

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Gloria Lisicki**

**March 2026**

We had a bad snow storm, I hope all of you are fine after shoveling to clean up the mess.

Well, we are 9 months into my term and everything has been pretty smooth.

As we get closer to the end of the 2025-2026 term, our membership is a little short, but I know we can get to the 100% in membership, because without your help it will not happen. So if you can please send in the membership. I would like to thank all the auxiliaries that have reached 100% and those who are over.

St. Patrick's Day is coming soon, and I know that the veteran's in the hospitals would like to see all of you, and don't forget to bring them some GREEN.

Just a reminder our National President Lois Callahan visit will be May 6-10, please mark your Calanders.

Wildwood is just around the corner we will be there before you know it, we will have a Memorial Service for the Auxiliary which we haven't had in some time. Looking forward to seeing all of you then.

Thank you all for what you do for our Veteran's, they all appreciate it.

**"From Sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free"**

**"FOREVER SERVING VETERAN'S"**

# AMERICANISM

**2025 - 2026**

Sandy Reed  
732-343-1133  
Vfwauxiliary7508@gmail.com

WOW! Can you believe it's already March? Time to start preparing your End of Year Reports. If you have any questions about the Americanism report, please call me!

As Spring nears, new, fresh flags will be raised, and it is important to be educated on Flag Etiquette. Winter weather can be tough on outdoor flags, making March an ideal time to check, replace, and recommit to proper flag care. This month, consider sharing these reminders with your Auxiliary and community:

## **Inspect and Refresh Outdoor Flags**

- Look for fraying, fading, or tearing caused by winter storms.
- Retire damaged flags respectfully—burning in a dignified manner or delivering them to your Post for proper disposal.

## **Proper Display**

- The flag should never touch the ground, water, or anything beneath it.
- When displayed with other flags, the U.S. Flag should always hold the position of honor—highest and to its own right.
- If flown at night, the flag must be properly illuminated.

## **Half-Staff Protocol**

- Lower the flag to half-staff only when directed by the President or Governor.
- When raising to half-staff, first raise it briskly to the top, then lower it slowly to the halfway point.

## **Respectful Handling**

- The flag should never be used as clothing, drapery, or decoration.
- When storing, fold the flag into the traditional triangle shape, symbolizing the tri-corner hats worn during the American Revolution.

## **Teaching Youth**

March is a great time to visit classrooms or youth groups to:

- Demonstrate how to fold the flag
- Explain the symbolism of the stars and stripes
- Share why we stand for the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance

These small lessons create lifelong respect for our nation's most recognizable symbol.

**\*\*Take pictures, update your checklist and send them to me!**

***Forever Serving Veterans***

**Auxiliary Outreach**  
**March 2026**

This month, I'd like to encourage you and your Auxiliary to volunteer with NJ Special Olympics. As many of you know, they have chapters all over the world.

Special Olympics encourages children and adults with different abilities to reach their potential in sports and competition. We all know how important it is to foster a sense of inclusion and accomplishment. It promotes healthy habits, as well. There are opportunities for our Auxiliary members to volunteer throughout the entire year.

In particular, for our Mercer County members, there is an event coming up in May. Follow the link here for more information:

Mercer County Track & Field - Special Olympics New Jersey  
<https://share.google/qosOk6ljX02ISSaQ6>

Also, please consider volunteering individually or as an Auxiliary. Below is the link for the NJ Special Olympics, which you can follow to find opportunities in the area you live in. New Jersey <https://share.google/b6zr5EeTPxdGd7rkR>

Yours in Service,  
Kathleen Shanahan  
NJ VFWA Auxiliary Outreach 25/26  
[shanahank2@gmail.com](mailto:shanahank2@gmail.com)  
201-410-6814

# BUDDY" ©POPPY / VFW NATIONAL HOME

March 2026



Kathleen Reichenbach  
7 Ashley Road  
Whiting, NJ 08759  
732-740-1526  
[kreich325@gmail.com](mailto:kreich325@gmail.com)



*I know, I know.....you might not believe it but the first day of  
Spring is March 20 at 10:46 A.M!!*

*Have Faith*

*Faith like our Veterans and their families have in us to  
Continue to distribute our "Buddy" Poppies.  
Faith that we will continue to educate about the  
importance of this beautiful Poppy.*

*Soon flowers will be popping up all over.*

*Let's see some "Buddy" Poppy Drives  
popping up also.*

*Keep the Faith Going*



*Growing*



# VFW NATIONAL HOME

3574 S Waverly Rd.

Easton Rapids, MI 48827

**Donations** 866-483-9642.

**For Help** 800-313-4200

[help@vfnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfnationalhome.org)

**General** 800-424-8360

[info@vfnationalhome.org](mailto:info@vfnationalhome.org)

**March 2026**



## Who We Help

The National Home's community is open to the families of actively serving military personnel, veterans, and relatives of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. The family can be one or both parents with one or more children.

## VFW/AUXILIARY

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Applicant has a parent in the VFW or Auxiliary in good standing or, if deceased, in good standing at the time of death
- Single or Married with dependent child(ren)

## VETERAN

- Honorably discharged, Active, Guard, or Reserve Veteran
- Surviving widow or widower with dependent children
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Single or Married with dependent child(ren)

## ACTIVELY SERVING

- Unaccompanied Tour or Deployment
- Parent(s)/Guardians(s)
- Single or Married with dependent child(ren)
- Drilling National Guard & Reserve

[info@vfnationalhome.org](mailto:info@vfnationalhome.org)

**3573 S Waverly Rd.**

**Eaton Rapids, MI 48827**

**Donations: 866-483-9642**

**General: 800-424-8360**

*Forever Serving Veterans.....*



***EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION  
MARCH 2026***

I know it's cold out even for me and as you know I love the cold. But Spring is right around the corner and Daylight Savings time is just 2 weeks away.

Speaking of light there is light at the end of the Department of New Jersey's loss of Auxiliaries. We have instituted an Auxiliary in Brigantine, thank you Barbara Wiener for being the organizer. And paperwork has been sent into National for an Auxiliary in Maple Shade, thank you Mary Ryan Sandman for being the organizer of that one.

Does anyone else want to shed light on a Post who doesn't have an Auxiliary let me know and I will gladly reach out to them.

Let's all be a Lighthouse guiding new members and making existing members feel like they are part of our Ocean.

Let's turn our yellow and red light Auxiliaries to GREEN for St. Patrick's Day. I have ideas to help with that.

