

Presidents Message  
Gloria Lisicki  
December 2025

It is the Holiday Season, all our hospital Christmas parties are scheduled and you all should have the dates, please try to attend, the veterans look forward to us coming and celebrating the holidays with them. Don't forget the veterans that can't get out, visit them and spend some time with them.

I have completed all but 2 official visits, It has been a wonderful experience to see seasoned members and meeting all the new members. I have traveled up and down this state, and it is beautiful. I would like to thank all of you for what you do for our Veteran's.

I would like to thank my chairman that are doing a fantastic job with the programs for the past 6 months.

Our membership is doing well, but I know we will do better, because that is what New Jersey does.

Remember to send your money for your Special Project Pins to our Treasurer Paula Pinto, earmarked Special Project Pins, you can also send additional donations for Cancer.

Our National President Lois Callahan visit will be May 6-10, 2026. More information will follow.

Wishing you all a very Healthy, Happy Holiday Season.

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

**"Forever Serving, Veterans"**

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# AMERICANISM

**2025-2026**

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

As we enter December, we reflect on two important themes in Americanism: remembrance and gratitude. On December 7, 1941, the United States was forever changed by the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Over 2,400 Americans lost their lives, and our nation was called to unite in strength, courage, and sacrifice.

Pearl Harbor Day serves as a solemn reminder that freedom is never free. It is our duty, as patriotic Americans, to honor the men and women who served and sacrificed—and to educate the next generation about the importance of vigilance, service, and love of country.

## **Fly the American Flag at Half-Staff**

- The U.S. Flag Code recommends lowering the flag to half-staff until sunset on December 7th in honor of those who lost their lives.

## **Attend or Organize a Ceremony**

- Local VFW or Auxiliary posts, municipalities, and schools can hold remembrance ceremonies.
- Include presentations, wreath-laying's, or a reading of names.

As we observe the holiday season, we are reminded of another enduring American value—the spirit of giving. December is a time when communities come together to show kindness, support our veterans and military families, and express gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy. Through acts of service, charitable giving, and outreach to those in need, we embody the true meaning of Americanism: unity, compassion, and respect for one another.

Let us take this month to reflect on the sacrifice of those who answered the call after Pearl Harbor and to carry that same spirit of patriotism into our holiday traditions. Whether we are participating in community service projects, sending cards to deployed troops, donating to local food banks, or simply flying the flag with pride, we continue to honor our nation's values.

In remembrance and in celebration, let's keep the spirit of America strong this December.

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

***Forever Serving Veterans***

# BUDDY" ® POPPY / VFW NATIONAL HOME

December 2025



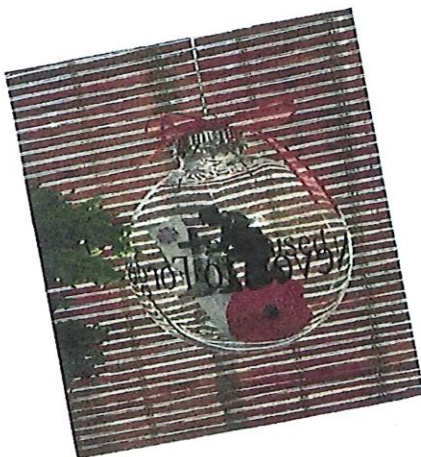
Kathleen Reichenbach  
7 Ashley Road  
Whiting, NJ 08759  
732-740-1526  
[kreich325@gmail.com](mailto:kreich325@gmail.com)



Can you feel it in the air? The Holidays! The Season of giving.

Distributing Poppies dates to more than a century ago, when it became the VFW's official memorial flower in 1922. Remember we are not selling Poppies, but we are distributing in the hopes of receiving donations. Their beautiful red color blends with the color of the Christmas Season the season of giving. Many towns hold Christmas festivities and Christmas Markets. Look into setting up a table at one of these local gatherings. In many cases the town will waive a vendor table fee if you show them your tax-exempt papers. So, get out there and join in the festivities. Give that beautiful "Buddy" Poppy more visibility so we "Never Forget". People want to give it's in the air, so let's help them with that. Shake those cans!

