



Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Happy 2024! Blessing to all. Is it January already? Wasn't it yesterday that we started a new membership year and officers were sworn into the Department of PA VFW Aux? We have been attending meetings, organizing community activities, promoting National programs, mentoring our members, visiting our Veterans and so on. It was a jolt for me when I realized that half of my year as President is history.

The good news is that if we pause now, and organize our thoughts and goals, we can continue to accomplish more. If we aren't officers or chairmen, we can still share our knowledge and experience with newcomers and those moving into different positions. Leadership comes in various sizes and shapes. I'm sure there is a size that fits each of us. Be confident, ask questions and continue to learn.

As of December 29 our Department membership stands at **93.36%**. A special thank you to everyone who continues to work hard to make sure our continuous members remain current.

Our **2024 Mid-Winter Conference** will be held January 19-21 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh-Cranberry, 910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 16046. Please join us for the Joint Opening Session, Auxiliary Teambuilding and the other scheduled sessions. The VOD Banquet will be on Saturday Evening, where our State winner will be announced. (schedule included here).

Wishing you a safe, healthy and Happy New Year!

Veterans & Family Support
Americanism
Hospital
James VanZandt VAMC
Membership
Mentoring for Leadership
Youth Activities
TIPS

IMPORTANT DATES 2024

January 1 & 2 Department Headquarters Closed – New Years
January 3 District 7 Meeting @ Darby #974 – 7:00 P.M.
January 7 District 9 Meeting @ Parkesburg #4480 – 2:00 P.M.
January 7 District 17 Meeting @ Middleburg #5640 – 2:00 P.M.
January 7 * District 18 Meeting @ New Cumberland #7415 – 2:00 P.M.
January 7 District 9 Meeting @ Parkesburg #4480 – 2:00 P.M.
January 15 Department Headquarters Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 19-21 Mid Winter Conference,
January 21 District 11 Meeting @ Kingston #283 – 2:30 P.M.
January 21 District 22 Meeting @ Duncansville #8724 – 2:00 P.M.
January 21 District 25 Meeting @ Saxonburg #7376 – 2:00 P.M.
January 21 District 27 Meeting @ Greensburg #33 – 2:00 P.M.
January 28 * District 10 Meeting @ Throop #7251 – 1:00 P.M.
January

*Department President Official Visit

BY ORDER OF:

Mary Jean Mastridge

Mary Jean Mastridge
Department President

ATTEST:

Jodie Hollinger

Jodie Hollinger
Department Secretary/Treasurer

"Let Freedom Ring"

**NATIONAL HOME
WAYS & MEANS TABLES
& MONEY TREE
AT
MID WINTER CONFERENCE**

Double Tree by Hilton-Pittsburgh Cranberry
910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA

The National Home & Ways & Means Tables will be open Friday beginning at 10:00 A.M. - Items can arrive as early as Thursday Evening. Closing time on Saturday will be posted for all to see.

Your donations to both tables are very much welcomed and appreciated.

Looking forward to your creative donations!!



VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT

GENERAL ORDERS #7 January 2024

After the Holidays it is Important to Remember Our Veterans! After all the attention during December, January can be a huge letdown for our Veterans, especially shut-ins or in facilities. Contact local VA Hospitals, nursing homes, and Veteran aid centers to see if your Auxiliary can provide volunteers or items. Send “thinking of you” cards to the Veterans (if you can obtain a list) or send one card to hang on the facility’s community bulletin board. Gather a few Auxiliary members and visit with the Veteran residents in their community room – take goodies and sit with the Veterans to hear their stories. Please coordinate with the facility to arrange the date/time of gathering, number of visitors and pre-approve any items being given to the Veterans. If January isn’t an option, try February and help to brighten these dark months.

The Beginning of the Year is a great time to encourage Veterans to make an appointment with a VFW Accredited Service Officer – to enroll in the VA, or to review their claim, especially if there is a change in their medical status. If the Veteran is married, encourage them to make an appointment to review their claim with attention to surviving spouse benefits.

