



Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



1103 N. Blackwelder Ave. OKC. OK 73106
405 525-2680/ www.vfwoklahoma.org

July 2020

2020-2021 Series

"Where Liberty dwells, there is my Country."

Benjamin Franklin

DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA HEADQUARTERS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

General Orders No. 1

2020-2021 Series

- Proof of Eligibility Requirements for Officers:** All Posts & Districts should be reminded of the provisions of Section 216 &, 416 of the Manual of Procedures that officers, elected and appointed, shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.
- Pursuant to Article V, Sec 3 of the Department of Oklahoma, Veterans of Foreign Wars By-Laws,** "A delegate registration fee established by the Council of Administration will be paid by each Post for every delegate to which it is entitled and by others authorized to cast a vote as defined by the National By-Laws. This fee may be increased/decreased at each succeeding convention by the Council of Administration. Said fees shall be paid to the State Quartermaster 15 days prior to the opening session of the Department Convention. Anyone wanting to register after this date will be assessed an additional fee of \$1.00 for each delegate registered. Post delegate fees are due and payable regardless of convention attendance. Post that do not pay prior to the convention will be assessed the delegate fees at the plus \$1.00 rate."

/os/

MICHAEL L. MERIT
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /

Curtis A. Watts
Adjutant



FROM THE COMMANDER



Michael L. Merit
State Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Oklahoma

Comrades,

July 1st 2020

First of all, I hope this finds all of you and your family healthy and well. If not, I pray for a speedy recovery. Well, here we are on the first day of a new administrative year! I want to thank our Immediate Past State Commander Darryl Mabry for all his hard work not only this past year, but also for his time coming up the chairs and all he has done to support the VFW, Auxiliary and Cooties. So, hats off to you, Darryl! Congratulations on a great year, even with COVID-19 hampering the last half of it!

On June 20th, 2020, the Department held its 99th Annual Convention at which I was humbled and honored to be elected your State Commander. I want to thank each and every one of you for the support you have given me as I climbed up through the chairs these past five years. I want you to know that you come first this year. This year will not be about one individual, Post, District or the Department. This year is about you, the member, who makes this organization so great. We are going to focus on you and what we can do to make your membership worth keeping and coming back for.

All of this begins with you. We are going to be open to all ideas that will grow and strengthen our Department this year. We are going to have to be creative in what we do this year as we continue to face the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. That means that we must think outside of the box when it comes to promoting our programs and growing our membership. That also means finding ways to stay in contact with our membership and checking in on them from time to time. We are our own best support system, but it requires ALL of us to take part in it.

Our Membership Chair, State Surgeon Stacy Reddig is working with our Membership Retention Chair Robbi Clark to formulate an aggressive membership program. It is going to be a comprehensive design that will utilize grassroots efforts as well as support at all levels. From what I have seen of it so far, it looks to be a great program. Along those lines, State Officers as well as the District Officers are aware of the membership goal for this year and now I am passing that along to you: **100% BY DECEMBER 31ST, 2020 110% BY JUNE 30TH, 2021.** That means we are looking to add 1,160 members to our ranks by the end of the administrative year. This is an extremely aggressive goal, but I know that we can pull up our bootstraps and accomplish anything, so long as we put our mind to it. Our Department Auxiliary President Steven Hodge and I have created a competition for everyone to participate in. The VFW member that recruits the most for the Auxiliary and the Auxiliary member that recruits the most for the VFW will both receive awards at the next convention. I am also announcing my Commander's Challenge for the year: The first post and District to reach 110% will receive a \$100 reward should they make it prior to 31 Dec 2020. Each post or District that makes it after the first one but prior to 31 Dec 2020 will receive a \$50 reward. Again, it begins with you.

For our Programs, we have a very enthusiastic Chair in our District 14 and Post 5263 Commander Erica Wilson-Traxler. She is formulating a comprehensive agenda for making sure we continue the trend of increasing the participation in every one of our programs. We know that there will be a rough road ahead as we await word if schools are going to reopen. Even if they do not, we must continue to promote everything we can. The word of mouth network can be especially useful in times like this. That also includes social media. Soon, we will be announcing an aggressive social media platform to help accomplish our mission. So, look for great things to come from our programs.