**Until next time From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep us Free, while Forever Serving Veterans. Happy Fishing.**

***RECRUIT – RECRUIT – RECRUIT – RETAIN – RETAIN – RETAIN***

Extension & Revitalization Chairman/Chief of Staff

Margaret Russo

[jerseymom1207@aol.com](mailto:jerseymom1207@aol.com)

732-887-7947

## **Historian/Social Media**

**March 2026**

**Can you believe it is March already?**

**After the snow that was dumped on us last weekend, I am ready for SPRING (and so is my PTO/PST bank)!**

**Keep an eye out on Socials – this weekend we will be at National's CAFÉ at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.**

**Now, I am going to use everyone's favorite words – YEAR-END REPORTS!**

### **Historian Deadlines**

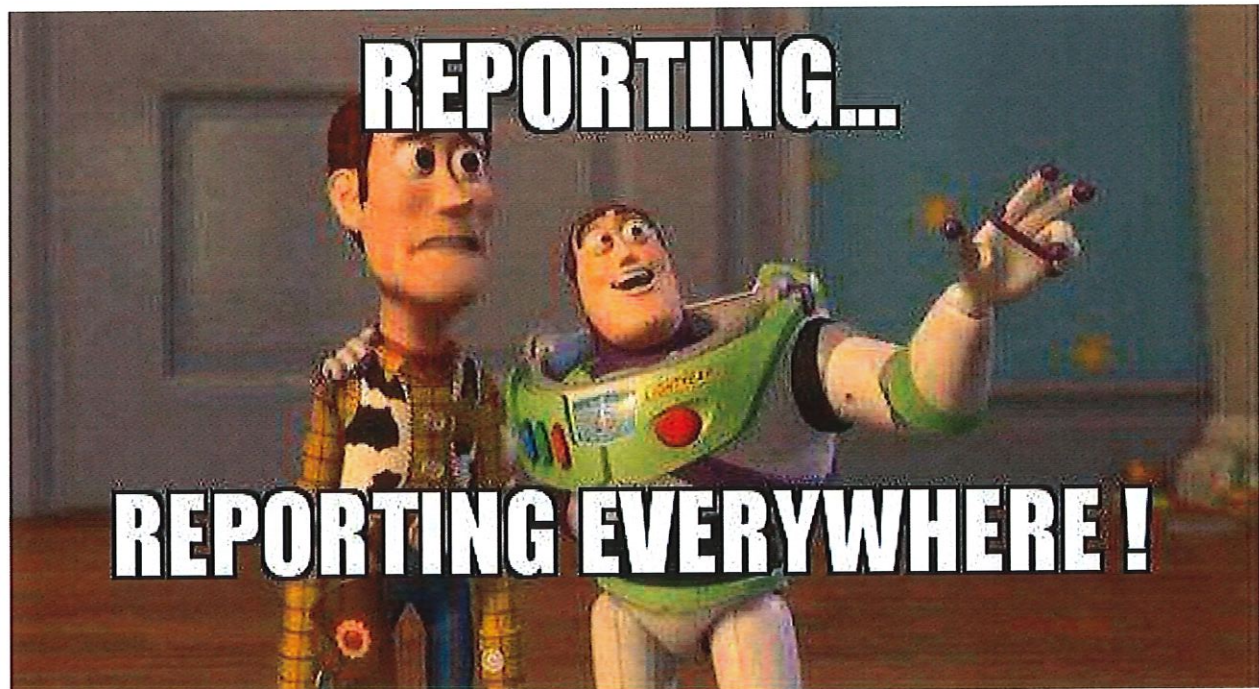
- 1. If you are submitting a Reel highlighting an Auxiliary in Action, the Reel and form must be received by March 15<sup>th</sup> (to me).**
- 2. Did Department President Gloria Lisicki visit your District or Auxiliary? Please send a report of her visit to your District or Auxiliary. Please do not e-mail! Entries are due by April 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- 3. Does your Auxiliary have a Social Media page? Submit a two-pocket folder with screenshots from your page. **MAX OF 26 PAGES.** Please do not e-mail entries. Entries are due by April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Now for that year-end report.

1. Does your Auxiliary communicate with its members every 4 months, by e-mail, snail mail, text or phone call?
2. Does your Auxiliary have a Facebook page? It doesn't matter if it is a shared page with the VFW.
3. Does your Auxiliary have a website? It doesn't matter if it is a shared page with the VFW.

If you answered yes to any of these questions. Report it!  
Congrats you participated in the Historian program.

Don't forget to include your Facebook Page name (we will follow you) and your website address.



Hospital Communications March 2026

Barbara Wiener

[barb.wiener@yahoo.com](mailto:barb.wiener@yahoo.com)

201 6<sup>th</sup> St. North Brigantine NJ 08203

609-464-1791

Let's begin by saying, the First day of Spring is March 20<sup>th</sup>, I don't think it could get here any sooner. Hopefully everyone is staying safe and warm.

Attached to the communications are the monthly activity report and the end of year report. These numbers are very important, as I do send them in to National. Make sure all the lines are filled, volunteer hours, money spent and so on. Deadline for end of year reports is April 15, 2026. Remember, every Auxiliary has visited a VA Home or Private nursing homes at one point, so everyone should be filling this form out.

Any Auxiliary that has sent money to 5 or more VA Homes, please send me an email to who you are and which homes. Anyone that has donated to 5 or more will receive a certificate.

Don't forget to check out MALTA for any other awards that you could be entitled too. Everyone should be sending something, you all do the work, nothing wrong with being recognized for what and how much you do.

Also, I know that this weather has limited us to where we can go, but don't forget to try and visit your local nursing homes as well as our state VA homes. Our Veterans are there year-round, and some don't receive visitors at all and count on us to visit.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support to all of our VA Hospitals, it is appreciated by all, especially your Veterans.

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to get in contact with me.

FOREVER SERVING VETERANS

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA HONORING VETERANS

aux president	post	hospital rep	hospital name	donations\$
joyce tanalski	thomas kavanaugh+2290	Lorraine Brooks	Lyons	1100
Linda Hetzel	10061	Lorraine Brooks	Menlo	100
Terry Marshall	9462		Lyons	795.13
Terry Marshall	9462		Seacrest	
thomas kamvski	6061		vineland	350
lynn brooks	2833	lorraine brooks	menlo	
daniella lund	9503		lyons	350
daniella lund	9503		vineland	1650
daniella lund	9503		menlo	1650
daniella lund	9503		paramus	1650
halloween		barbara wiener	crystal lake	600
thanksgiving		barbara wiener	vineland	300
christmas		barbara wiener	vineland	200
valentines		barbara wiener	vineland	1350
deborah mcclendon	3525		hamilton grove	250

cards	vet week	volunteers#	Students	Hours	womens health
		3			
		4		60	
		1	10	1	
		9	70	4	
		7			
		7		18	
		4		10	
		2		10	
		30		25	
		17		17	
		3		1	

**MENLO PARK VETERANS HOME  
EDISON NEW JERSEY**

**MARCH 2026**

Margaret Russo  
15 Grant St., Sewaren, NJ 07077  
732-887-7947  
[Jerseymom1207@aol.com](mailto:Jerseymom1207@aol.com)

Hi Everyone:

I hope that you are all thawing out of this unbelievable winter.

