SUNSHINE E-NEWSLETTER



2026-2027 November - Issue # 5 **Team Florida**

FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



GROWING STRONGER FOR OUR VETERANS 2026-2027

November 2026

Dear VFW Auxiliary members,

We are fast approaching the holidays so it's time to help all those who need a little extra help. Our first holiday is Veteran's Day so let's make sure to honor all those who gave so that we live in a free country. It might be as simple as a card, but all these gestures mean a lot to those who might not have heard grateful words or tokens of appreciation.

I know that we have a lot of people who are cleaning up after hurricane Isaias. This is why we contribute to that disaster relief so that our brothers and sisters have a helping hand after no power and high winds. I saw some of the destruction as I traveled to Mobile, Alabama for our Southern Conference meeting on October 23rd. The weather was glorious, and we had some time to tour the USS Alabama.
Our department got to brag a bit because our second Florida house is opening at the VFW National Home. It's amazing to think that 2 families will have their world brightened so much by the opportunity to live in the 2 new houses. In case you didn't know, the national VFW Auxiliary has also sponsored a house which is next door to Florida 2. Our donations will be even more critical to keep these families moving toward their goals.

Another goal is to achieve 95% membership by the end of November. Think about someone who you might gift with an annual or even lifetime membership! Those gifts last because they honor the person who served our country!

As we approach Thanksgiving let us always be grateful for all our blessings in this country!

Kathy Wright

VFW Auxiliary President
Department of Florida



District 6 Hosts Annual Patriot's Pen Bowling Tournament

On September 27, 2026, District 6 held its annual Patriot's Pen bowling tournament, a cherished event that supports the district's youth banquet. Funds raised through the tournament help ensure a memorable celebration for the students recognized as winners of the Patriot's Pen contest.

Beyond fundraising, the tournament offers an added benefit: the chance for members from across the district to connect, spend time together, and strengthen community ties. The event once again brought participants together for a day of camaraderie, friendly competition, and support for local youth.



VFW Post 4250 Launches Thanksgiving Food Drive for Veterans

VFW Post 4250 in New Smyrna Beach, District 19, has launched a Thanksgiving food drive to help ensure local Veterans-in-need can enjoy a warm and generous holiday meal. To organize donations, the Auxiliary created a display featuring colorful paper "feathers," each labeled with an item the post hopes to collect. Community members are invited to "pluck" a feather and contribute the listed item, making it easy for everyone to participate.