On another point don't forget to decorate your Post with Poppies. How about decoration a tree with Poppies. Also put a Poppy on those Christmas gifts. Just an added reminder, start gathering your info for year end reports. Like the holidays it will be here before you realize it.



*Forever Serving Veterans.....*





# VFW NATIONAL HOME

3574 S Waverly Rd.

Easton Rapids, MI 48827

**Donations** 866-483-9642.

**For Help** 800-313-4200

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

**General** 800-424-8360

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



December 2025

"The VFW National home serves as a living memorial to America's veterans by helping our nation's military and veteran families during difficult times"

## CHANGING LIVES

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

Google Chrome

The VFW National Home is all a buzz with the coming holidays and making everything "Bright & Merry" for our Veterans and their families. Consider sending some extra jingle for their Holiday Cheer. Visit their Amazon Wish list and you can help stuffing Santa's Bag and avoid shipping costs. As always you can make a gift online through Malta. Spread that Holiday Cheer and show how much we love and appreciate our Veterans and their families.

*Forever Serving Veterans.....*



**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**

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

**VFW National Home**

2. 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 \_\_\_\_\_



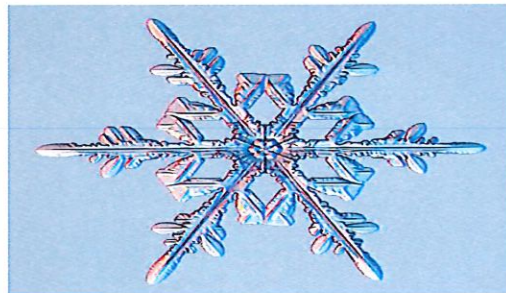
***EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION  
DECEMBER 2025-2026***

Now that Thanksgiving is over and everyone is in holiday swing let's not forget about giving the gift of your time to help struggling Auxiliaries revitalize their members. What about a post that doesn't have an Auxiliary are there any of them in your District? If so please let me know so I can contact them about the advantages of having an Auxiliary.

Are you having any holiday Open Houses or New Years Eve parties how about inviting your inactive members to participate? Maybe they feel that they weren't asked to help so they don't want to intrude on an already established event.

As always please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need any assistance.

I want to wish everyone and your families a very Blessed Holiday season and Happy New Year. Let's continue to grow into 2026.



**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/Media Relations

Mary Ryan Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd.

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

(609) 456-1774

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

Can you believe it's December already?! It seems like yesterday we were in Wildwood!

So far this year, I have gone over honoring our Histories and Traditions, Social Media and the Meta Business Suite, the newest addition to the program – Reels, and Instagram.

I have included in the mailing the updated flyer of the Use of Technology in Meetings. This can be found in MALTA under Member Resources.

Department President Gloria Lisicki has almost completed the visits to the Non-District Auxiliaries and Districts. This brings me to Department Award #2. (This can be found in the Communication Center) If Department President Gloria Lisicki has visited your Auxiliary or District, please send me a report of her visit. This contest is open to Non-District Auxiliaries and Districts. Just tell me a story of her visit. And don't be afraid to ask me questions. I am here to help you.

Now, don't forget to send in those pics with Santa. I am creating an album for Santa pics on our Department Facebook Page. Just send me a pics of members and children with Santa. \*\*If they are not your children, make sure we have permission to post the pictures.

## Using Technology to Conduct an Auxiliary Meeting

Members may join meetings using electronic or digital tools such as conference calls, webcams, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting and Skype.

This is your guide on who, what, when, where and how to use technology in Auxiliary meetings.

Facebook is not a meeting platform nor is it an acceptable form of using technology to conduct a meeting, even if it is a private group.

While you may choose from multiple web browsers, Google Chrome is the best browser for optimal connectivity.

### Technology Tools: What is needed on both ends?

- Personal computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone
- High speed Internet connection (such as DSL or Internet provided by a cable company; for tablets and smartphones, 3G, 4G, 5G or LTE is often not fast enough; you need Wi-Fi)
- Telephone line or USB connected speakers and microphone
- Internal webcam or USB connected external webcam

Choose the meeting platform that works best for you and your members.