The VFW’s National Veterans Service (NVS) was established to help all Veterans, service members, their families and survivors navigate the claims process. They assist in filing for disability compensation, rehabilitation and education programs, pension and death benefits, and employment and training programs; and will request hearings before the VA and the Board of Veterans Appeals to present oral arguments when needed. More than \$13 billion in compensation and pension was recouped by Veterans represented by the VFW in 2023. The VFW is proud to offer this service -- **FREE OF CHARGE** -- to all Veterans seeking assistance with the claims process.

- To locate a VFW Service Officer or Claims Consultant in your area, contact: Charles Beattie, VFW Department of PA Service Officer 412-395-6259.
- For more information, visit <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>.
- To support the NVS, send your donation to the VFW earmarked for NVS. Mail check to VFW National Headquarters, Attn: NVS, 406 W. 34th Street, 11th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111

Women Veterans Conference, sponsored by VFW Dept of PA, will be held March 15-16, 2024, in Harrisburg. All women veterans in Pennsylvania are welcome to attend, they do not need to be a member of the VFW. Preregistration is required; forms and information at www.vfwpa.org (under the “resources” tab, then “Women Veterans”) or contact Amy MacKenzie, 717-575-3982. Final registration is January 31, 2024 or until sold out.

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#7

January 2024

Happy New Year Auxiliaries!! You all had an outstanding 2023 year as you proudly spread the ideals of our organization. Keep up the good work this year. With the winter months still to come, some Auxiliaries take January or February off to regroup and rest. While you are doing so, take time to go back and reflect on what you did as an Auxiliary and even individually to promote this program. Download the reporting form and awards pages to see if you have met the requirements of the report and awards, this way you will know what you have to work on yet. January is also a great month to get your Auxiliary events for this year penciled into your calendar. Some examples are as follows.

- Host an activity or event that educates the community that our VFW acronyms are “more than letters.”
- Hold a flag folding or missing man ceremony.
- Celebrate a branch of service birthday.
- Hold a flag distribution day. Include *Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Flags*.
- Host a *Gold, Silver, Blue, or White Star Family* recognition event.

These are just a few of the events that qualify your Auxiliary for awards at both levels of our organization.

You can also promote the Americanism Program while doing events for our other programs such as Youth Activities, Veterans and Family Support, Auxiliary Outreach, and pretty much all of our programs. One idea is to co-promote the “**Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue**” contest. Anytime you can incorporate this program into your other activities GO FOR IT!! It is so important that we take every opportunity to spread Americanism and Patriotism throughout our communities.

If you have anything to share with Department or National Facebook pages please send it to me and I will see that it is submitted for posting. If you are posting on your Auxiliary Facebook or Instagram page don't forget to hashtag #vfwauxamericanism.

Madam President's motto this year is “**LET FREEDOM RING**” let's do her proud by making the Americanism program outstanding this year and bringing her home lots of awards in July from the National Convention in this “**BANDING TOGETHER FOR OUR VETERANS**” year.

Loyally,

Carolyn J. Paccio

2023-24 Americanism Chairman



**HOSPITAL
General Orders # 7
January 2024**

I hope this finds you all healthy and well and each one of you has the merriest of Christmases.

I have appreciated the enthusiasm that has been shown to our veterans this past year and your commitment to work hard for our veterans in the VA Hospitals, VA Homes, non-VA nursing homes and other care facilities.

Linda and I have had our challenges going into the VA Hospital as it was closed to volunteers due to covid. We are able to go back in but must mask and our veterans are not able to co-mingle floor to floor.

The good part of that is we are still able to help our veterans and that is the MOST important thing. I'm sure that is true for you all as well and we won't let Covid stop us. We just have to get creative.

Remember to report and please thank those that do volunteer. You can go onto the PA Va Auxiliary website and go to Programs and at the bottom of the Hospital Program are nomination forms for Hospital Volunteer and also printable certificates to thank you that volunteer.

Remember we need to Band Together For Our Veterans!!

Loyally yours,

Peggy

Peggy Freyer, Dept of PA Hospital Chairman
814-327-0291

James Van Zandt VAMC

General Order #7 2023 – 2024

January

“Let Freedom Ring!” by “Banding together for our Veterans”



Hey everybody! We are so excited for this new year. We can visit our hospitalized veterans. So, I hope to see you soon! Volunteering is so important and cost nothing but time.