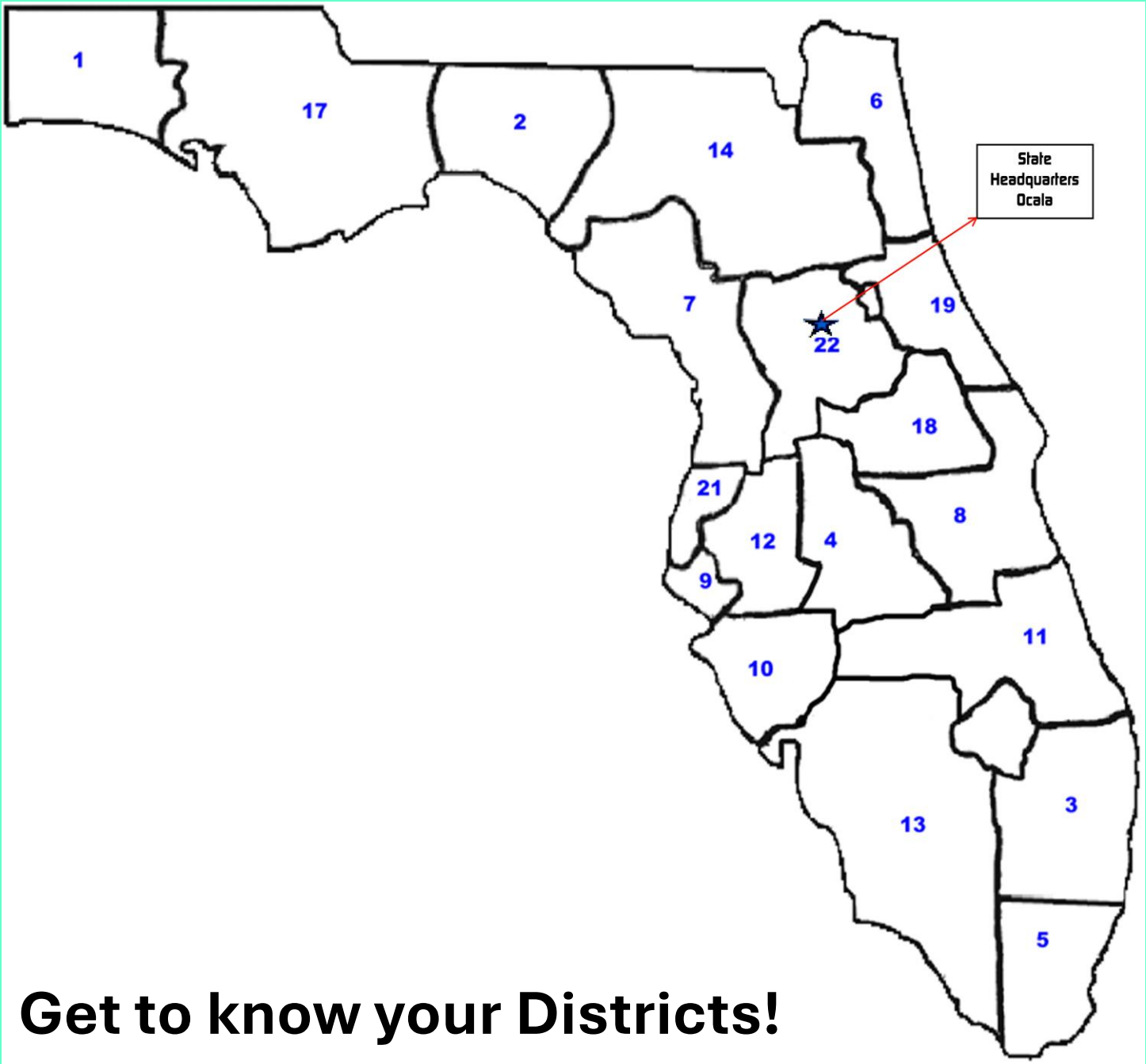
This creative and engaging approach not only highlights the needs of local Veterans but also encourages greater community involvement during the holiday season. The effort reflects the Auxiliary's ongoing commitment to supporting those who have served.



Auxiliary Post 4252 Welcomes District Visitors at October Membership Meeting



Auxiliary Post 4252 in Hernando welcomed several District and Auxiliary leaders during its October 8 membership meeting. The visit provided an opportunity to share updates, strengthen connections, and recognize the ongoing work of the post and its officers.



Get to know your Districts!

Riddle Homecoming

The Auxiliary to VFW Post 1590 in Daytona Beach, Florida held a poppy drive during the Embry–Riddle Aeronautical University homecoming tailgate event. Members enjoyed engaging with students and sharing the history and meaning behind the poppy as a symbol of remembrance.





North Port VFW and Auxiliary Create Powerful Display Highlighting Military Suicide Awareness

The North Port VFW and Auxiliary 8203 of District 10 recently completed a meaningful display to help raise awareness of Military Suicide within the Post and the community. The display featured 26 military boots, 26 ribbons, 40 American flags, and a large banner designed to draw attention to this important issue.

Auxiliary members Dot Shaffer, Jeanine Largent, Margaret Rementer, and Cyndy Terry helped assemble the display. Behind the scenes, VFW Sr. Vice Commander Russ Crump and Auxiliary member Barbara Crump donated the banner, while VFW member Bill assisted with placing the boots and flags and setting up the lighting so the display would stand out in the evening.

This collaborative effort reflects the dedication of the North Port VFW and Auxiliary in honoring those affected and increasing awareness throughout the community.







VFW Auxiliary 4337 Officers Unite for Photo

After three months, all current VFW Auxiliary 4337 officers were finally able to attend the monthly meeting together. Before the meeting began, the group gathered for a quick photo session to mark the occasion.



VFW Post 8189 Delivers Pet Food Donations to Meals on Wheels

On Friday, October 9, VFW Post 8189 Auxiliary delivered pet food collected through the Post's Pet Food Drive to the Citrus County Meals on Wheels program in Lecanto. The generous donations will help feed the beloved pets of local Meals on Wheels recipients, offering added support to individuals who rely on the program. VFW Post 8189 and its Auxiliary extend their appreciation to everyone who contributed and helped make the drive a success. This effort reflects the Post's ongoing commitment to giving back to the community.