But at least we were able to bring some warmth and cheer to residents at Menlo. It make me happy that they are allowing us to do different things at Menlo now.

We held a Valentine's Day party on Valentine's Day I had quite a few helpers. Huge shout out to East Brunswick Auxiliary 133 for always being there to help and for the great goodie bags. The residents enjoyed entertainment along with desserts and snacks. They also received cards with a small monetary donation that was put into their accounts.

We will be holding a St. Patrick's Day party on March 17<sup>th</sup> with bingo at 2:00 and bagpipers & goodies at 3:30. Please feel free to join us. If you will be able to come please let me know.

Thank you so much for all you do for our hospitalized veterans and let's continue to support them, they really enjoy our visits/events.

Vineland Veterans Memorial Home

Barbara Wiener

[barb.wiener@yahoo.com](mailto:barb.wiener@yahoo.com)

201 6<sup>th</sup> St. North Brigantine NJ 08203

609-464-1791

A key fact about Vineland Veterans Home: Open to honorably discharged veterans, their spouses/widows (50+ years old, married 10+ years), and Gold Star parents. Preference is given to NJ residents of at least two years.

Thank you to all who attended and helped at the Valentines Day Party, it was a huge success. (unfortunately I think I handed out the last of my special roses) Special shout out to Runnemead Post, Bill Samposki and Auxiliary for the meatball subs, chips and soda. They all loved it. Also thank you to Sea Isle Auxiliary for coming out and showing your support.

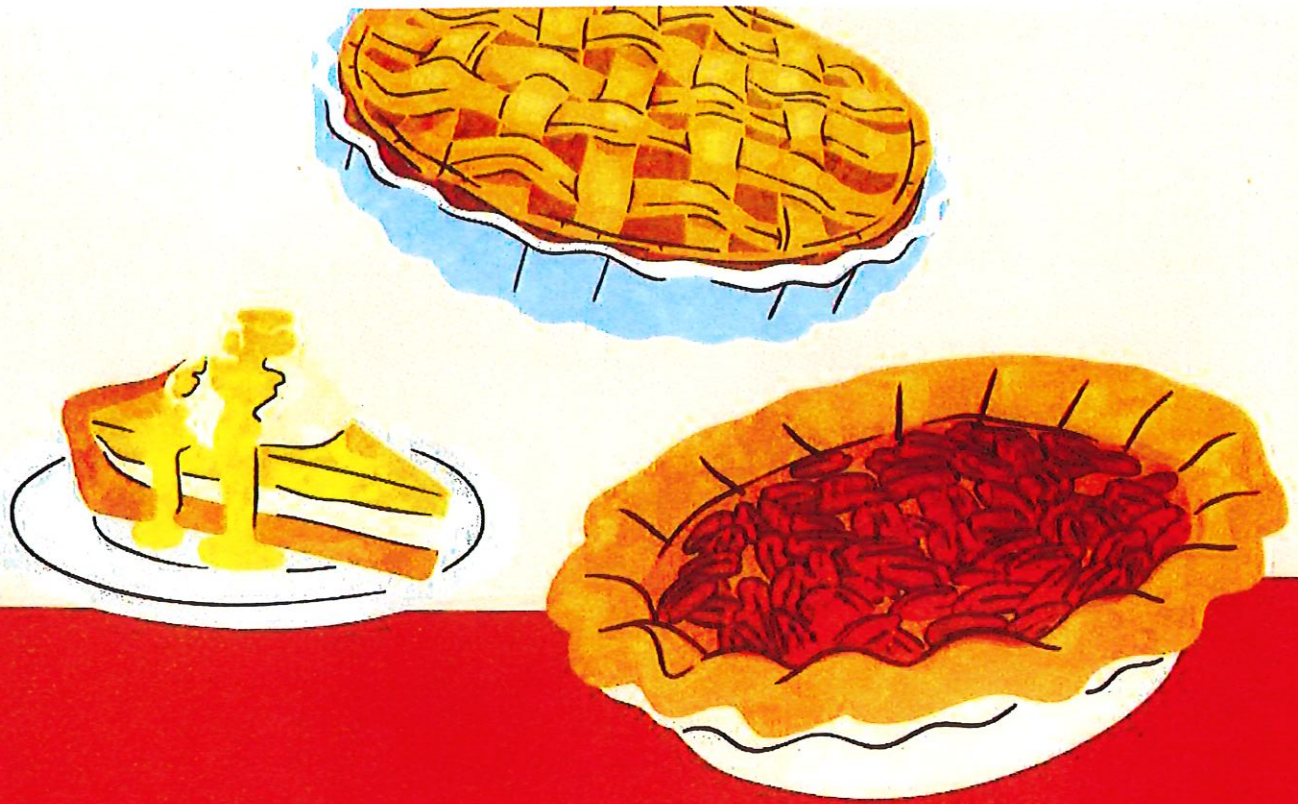
CANCELLATION

National Marching Band Day was to be scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup>, but due to unforeseen circumstances it had to be cancelled. (for anyone who donated instruments, thank you and we will be using them at a different time) BUT...instead we are having

PIE EATING CONTEST!!!!

There will be 3 awards given to residents, employees or volunteers. So, bring on your appetite and join in. It will be at 2pm, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Vineland Home. Again, everyone is invited and looks to be a really good time.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support to Vineland Home, it is appreciated by all.



# **PIE EATING CONTEST**

**VINELAND MEMORIAL VETERANS HOME  
OPEN TO RESIDENTS-EMPLOYEES-VOLUNTEERS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> 2PM**

**TOP 3 WINNERS WILL RECIEVE A PRIZE**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Marching Band Event cancelled to unforseen circumstances

Any questions, please contact Barbara Wiener

Legislation  
March 2026

What an end to the month of February more snow than we have seen in a long time and still a little more to come. Well hopefully Spring will be here, the snow will be gone, and I hope that everyone will be working hard for our veterans.

The 2026 VFW Washington Conference will be held March 1, 2026, through March 5, 2026. Attached please find a copy of the schedule for the Conference, and the VFW Talking Point Packet regarding Legislative Priorities. If you will be in attendance, please text your name to Amy Jo Lett, the VFW Auxiliary Legislative Ambassador, to 816-668-3134 as she has created a GroupMe group and would love to share updates and pictures if you are there.

Also please remember to fill out the Legislative National Program Awards, 2025-2026 Entry Form if you are going to enter and send the forms to me at my email below for judging. The entries will be judged, and the winning entry form will be sent to our National Legislative Representative, Amy Jo Lett by April 30, 2026. Let's show National what New Jersey is made of.