**Zoom, VISIT: [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com)**

- Video and call-in option

**Microsoft Teams, VISIT: [microsoft.com](http://microsoft.com)**

- Video meetings

**Go To Meeting, VISIT: [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)**

- Audio meetings

**Skype, VISIT: [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)**

- Skype to Skype audio and video calls.



### Who Might Need to Do This and When?

- Members who travel for work
- Members who are deployed overseas
- Members called away for emergencies
- Snowbirds
- Members in locations with extreme weather
- Members who are geographically isolated
- Members who are homebound
- Members living in assistance facilities

## Guidelines for Joining a VFW Auxiliary Meeting with Technology: From Bylaws Sec. 210

1. Video conferencing or teleconferencing is permitted for members unable to attend a meeting.
2. Auxiliary Secretary shall designate in the minutes; members attending by way of video or teleconferencing.
3. Video conferencing when used to form a full quorum shall be utilized for extenuating circumstances only.
4. The Auxiliary President or designee, if President unable to attend, must be at the location site if teleconferencing is used for obtaining a quorum (extenuating circumstances only).



## Hospital & VAVS Activity Report

Please mail/email this report within 30 days of any activity to

Barbara Wiener 201 6<sup>th</sup> St. N. Brigantine NJ 08203 [barb.wiener@yahoo.com](mailto:barb.wiener@yahoo.com)

Auxiliary President \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Auxiliary Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

If the Event was held by a Hospital Representative and not an Auxiliary

Hospital Rep Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**\*LIST THE NAMES OF ANY VOLUNTEERS ON THE BACK OF THE SHEET\***

### Section 1 – Items or Money Donated to Hospital

Name of Hospital the donation was made \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Approx Dollar Amt. \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2 – Hospital Party, Non-sponsored Hospital parties or any other activity

Name of Hospital/Facility the Party was held \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Activity \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER of VOLUNTEERS** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Hours** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Students** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Hours** \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3 – Reporting Regularly Scheduled Volunteers

Name of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Hospital/Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Total Hours for this Report \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Volunteered \_\_\_\_\_

Does this Volunteer qualify for a Hospital Service Pin----Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Projects for this Report \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of **Members** that participated \_\_\_\_\_

Hours worked this report \_\_\_\_\_ Total Miles Traveled \_\_\_\_\_ Total dollar value \_\_\_\_\_

**For non-sponsored hospitals, please provide proof for credit**

VETERANS HAVEN SOUTH  
P.O. BOX 80, 301 SPRING GARDEN ROAD  
WINSLOW, NEW JERSEY 08095-0080  
609-561-4990

## VHS Donation Wish List

VETERAN WELCOME PACKAGES	VETERAN ENHANCEMENT ITEMS	DEPARTING HOUSEWARMING PACKAGES
<b>NEW ITEMS ONLY</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS ONLY</b> (Sizes L-XXXL)	<b>NEW ITEMS ONLY</b>
Toiletries	T-Shirts – (Long & Short sleeve)	Small Lamp/Alarm clocks
Bath Towels/Wash Cloths	Sweatshirts/pants	Dish Sets – Glassware/Cups
Shower Shoes/Flip Flops	Athletic Shorts	Cutlery Sets/Oven Utensils/ Mitts
Pillows	Undergarments	Toasters/Coffee Makers
Twin Sheet Sets	Undershirt Tank-tops	Shower Curtains/Rings/Rods
Blankets	Coats/Gloves/Hats	Bath Rug Sets
GIFT CARDS	Robes	Laundry Baskets/Supplies
	GIFT CARDS	Brooms/Dustpans/Buckets
		Toilet Paper/Paper Towels
		Small Waste Baskets
		*****Adopt A Box***** \$150 – complete housewarming package

\*\*\*\*PROJECTS\*\*\*\* Ask how you can help or take charge of one of our projects! \*\*\*\*PROJECTS\*\*\*\*

