

General Orders No.3

September 2024

GREETINGS AUXILIARY SISTERS AND BROTHERS:

What's the President Been Doing?

Last month had my Chief of Staff driving me all around the state. I was able to visit two districts, District 13 and District 8. In conjunction with these two district visits, I was also able to visit with the residence of Southeastern Veterans Center and Delaware Valley Veterans Home. Sending "Thanks" to the Auxiliary Members in both of these districts for such warm welcomes and lovely visits. With the help of your Line Officers, we were also able to complete four On-the-Road Training Sessions in Clarion, Coraopolis, New Cumberland and Duncansville. At the office, we began organizing memorabilia for the 100th Anniversary Showcase, which is going to be awesome. (We are still accepting donations for the showcase.) I continue to spend time in Headquarters 2-3 times per week and have monthly Zoom Meetings with the Line Officers, District Presidents and Program Chairmen. We are definitely keeping busy!

What's Been Going On?

August finished up our **On-the-Road Training** (OTR) with about 250 of you attending from all across the state. Lots was learned and many members felt that it was so valuable to be able to talk to members from other Auxiliaries and to share ideas and strategies. Thanks to all of you who were able to attend. Make sure to mark your calendar for next year: OTR is a "can't miss."

August also began the first Historian/Media Relations Online Training, focusing on Tips for Facebook, How to a Power Point Presentation, Tips for taking pictures, as well as Hashtags and QR Codes. Sign-up for one of the remaining training sessions November 23, 2024 or January 18, 2025.

Department Facebook Page

This past month our Department Facebook Page had over 21 thousand impressions, over 6 thousand reaches and over 4 thousand engagements. We'd love to reach even more of our members. Please follow us and let's increase our engagements for the month of September.

- > Thoughtful Thursdays—Yep, they get you thinking. Check out our Post every Thursday.
- What's Up Wednesdays—These are short videos by me, the Department President. What will next Wednesday's subject be??? (If you have ideas, feel free to send them to me.)
- PA VFW Auxiliary Chaplain's Corner—follow this page to experience uplifting spiritual prayers and thoughts.

What's Due?

ATTN: Treasurers on all levels – have you filed your 990N-e-Postcard? Deadline for filing is November 15, 2023; however, we ask that you take the time right now to complete this. You can use the following link**:

<u>Annual electronic filing requirement for small exempt organizations — Form 990-N (e-Postcard) |</u> Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov)

**After filing remember to log back in two weeks later to receive your confirmation of acceptance. Don't forget to email a copy to Jodie: jodie@vfwauxpa.org

- > Christmas Canteen Fund donations must be in the office by October 31st.
- Submit your Auxiliaries and Members In-Action to be featured in General Orders and on the Department Facebook page. (Send your submissions to the office, to a Department Line Officer, to your District President or to a Program Chairman.)
- Auxiliary Presidents—per the Bylaws, it is your responsibility to attend or make sure someone from your Auxiliary is attending each District Meeting.

<u>Tip</u>

Keep a copy of the All-State Auxiliary Checklist in your Secretary's Book and review it at each meeting so you don't miss an important deadline.

Upcoming Events:

- Celebrating America's Freedom Event at the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids,
 Michigan—September 6-8, 2024 Bus Trip (Check out the attached flyer):
 - Come celebrate the VFW National Home with National President Brenda Bryant and the Department of PA. A bus trip has been planned for this exciting celebration.
- 100th Anniversary Celebration for the Department of PA, VFW Auxiliary—Nov. 15-16, 2024 in Harrisburg, PA (Information found on PA website – watch for email updates)
 - The state organization is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a Night-at-the-Races fundraiser and a birthday bash. Details will be announced very soon.

President's Message Auxiliaries in Action Event form Legislative Membership New Member Action Christmas Canteen Fund Programs

IMPORTANT DATES:

September 2 – Labor Day – Department Headquarters closed Labor Day picnic at Coatesville VA September 4 - Sharing & Caring Boat Ride – Pittsburgh for Hospitalized Veterans September 6-8 –CAFÉ trip to VFW National Home, Eaton Rapids, MI
September 8 - District 10 Meeting @ Eynon #7963 – 1:00 P.M.
September 8 - District 28 Meeting @ Erie #470 – 1:00 P.M.
September 11 - Patriot's Day
September 15 - District 9 Meeting @ West Chester #106 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 11 Meeting @ Berwick #821 -2:30 P.M.
September 15 - District 15 Meeting @ Duboistown #7863 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 20 Meeting @ Tobyhanna #3448 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 22 Meeting @ Dubois #813 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 23 Meeting @ Everson #595 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 24 Meeting @ Waynesburg #4793 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 25 Meeting @ New Castle #315 – 2:00 P.M.
September 15 - District 29 Meeting @ Camp Guyasuta – 1:00 P.M.