Yours in service,

Lynn Ann Malone  
NJVFWA Legislative Chair 25-26  
908-578-0440  
Lynmal1@aol.com

**March Washington Conference  
Crystal Gateway Marriott  
Week Schedule  
March 1-5, 2026**

**Sunday, March 1**

Travel arrivals

**5:00 – 6:00 p.m.** First Time Attendee Meeting (Location TBD) –  
*Mandatory for first-time NLC Members*

Group on own for dinner.

**Monday, March 2**

**9:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.** All Attendees Meeting (Location TBD) –  
*Mandatory for all members*

**1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** Hill Meetings

**5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** Leadership Exchange (Location TBD) **NEW!!**  
*Food & Drinks Included*

Group on own for breakfast, lunch & dinner

**Tuesday, March 3**

**8:15 a.m.** Bus Leaves Hotel for Capitol Hill

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** Joint Hearing Testimony (Senate Dirksen Room G-50)

**1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** Hill visits

Group on own for breakfast/lunch/dinner

**Wednesday, September 10**

Hill visits – All day

Group on own for breakfast/lunch

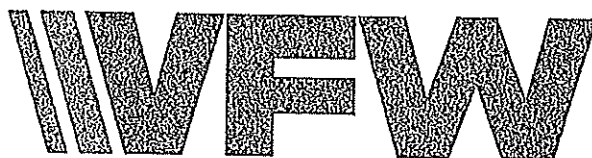
**5:00-7:00 p.m.** Reception at Hyatt Hotel, 200 Maryland Avenue NE

**Note:** Transportation will be provided back to hotel immediately after reception.

**Thursday, March 5**

Travel departures

# Veterans of Foreign Wars Legislative Priorities



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

**VFW Washington Conference  
March 1-5, 2026**

**Visit us at: [www.vfw.org/LegislativePriorities](http://www.vfw.org/LegislativePriorities)**

Issue Contact: Meggan Coleman at [mcoleman@vfw.org](mailto:mcoleman@vfw.org)

## Community Care Reform

### The VFW's Concern:

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community care must operate as a unified and veteran-centric system rather than a collection of disconnected programs with different rules and access pathways. While the Community Care Network has become a structured, accountable model under the *VA MISSION Act of 2018*, other VA community care programs—most notably the Foreign Medical Program and CHAMPVA—remain largely unstructured, paper-based, and disconnected from modern health care delivery. This fragmentation creates confusion, delays care, burdens families, and undermines confidence in VA. It needs to establish consistency across all community care programs by applying common standards for eligibility verification, provider networks, care coordination, and claims processing, regardless of where care is delivered or who receives it.

As part of this effort, the VFW supports modernizing the Foreign Medical Program to enable predictable, coordinated care for both service-connected and non-service-connected conditions, and exploring responsible structural reforms to CHAMPVA, including options to expand access beyond families of veterans who are 100 percent permanent and total, while preserving program integrity. A consistent, modern community care ecosystem would reduce administrative burden, improve access, strengthen oversight, and better reflect the nation's obligation to veterans and their families. The VFW also believes that Congress must ensure that VA builds on recent CHAMPVA modernization efforts by expanding digital access, streamlining eligibility and claim processing, and ensuring timely, transparent care for all beneficiaries.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.740 / S.275, *Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2025*, to ensure veterans receive clear information and timely health care by improving the efficiency, oversight, and coordination of VA's community care program.

Pass H.R.467, *Foreign Medical Program Modernization Act of 2025*, to expand access to health care for veterans living abroad by modernizing reimbursement systems and strengthening global care options.

Note: For H.R.740 cosponsorship, please email Matthew Telford at [matthew.telford@mail.house.gov](mailto:matthew.telford@mail.house.gov).

For S.275 cosponsorship, please email Jase Rapert at [jase\\_rapert@moran.senate.gov](mailto:jase_rapert@moran.senate.gov).

For H.R.467 cosponsorship, please email Noah Garber at [noah.garber@mail.house.gov](mailto:noah.garber@mail.house.gov).



Issue Contact: Joy Craig at [jcraig@vfw.org](mailto:jcraig@vfw.org)

## Concurrent Receipt Reform to End Earned Benefits Offset

### The VFW's Concern:

For more than two decades, Congress has failed to address the long-standing injustice of withholding military retirement pay from disabled veterans. Department of Defense (DOD) military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation are separate and distinct benefits, earned for different reasons, yet current law continues to treat their concurrent receipt as "double-dipping." The VFW believes this policy is fundamentally unfair, inconsistent with modern military compensation principles, and long overdue for reform.

In 2004, Congress took an important step by authorizing concurrent receipt for retirees with at least 20 years of service and a 50 percent or higher service-connected disability. While this was a positive step, the VFW believes the 50 percent threshold is arbitrary and unfair. Veterans rated below 50 percent incurred risks, injuries, and sacrifices for our nation, yet they remain excluded from full benefits without clear policy justification. This partial fix has created confusion, inequity, and frustration among disabled retirees.

The problem is especially acute for veterans who are medically retired under Chapter 61, including those injured in combat. More than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees, some of whom need ongoing care and support, continue to have an offset between their DOD retirement pay and VA disability compensation despite having earned both benefits. Many of these veterans face lifelong medical needs and reduced earning capacity, making it particularly harmful to their long-term financial stability and family well-being.

The VFW strongly believes Congress must end the offset of earned benefits and fully address concurrent receipt. This issue should be evaluated squarely within the Armed Services Committees, where military compensation, retirement policy, and readiness impacts are properly considered. Importantly, the cost of correcting this injustice should not be framed as a tradeoff against national defense or other veterans' benefits. Congress has existing tools including the Military Retirement Fund to responsibly finance earned retirement obligations without forcing harmful offsets or false budgetary choices. Every year of delay perpetuates financial hardship and erodes trust among those who fulfilled their service commitments in good faith. The VFW calls on the 119th Congress to finally resolve this issue and ensure disabled retirees receive the benefits they earned through honorable service.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.2102 / S.1032, *Major Richard Star Act*, either as a standalone bill or via the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027, to enable Chapter 61 retirees who sustained combat-related injuries to receive their vested DOD retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset.

Advance broader concurrent receipt reform by eliminating offsets between DOD military retirement pay and VA disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

Hold hearings in the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to examine the history, equity, and fiscal treatment of concurrent receipt, including the appropriate use of the Military Retirement Fund and available budgetary mechanisms to fulfill earned retirement obligations.



Issue Contact: Meggan Coleman at [mcoleman@vfw.org](mailto:mcoleman@vfw.org)

## Written Informed Consent for Suicide Prevention

### The VFW's Concern:

Veteran suicide remains a crisis. An estimated 155,000 veterans have died by suicide since 2001, with nearly a third of these deaths occurring while under Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care. Suicide rates among veterans ages 18–34 have more than doubled and remain significantly higher than among non-veterans.

