans and their families in any capacity. I feel strongly that the success of the Auxiliary depends on everyone working together as an organization. I know that with my experience and knowledge of this organization, I can be effective while making a difference, and ask for your support as Department Guard 2023-2024.



### Debra Gates—Candidate for Department Guard

My name is Debra Gates and I would love to be your next Department Guard. I am a Navy Veteran who served for 3-1/2 years on active duty. I am married to Chris Gates who served in the Navy for 26 years. Veterans and Active-duty members are near and dear to my heart, I have spent the greater part of my life around the armed forces, I have been the liaison for an Aircraft carrier Family readiness group, Ombudsman for shore duty command. I understand what it's like to not have a voice in the decision process. I feel I can communicate the needs of the younger members, if we as an organization are to move forward the younger veterans and spouses voice need to be heard. I am currently holding the position for the Department of Florida Patriotic Instructor/ Americanism Chairperson, District 19 Auxiliary President, VFW 3282 Auxiliary President. Positions I have held in the past, District 19 Auxiliary Senior-Vice, District 19 Auxiliary Trustee, VFW Post 3282 Auxiliary Senior-Vice, and VFW Post 3282 Auxiliary Membership Chairman. I am very dedicated to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Auxiliary, I am passionate, excited, and driven to bring my very best every day. I truly believe no one does more for Veterans!! I am asking for your support in my endeavors to be the next Guard for the Department of Florida Auxiliary 2023-2024



### Leilani Jones—Candidate for Department Guard

Aloha, My name is Leilani Jones, and I would be honored and humbled to have your consideration for Guard for the Department of Florida in the 2023-2024 year. I joined the VFW Auxiliary to honor my father's foreign service. John C. Daniels was drafted into the Marine Corps and was a drill instructor for 4 years. Upon coming home he found out a child was on the way (guess who) and decided to rejoin the military. The Marine Corps would not give him time to put his affairs in order so he joined the Army and served for 24 years retiring as a Command Sergeant Major (CSM). I spent my entire childhood on military bases. In fact, I went to 6 high schools in 4 years. I still remember jumping off the swing when the bugles played every day and standing at attention with all the other kids. I joined the VFW Auxiliary in 2009 and became a life member in 2012. I started going to the VFW to spend time with my parents. I never realized that it would become such an important and fulfilling part of my life. I am in my third year of being the Auxiliary president at post 7909 in Jacksonville. I have moved up the chairs in district 6 and am currently the senior vice president. I was the Department patriotic instructor 2018-2019 and organized the patriotic rally and POW/MIA service. I have been the chairman for Americanism, Veterans and Family support and Youth programs for the Department of Florida. I have a passion for this organization and to our veterans and those serving in our military. I believe that you can have fun in all that you do hence the silly costumes. I have the full support of my loving husband Bobby Jones and my sons Justin and Antonio. I would not be able to do the things I do without them in my corner. Mahalo for your love and support and remember a smile goes a long way



### Pauline Riddle—Candidate for Department Guard

East Seminole County Auxiliary to VFW Post 10139 is proud to announce their support for Pauline B. Riddle as a candidate for Department of Florida Auxiliary Guard for the upcoming 2023 -2024 year... Pauline has a life-long proven record of leadership and community involvement leading to successful outcomes. Through her various roles within her family, career and VFW Auxiliary, she has faced varied challenges that have developed her into a leader displaying, empathy, charisma and encouragement to all. Pauline has held several positions within our Auxiliary and has been successful at each. As President, she held strong during the Covid 19 Global Pandemic leading efforts to ensure the community and VFW Post needs were met. She organized a drive to stock the empty food pantry at the local elementary school to feed families in need... "A Challenge" brings out what we like to see in Pauline. She has worked her way through the chairs of both Auxiliary and District Level. She's first to speak out if the VFW Post or community needs assistance and encourages the Auxiliary to assist in any way we can. This is exemplified by her correspondence tag line of: "The Strongest Heart is the Heart of a Volunteer". The East Seminole County VFW Post Veterans has bestowed Pauline awards...for her leadership and partnership toward a more positive working relationship between the VFW Post and Auxiliary. Upon acceptance of the most recent award she stated "A coach can't win a game, without a good Team" - an acknowledgement of her leadership and team spirit. As Auxiliary President, the Auxiliary brought home (12) Awards including "Circle of Champions" at the 2022 June Convention, along with (2) of our chairman Receiving "Hospital Chairman of the Year", and a special Certificate given to "The Mentoring of the Year" Chairman, and at the 2021 June Convention she brought to the Department's attention the hard work of a local Nurse, for which the Nurse was named "Hospital Worker of the Year" which goes to show she makes it a point to appreciate and recognize the efforts of all and rewards, when possible Auxiliary members for their dedication and achievements