For our All State Program this year, we are keeping a very aggressive stance when it comes to the competition. All State is supposed to highlight those Posts and Districts who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to exemplify everything the VFW stands for. That is why the rules for the competition are going to be as tough as they are. However, to get the ball rolling, within the next few days, all Post and Districts that have an email address will begin to receive the All State Checklists. Most District Commanders already have them, so if you do not receive them via email, they can get a copy to you. I know it is going to be tough to meet the requirements, but we would not have set them that way if we did not think that you could do it.

Our Department Centennial is April 16th, 2021. By this point, all of you should have received a card in the mail asking you to update your information and submit your picture and story to be added to our Centennial Memory book. I hope all of you have participated and have purchased a book. It is a great memento to have. Not many get to celebrate 100 years, so this is going to be an amazing experience for all of us. Speaking of mementos, our Centennial Coin design was released at the State Convention. District 1 Commander Matt Ward had the winning design. The coins are currently being made and will be available at the upcoming district meetings as well as the Schools of Instruct August 15th in Eufaula and August 22nd at the State Headquarters. All the State Officers and District Commanders have preorder forms. They are two inches wide and the price per coin is \$20. Each coin will be individually numbered and current set is 500 coins. We would love to have

to order another 500! So, get in contact with one of the state officers to reserve yours today!



Finally, again I want to thank all of you for elevating me to this high office. As I said before, this year is about you and TEAM OKLAHOMA. That is going to be a recurring theme this year: TEAM OKLAHOMA. We are all in this together as a team. We will make it. We will strive. We will continue to be the "First to Fight for Veterans!" Why, because we are TEAM OKLAHOMA! Carry on!

FROM THE STATE SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

State Senior Vice Commander
National and State Legislative Chair
Bylaws/Resolutions Chair

Jim Bassett

Well, we completed the 199th Department of Oklahoma Convention, safely. I want to thank all of you for your support during my tenure as Junior Vice Commander as well as your support for Senior Vice Commander. I will strive to meet or exceed your expectations. I think we will have a great year!

I do want to remind everyone that Covid-19 has not gone away, so please, keep cleaning your hands, social distance from everyone, don't touch your face and wear a mask. Don't forget, there are always people out there trying to scam you out of your hard-earned money by offering miracle cures. Please don't fall for them. If you want to throw money away, give it to the Foundation. At least there it will do some good.

I have some different responsibilities this year, new challenges. If you have any inputs towards legislative or bylaws and resolutions, please let me know.

Normally, this is where I begin to let you know about our upcoming events. Well, the future of baseball and soccer are still unknown at this time. Basketball, which was canceled is trying to make a comeback. So, we still do not have dates for any sporting events. As soon as I find out I will get word out. These are great events to attend. You get to enjoy a ball game, meet and talk to fellow VFW and Auxiliary members, and meet potential new members. If you have not attended one of these events, you should. They are a lot of fun.

It is a new year and we have some great recruiting opportunities planned down the road. If you have a recruiting membership drive, please let us know. We have a lot of talented recruiters willing to assist you with your drives. Let us know.

You may have noticed that I talk a lot about retention. What good is bringing one new member in when you have two or three leave? Some ideas have been assigning someone as your post have a greeter. This would be someone to welcome everyone and talk to them? New and old members, someone to talk to them, make them feel welcome and encourage them to participate.



DONATE!! DONATE!! A new year and new drives. We will be getting them scheduled at our events. If you have an event that would benefit from a Blood Drive, let me know. This is another way that we can help our veterans, families, and communities. In

the meantime, the American Red Cross and Oklahoma Blood Institute are running low. Donate some blood if able, help our community. The Supreme Military Order of the Cooties has set up an online report of blood donated. They will send you a certificate of recognition if you donate, please submit the information at <http://vampire.puptent1.org/>. The blood drives are being sponsored by the Military order of the Cooties Grand of Oklahoma.