Approximately 70 percent of veterans treated by VA are prescribed psychiatric medications and reporting has shown that nearly half of veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are prescribed multiple psychiatric medications at once, commonly referred to as “combat cocktails.” These prescription rates are substantially higher than those of non-veterans. Many of these medications also carry Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Boxed Warnings related to suicidal thoughts and behaviors, making careful monitoring and clear communication essential. VA’s Office of Inspector General has identified gaps in documentation of informed consent discussions and weaknesses in medication safety protocols. These findings make clear that we must strengthen communication and oversight across the system.

Psychiatric medications can be appropriate and life-changing when properly prescribed and monitored. But like any serious medical treatment, they require honest conversations and shared decision making. Written informed consent is already standard for many high-impact therapies and has not been shown to discourage care. By clearly explaining benefits, risks, alternatives, and expectations up front, written informed consent brings mental health treatment into the open and reinforces a simple truth—mental health care is health care. Transparency builds trust, keeps veterans engaged in care, and helps prevent avoidable crises. For these reasons, the VFW supports strengthening written informed consent and improving oversight of psychiatric prescribing practices to ensure veterans receive safe, informed, and high-quality care.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.4837 / S.3314, *Written Informed Consent Act*, to expand written informed consent requirements to ensure veterans receive clear, written information about the benefits, risks, alternatives, and expectations associated with long-term psychiatric medications.

Pass H.R.6858, *Veteran Suicide Prevention Act*, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a review of the deaths of certain veterans who died by suicide, and the role prescribing practices and medication management may have played in these deaths.

Note: For H.R.4837 cosponsorship, please email Tyler Zidlicky at [tyler.zidlicky@mail.house.gov](mailto:tyler.zidlicky@mail.house.gov).  
For S.3314 cosponsorship, please email Heidi Thom at [heidi\\_thom@sheehy.senate.gov](mailto:heidi_thom@sheehy.senate.gov).  
For H.R.6858 cosponsorship, please email Josh Orenstein at [josh.orenstein@mail.house.gov](mailto:josh.orenstein@mail.house.gov).



Issue Contact: Meggan Coleman at [mcoleman@vfw.org](mailto:mcoleman@vfw.org)

## Modernizing VA Brain Health Care

### The VFW's Concern:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) treats millions of veterans for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and other brain health conditions, many of which are complex, overlapping, and highly individualized. While VA has expanded access to mental health services, veterans continue to report that existing treatment approaches do not work for everyone, particularly for those with persistent or co-occurring conditions. With nearly 2.5 million veterans using VA mental health services, it is uniquely positioned to modernize brain health care by strengthening the research and clinical infrastructure needed to better understand and treat PTSD, TBI, and related neurological conditions in an evidence-based and veteran-centric way.

PTSD and TBI are frequently treated through separate systems despite significant clinical overlap. Veterans with both conditions often experience fragmented care, underscoring the need for a more integrated and realistic approach to brain health treatment. Modernizing VA brain health care is not about prematurely endorsing specific therapies or bypassing scientific standards. It is about ensuring VA has the capacity to responsibly study promising approaches to make informed decisions about if and how they should be integrated into care.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.2623, *Innovative Therapies Centers of Excellence Act of 2025*, to authorize VA to establish Centers of Excellence to research and evaluate innovative approaches to treating PTSD and related conditions, and to develop the evidence and clinical expertise needed to inform future care decisions.

Pass H.R.6444, *Blast Overpressure Research and Mitigation Task Force Act*, to improve coordination, research, and care delivery between VA and the Department of Defense for veterans experiencing TBI, PTSD, and related conditions due to blast exposure.

Pass S.800, *Precision Brain Health Research Act of 2025*, to strengthen VA's ability to conduct advanced brain health research focused on individualized care for conditions such as PTSD and TBI.

Pass S.2737, *Veterans National Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act*, to expand VA's national TBI treatment infrastructure and improve access to specialized, interdisciplinary care to support more coordinated brain health treatment.

Note: For H.R.2623 cosponsorship, please email Alicia Seagraves at [alicia.seagraves@mail.house.gov](mailto:alicia.seagraves@mail.house.gov).

For H.R.6444 cosponsorship, please email Katie Wallach at [katie.wallach@mail.house.gov](mailto:katie.wallach@mail.house.gov).

For S.800 cosponsorship, please email Kaitlin Burgess at [kaitlin\\_burgess@moran.senate.gov](mailto:kaitlin_burgess@moran.senate.gov).

For S.2737 cosponsorship, please email Madison McGinley at [madison\\_mcginley@tuberville.senate.gov](mailto:madison_mcginley@tuberville.senate.gov).



Issue Contact: Nancy Springer at [nspringer@vfw.org](mailto:nspringer@vfw.org) for Predatory Claims Companies & Emerging Toxic Exposures  
Issue Contact: Joy Craig at [jcraig@vfw.org](mailto:jcraig@vfw.org) for Transition from Service  
Issue Contact: Joe Grassi at [jgrassi@vfw.org](mailto:jgrassi@vfw.org) for Post-9/11 GI Bill Book Stipend

## Other Areas of Concern

### Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies

While the VFW respects a veteran's right to choose who assists with a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation claim, we remain deeply concerned about unaccredited actors commonly known as "Claim Sharks" who exploit veterans through deceptive and predatory business practices. Although federal inaction persists, recent court decisions affecting state-level legislation demonstrate growing momentum to hold these actors accountable.

The VFW urges Congress to enact legislation that would meaningfully prohibit the exploitation of veterans by unscrupulous Claim Sharks, strengthen the VA accreditation system, and oppose proposals such as H.R.3132, *CHOICE for Veterans Act of 2025*, that would place veterans in debt merely for seeking their earned benefits.

### Transition from Service

In early 2024, VA launched its improved Transition Assistance Program (TAP) 6.0 benefits and services curriculum that includes an accredited representative to physically assist service members with filing their Benefits Delivery at Discharge claims. Data show this initiative has been effective in increasing the number of transitioning service members receiving their benefits upon discharge.

The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R.1845, *TAP Promotion Act*, to codify this facet of VA's TAP curriculum.

### Post-9/11 GI Bill Book Stipend

The Post-9/11 GI Bill remains one of the most impactful benefits earned through military service that helps veterans pursue higher education and career advancement. However, its book stipend has not changed since the program's establishment in 2009 and has not kept pace with inflation or the rising cost of education.

The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R.1965, *Veteran Education Assistance Adjustment Act*, to adjust the Post-9/11 GI Bill book stipend from \$1,000 to \$1,400, and to include annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index to keep pace with inflation and rising costs.