Peggy and I have started up our Tuesday night bingos and our veterans are so happy to see us. We have provided numerous items for our veterans such as: Our New Veteran Mothers program where we provide needed baby items. Just in this past year we have seen 20 new babies come into this world! We also buy needed clothing for our veterans. And when the staff at James Van Zandt call with a need we are able to respond because of your generosity.

We forget that the hospitals and homes only provide medical and a place to stay. So please do not forget to donate to our VA Hospitals and Homes! We thank you for your continued support and donations!

Please send donations to: VFW Auxiliary Dept. of PA
4002 Fenton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Make checks payable to: Dept. of PA VFW Auxiliary
Earmark: James Van Zandt

Loyally,

Linda

Linda Dilling, Representative

Peggy

Peggy Freyer, Deputy



MEMBERSHIP

General Orders #7

January 2024

"CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN"

91.81%



I hope that your Christmas went well and we are reaching the top of the mountain on membership. So let's start our final countdown for the end of 2023 and start out with a big bang for 2024. So how can we do this?

- Contacting with current members
- Reconnect with former members
- Meet and Greet Event
- Recruiting Event
- Get your New Year Calendar ready to give out to current members

Would like to give a big shout out to the following Auxiliaries for reaching 100% or more in membership as of December 23, 2023, District 8, Auxiliary 2124 - 101.64% & Auxiliary 6493 - 110.92%; District 9, Auxiliary 106 - 103.75%, Auxiliary 2435 - 104.06%, Auxiliary 5752 100%, Auxiliary 6759 - 103.05% & Auxiliary 8757 - 104.05%; District 10, Auxiliary 3474-100%, Auxiliary 7069 - 108.54% & Auxiliary 7251 - 113.92%; District 11, Auxiliary 8161 - 102.13%; District 13, Auxiliary 9045 - 105.26; District 14, Auxiliary 6824 - 100%; District 16, Auxiliary 595 - 103.03%; District 18, Auxiliary 148 - 100.82%, Auxiliary 477 - 101.36%, Auxiliary 5750 - 100% & Auxiliary 7252 - 108.77%; District 21, Auxiliary 2506 - 104.45%, Auxiliary 6319 - 101.17% & Auxiliary 6771 - 100.58%; District 25, Auxiliary 499 - 140.00%; District 26, Auxiliary 1989 -100.00%, Auxiliary 2076 - 101.96%, Auxiliary 4200 - 110.26% & Auxiliary 4963 - 100.00%; District 27, Auxiliary 3414 - 101.39% & Auxiliary 8427 -100.00%; District 28, Auxiliary 470 - 101.47%, Auxiliary 6233 - 100.00% & Auxiliary 7842 - 100.88%; District 29, Auxiliary 214 - 100.00% & Auxiliary 9199 - 100.00%.

As we "Band Together for our Veterans" it is time for us to get ready for a great year with "Lights, Camera & Action." Get ready to "Climb Every Mountain" and we can reach the top of the mountain "Let Freedom Ring".

Tammy Hunter

Tammy Hunter

Department Membership Chairman

huntertammyjo@aol.com

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP

General Orders #7

January 2024

Every little act of teaching, reaching out, including is an act of mentoring. We must be diligent about sharing all that we have learned and doing all we can do share the passion of serving.

Not every member that joins will immediately show enthusiasm and interest in getting involved in our work. Never give up hope. It may just not be the right time in their life. Continue to reach out and encourage. Just think what we could accomplish, if every single member across the United States would work on just one project or activity each year? By working side by side and sharing our passion with kindness and love, we will be unstoppable.

Many times you will hear “I’m not a leader – I can’t do that.” There are leader capabilities in each of us. Someone just has to pull out the confidence and the passion.

Let’s continue to live by Henry Ford’s quote, **“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”**

During the beginning of this 2024 year listen for that **“Let Freedom Ring”** bell and always be good to people and show your patience and love as we continue our work serving our Veterans and their families.