# Candidates Corner

## - Veterans Village 3 year Home Board



### **Lisa Batchelder—Candidate for Veterans Village 3 year Home Board**

Life Member of the VFW Auxiliary Post #10087 I joined the VFW Auxiliary under the eligibility of my grandfather (Anthony Natoli) for his service in Occupied Korea. A little background on me: I have been a Registered Nurse for over 30 years in all aspects of nursing, which include but are not limited to nutrition, mental health, physical health, assistance with everyday activities of living. Most of which required budget and financing to maintain a department and follow guidelines toward maintaining the budget. This also included finding ways to raise money to benefit both my staff and residents. With this, my accounting background was very useful. I have advocated not only for Veterans, but also for our seniors in the State of Florida for over 20 years. I have owned and operated some successful businesses in my life. I have very strong leadership skills and above all, I am a great listener, which I feel is a priority for the Residents of VFW Veterans Village as the Village is the home of our Veterans to help maintain both their dignity and their independence. Being a part of the home Board of our Veterans Village would be an honor and a privilege and to be able to advocate for these Veterans and their families who reside at the home. Being a nurse in the community, I have had the opportunity to serve many of these veterans in their own homes. I have



### **Laura Love -Veterans Village 3 year Home Board**

My name is Laura Love. I am running for the 3 year term on the VFW Veterans Village Home Board. I am in my 3rd year as a board member. Since I have been on the board I have held the offices of Vice President (2 years) and this year I am the secretary. Since being on the board we have come a long way. We have tried to keep lines of communication open and have shown our finances with the auxiliary. The auxiliary is a very big supporter of the Village and I feel you should know what is going on there. I have always had a place in my heart for the Village. When it first opened over 30 years ago I along with my husband and children used to go and cook meals for the residents. I work in School Nutrition and am always working with the kitchen staff on meal choices and equipment needed to make things better. I ask that you support me in this endeavor as I can keep the VFW Village going strong. Thank you

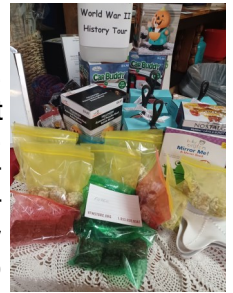


# Auxiliary Work Is Never Done

## Wesconnett Auxiliary 7909



Attached is a picture of one of the hardest working auxiliary workers we have at Wesconnett Auxiliary 7909, Jacksonville. We set up a table at our post and she supplied it with her homemade goodies such as made rum balls, bourbon balls, orange balls, zucchini cake to raise money for the Atlantic Coast Young Marines. She wouldn't take any money for baking supplies. Then she started adding to the table with new or gently used items to raise more money. This group of Young Marines wanted to make a trip to France and Germany to see World War II sites, and they



participated in all sorts of fundraising activities. They will be leaving June 4th and part of the reason is the efforts of this lady who raised \$600 with her baking/treasure table.

## Golden Gate Auxiliary 7721



It was a great honor for Auxiliary member Bonnie Neyhart to welcome her Husband Ken Neyhart, Army, Vietnam Veteran, awarded two Purple Hearts, home from this day long visiting Washington, D.C. memorials. It was a special family day with their son Scott Neyhart a Gulf War Army Veteran who was his father's Guardian. The flight also included Four WW2 veterans, all were welcomed home by a huge crowd which included Auxiliary members from District 13, other families, scouts, military groups and children.



## Wesonnette Auxiliary 7909



Attached are some photos of 2 classes from Sacred Heart School with the pizzas still in the boxes. Our auxiliary Wesconnett 7909 in Jacksonville treated them to this pizza party because both classes participated in the Patriot's Pen contest. We delayed the party until it was convenient for the teachers. This was an early release day before spring break so it was a good time to celebrate. They were so excited because it was

Marcos pizza. This could become an annual event. This school has been designated a Purple Star School of Distinction for supporting military families. This program was established in 2021 when the Florida legislature passed HB 439.

