



# SUNSHINE E-NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY



*From:*

*VFW Auxiliary Department of Florida  
Line Officers*

*Teresa Bachand, President*

*L-R: Linda Burnett, Treasurer; Debbie Tilley, Secretary; Margaret Rementer,  
Conductor; Ginger Brehmer, Sr. Vice President; Mike Yates, Jr. Vice President;  
Kathy Wright, Chaplain; Jason Estell, Guard; (non-pictured, Maggie  
Gilchrist, Chief of Staff*

# Veterans Administration Volunteer Service Representative

## ***What National Says:***

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) operates one of the largest volunteer programs in the Federal Government, supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support. In 1946, the VFW Auxiliary became one of 13 charter members of VAVS. The mission of VAVS is to provide a structured volunteer program under the management of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees in cooperation with community resources to serve veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.

Members of the VFW Auxiliary have been providing extra encouragement, love and support to our veterans since World War I. The supplemental services provided by our VFW Auxiliary Volunteers have made a difference in patients' response to treatment and contributed substantially to the welfare of the patients and their families. Our VFW Auxiliary Volunteers provide their services to VA hospitals, Community Living Centers, outpatient clinics, Fisher Houses, outreach centers, satellite facilities, Federal cemeteries and state veterans homes.

**The VFW Auxiliary VAVS also provides monetary contributions** which assist in providing support services, activities and comfort essentials that may not be fiscal priorities of the VA. It is almost impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing our volunteers have given to veterans and their families.

**Our need for volunteers has accelerated.** There are more veterans being served in the VA system than ever before. This makes recruiting a vital part of the VAVS Program. We have an increasing number of aging veterans, younger veterans and female veterans utilizing VA medical facilities. To provide these veterans with the quality of care, dignity and compassion of which they are so deserving, we need to focus on recruitment. If the VFW Auxiliary vision of continued excellence in the future is to be a reality, recruitment efforts must increase.

**A VAVS Representative holds a key position**, not only to the VFW Auxiliary, but to the VA as well. The purpose of the VAVS National Advisory Committee as written on page 9 of the VHA Handbook, 1620.01 states: "The VAVS NAC advises ..... on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA health care facilities and on matters relating to volunteerism. The members are responsible for:

1. Promoting VAVS Programs;
2. Communicating VA policies to their constituencies; and
3. Making recommendations to improve volunteer services to Veterans."

## ***What a Department of Florida VAVS Rep says:***

The VFW Auxiliary holds representation at nearly 100% of the VA facilities across the United States. serve food, helping anyway they could.

Today, we are the key to the emotional care and well-being of our Veterans. We are the ones who let our Veterans know they are not forgotten when they are ill. Our visits, our smiles alone bring sunshine, hope, and peace of mind. The Auxiliary plays a very important role, as a little bit of time, attention, and love go a long way.

We are starting anew since the Covid shutdown. During those times, our



## Mid-Winter Conference and Banquet

The Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 19-21, 2024 at Westgate Lakes Resort.

**Reservations:**

1-877-502-7058 mention group code 67-885.

Deadline for reservations is December 28, 2023 by 5:00 pm.

The **tentative agenda** is: *All meetings are tentative and subject to change*

**Friday, January 19**

8:45 am Floor Practice

10:00 am Department Chairman meeting (closed)

10:45 am District President's Meeting (closed)

1:00 pm Council of Administration

Meeting—open to all members followed by Opening Ceremonies

Mid-Winter Conference

**Saturday, January 20**

8:00 am–1:00 pm Mid-Winter Conference

Lunch Break

**Saturday Evening.**

**Celebration of Achievement Banquet.**

6:00 pm Cocktails

6:30 pm Doors open

6:45 pm Program begins

7:00 pm Dinner

*Dress is Suit or Semi-Formal*

**Dinner:**

Chicken with Parmesan Dill

Cream Sauce,

Applewood Smoked Pork

Tenderloin with Tarragon Mustard.

Garden Salad with Italian Herb Dressing

Oven Roasted Potatoes

Sauteed Green Beans

NY Style Cheesecake with mixed berries

Fresh brewed coffee or decaf or hot or iced tea.

**Tickets:** \$47 / person

Purchase Department

Headquarters only (see order form on website.)

Deadline for tickets is January 20, 2024

Tickets will not be mailed. Must pick them up at the hotel.

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Veteran patients, Domiciliary and CLC residents and Hospice relied on the medical staff for any human connection. That left our invaluable health care providers exhausted. Even though our donations are generous and greatly appreciated, the time has come to roll up our sleeves once again and help in any way possible.

- Become a registered Hospital volunteer.
- Volunteer as an Occasional volunteer through your Auxiliary.
- Bring in student volunteers (at least 16 years old).
- Sponsor volunteers (non-Auxiliary).

Volunteering has benefits we can share, like gaining work experience, learning new skills, meeting new people, and most importantly, giving something back. Keep permanent records of all your volunteer hours. Report them to your Hospital Chairman and VAVS Representative.

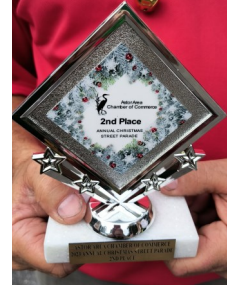
Contact your VAVS Representative or VAVS Deputy, Hospital or Clinic, and ask what events our Auxiliary can participate in. Raise funds for the Hospitals' needs. This is a perfect opportunity to celebrate a non-traditional holiday with the Veterans. Make it exciting, make it uplifting, make it fun.





# Sharing Wonderful Auxiliary Projects

**Astor Auxiliary 9986** took second place in the Astor Area Christmas Street Parade.



## Youth, Hospital and Veterans and Family Support

**Golden Gate 7721 Auxiliary** packed boxes for Army Battalion in South Korea. They included cards made by middle school children.

Members made quilts for the veterans in nursing homes.



## Hospital and Buddy Poppy

Jacksonville Juniores showing off the cards they made for the veterans in the local nursing home. Each girl wrote inside the card her appreciation for the Veteran's service.

**Wesconnett Auxiliary 7909** member Kathy Wright provided the card supplies and gave the girls a short lesson on the historical background of November 11th and the Buddy Poppy.



## Veterans and Family Support

**Arrant-Smith Auxiliary 4127** packed 20 Thanksgiving gift bags for Veterans. Gift bags included Stuffing mix, mashed potatoes, green beans, mushroom soup, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, gravy mix and a roasting pan. A Publix \$25 gift card was included for the turkey. The bags were delivered to Homestead Air Reserve Base.