VETERAN ROOM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ITEMS	VETERAN SOUTH FACILIY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS	VETERAN SOUTH FACILIY/PROGRAM NEEDS
<b>Retrofit 100 rooms!!</b>	<b>1. BED FRAME REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>1. FORKLIFT</b>
Alarm Clocks	<b>2. KITCHEN PROJECT/PIZZA OVEN</b>	<b>2. WAREHOUSE PROJECT-(Mezzanine)</b>
40" Smart TVs (Wi-Fi capable)	<b>3. GAZEBO/COVERED PATIO PROJECT</b>	<b>3. STANDBY GENERATOR</b>
Mattresses	<b>4. MULTI-PURPOSE GATHERING ROOM</b>	<b>4. VEHICLE (MINIVAN)</b>
Refrigerators (3.1 Cubic w/freezer) by Magic Chef	<b>5. GAZEBO/COVERED PATIO PROJECT</b>	
Lamps		
Blankets		
Small Trash Cans		

An updated list can be found on our website: <https://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/services/vetshavensouth/documents/VHS-Wish-List.pdf>

Any questions, please let me know - thank you for all you do for our vets at VHS!



# **DUEL OF THE SANTAS VINELAND MEMORIAL HOME ANNUAL STATE PARTY**

**11AM TO .....  
SUNDAY DECEMBER 14**

**524 NW Blvd | Vineland NJ**

Come join us and celebrate with our Veterans.  
There will be gifts, lots of food, beverages, and  
desserts. With a few surprises!!!

Any questions, please call Barbara Wiener, [barb.wiener@yahoo.com](mailto:barb.wiener@yahoo.com)





Legislation Program  
December 2025

The holidays are fast upon us, and I would like to take this time to thank each and every one of our members who have helped our veterans and service members throughout this year, whether you attended a Town Hall meeting, wrote to your Senator or Congressmen, or by visiting our members who are in the hospital by just sitting with them and listening to their stories, or just helping out wherever you could to help our veterans.

Due to the shutdown of our Government for those many days, I am sure that while it will take some time for them to get back up and running especially with the Holidays, we can still be part of the VFW Action Corps and stay informed as to what is happening in Washington.

Don't forget our Legislative Priorities from the Fall Legislative Conference held in Washington on September 7-11, 2025, a copy of which I have attached for your ready reference to help you prepare for the coming year. Let's keep up the good fight for our men and women who served or are serving no matter where stationed and remind them that we are here to help and support them.

Again, have a Happy Thanksgiving, enjoy the Holidays and talk to you in the New Year.

Yours in Service,

Lynn Ann Malone  
NJ VFWA Legislation Chair 25-26  
908-578-0440  
Lynmal1@aol.com

# Veterans of Foreign Wars Legislative Priorities



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

Fall Legislative Conference  
Washington, D.C  
September 7-11, 2025

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

## Community Care Reform

### The VFW's Concern:

While community care is a necessary component of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care, administrative barriers prevent veterans from receiving timely, high-quality services. Despite seeing some improvements with the passage of the *VA MISSION Act of 2018* (Public Law 115-182), veterans still face confusing eligibility rules, delayed referrals, billing disputes, and inconsistent communication and coordination. These challenges are especially harmful for those in rural areas who rely heavily on community providers. Growing numbers of women veterans depend on community care for specialty care including mammograms, maternity services, and fertility treatment. Veterans in mental health crises may require immediate inpatient services outside of VA facilities. Additionally, veterans living overseas—many of whom support American military or diplomatic interests—face additional barriers when attempting to access VA health care through the Foreign Medical Program (FMP). This program currently restricts eligibility to those with service-connected disabilities or participation in rehabilitation programs, and requires veterans to seek out their own providers and apply for reimbursement. This uncoordinated care leaves many abroad without reliable access to medical services and poses unnecessary risks to national security.

For these reasons, the VFW strongly supports strengthening oversight, transparency, and coordination of these programs to ensure veterans receive clear information about eligibility, referrals, and scheduling, and to ensure community providers receive timely payments to maintain a strong network. The VFW also seeks to modernize the FMP by expanding eligibility to all veterans abroad, removing barriers tied to disability status or rehabilitation, modernizing payment systems, and exploring provider networks outside the United States. The combined result would improve health care coordination, reduce treatment delays, prevent gaps in care, and ensure that veterans in the states or overseas have timely access to services in their local communities.

### 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 Matt Brennan at [matt.brennan@mail.house.gov](mailto:matt.brennan@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).