### Emerging Toxic Exposures

Presumptions of service connection play a critical role in reducing the evidentiary burden on veterans seeking VA disability compensation. Accordingly, the VFW is deeply concerned by VA's September 2025 decision to remove male breast cancer from the *Honoring our PACT Act of 2022* (Public Law 117-168) presumptive list without transparently releasing publicly available scientific data to explain the removal.

The VFW urges Congress to conduct oversight hearings to ensure VA administers the legislation's presumption decision process transparently and in full compliance with the law.





# Legislative National Program Awards 2025-2026 Entry Form

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or VFW Priority Goals.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or VFW Priority Goals.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

**VFW Auxiliaries must send this completed entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2026 for judging.**

VFW Auxiliary Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VFW Auxiliary No: \_\_\_\_\_ Department of: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or VFW Priority Goals. (e.g., flyers, brochures, social media posts, newsletters, e-newsletters, handouts, photos, links to videos, etc.)

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The Department Legislative Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to National Legislative Amy Jo Lett by April 30, 2026 for judging.

Department Legislative Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ *Signature*

*Forms sent to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters will not be processed or forwarded.*

**MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM 2025 – 2026 “Forever Serving Veterans”  
March 2026 Communication**

**Chairman Denise Beckler 856-448-3501 (can text) denise.beckler@aol.com  
12 Wright Ave. Stratford, NJ 08084**



**LETS TALK MEMBERSHIP PERCENTAGES**

At our recent road trip training session, a member asked me if I could explain what all the percentages meant at the top of the membership roster – great question Ellen, thanks for asking! So, let’s talk about them...

<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Paid Total</b>	<b>Prior Total</b>	<b>Current Percent</b>	<b>Paid Percent</b>
1	28	28	96.43%	100.00%
0	33	33	100.00%	100.00%
4	34	33	90.91%	103.03%
5	63	60	96.67%	105.00%
0	57	67	85.07%	85.07%

**The Paid Percent Column** – this one we’ll discuss first, as this is the percentage used for membership awards. Each year, the challenge is to get to 100% in membership. The Prior Total Column shows what your membership headcount was at the close of June the previous year and the Paid Total shows what your membership headcount currently is. The goal to reach 100% in Membership is to have those two numbers match (or have paid be higher), as you see above. Should a member die, as long as their dues were paid before they passed, the Paid Percentage will reflect their dues paid until the close of June the current year and their membership will count towards the Paid Percentage for the year.

Now...while it’s great to get to 100% paid, it does NOT help your auxiliary grow – here’s why...

**The Current Percent Column** – using the first line as the example above: to understand what the current percent means, you take your Prior Total (28) and subtract any deceased members (1). While the Paid Total (this year’s total count) doesn’t change, MALTA take that deceased person into account and reduces your Paid Percent (100%) by that loss and that’s where the Current Percent total comes from (96.43%).

Why is the Current Percent Column a big deal? To continue to grow, you want BOTH the current and paid percentage columns to be 100% or higher. For most of the Auxiliaries listed above, even while showing 100% (plus) paid, if that current percentage doesn’t also show 100% (plus), then their auxiliary didn’t grow, it shrunk and that’s never a good thing for an auxiliary.

The important takeaway here is this; as you strive for that 100% of Paid Percent to receive the monetary awards from membership challenges, keep an eye on that Current Percent column and make that a personal auxiliary goal – get both to 100% plus and you’re auxiliary will continue to grow!!



**“From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free”**

# Scholarships

Carolyn Rovito  
251 Church Street, Apt. 1  
Lodi, New Jersey 07644  
201-233-7010  
[Crovito.2@gmail.com](mailto:Crovito.2@gmail.com)

Spring is almost here! This means our scholarship programs for the year are wrapping up. We still have the Young American Patriotic Art Contests to be submitted. Please make sure I have your entries by April 15<sup>th</sup> to allow for judging and forwarding to National.

As we have had many participants in our programs this year, it would be great for our Auxiliaries to organize an event which recognizing the participants for their work. The event can be big or on a smaller scale. Some things I have done in the past and seen other Auxiliaries do to recognize these participants locally are:

- Invite them to your meeting and distribute citations to the winners and participants
- Hold a special ceremony with Town and School officials to recognize the efforts of the participants
- You can give along with citations a patriotic goodie bag and even an American Flag
  - Places like Lowes give a discount to Veterans and can help to keep the cost down
- Serve refreshments along with the recognition event (everyone loves a sweet treat)

Reminder! Our year end reports are due April 15<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure you are reading the reports thoroughly as some of our programs have not ended yet so I sending in the year-end report now would not be possible to answer all the questions as you may still receive entries. Please let me know the events you are having to recognize the participants. If am available, I'd love to attend your event.

Please report and photograph the great work our Auxiliaries do to promote and participate in these programs.

We are looking to have a ceremony to celebrate the winners of the above contests. The date is still being worked out but there will be more information to follow in upcoming promotions.

*Forever serving our Veterans*

# Special Project

## March 2026

Mary Ryan Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

(609) 456 – 1774

[maryryan.nj11@gmail.com](mailto:maryryan.nj11@gmail.com)

### **National Joint Special Project**

Several years ago, a General Store was built on the campus of the VFW National Home. As many of you know the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan is in the middle of nowhere. This is both positive and negative. The positive – those needing treatment can focus on what they need to. The negative – the closest market is a 40-minute drive.

This year, National Commander Carol Whitmore and National President Lois Callahan have chosen for their Joint Project is to “Stock The Store”. They are looking for financial donations to purchase shelving units, refrigerators, freezers, etc. Please do not send these units to the National Home! Donations can be sent through MALTA!

### **Donations for National Joint Special Project**

Donations for the Joint Special Project can be sent to:

Mail:

VFW National Home

3573 S. Waverly Rd., Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

Call: (866) 483 – 9642

Online:

<https://vfwnationalhome.org/donate>

Notate “Retail Store” in the comment section

### **National President’s Special Project**

National President Lois Callahan has chosen for her Special Project to raise funds for the Continuing Education Scholarships. Currently, there are four (4) scholarships (1 to each Conference) of \$2,500 each. Donations for this program can be made through MALTA.

Don’t forget to send in the money for your Special Project Pin money to Department Treasurer Paula Pinto.