Loyally,

Sandy

Sandy Brenner, Chairman
Mentoring for Leadership

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

General Orders #7

January 2024

As we begin a new calendar year we as a VFW Auxiliary are winding down our program year. Have you participated in all the different Youth Activities? Have you mentored our youth to be Patriotic Adults and to show love and devotion to our country? There is still time to promote our programs.

Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue program is a singing contest for youth grades K -12 to record them singing the Star Spangled Banner. Entry forms are found in Malta Member Resources under Youth Activities. DEADLINE for Participating Auxiliaries to get Entries to their District President is March 31,2024 and District Presidents send to Department Chairman by April 15, 2024.

Illustrating America is open to youth in grades K-8. Students will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. There are 3 age groups: K-2, 3-5, 6-8. Art must be 2 dimensional on canvas or paper, and no smaller than 8x10 or larger than 18x24. Details are available in the Program Book. DEADLINE for Participating Auxiliaries entries to District President is March 31, 2024 and District Presidents to Department Chairman is April15, 2024.

Patriotism through Literacy is another way for our Youth to learn about our United States history and this is done by reading books. Another way is to teach them the Pledge to the Flag and the etiquette of our Flag.

We need to help our Youth **“Let freedom Ring”** by **“Banding together for Our Veterans”**.

If you have questions please contact me and remember the DEADLINES.

Happy New Year!

Joey Diehl

Depart pf Pa Youth Activities Chairman

joeydiehl@aol.com

717-386-7598

TIPS

General Orders #7 January 2024

The **100th Convention** of the Department VFW Auxiliary will be in June 12-15, 2024. Our **100th Birthday** of the Department VFW Auxiliary event will be held November 15-16, 2024 in Harrisburg. Please mark your calendar now! We really want to celebrate our first 100 years and remember those who made it all possible. Begin looking for pictures of events and programs (especially those dating back to the beginning). We are real interested in items, pictures, or articles that can help us to make this a true celebration of our beginning. With more information or questions please contact Marsha Fuhrman – fuhrman1970@comcast.net or Sandy Brenner – mitteymou@aol.com.



Buddy Poppy/VFW National Home -Amy Peterson

Keep the littles busy while still on holiday break, here's a fun & educational activity for them to enjoy!



All you need is the following:

Popsicle sticks, cupcake liners, food coloring, glue sticks and markers!

National Home Life Memberships and Tribute Bricks

Make great gifts to honor others, click on the link to order yours!

<https://vfnationalhome.org/you-can-help/membership/>

<https://vfnationalhome.org/you-can-help/tribute-bricks/>



Save the Date!

June 28, 2025

VFW National Home's
100th Birthday Party!



Auxiliary Outreach – Kimberly Grundon, Chairman

Auxiliary members serve other organizations beyond the Auxiliary and VFW and that volunteer work needs to be counted. Reporting volunteer hours effectively shows the importance of the VFW Auxiliary to the community.

Reporting is easy using PA Auxiliary Outreach Monthly Report Form located on PA VFW Auxiliary website at https://vfwauxpa.org/uploads/Documents/Programs/23_24_Auxiliary_Outreach_Monthly_Reporting_fillable.pdf

Report name of organization, number of hours, and number of volunteers on Monthly Reporting Form.

Report each month April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

Historian & Media Relations – Kristin DiGiacomo, Chairman

Sisters and brothers – remember that this year we want to make our legacy VFW members shine bright like the superstars that they are! All videos must be submitted to me (along with the entry form, found here

<https://vfwauxpa.org/uploads/Documents/Programs/2023-2024Historian&MediaRelationsAwardNo.1.pdf>, no later than **March 31, 2024**.

Submitting the videos is easy and can be done in multiple ways:

- Upload the video to your computer, save to a flash drive and mail your entry form and flash drive to me via US mail (please use a small box or bubble mailer).
- Save the video to your computer and send the form and video via email.
- Upload the video to YouTube and email the completed form and link to the video via email.

Remember, this video should be 3-5 minutes long. You must also include a short paragraph of the VFW Auxiliary legacy member that you interviewed on the form. If you have questions, please email me at k.digi@pitt.edu.