## Exploring Alternative PTSD Treatments

### The VFW's Concern:

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), more than 40 percent of veterans in the VA system have a service-connected disability rating for mental health. The VFW acknowledges the growing need for alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)/mental health conditions. Currently, veterans seeking mental health care are predominantly directed to two types of medications—selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)—as well as various evidence-based therapies to reduce PTSD symptoms. Veterans have expressed to the VFW their concern that VA may be overprescribing these medications for mental health conditions. While today's standard treatments are successful for some individuals, many report experiencing only temporary relief of symptoms, adverse side effects, and difficulties when going off medications. To ensure patient safety, the VFW urges VA to provide written informed consent to all veterans before starting long-term treatment with psychiatric medications, so they fully understand potential risks, benefits, and alternatives.

With nearly 2.5 million veterans using VA mental health services, it has the unique capacity to lead the nation in advancing innovative treatments. Just as VA pioneered telemedicine, cardiovascular care, and prosthetics, it can now do the same for PTSD care. Because not all treatments work for everyone, the VFW urges Congress and VA to research and provide alternative, non-conventional solutions for veterans. Some such treatments that have shown potential include stellate ganglion block, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, ketamine infusion, MDMA-assisted therapy, medical cannabis, and other plant-based alternative therapies.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.4837, *Written Informed Consent Act*, to expand informed consent requirements to include five additional medication categories to ensure veterans are fully aware of the risks and benefits of these medications.

Pass H.R.2623, *Innovative Therapies Centers of Excellence Act of 2025*, to designate five VA medical centers as specialized hubs focusing on cutting-edge PTSD treatments for veterans.

Note: For H.R.4837 cosponsorship, please email Tyler Zidlicky at [tyler.zidlicky@mail.house.gov](mailto:tyler.zidlicky@mail.house.gov).

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

## Retirement and Military Personnel

### 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, distinct benefits earned for different reasons, yet Congress continues to wrongly treat their concurrent receipt as "double-dipping." The VFW believes this policy is fundamentally unfair, and it is far past time for Congress to act.

In 2004, Congress authorized full concurrent receipt for veterans with at least 20 years of service and a 50 percent service-connected disability rating or higher. While this was a positive step, the VFW believes the 50 percent threshold is arbitrary and unjust. Veterans rated below 50 percent still endure sacrifices, risks, and challenges, yet they are excluded from full benefits with no reasonable explanation. This exclusion has left many veterans frustrated and feeling abandoned by the very system that should be supporting them.

Additionally, veterans who medically retire under Chapter 61, including combat-injured and ill veterans, continue to suffer due to the offset of their retirement pay and disability compensation. More than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees, including those who need ongoing care and support, do not have full access to their vested retirement pay and service-connected disability compensation, creating financial hardship for them and their families.

Congress must act now to end the policy of offsetting benefits, fulfill its promises, and prevent further harm to disabled veterans. The cost of full concurrent receipt is far outweighed by the moral obligation to honor their sacrifices. The VFW calls on the 119th Congress to pass legislation that will show them their service is truly valued. Every year of delay only deepens the financial and emotional toll on these veterans who have already given so much to this country.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass S.1032 / H.R.2102, *Major Richard Star Act*, either as a standalone bill or via the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (proposed Senate Amendment 2968) to enable Chapter 61 retirees who sustained combat-related injuries to receive their vested DOD retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset.

Pass legislation to eliminate any offset of DOD military retirement pay and VA disability compensation.

## Transition from Service

### The VFW's Concern:

Leaving military service is often complicated by service-related ailments, family needs, loss of identity and support networks, and the required training to enter a new career field. Sadly, the initial year following discharge also comes with increased suicide risk among veterans, heightening the need to ensure all transitioning service members are connected to post-service benefits and resources as quickly as possible.

One of the best resources to utilize are accredited representatives who can help with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims. These representatives can be from the national, state, or local level. Through BDD, service members can file expedited claims and complete medical evaluations before leaving service, enabling VA to provide disability ratings upon discharge. Receiving accelerated claims decisions means BDD participants are better able to minimize gaps in essential care like mental health counseling and medication management once they officially leave service.