Loyally,

Andrea

Andrea Meintel Department President

Jodie

Jodie Hollinger Department Secretary/Treasurer

Stay Connected:

- Visit our website: <u>www.vfwauxpa.org</u>
- Follow us on Facebook: VFW Auxiliary Department of Pennsylvania
- Follow us on Instagram: pa_vfw_auxiliary

*Official Visit



Auxiliaries and Members

In-Action



The Brockway Auxiliary 7252 awarded members Carolyn Overbeck and Keri Pisarcik for their Exceptional Persistence with recruiting and educating Social Members to transfer membership to Auxiliary, increasing last year's membership to 126%. Pictured left to right:

Assist. Conductor Marcus Kreigel, Jr. Vice-Pres. Sandy Baka, Sr. Vice Pres. Christa Fritz, Aux. member Carolyn Overbeck, Conductor Keri Pisarcik, President Lyndsey Tamburlin

EMPOWERING HEROES: DONNA GEORGE'S DECADE OF DEDICATION WITH MILITARYSHARE



Duncansville VFW #8724 in Blair County partnered Food Bank to unveil the MilitaryShare program as its first distribution site. MilitaryShare is a food distribution designed to support veterans and their families. For the served, MilitaryShare

Nearly ten years ago, the

site at armories, VFW, and AMVET locations throughout the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's 27 county service area.

Donna George has been with the program since day one, witnessing its incredible growth and building lasting connections. From its beginnings a decade ago, where it served 40 veterans and families, the program now supports over 345 individuals monthly. Donna has been a constant presence throughout this journey, introducing and guiding numerous volunteers with her unwavering dedication and fervor. Through her interactions with hundreds of families in

her community, she has been profoundly touched by the program's impact, leaving a lasting mark on her heart

One of the program volunteers recruited by Donna, Kaytee exemplifies the extraordinary commitment to the cause by driving three hours one way to contribute her time. Donna reflects on the significance of the program, emphasizing that for many, "This is their groceries for the month; there are quite a few of them that wouldn't be able to make it

When Donna pauses to think about her why, it becomes alongside her veteran husband at the distribution, and both her father and grandfather are veterans of the armed services. "Our veterans are our heroes; more people need to serve them." Donna doesn't see a time when she won't be there, in all seasons, to help her neighbors in need. "I love doing this program; it gets tough at times, but we are always here."

Donna's dedication remains steadfast. She is unwavering in her commitment to providing nutritious food to our neighbors in need. This pioneer of care and compassion for our heroes is empowering change through servant leadership.

Donna George, Duncansville VFW Auxiliary 8724 was recognized for 10 years of service to Veterans through the MilitaryShare Program.



New Cumberland VFW and Auxiliary 7415 hosted over 70 members for On-the-Road Training.



VFW Auxiliary 7155 Trappe set-up an information and membership table at their local Texas Roadhouse. Way to raise awareness and a little money to boot!





Pennsylvania received 1st place in Category 3, National Buddy Poppy Display Contest. Entered by VFW Auxiliary 5265, Spring Grove.



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY

Department of Pennsylvania

4002 Fenton Avenue Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943 PH# 717-232-7604



EVENT ATTENDEE OR SPEAKER REQUEST FORM

We are pleased to respond to requests for Department representatives to attend and/or speak at an event that you are sponsoring. Please complete this form and return it to Department Headquarters, either by mail or by email (jodie@vfwauxpa.org). As schedules can fill up quickly, we would ask that you make your request 4 weeks prior to the date of the event. If you have any questions, please phone or email Department Headquarters.

Today's Date	-		
Name of person making this request	:		
Contact Info Phone	Email_		
Post/Auxiliary			
Date of Event			
Description of Event			
Preferred Representative			
Department Representative will be t	the Keynote Speaker	: Yes	No
Is the person making this request the	e event organizer?	Yes	No
If No, Who is the Event Organ	izer		
Event Organizer's Phone Num	nber		
Any other information:			

Submit Request completed Request Form to Jodie@vfwauxpa.org

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Karen Mooney, Chairman September 2024 General Orders #3



Are you registered to vote? If so, be sure you do your due diligence to know who the best candidate is to vote for. Who is going to have our Veteran's best interest while in office. Please be sure to know who is running for an office in your area/region and what they stand for. Our voices do make a difference. VOTE

2024!!!!!!!!