Auxiliary Post 4252 Presents Good Citizen Awards at Hernando Elementary

Auxiliary Post 4252 participated in the Good Citizen Award ceremony for nine students at Hernando Elementary School on September 30, 2026. Representatives from the Auxiliary attended to support and congratulate the recipients for their outstanding citizenship and contributions to their school community. Their presence reflected the Auxiliary's ongoing commitment to encouraging positive values in local youth.



VFW Auxiliary Post 10084 Hosts Mobile Mammography Screening for Community Awareness

VFW Auxiliary Post 10084 of Lake Panasoffkee recently hosted a mobile mammography screening bus as part of its ongoing effort to promote breast cancer awareness within the community. By providing convenient access to screenings, the Auxiliary helped encourage early detection and supported local residents in taking proactive steps for their health.





Attention! From National:

ADOPTED AS AMENDED by NATIONAL VFW

Resolution

2025 RESOLUTION No. 4 - AMENDED THEN POSTPONED

Sec. 210-Meetings , Regular and Special

WHEREAS, currently the National Podium Edition Bylaws and Ritual Sec. 210 does not address the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the Auxiliary Business Meeting; and,

WHEREAS, it has proven to be problematic in solving issues within the Auxiliaries.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that Sec. 210 add the letter H. to be read as follows:

H. Divulging of VFW Auxiliary private business outside of the actual VFW Auxiliary Business Meeting, to non-members, shall not be allowed, *without proper authority*.

Submitted by National Resolutions Committee

Chairman: *Sandra Onstwedder Messenger* Date: April 16, 2025

Committee Member: *Lois Callahan* Date: April 16, 2025

Committee Member: *Betty Arnold* Date: April 16, 2025

Committee Member: *Ann Panteleakos* Date: April 16, 2025

Committee Member: *Cortina Barnes* Date: April 16, 2025



Monthly Program Focus: Legislative

Be Engaged – Share this information with your Auxiliaries:- Notice of 2026 Election Information – Important Dates & Deadlines Voting in person must have photo/signature ID

General Election November 3, 7am-7pm

For election office or voting locations contact your County Supervisor of Elections

Program Goals 2026-2027

- ☐ **Budget**
- ☐ **Health Care**
- ☐ **Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs**
- ☐ **Education, Employment and Transition Assistance**
- ☐ **Military Readiness**
- ☐ **National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA**

Don't Forget to use Hashtag when posting on **social media:** #vfwflauxlegislation #AuxiliariesinAction

S. W.A.P.- Have you or your auxiliary created a special event or working on something related to Legislative, send me your ideas and I will share with others. ***REPORT…REPORT***

Are you using MALTA Legislative Resources to help members Tools & Resources –

- Guide to Contacting your Legislators –
  - **Look up your Representatives** https:/votervoice.net/VFW/Address
- Auxiliary Involvement in Elections and Political Activities – **Do's & Don'ts key information on how to represent yourself and Auxiliary**
- Action Corp Weekly information – Priority Legislation and Sign Up: www.votervoice.net/VFW/home
  - Click and tell Congress to oppose Veterans Bill Cuts
  - Tell your representative to sign discharge petition

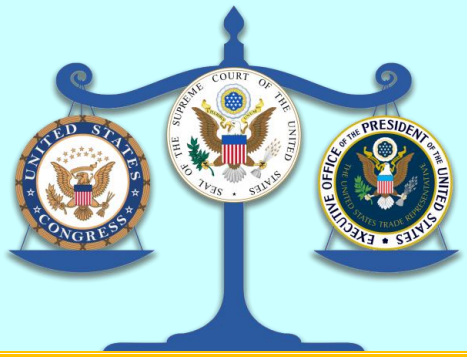
Let's start by being informed so you and others are engaged:

- Identify your legislative representatives
- Ask questions of your representative on what they are doing for Veterans
- Auxiliary or VFW members are not permitted to endorse political candidates. You may attend events but do not wear anthing that identifies you as an auxiliary member
- Use your resources under MALTA "Member Resources"
- Communicate by emails or phone calls to legislators
- Be familiar with both 2026 and 2027 VFW legislative action goals
- Use social media to share information about community leaders.
- Have your Auxiliary Chairman bring up important issues, use monthly newsletters and information posted on Dept of Florida Facebook page.