I'm waiting on details, but I know that the 45th Fallen Heroes Memorial Marathon is looking for volunteers this year. We will be setting up a resource/recruiting table this year as well as sponsoring the run. The money raised goes to the Fallen Heroes families. This is a good cause. They will be looking for other sponsors. This may be a great opportunity for Posts and Auxiliaries to help our family.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

July:

Details of the Oklahoma City Dodgers and Oklahoma Energy Military Appreciation nights are still pending. If you would like information on helping, contact me, Jim Bassett, 405.664.3929 or bassettj15@yahoo.com.

~~18 to 23 July, 121st VFW National Convention~~ has officially been canceled. The 122nd VFW National Convention will be held in Baltimore, Maryland from 31 July to 5 August, 2021.

August:

Pending events

September:

I'm sad to announce that due to Covid the Oklahoma State Fair has been canceled this year. We are looking forward to next year already.

Tinker AFB 9/11/POW/MIA Memorial Marathon, details to follow

26th, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Fallen Heroes Memorial Marathon, Home 2 Suites, 4311 SW 15th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73170. We will be setting up around 0500. If you have questions or want to participate, contact me for details.

October:

1 to 11 October, Tulsa State Fair, as of this writing, has not canceled. We are looking for volunteers to staff the event. Plan is three shifts a day, at least three people per shift.

**OKLAHOMA
STATE FAIR**

Time was approaching for the Oklahoma State Fair, 17 to 27 September, as well as the Tulsa State Fair, 1 to 11 October. The Oklahoma State Fair board decided to cancel the fair this year. As soon as I get word on Tulsa State Fair as soon as I can. We will be concentrating on recruiting, but we will also be

Time was approaching for the Oklahoma State Fair, 17 to 27 September, as well as the Tulsa State Fair, 1 to 11 October. The Oklahoma State Fair board decided to cancel the fair this year. As soon as I get word on Tulsa State Fair as soon as I can. We will be

We will be



encouraging participation in all VFW and Auxiliary events. We now have plenty of time to start planning on next years fairs. I might also mention that several posts met the All State recruiting requirement during the fairs.



The Special Olympics schedule has been modified due to Covid 19, but they are always looking for volunteers. They are in need of coaches, assistants, chaperons, and cheering sections. When you're out volunteering for the VFW, please wear something that identifies you as a VFW or Auxiliary member; it helps increase public awareness. Sign up to help, better yet, have your post sign up to support or sponsor them. Apply at <https://www.sook.org/>.

Be Visible!

The VFW and the Auxiliary used to be very active within their communities. What are you doing in your community? When you're out volunteering for the VFW or Auxiliary, please wear something that identifies you as a VFW or Auxiliary member; it helps increase public awareness. Any time you help a veteran is also a good time to wear something that identifies you as a member of the VFW or Auxiliary. There are some exceptions if you are working with other entities, check with them to find out if you can wear VFW or Auxiliary items.

Be Visible!

Jim Bassett

State Sr Vice Commander
Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Oklahoma City Oklahoma 73106
405.664.3929
Bassettj15@yahoo.com
<http://vfwok.org/>



FROM THE STATE JUNIOR. VICE COMMANDER

**Department of Oklahoma
State Junior Vice Commander
Jeremy Owen**

First and foremost I want to thank you comrades for your support for me as State Junior Vice Commander. I want to ask you all to please check up on your comrades during these trying times. There are a lot of unknowns right now, but we can work through them as comrades and through this great organization.

I want you all to know that we are working on great things for this year. Don't forget to preorder your centennial coins. Recruiting is going to be a big focal point this year. If you are having a recruiting event please reach out, we are willing to help in any way possible.

Jeremy J. Owen
State JR Vice Commander

FROM THE STATE CHAPLAIN

Chaplain's Note

I hope this note finds you doing well. First, I would like to thank everyone for the support you showed me during the election. I will do my best to show everyone of YOU the same support. My plans are to get out to as many of the district meetings as my schedule will allow as well as all the department meetings. Mr. Gary Lee Walker has been appointed Assistant State Chaplain by the Commander. He will also be out visiting Posts and Districts. Gary Lee will be representing the Dept. when he visits so please show him the same courtesy and respect you have all so graciously showed me.