If you are not registered to vote please know that October 21, 2024, is the last day to register in PA for the November election.

For our Comrades, Auxiliary and our Post members, print out these impressive "I Voted" stickers for everyone to wear proudly on Election Day:

These label/stickers can be found on Malta in the Legislative Resource page. A terrific way to celebrate those individuals that allow us to be VFW Auxiliary Members.



Remember that VFWA must stay neutral and not endorse any specific candidate. Consider coordinating a town hall or even a meet and greet at your Post for candidates on the upcoming ballot. Exciting time to allow your members the chance to speak to a candidate about questions they may have in their community. Keep in mind the VFW Priority Goal's:



Remember that "Together Helping Veterans" and "From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans," No one does more for Veterans than the VFW Auxiliary!!!!!!!! Let's be sure we are heard.

New Member Engagement Guide



(For Officer Use)

New member engagement is a critical component to retain a member after their first year. It is important new members understand the value of their membership and that they feel they are getting value from their membership.

Listed below are resources and best practices to assist local Auxiliary Officers in welcoming new members. (All of the materials listed below are available for free at <u>www.vfwauxiliary.org</u> behind Member Login.)

For Auxiliary Officers

- New Member Orientation Checklist
- New Member Welcome Letter/Email Template
- VFW Auxiliary Eligibility Wheel
- Member Benefits One-Sheeter
- Facts Sheet
- Strengthening Auxiliaries Calendar (both filled out and blank)
- Membership Moments
 - o Orienting New Members
 - o Cultivate Engagement by Asking "How Would You Like to Contribute?"
 - Matching Member Talents to Leadership Success
 - Engaging Existing Members
 - Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future
- Online Auxiliary Academy: Engaging Your Auxiliary's Existing Members

For New Members

A new member is an engaged member, but often someone who needs to have an orientation to the VFW Auxiliary. It's best to hand the New Member Packet to them personally at a meeting or social gathering, but it can be mailed as well. It's important that the new member feels welcome and appreciated as they are often eager to volunteer and help veterans and their families.

Listed below are materials to include in a New Member Packet. (All of the materials listed below are available for free at <u>www.vfwauxiliary.org</u> behind Member Login.)

- New Member Welcome Letter/Email Template
- Connect with Us (Auxiliary Officer and National contact information)
- Member Benefits One-Sheeter
- Create and Manage your MALTA profile
- Know Your Bylaws
- Understanding Auxiliary Traditions
- VFW Auxiliary Acronyms and Common Terminology
- VFW Auxiliary National Programs: An Overview
- Facts Leaflet
- VFW Store Flyer

GENERAL ORDERS – SEPTEMBER 2024

MEMBERSHIP 2024-2025, Chairman Amy Peterson

"TOGETHER HELPING VETERANS" "TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE" "FROM OUR ROOTS TO OUR BRANCHES EXTENDING SERVICE TO OUR VETERANS" "STRIKE UP THE BAND!"

> #PAproud #VFWAuxiliary #vfwauxmembership #TogetherHelpingVeterans #vfwauxmembershipPA #StrikeUpTheBand

> > THAT'S GROOVY!



Auxiliary 3090, District 1 Auxiliary 6700, District 1 Auxiliary 5642, District 14 Auxiliary 3368, District 27 Auxiliary 3414, District 27

**as of August 14, 2024

Pennsylvania's

'ASK'-KICKERS

YESSSS!!!! Casey, PA will TOP THE CHARTS! "Don't believe me??? Just watch!"

DISTRICTS – Please do not forget to send your attendance sheet from each meeting. Email is great, please send to <u>thepetersons@breezeline.net</u>

TIP: KEEP the All-State form by your side at EVERY meeting, CHECK items off as you go! This makes year-end wrap up feel like a 'Summer Breeze!"

The AMAZING Donation Cheat Sheet and Hospital Donation Cheat Sheet are EASY!!!

BONUS TIP: Cheat Sheets cover MOST of the All-State required tasks! It is a WIN-WIN!

A couple of reminders for upcoming deadlines that will be here sooner, than later! Christmas Canteen donations must be RECEIVED by Oct 31 at Dept of PA VFWA, send in soon! USPS MAIL is slow, "get your motors runnin'!" - THANK YOU!

> "New Member Welcome Packets" Deadline is November 17. You may mail or email anytime before then! Thank you!

President, Treasurer and Secretary Dues MUST be paid by November 30.