In early 2024, VA launched its improved curriculum of VA benefits and services covered during Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes. TAP 6.0 includes having an accredited representative physically present to assist service members with filing their BDD claims. Data shows this initiative has been effective in increasing the number of transitioning service members receiving their benefits upon discharge. It also has the potential to positively affect factors that can contribute to the downward spiral toward suicide, thereby saving lives.

The VFW would like to see this practice codified into law and made permanent. Since this is a current VA program, we anticipate this legislative fix would be cost neutral.

### The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.1845, *TAP Promotion Act*, either as a standalone bill or via the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 (Section 551 of the House NDAA) to codify VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives from national, state, and local organizations in TAP classes.

Note: For cosponsorship, please email Colin Hawkins at [colin.hawkins@mail.house.gov](mailto:colin.hawkins@mail.house.gov).



## Other Areas of Concern

### Unaddressed Toxic Exposures

Veterans frequently contact the VFW about toxic exposures not included in the *Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022* (Public Law 117-168). Examples include but are not limited to water contamination at Fort McClellan, Alabama, and those who served as air crews, nuclear technicians, and submariners. This legislation established an enduring framework for a presumption decision process to guide the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ongoing, systematic evaluation of toxic exposures. Ensuring transparency and accountability in these evaluations requires consistent congressional oversight.

The VFW urges Congress to conduct oversight hearings to ensure VA's transparency and compliance in administering the PACT Act's presumption decision process.

### Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies

While the VFW respects the right of veterans to choose who assists with VA disability compensation claims, we remain deeply concerned about unaccredited actors who exploit earned benefits. These entities we call Claim Sharks often charge veterans exorbitant fees for services that are otherwise available at no cost. They suggest that their high volume of business makes them more effective than accredited representatives and falsely imply that their involvement can secure faster decisions or higher disability ratings. The VFW supports legislative efforts that require VA accreditation for anyone assisting with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of claims; any associated fees to be reasonable and never put veterans into debt; and safeguards to protect against unaccredited, predatory actors.

The VFW urges Congress to pass legislation to truly prohibit the exploitation of veterans by unscrupulous Claim Sharks and strengthen the VA accreditation system, and to oppose legislation like H.R.3132, *CHOICE for Veterans Act of 2025*, that would put veterans seeking their earned benefits into debt.

### GI Bill Improvements

Despite an increase in deployments since September 11, 2001, National Guard and Reserve members do not always earn their VA education benefits at the same rate as active duty service members. Currently, Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility is based on active duty service for at least 90 days. Initial skills and training periods are deemed non-qualifying service for those in the reserve components, and full-time National Guard service and certain responses to national emergencies do not qualify. In addition, the book stipend associated with the Post-9/11 GI Bill has not been increased since 2009, and students in online learning programs currently receive a housing stipend rate that is only half the national average.

The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R.1423 / S.649, *Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2025*, to create equity for National Guard and Reserve members by allowing any day in uniform for which military pay is received to count toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility; H.R.1965, *Veteran Education Assistance Adjustment Act*, to increase the book stipend from \$1,000 to \$1,400 for veterans using Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits, and include annual increases for the stipend based on the Consumer Price Index; and H.R.3753, *Expanding Access for Online Veteran Students Act*, to increase the monthly housing stipend to the full national average rate for students in approved online courses of study.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM 2025 – 2026  
December 2025 Communication

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



The holidays are quickly approaching. I know many of you are hosting Thanksgiving Dinner and/or Christmas Parties at your Post – will you have a recruiting table set up?? You NEVER know who will show up to one of these functions – make the new application available or easier yet, display a picture of the Membership QR code (see handout in this communication that can be printed out and used for this purpose!).

As I've traveled and visited for Official Visits, we've played a fishing pond game where members answer a question based on the fish they catch. They are questions meant to make you think about the WHY and WHO of being a member. As we've almost completed OV's, I would like to share the questions with you – take a few minutes to mull each one over:

- #1 – what made you want to join the Auxiliary?
- #2 – what are the 6 levels of eligibility?
- #3 – what is our main purpose as an organization?
- #4 – what can you personally do to make a new member feel welcomed?
- #5 – what do you think would help get more auxiliary members to participate?
- #6 – how can you be a lighthouse beacon for fellow members and new recruits?
- #7 – was there something you would have appreciated knowing as a new member?
- #8 – How many years have you been a member?