Florida Senators: Senior – Rick Scott 202-224-5274 / Jr. Senator – Ashley Moody 202-224-3041

Your voice matters and will be heard! Consult the Department of Florida and MALTA website for legislative resources.

Betty A. Bailey,
Legislative Chairman 26/27
Bann652@aol.com



Bonus Monthly Program Focus: Scholarship

Voice of Democracy Spotlight

For students in grades 9–12. Entrants prepare a 3–5-minute recorded audio essay and submit a typed copy based on the theme:

"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

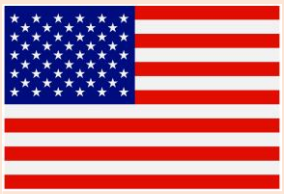
Student deadline: October 31, 2026

Patriot's Pen Spotlight

For students in grades 6-8. Entrants submit a 300-400 word essay using the same 2026-2027 theme:

"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Student Deadline: October 31, 2026



Recognition Starts with the Entry

Thank every student who submits, keep a list of participants and schools, and begin planning certificates, photos and a Red-Carpet recognition event.

Every entry deserves to be celebrated!

After October 31: Recognize & Report

Recognition: Begin your Red-Carpet celebration plan now; Department and National Red-Carpet entries are **due March 31, 2027.**

Reporting: Record school contacts, promotions, number of entries, photos and recognition plans. Ask the Post for final Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry totals so your report tells the full story.

Keep Every Scholarship Seed Growing

Continuing Education applications remain open for eligible Auxiliary members, spouses, sons and daughters age 21 or older; four $2,250 scholarships are awarded and applications are due **February 15, 2027**.

Patriotic Art entries for grades 9-12 are due to a participating Auxiliary **March 31, 2027** - November is a great time to reconnect with art teachers.

Prepare for November Now

- **Count Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries and schools represented**
- **Thank educators and schedule participant recognition**
- **Shift your educator tracker to Patriotic Art outreach**
- **Share Continuing Education with eligible members and families**
- **Report October activity and save photos, emails and flyers**

Keep watering your Seeds for Scholarships.

If your Auxiliary or District is discussing yearly program donations this month, please remember Scholarships. Consider supporting the **National Continuing Education Scholarship Fund**, the **National Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund**, local student awards, or a future **Red Carpet Recognition** event.



Please reach out to me if you have any questions!

Stoney Lawrentz-Edwards
Scholarship Chairperson
StoneyLawrentz@gmail.com



Young Artists Celebrated at VFW Auxiliary 2550

VFW Auxiliary 2550 in Dunedin hosted its Illustrating America Youth Artist Appreciation Ceremony on October 17, 2026, showcasing 53 entries from three local schools. Thirteen families attended as students received certificates, bronze medals, and patriotic goody bags. Three Post winners and one Department of Florida third-place winner earned special recognition, with awards for absent students delivered to their teachers. Volunteers and local artists transformed the hall into a gallery, lending easels and helping decorate to highlight the students' creativity. All parents signed photo releases, so event photos can be freely shared.









Department of Florida President Visits USS Alabama During Southern Conference

During the Southern Conference in Mobile, Alabama, Department of Florida President Kathy Wright had the opportunity to visit the historic USS *Alabama*. The battleship, one of the nation's most recognized military memorials, provided a memorable backdrop for conference attendees and visitors.

President Wright toured the legendary vessel, which serves as a tribute to the service and sacrifice of America's veterans. The visit offered an opportunity to reflect on the rich military history preserved aboard the USS *Alabama* and to honor those who have served the country.

The stop at the USS *Alabama* was a highlight of the conference, combining education, history, and patriotism while showcasing one of Mobile's most treasured landmarks.

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



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.

Department Officers 2026 – 2027

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Know your Department Chairmen:

- **Americanism – Lanaie Reed** Americanismfl@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!"

Video:
Sunshine E Newsletter – Passing the Torch.



2026-2027 Department Chairman Growing Stronger for Our Veterans!



Dates to Remember for 2026 – 2027

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

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