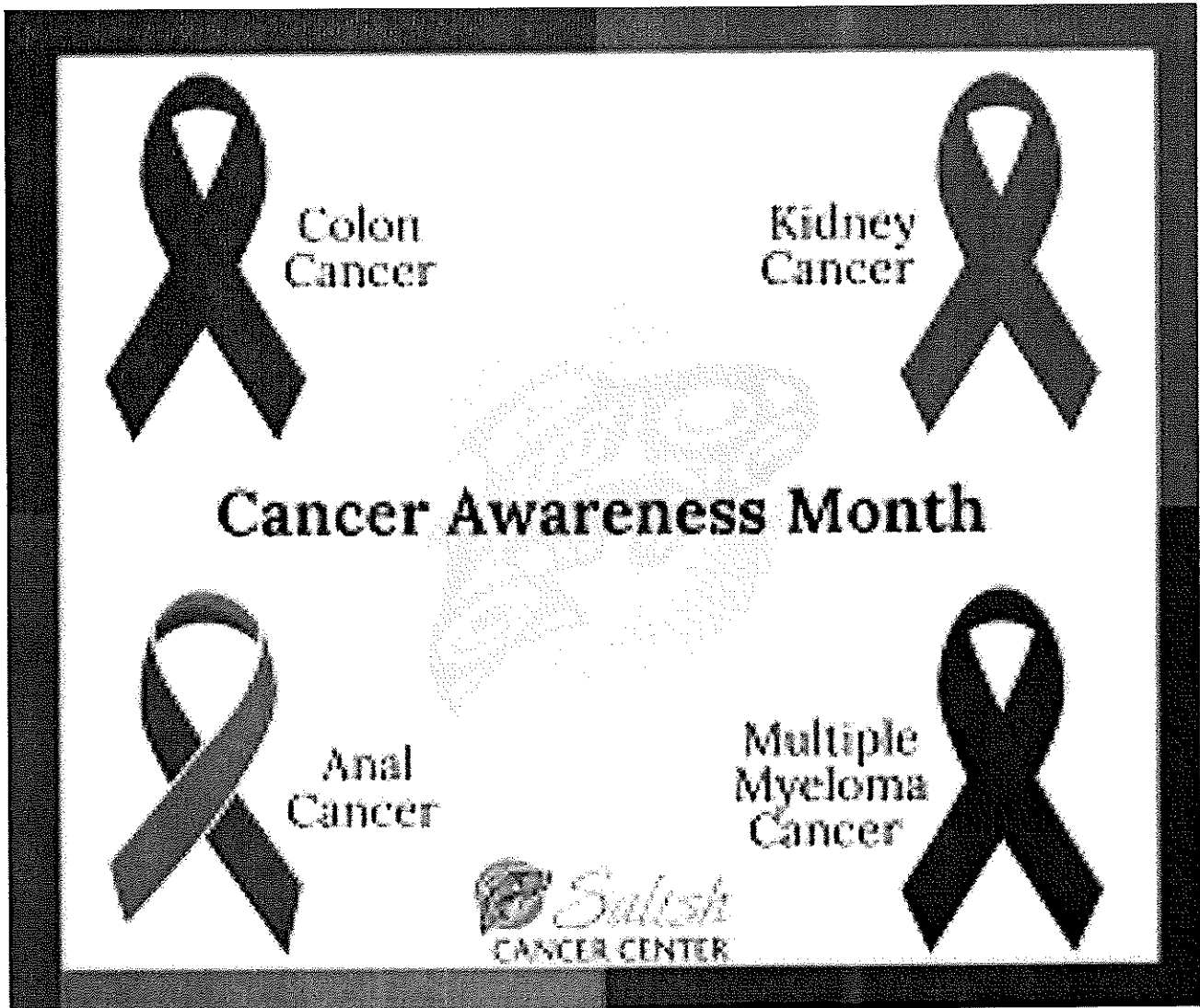
### **Department President’s Special Project**

As you know Department President has chosen for her Special Project Pediatric Cancer Research through The Rutgers Cancer Institute.

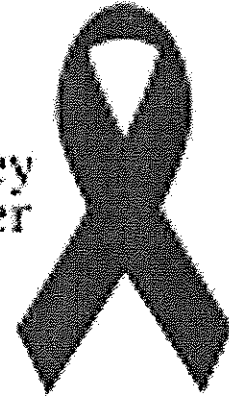
March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Screenings are recommended for adults 50+ or earlier for high risk. It is also Kidney Cancer Awareness and Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month. Kidney Cancer is one of the Top 10 Most Common Cancers. Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month is a global campaign to raising awareness, supporting patients and funding research for this rare blood cancer.

**\*\*ANNOUNCED AT FALL CONFERENCE\*\***

At Fall Conference, Any Auxiliary that makes an additional donation to Department President's Special Project (Pediatric Cancer) (in addition to Department Donation List and Monies turned in from Special Project Pins) will receive a citation at Department Convention in Wildwood. The Top 3 donors will receive an award. This contest will run from July 1 to May 1. **\*\*Additional citations will be given out in July.\*\***



Colon  
Cancer

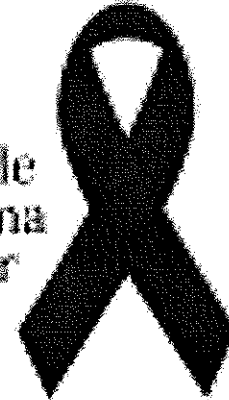


Kidney  
Cancer

## Cancer Awareness Month



Anal  
Cancer



Multiple  
Myeloma  
Cancer



## VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT March 2026

Terri Andryszczak  
24 Beech Street  
Kearny, NJ 07032  
Phone: 732-322-9970  
Email: [vfwpost1302aux@gmail.com](mailto:vfwpost1302aux@gmail.com)

Continuing with last month's focus on grants, let's put the spotlight on the VFW Foundation Grants. Yes, plural and they are open exclusively to VFW entities. Offering more opportunities of support to our veterans and military.

The first one is the VFW #StillServing Grant. It is exclusive to VFW Posts, Districts, and their Auxiliaries. Its purpose is to offset expenses incurred by posts, districts, and auxiliaries for community service projects. Funding up to \$1,500.

Another grant is the Post Assistance Grant, which is exclusively for VFW Posts. It is for posts that are repairing, renovating, or restoring their 'home' to further serve veterans and their local community. Minimum amount is \$500 but can receive up to \$2,500.

The final grant is Uniting for Veterans Grant. Both hunger and homelessness have become more prevalent in our communities. No veteran, service member and their families should endure either. Therefore, VFW Posts and Auxiliaries can apply for this limited matching grant for monetary, food, or item donations in their community up to \$1,500. Posts and Auxiliaries are vital to make a dent in both.

For more information on these grants, criteria, guidelines, or applications, please go to the VFW website: <https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/post-grants>.

Let's do all we can for our veterans, service members and their families!

Don't forget to submit Year End Reports by April 15<sup>th</sup>!



Carmen Peterson  
Dept. NJ Chairman



March, 2026



It's that time of the year, for Leprechauns, kites, and spring. By this time you hopefully have given out your applications for Illustrating America to local schools, after school programs, home schooling, libraries, and art schools. Remember to get your local parent teachers associations to get involved with this contest.