Did any of these questions make you think or a minute or two? Did any of them bring back good memories of past activities and time spent with fellow members? Remind you **WHY** we do this?? You all do such great work for the veterans in our great state and across the country – we need to share the excitement of that work with others – our enthusiasm is the best way to recruit! So remember your **WHY** and share it!

Sales Pitch Time! The holiday gift giving season is just around the corner, wouldn't a life membership be a GREAT gift to a friend or family member?? And as an auxiliary, if you know of a member whose struggling financially, which makes it impossible for them to pay their dues – consider sending them some holiday love by paying for their per capita (\$15.00), to renew their dues for this year. Besides it keeping your numbers up, more importantly it's lets that member know you care! The funds can come out of your General Fund or your Relief Fund (just be sure to vote on it if not already in your Standing Rules).

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season – enjoy time with your family and friends!



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

***"Forever Serving Veterans"***





**Join the VFW Auxiliary  
today!**

**Use the QR code below  
To sign up**



**Any questions?  
Call: 856-448-3501**



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today!**

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**Any questions?  
Call: 856-448-3501**



**Join the V**

**Use the (**  
**To**



**Any (**  
**Call: 8!**



# From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free



## VFW Auxiliary Membership Eligibility

Sign up Today!



Husband	Wife
Father	Mother
Brother	Sister
Son	Daughter
Grandfather	Grandmother
Grandson	Granddaughter

Step & Adopted family members  
may be eligible as well



## **Special Project**

Mary Ryan Sandman

176 Patty Bowker Rd

(609) 456 – 1774

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

[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.

December is Aplastic Anemia Awareness Month, Cancer-Related Fatigue Awareness Month, HIV/AIDS Awareness Month and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month.

Aplastic Anemia is a rare condition where the body's immune system attacks its own bone marrow. In most cases, the cause of this is unknown; this is known as Idiopathic Aplastic Anemia. There is also Acquired Aplastic Anemia, this refers where environment and physical conditions are linked with this diagnosis. Aplastic Anemia is common among pregnant women. It can be genetic.

Cancer-Related Fatigue is a constant feeling of tiredness from Cancer or Cancer Treatment. This may prevent you from doing normal daily activities. This is one of the most common side effects from Cancer. Other causes of Cancer Fatigue are poor nutrition, anemia, medications, emotions and activity/rest cycle. The best way to reduce fatigue is first find the cause of the fatigue. Talk to your healthcare team, it could be an interaction with your regular meds and the treatment. The next step is to change what you can.

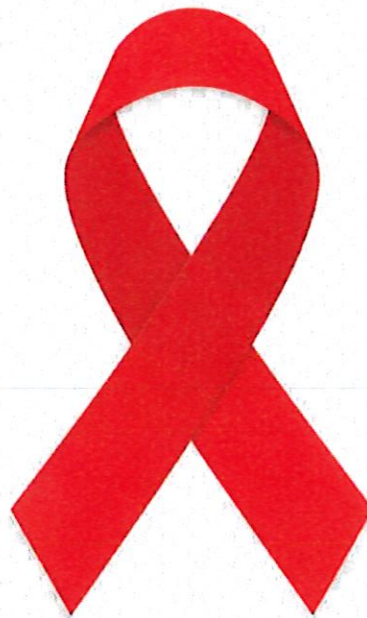
HIV/AIDS Awareness is centered around World AIDS Day on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

We are in the middle of the BRRR months. December is also Seasonal Affective Disorder Awareness. This is a form of depression that comes and goes with the seasons, usually in the winter months. This is due to the lack of sunlight during shorter days, this disrupts the body's internal clock. Treatments include light therapy, Vitamin D and traditional depression treatments.



**\*\*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.\*\***



## VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT

### December 2025

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

The holiday season is a festive time of year. We gather with family and friends, some visiting from far away. Laughing at embarrassing stories recalled from childhood at the dinner table. Making new memories with the younger generation. Welcoming the new additions to the growing family. Spending way too much to find the perfect gifts.