CHRISTMAS CANTEEN FUND

The goal of the Christmas Canteen Fund is to see that every patient in all our VA facilities receives a \$1.00 canteen book. It may not seem like a lot to you, but to some it may be the only gift they will receive. Therefore, we ask that your Auxiliary be generous with your donations to the Christmas Canteen Fund. Our Deadline for receiving this gift is **October 31, 2024**, so we can process your gift and send it out to our VFW Auxiliary Hospital Representatives.

Make checks payable to: Dept. of PA VFW Auxiliary 4002 Fenton Avenue Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943

The Pennsylvania All-State Award requires a gift of a minimum of \$10.00 to the Christmas Canteen Fund.



"Together Helping Veterans"

"From Our Roots to Our Branches

Extending Service to Our Veterans"

AUXILIARY PROGRAM NEWS SEPTEMBER 2024

"Together Helping Veterans" "From Our Roots to our Branches

2024-2025

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT Stacey Miller

National Suicide Prevention Week, which begins on September 8 and ends on September 14 this year, is an annual campaign observed in the United States to educate and inform the public about suicide prevention and to warn about rising suicide rates. It also aims to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide and encourage the pursuit of mental health assistance.

Assistance is a call, text, or a chat away. For assistance 24/7, dial 988 and press 1 or text 838255.

We each can play a key role in supporting our veterans who are struggling: Learn the signs of someone Often there are changes in behavior, such as mood swings, angry outbursts, or loss of interest in activities they love.

Reach out to someone who you think may be struggling - Trust your gut if you are concerned. Ask directly if they have thoughts of ending their life – research shows this is helpful and does not put the thought in their mind. You do not need to be an expert to have a conversation. AFSP has developed <u>#RealConvo</u> guides with language to help you start and sustain conversations on mental health.

AMERCANISM & PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR Tim Altman

Hello Auxiliary members! Can you believe it is September already? There are a few days this month we should put special recognition on. September 11 is Patriot Day which is the day we honor the lives lost and the heroes who responded to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. September 17th is Constitution Day; this is the day we recognize the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become citizens. September 20th is POW/MIA recognition day. On this day Loved ones and supporters can gather for candlelight vigils, walks and other events to honor and support their sacrifice. September 29th is Gold Star Mothers and Family Day. This day is intended to recognize and honor Mothers who have lost a family member in the service of the U.S. armed forces. Each year we should hold events to express love, sorrow, and reverence toward Gold Star Mothers and their families. We are "Together Helping Veterans."

"BUDDY" POPPY & NATIONAL HOME Cindy Utter Peters

This month I would like to cover a new program at the VFW National Home called Guitars for Heroes. During this program, participating veterans spend ten weeks learning to play the guitar. After completing the course, the veteran is given the guitar to keep. This month 2 veterans successfully completed the program!

There already is a program for piano lessons at VFW National Home! They recently had their 41st piano recital. Their teacher has taught this program for 39 years! Speaking of dedication...

This year we CELEBRATE the 100th year birthday of the VFW National Home. Please don't forget to send them a Birthday Card to:

VFW National Home 3573 S Waverly Rd Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

My most sincere thanks to my Auxiliary family who ceaselessly work "TOGETHER HELPING VETERANS!"

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AUXILIARY OUTREACH Jency Mercado

Fall is coming! I want to talk about all the fun outdoor outreach programs in which we can become involved. Outdoor activities within Parks and Recreations in your local areas, hosts a wide range of programs. Reach out to your local parks and see what activities they have; they are always looking for volunteers. They have activities such as Art in the Park, Clean up Days, weekly Weeders, Scavenger Hunts, and fall camps. Just remember to wear your VFW shirt, pin, or hat. Don't forget to give your hours to your Outreach Chairman!

Thank you for all your hard work in your communities.

The VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program would like to educate and raise awareness of the Honors Escort / Final Salute program. By reaching out to nursing home facilities throughout Pennsylvania, together we can respectfully take steps toward honoring every military veteran at their time of passing with dignity and excellence.

The Honors Escort is an end-of-life protocol at the hour of death to honor military Veterans who have unselfishly served our country. This brief ceremonial procession invites staff, Veterans, and visitors to a moment of recognition that offers a dignified farewell to institutionalized Veterans.

- Honors Veteran and family members
- Creates a visual display of military heritage
- Allows staff a minute to grieve

Thank You for accepting this challenge to educate and raise awareness about the Honors Escort Program.