### Illustrating America

It's March and the contest is due by the end of March, I have again enclosed the information for the contest. Last month I sent the applications, which you can get on line at [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources) Get the children involved and at the same time they can learn about patriotism.



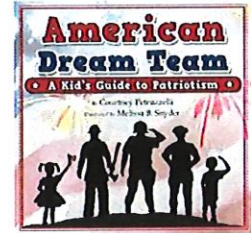
### Patriot Youth Award

I want to stress this award to those youth who go out there and show their patriotism. What better way to honor our youth than to award them with the Patriot Youth Award to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, service members and their families. Award form is available at under MALTA: [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources) under Youth Activities.



### Book of the Month Patriotism through Literacy

Reading at any time to children is an exciting experience. I'm sure your local preschool, day care or library would love to have you come in and read to children and perhaps contact your local high school and get some of these teenagers to help with this program. Some of the high school students need that community service on their resumes for college. Supporting our Youth is important and we do this by involving them in what we do.



Resources for Youth Activities can be found at: [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources)



"Think outside the box!" I can't say enough about this - Look for activities that involve the youth in your program. Have a Patriotic Craft day for children at your post. Have a breakfast with Santa, or host a snow ball fight using cotton balls...think fun. Craft of the month:

We cannot always build the future

**FOR OUR YOUTH,**  
but we can build our youth  
**FOR THE FUTURE.**

- FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

KIDACTIVITY.org

Letting our Youth know that "From Sea to Shinning Sea we honor our Veterans Who Keep Us Free" is who we are and with "Forever Serving Veterans" is what we do.



## Illustrating America

Children love to color and older children enjoy drawing, so now is the time to start getting our the word of our Illustrating American contest.

Contact your local schools and art schools, libraries of this contest that is available. Remember to include our home school children as well.

Get in touch with the local parent organizations in your schools, either in person or send a letter.

Use Social Media to promote this contest either by Facebook, twitter or other.

Deadline is March 31, 2026.

Go on line to [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources) to get a copy of the application. Read the rules carefully, make sure the children understand these rules so that the child's artwork is according to the rules, and won't be disqualified. It doesn't cost anything to promote this program. Have fun with it and the children.



# Craft of the Month

March, 2026



March is the time for Leprechauns and wind, and the beginning of spring

## Materials"

- \*red, white and blue paint
- \*ribbon for hanging
- \*cardboard cut into a shamrock of any size, or purchase a wooden shamrock
- \*glue and glue gun.
- \*ribbon or string for hanging.
- \*Modge podge

## **Directions:**

1. Using cardboard cut out a shamrock of any size, but not too big, or use a wooden shamrock.
2. Outline as shown in picture above and paint the shamrock.
3. Let dry.
4. Put a coat or two of modge podge and let it dray
5. Cut out string or ribbon and glue to back of shamrock.

*Your craft is ready to hang*





**DIRECTORY CHANGES**  
**MARCH 2026**

**ADDRESS CHANGE**

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PAST DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT

**HELEN GONYOU**

1038 Crosswinds Dr.  
Midland, GA 31820

**VFW "Buddy" Poppy  
Year End Report  
2025-2026**

Kathleen Reichenbach  
7 Ashley Road  
Whiting, NJ 08759  
732-740-1526  
[kreich325@gmail.com](mailto:kreich325@gmail.com)

*This form is for statistical purposes only.*

Auxiliary Chairman must submit this report to their Department Chairman by April 15, 2026.

**VFW "Buddy" Poppy**

1. Did your Auxiliary hold a VFW "Buddy" Poppy drive with or without your Post? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Number of VFW "Buddy" Poppies that were distributed. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Did your Auxiliary participate in the VFW "Buddy" Poppy Display Contest at Department Convention? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_

**VFW National Home**

1. Did your Auxiliary promote the VFW National Home? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Did your Auxiliary promote the VFW National Home Helpline? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Did your Auxiliary purchase at least one VFW National Home Life Membership in the current Program Year? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did your Auxiliary purchase at least one VFW National Home Tribute Brick in the current program year? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_

Auxiliary Name & Number \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

# Chaplin's Report 2025 -2026

Carolyn Rovito  
251 Church Street, Apt. 1  
Lodi, New Jersey 07644  
201-233-7010  
[Crovito.2@gmail.com](mailto:Crovito.2@gmail.com)

**DUE APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2026**

At our Department of New Jersey Convention in the end of May we will be holding our annual memorial service to honor our members we have lost over the past year. Please provide the name of your deceased members from March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025 through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026 to me by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, so they can be recognized in our service.

Auxiliary Name \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
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6. \_\_\_\_\_
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18. \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_

**VFW Auxiliary Department**  
**Year-End Report Worksheet**  
**Hospital**  
**2025-2026**

All Auxiliaries must fill out this form and send it to me by **April 15, 2026**.

Barbara Wiener

barb.wiener@yahoo.com

201 6<sup>th</sup> St. N

609-464-1791

Brigantine NJ 08203

**Auxiliary Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Auxiliary Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **District #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Auxiliary President** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Auxiliary Chairman** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_

1. The number of VFW Auxiliary members that volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA Medical facility. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The total number of hours that VFW Auxiliary members volunteered at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. \_\_\_\_\_

3. The total number of hours that Sponsored Volunteers and/or students volunteered under the VFW Auxiliary sponsorship and supervision at any VA and/or non-VA medical facility. \_\_\_\_\_

4. The number of VFW Auxiliaries that promoted, participated in or co-hosted any activity with their VFW Post. \_\_\_\_\_

5. The total dollar amount spent on All Hospital Program-related items and/or projects. \_\_\_\_\_

**Auxiliary President Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Veterans & Family Support  
Year End Report  
2025-2026**

Terri Andryszczak  
24 Beech Street  
Kearny, NJ 07032  
[vfwpost1302aux@gmail.com](mailto:vfwpost1302aux@gmail.com)

This form is for statistical purposes only.  
Auxiliary Chairman must submit this report to their Department Chairman by April 15, 2026.

1. Did your Auxiliary promote, participate, host or co-host with your VFW Post activities for any VFW Program?

Disaster Relief	(Yes or No) _____
Military Assistance Program (MAP)	(Yes or No) _____
National Veterans Serie (NVS)	(Yes or No) _____
Unmet Needs	(Yes or No) _____
Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Awareness	(Yes or No) _____

2. Did your Auxiliary provide direct aid to veterans, service members and/or their families? (Examples: meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.) (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe what was provided: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The approximate number of veterans, service members and/or their families assisted. (How many?) \_\_\_\_\_

4. The total monetary donations and/or value of donations and goods/services provided to veterans, service members and/or their families. (How much?) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Auxiliary Name & Number: \_\_\_\_\_ District #: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_