A typical image for many of us. For others, it can be the opposite – the “holiday blues”. The weather can be gloomy and cold. Maybe there are no family and/or friends to gather with. Struggling financially to put food on the table, trying to make ends meet daily, so there is nothing left to purchase gifts. This can easily be the case for our service members, veterans and their families. Thereby, increasing the feeling of hopelessness, loneliness, agitation, depression, etc. – triggering mental health issues – which we do not want to happen. We want to prevent any of these thoughts during this time of year.

There are a few ways the Auxiliary can help ease their burdens and reduce anxiety. Host a holiday party for the service members, veterans and their families – such as “Breakfast with Santa” and have gifts for their children. Deliver holiday meals to homebound veterans, spend some time with them to ensure they are eating, and check back on them a few days later. Visit the Veteran Homes and Hospitals. Sometimes it is not what you bring, but what you do in the time spent with them.

Prepare care packages for those deployed, and a few for those stateside. Who does not like opening a box? Any little bit that helps to put a smile on their face, even for a minute, brings a smile to our face(s), and it spreads to others. The holiday season is about sharing and caring, and the VFW Auxiliary are pros at taking care of those that sacrificed so much for us.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**





Carmen Peterson  
Dept. NJ Chairman



November, 2025



## Happy Holidays

It's December and a magical time of silver bells, lights, and ho, ho, ho. Think of Veterans families and what you as a Post and Auxilliary can do to help these families.

We honor our Veterans by doing services, and what a better time than to involve the youth in your event.

### Working with Youth Groups

Have the Scouts, local youth groups participate in Pearl Harbor services by inviting them to join you services and your post or memorial. Have a Christmas luncheon for Veterans who are homeless or from nursing homes and invite the local youth groups to help serve these Veterans.



### Illustrating America

Our younger youth, love to color and draw, so now is the time to start getting out the word of our Art contest for our younger students. Contact your local schools and art schools, libraries of this contest that is available. Deadline is March 31, 2026. Use your social media and The Patch to promote this contest.



### Book of the Month Patriotism through Literacy

Reading for the holidays 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!"** 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: Star Project

Remember to start thinking about Illustrating American Art contest, get those applications run off and bring them to your local libraries to circulate them.

*We cannot always build the future*

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

- FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

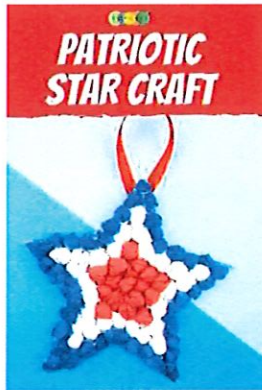
KIDACTIVITIES.ORG

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.

# Youth Activities

# Craft of the Month

December



December is a time for giving, whether it be a gift, a helping hand, or just being there for someone. Trees get decorated and here is a perfect tree ornament.

## Materials"

- \*red, white and blue tissues paper
- \*patriotic, red and blue ribbon
- \*card board cut into a star of any size, or purchase a wooden star.
- \*glue and glue gun.
- \*about 8 inches of ribbon in red, white, or blue.

## **Directions:**

1. Using cardboard cut out a star of any size, but not too big, or use a wooden star.
2. Cut red and blue ribbon to about 8 inches. Glue ribbon to top of the star, then proceed with gluing the tissue paper balls.
3. Cut tissue paper into inch squares. Crumple tissue paper into balls.
  - >Start with the outside and glue tissue balls around the edge in a single layer and 1 row (squeezing in at the end is fine) choose color you like.
  - >Second, repeat process choosing color you like.
  - >In the center repeat process and fill in with last color of tissue paper .Let dry, then do the same on the other side.
4. Cut red and blue ribbon to about 8 inches. Glue ribbon to top of the star, then proceed with gluing the tissue paper balls.

*Your craft is ready to hang*





Happy Holidays  
Florina Hawke  
Donna

Happy Holiday  
Camilla Alford

Happy  
Holidays  
Margaret Russo



Wishing all of our Members  
and their Families a  
Happy and Healthy  
Holiday Season!

Mary Dungan  
Carolyn R. White

Happy Holidays  
Victoria Hurd

Happy Holidays  
Terri  
Anderson