EXTENTION, REVITALIZATION & MENTORING Kathy Altoff

My 1st National Convention was **AWESOME.** The Department of PA did great, winning awards. What a sight to see all the Departments being escorted with the colors, all the pageantry from our opening to the closing!

This year's program does **NOT** have a Year-End-Report, **BUT** you can receive awards and citations for participating in the Program. This information can be found in your Program Book on page 40. Remember to send supporting documentation so I know what you did within your Auxiliary. Remember, to make sure your Auxiliary has met all obligations to qualify for these Citations and Awards.

Let's Strike Up The Band marching on to achieve our goals "Together Helping Veterans."

HOSPITAL Linda Dilling



SCHOLARSHIPS - Pam Sopher

It is hard to believe that our schools have already started. Well, guess what time it is? Time to get ALL our Scholarships material into our schools, churches, youth group organizations, wherever you can find to post them. This information is so vital for them to help defray the costs of furthering their education. If we can reach our students, with the technology they have, they will be able to access this information on their own, and have everything they need to apply for these scholarships, as well as share them with their fellow students. How easy it will be for them to access this information; it is a win-win situation for all of us as we are able to get more involvement in our program.

Don't be afraid to contact our schools. Explain what our programs are about. Talk to your teachers, guidance counselors, principal or whoever you can think of that has the student's best interest at heart. Tell them about the QR Code and how easy it is to use it. If you are not allowed to do this, then please ask them if they will post our flyers with this code on them. At our Program Training held in July, this information was passed out to your District Presidents to share with you. If your District President has not done so, please contact them for it. If not, contact me and I will see that you get it.

The QR Code when used on card stock paper can be cut out, or laminated and passed out to your members, so you will always have this information with you. Just scan the code, use the code, share the code with others and ask them to share it as well. Please remember that I am asking all of you for your input on this code, good or bad. Please email me with your thoughts, and where you placed this information. Knowledge is power, power is the key.

AUXILIARY PROGRAM NEWS SEPTEMBER 2024, PAGE 3



HISTORIAN/MEDIA RELATIONS KRISTIN DIGIACOMO

Do you "**Remember the Time**" to connect with your members on a regular basis? Keep in mind that not everyone has Facebook or an email address, and that is ok. So, what can you do to spread the word and connect with your membership?

- PREPARE a monthly or quarterly newsletter to be both mailed and e-mailed out for your members.
- **RECOGNIZE** those members who are celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, volunteer work, etc.
- UPDATE your Auxiliary/Post Facebook page regularly

"From Our Roots to Our Branches Extending Service to Our Veterans" is why we are part of this amazing organization because we are all *"Together Helping Veterans."*

YOUTH ACTIVITIES—Jeanna Leydic

Back to school is in full swing for the kids! Time to start thinking about sponsoring youth events! With school back in and fall sports beginning, there are several ways to get involved with the youth in your area! Host a reading day for "Patriotism through Literacy" at the beginning of the school year to help kids' brains get into gear for the school year. September is a great month to teach youth about Patriotism. Here are so ideas:

<u>Patriot Day – September 11</u>

Patriot Day, also known as the National Day of Service and Remembrance, occurs on September 11 each year in memory of those killed during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Those we lost on September 11, 2001, will forever hold a cherished place in our hearts in the history of our nation. Appropriate ceremonies and activities include a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 a.m. EDT, remembrance services and candlelight vigils. **Flags should be flown at half-staff on Patriot Day.**

POW/MIA Recognition Day – Third Friday in September

POW/MIA Recognition Day is September 20, 2024. POW/MIA Recognition Day honors the commitments and the sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified by law on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations. It would be a great time to make a formal presentation of the flag to the facility. POW/MIA – YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day – September 17

This day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, by 39 delegates to the Constitutional Convention. This document established the framework of our government and the rights and freedoms that "We the People" enjoy today.

<u>Gold Star Mother's/Family's Day – Last Sunday in September</u>

Gold Star Mothers and Family's Day is September 29, 2024. Gold Star Mother's/Family's Day honors mothers and families who have lost a service member in the line of duty or in support of military activities. The name comes from the custom of families hanging Service Flags in the window of their homes. The Service Flag has a star for each family member in the armed forces.

- A blue star represents a family member in active service.
- A silver star represents a family member wounded or injured in a war zone.
- A gold star represents a family member killed during active-duty and stands for sacrifice made for honor and freedom.

These are great days to get those youth more zoomed in on being Patriotic!! Use your R.A.P. cards and Patriotic Youth Awards!!

Here's the link for the R.A.P. cards and Patriotic Youth Award templates!

https://vfwauxpa.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp