

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

General Orders No .2

August 2023-2024

Greetings,

Our New Year has certainly gotten off to a great start! The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary has wrapped up its annual Convention in Phoenix, AZ. The outside temperature was well over 100 degrees but once inside the Convention Center, we conducted business in comfort.

Carla Martinez (Utah) was installed as our National President for 2023-2024. We look forward to her leadership and friendship. She will be visiting the Department of PA in September. Plans are in the works – watch for details!

Our Department was the proud recipient of many awards for the 2022-2023 year.

CONGRATULATIONS to those who worked so hard to do what was required and who went the extra mile to make us all PA PROUD.

I have been asked by many of our members to make the acceptance speech that I gave at our Department Convention available to all. You can now view it on our Department website.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Auxiliary Program & Training, August 4 & 5 at the Eisenhower Hotel & Conference Center, Gettysburg to kick off this **“Let Freedom Ring”** year with lots of enthusiasm.

Included within:

Veterans & Family Support
Americanism
Auxiliary Outreach
Membership
Hospitals
Mentoring for Leadership
PA Soldiers and Sailors Veterans Home
Scholarships
TIPS

IMPORTANT DATES:

- August 4-5 Auxiliary & Program Training (All members are urged to attend).
Eisenhower Hotel & Conference Center, 2632 Emmitsburg Road,
Gettysburg, PA 17325
- August 6 District 18 Meeting @ Lykens # 2385 - 2:00 P.M.
- August 13 District 13 Meeting @ Birdsboro #411 - 2:00 P.M.
- August 13 District 17 Meeting @ Duncannon #255 - 2:00 P.M.
- August 13 District 26 Meeting @ Sagamore #6555 – 2:30 P.M.
- August 13 District 30 Meeting @ Saxton #4129 – 2:00 P.M.
- August 20 District 8 Meeting @ Levittown #6495 – 1:30 P.M.
- August 20 District 14 Meeting @ Rome #8675 – 2:00 P.M.
- August 20 District 19 Meeting @ Oil City #464 – 2:00 P.M.
- August 20 District 20 Meeting @ Tobyhanna #3448 – 2:00 P.M.
- August 20 District 24 Meeting @ Waynesburg #4793 - 2:00 P.M.
- August 27 District 27 Meeting @ Donegal #6743 – 2:00 P.M.

Mary Jean Mastridge

Mary Jean Mastridge
Department President

Jodie Hollinger

Jodie Hollinger
Department Secretary/Treasurer

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT

GENERAL ORDERS #2 August 2023

We **LOVE** our veterans and **Veterans & Family Support** is the heart of our organization. Our veterans have sacrificed so much for us, so we are banding together to do all we can for them.

We thank them for their service, and we honor them with ceremonies, programs, and events. We can also provide them with helpful resources for when life gets rough.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. More than 16 veterans commit suicide each day. We can show our concern about the rate of suicide among veterans by wearing the Auxiliary Suicide Awareness Prevention Pin (a blue tear drop with the Auxiliary logo and combat boots at vfwstore.org) Print and share the Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness Stickers found in Malta, under Member Resources, under Veterans & Family Support.



Great strides have been made in Veteran suicide prevention, but much work remains to be done. Plan activities and events to share resources.

Make a difference in the life of a veteran or service member in crisis by educating yourself and others about the warning signs of suicide. Learn more at www.veteranscrisisline.net. The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis (or having thoughts of suicide) and those who know a veteran in crisis with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders 24/7: Call 988 and Press 1.

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary are committed to helping change the conversation and stigma surrounding mental health in the United States. Change the stigma, improve research, support your community, and explore treatment options with these Mental Wellness Resources:

- **VFW Mental Wellness Campaign** vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness
- **The Campaign to Change Direction** changedirection.org
- **Patients Like Me** patientslikeme.com/join/vfw
- **The Elizabeth Dole Foundation** elizabethdolefoundation.org
- **Help Heal Veterans (Therapeutic Craft Kits)** healvets.org
- **Veterans Voices Writing Project** veteransvoices.org
- **Give An Hour** giveanhour.org
- **One Mind** onemind.org

Dates to remember:

Sept 10	World Suicide Prevention Day	Oct 5	National Depression Screening Day
Sept 10-16	Suicide Prevention Week	Oct 8-14	OCD Awareness Week
Oct 1-7	Mental Illness Awareness Week	Oct 10	World Mental Health Day
Oct 3	National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness		

What will you do for our veterans, service members and their families?

We are **Banding Together for Our Veterans to Let Freedom Ring.**

Loyally,

Tina Hinkle

Tina Hinkle, Veterans & Family Support Chairman, tina@vfw5265.org



AMERICANISM
GENERAL ORDERS #2
AUGUST 2023



Dear Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters,

It is my pleasure to be serving you as this 2023-24-year **Americanism** Chairman. It expresses President Mary Jean's theme "*Let Freedom Ring*" so well.

The program this year will be taking on some new direction, under the leadership of our National Ambassador Linda Roloff. I was privileged to meet Linda at the National Convention in Phoenix and learned a lot about this direction. I too will be adding in my own spin with her blessing. Firstly, I would like you to print out the programs (both department and national), the corresponding awards, and your reporting form. Keep these in a folder so as you are doing projects you can refer to each of the pages collectively, it will make for easier end of year reporting.

There will be **heavy** emphasis on **POW/MIA** and on the Auxiliary Patriotic Instructors this year. Also, combining your Youth Activities and Americanism programs is highly encouraged this year. Joey and I will be teaming up some months with special activities for you to try. I will be keeping in touch with Linda and other chairman via a closed Facebook page where we will be sharing ideas and information to pass along to you in General Orders, as Tips, or on the Department Facebook page. The focus will be different each month so please make sure you keep up to date with all of these media outlets.

This year's hashtags will be:

- #auxtribe (this is an important part of the program)
- #vfwauxiliaryamericanism
- #pavfwaux

Get your Patriotic gear ready it's going to be a Star-Spangled Year as we are "**Banding Together for Our Veterans.**"

Loyally,

Carolyn J. Paccio

Americanism Chairman 2023-24



Building Partnerships ● Auxiliary Participating in Outreach

General Orders #2 August 2023

Pennsylvania Adopt a Highway Program

Volunteers beautify roadsides two miles at a time. You or your civic volunteer group signs a two-year agreement to pick up litter at least two times a year. In return Penn DOT posts recognition signs along the adopted roadway giving you or your group full credit for your efforts.

Penn DOT will provide: Safety vests, trash bags, work gloves, “Litter Crew Ahead” signs (by request) and other equipment required by your Penn DOT representative.

Penn DOT will: for your safety the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) will be notified of all scheduled events.

Penn DOT will: pick up bagged litter from the roadside and post signs in recognition of your efforts.

For information, visit: <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/about-us/roadsidebeautification/pages/adopt-a-highway.aspx>

Loyally,

Kimberly Grundon

Kimberly Grundon

Department Chairman

Auxiliary Members **“Banding together for our Veterans”** to **“Let Freedom Ring”**



GENERAL ORDERS # 2 AUGUST



“CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN”

Malta is up and running for the 2023-2024 year and we have made great strides climbing the mountain. I hope you have already mailed out your membership dues notice. Have you checked out **Malta** under **Membership Resources** it has everything you need to gain new members and help to bring old members interest back. Everything you need is there at your fingertips:



VFW Auxiliary Applications



VFW Auxiliary Brochure Order Form



New Member Engagement Guide



New Members Orientation Checklist



New Member Packet



Retention Tools



And much more

Recruiting Important tools that are helpful:

- Fact Sheet, available for free from National Headquarters
- Business card with contact information
- Malta Membership Resources

“Lights, Camera & Action” we can get ready to **“Climb Every Mountain”** to succeed in our task and make the journey to the top of **“Let Freedom Ring”** so is your Auxiliary up for the journey let’s start the climb!!! We can **“Band Together for our Veterans”** for a successful journey to the top.

Tammy Hunter

Department Membership Chairman

huntertammyjo@aol.com

HOSPITALS

Have you considered volunteering? It is really pretty easy to do.

Any member in good standing can volunteer in the name of the VFW Auxiliary.

You can volunteer at a VA Medical Center, VA Homes, nursing homes or hospitals. Contact the volunteer coordinator at the facility of your choosing. The volunteer coordinator can steer you to where the need is but volunteer where you are comfortable. The VA has a program called Compassionate Care Contact Corps that also allows you to volunteer. There are VA hospitals in PA that have this program in place. This program was initiated during the pandemic and is done virtually. Volunteers are trained to interact with a veteran by making weekly phone or video calls that can be 15-60 minutes in duration. Contact your local VA to see if there is currently a program in place.

At VA Medical Centers there are regularly scheduled volunteers that participate in the VAVS program on a regularly scheduled assignment under the VA supervision.

Occasional volunteers serve under VAVS supervision with a group or organization on an occasional basis.

Sponsored volunteers are non-VFW Auxiliary members who serve under the VFW Sponsorship.

To be a volunteer at a VA facility you need to complete a training and fingerprinting and complete yearly training.

Volunteering can be done in many ways; Bingo, playing cards, transporting veterans to scheduled appointments within the facility. Check with the facility before bringing in food items as they may not be allowed.

We certainly remember our veterans on holidays like Christmas, Memorial Day and Veteran's Day but we can remember them on non-traditional holidays too. We all know there is a day for everything-

National Bacon Lovers Day on August 20th

Popcorn Day January 19th

Bagel & Lox Day on February 9th

Go to www.timanddate.com for list of non-traditional holidays.

The point is we are remembering our veterans and that is the least we can do!

REMEMBER TO REPORT REPORT REPORT

Peggy Freyer

Hospital Chairman

TIP- Remembering your volunteers is easy. Thank you goes a long way. You can to www.vfwauxiliary.pa.org then to Programs the Hospitals to find a fillable certificate of appreciation.

Mentoring for Leadership

GENERAL ORDERS #2

August 2023

Creating leaders to carry on our mission is an every day way of life. No matter how much knowledge we each obtain, there is always more to learn, more to absorb and to share.

Let's begin this "**Banding Together For Our Veterans**" year by training those with a passion to spread their knowledge while serving our Veterans. Encouraging our members to recognize the strengths and interests of our new and returning members; showing a sincere interest in each of them and closely listening to what they are saying will begin this year on a high note.

Encouraging a great understanding of our Auxiliary Traditions will help to bring out the passion in our brothers and sisters and will nurture future leaders.

Training is an essential tool to good leadership. Our VFW Auxiliary is one of the best examples of "you were not born knowing everything." There are so many resources available to every member – brand new and those who have been in our organization for many years. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn something new. Utilize our many resources available in MALTA. There is a wealth of knowledge available there to you!

Together let's build our plan to hold a mentoring activity in every Auxiliary. Size does not matter – The Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future will help you create a plan.

Keep your eyes wide open for every opportunity to encourage and inspire another Brother or Sister about something that you are passionate about. This year of "**Let Freedom Ring**" is the perfect opportunity to make a difference.

Looking forward to great year serving Veterans, their Families and our Communities.

Loyally,

Sandy

Sandy Brenner
Mentoring for Leadership

PA SOLDIERS AND SAILORS VETERANS HOME
General Orders #2
August 2023

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Department President Mary Jean Mastridge for our appointments as Representative and Deputy to Pa. Soldiers and Sailors Home in Erie, Pa.

To all the Auxiliaries that have supported us in the past, we extend a sincere Thank You for all your donations.

We also want to thank all the volunteers, for without them, many things we do for our Veterans would not be done.

Because of your donations, all Veterans have enjoyed many activities.... fishing trips, visits to the zoo, Veterans' Home Week, bingos birthday parties, music and supply them with their many wants and needs.

Once again, we are asking for your support for our Veterans at the Pennsylvania Soldiers and Sailors Home.

Please send your donations earmarked PSSH to VFW Auxiliary of Pa., 4002 Fenton Ave, Harrisburg, Pa. 17109-5943.

Thank you for continued interest in serving our Veterans and families as we **"LET FREEDOM RING."**

Thank you again for your support for Our Veterans across the state.

Sincerely,

Doris L. Svitek, Representative

Marlane E. Zaken, Deputy

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

GENERAL ORDERS #2

AUGUST 2023

Without effort nothing is gained and our students depend on us to lead! It is challenging and sometimes awfully hard for us to get our information into the hands of the students. Grocery store bulletin boards, and libraries could be helpful places for pamphlets; sporting events, churches, pools, gyms - wherever a parent or student might appear - would be a place to leave a brochure. And schools, the teachers still need to be receiving information. Try getting the teachers' names on the school website and contacting them individually.

Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition - "What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"

Make sure the winning recording is between 3 – 5 minutes in length (+ or – 5 seconds.) We do check them before any student advances to the National Competition. Make sure the student does not identify themselves, their race, or their school during the recording. The deadline for entries to be at the sponsoring Post is Midnight, October 31, 2023.

Patriot's Pen Essay Competition – "How are you inspired by America?"

Check to be sure each essay is between 300 - 400 hundred typewritten words (+ or – 5 words,) regardless of the length of each word, excluding the title and footnotes. Once again, make sure the student does not identify themselves or their school in the essay. The deadline for entries to be at the sponsoring Post is Midnight, October 31, 2023.

2 & 3-D Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contests

It is not too early to get this information into the schools! Do Not Frame 2-dimensional art pieces. Submit canvas entries on stretcher frame or canvas boards. All other entries must be matted in white. **Do not use colored mats.** Reinforce the back with heavy paper or cardboard so the art does not bend over. No smaller than 8"x10" nor larger than 18"X24", not including the mat.

All 3-dimensional art should not be smaller than 8" in any direction nor larger than 24," and cannot weigh more than 5 pounds. The deadline for entries to be at the sponsoring Auxiliary is March 31, 2024. Unlike VOD and Patriot's Pen, each Auxiliary may sponsor one entry to go to the Department Judging.

Every year, the VFW VOD, the Patriot's Pen Chairs, and I do our best to help every Post and Auxiliary to promote **ALL** the programs, and involve as many students as possible. Unfortunately, we are also responsible for enforcing the rules set for us by the National Organizations. We do not like disqualifying entries, but there is not much wiggle room in the rules. Remember: There is nothing in the rules that say you can't look over your entries before they enter the judging, and ask the students to make changes. Examples - Add two more sentences to your essay to get to the number of words needed, erase your name from that recording, or change the mat on your picture to white. There are no rules limiting helping student to help themselves!

Loyally,

Joan

Joan Faddis

Department Scholarship Chairman

TIPS

General Orders #2 - August 2023

Historian/Media Relations – Kristin DiGiacomo



Are you confused about what this icon stands for?

That icon is for Instagram! It's an app that allows you to share photos, stories or reels Regarding your Auxiliary and the work you're doing for our Veterans and their families!

If you're brand new to Instagram but want to learn about how you can use it for your Auxiliary, please click here to watch a short video about it <https://youtu.be/ppXrPOz8gKI>

Buddy Poppy – National Home – Amy Peterson, Chairman

VFW National Home serves as a living memorial to Veterans by helping our nation's military and their families during difficult times. It's a well-deserved fresh start, offering many services for the whole family!

If you know a Veteran and/or family who may need assistance, please encourage them to:

Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200

Email help@vfnationalhome.org

Visit vfnationalhome.org/help

The most common POPPY ORDER FORM is available on our site www.vfwauxpa.org

Patriotic Instructor – Janet Albin

This month are several important Awareness and Patriotic Days. Many Posts and Auxiliaries plan special remembrance events on these days. If your Auxiliary is hosting or assisting with one or more of these events. Don't forget to document the event with pictures, or news articles. Think about giving out American or POW/MIA flags to attendees. Buddy Poppies can be added to the flags. Post pictures of and a description of the event on Facebook with the hashtags #AuxiliaryPatriotism and #AuxiliaryPatriotismPA. Maintain a file folder for pictures, clippings, and notes on the events so they are handy when it's time to complete your yearend reports.

August Patriotic Days:

Coast Guard Birthday – August 4

U S Department of Defense Birthday – August 10

Navajo Code Talkers Day – August 14

Marine Corps Reserve Birthday – August 29

Purple Heart Day – August 7

Agent Orange Awareness Day – August 10

National Airborne Day – August 16

Antiterrorism Awareness Month

DON'T FORGET TO FLY YOUR FLAG

Hospital – Peggy Freyer

Remembering your volunteers is easy. Thank you goes a long way. You can go to www.vfwauxpa.org then to Programs, then to Hospitals to find a fillable certificate of appreciate certificate.