I believe we have a great group of people in place and pray we are successful in all we have set to accomplish this year. My contact information is below, please contact me if need be. Please feel free to use my personal email address listed below until I get my VFW email account set up.

Enjoy your summer.

God Bless

Richard Willey

(580) 318-3782

rickwilley@hotmail.com

"I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." – **Abraham Lincoln**

Galatians 5:13-14

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."



FROM THE OKLAHOMA VFW FOUNDATION

OUR MISSION: The Oklahoma VFW Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, assists Oklahoma veterans and their families, promotes patriotic programs, provides relief for veterans and veteran support organizations, and provides educational scholarships.

First of all, the Oklahoma VFW Foundation wants to thank everyone who has participated in our Founding Donor and Founding Sponsor programs. Our Founding Sponsors are listed on the home page of our website (www.okvfwfoundation.org) and the Founding Donors are listed on a different page of that website. Please review those lists and thank those individuals and organizations for their support.

The Foundation wishes to welcome two new board members. Jeremy Owens, who by being elected as the new Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Oklahoma VFW will also serve on the Board of Directors. The five members of the Board who are elected by the VFW membership also selected John Payne of VFW Post 20207 to serve a 4-year term on the board of directors. The Foundation would like to offer its sincere thanks to the two board members who dropped off of the board, who have been members of the board from the beginning, Darryl Mabry and Ron Slowik.

Current other items that the Board of the Foundation approved, and that the Foundation is working on include:

- In July 2020, the Foundation will be making a \$5,000 donation to the Oklahoma VFW to help fund their Veteran Service Officer program.
- The Foundation will be working to obtain corporate sponsors to fund the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen cash awards.
- The Foundation will be awarding the following donations to Honor Guards that have reported their activity to the Oklahoma VFW: \$2,000 to the District 5 Honor Guard, \$700 to the Del City VFW Post 9969 Honor Guard, \$700 to the Blanchard Veterans Honor Guard and \$700 to the VFW Post 1317 Shawnee Honor Guard. Executive Director Fischer will be contacting these Honor Guard's in the next few weeks to coordinate a formal presentation of these awards.
- The Foundation approved a disaster assistance program for Posts allowing for 50/50 matching grants up to \$1,000 for the purchase of materials to repair Post home buildings damaged by natural disasters.

- The Foundation is working with the Warriors for Freedom foundation in being a sponsor of their golf outing at Winter Creek Golf Course on July 18th.

As a reminder, you can be one of our Founding Donors for a donation of \$100. Founding Donors will receive a limited-edition pin and a numbered certificate, there will only be 200 founding donors. You can earmark your donation to go to one of our established programs (Service Officer Funding, VFW Scholarship Funding, Honor Guard Funding or Disaster Grants) or have the donation go to the program with the most need. With a donation of \$1,000, you can be a Founding Sponsor, which will include a numbered plaque. There will only be 45 Founding Sponsors. Founding Sponsors are able to request the funds to go any of the items Founding Donors can request, or they can also work with the Foundation to establish a separate program for their funds. With a donation of at least \$2,000 the Foundation will work with you to create a Donor Advised Fund. Contact us for more information on any of these programs.

John H. Fischer
President/Executive Director
Oklahoma Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation
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FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

It is with great pleasure that I have had the honor to be your National Council Member for the last two years. In that time, I have seen outstanding attitudes and the best professional performances from a VFW Department since I joined....50+ years ago. It takes every member from every part of our organization to make this work; from the Posts, to the Districts to State level leadership AND, most important from the overall members, whether from our senior members or the new member that just joined. I congratulate our pervious year's leadership for an excellent performance this past year! Considering there was almost a 25% loss of available time to ensure all our department's programs were completed due to COVID-19 issues, that is an exceptional feat! I have seen our new leadership grow into top-notch leaders over the last few years and have no doubt that their motivation and dedication to the VFW will again make

Oklahoma a force to be reckoned with as National Headquarters reviews the progress of each of its' departments. GO OKLAHOMA!!!

PSC /NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER ROBBIE CLARK

FROM THE VETERAN & MILITARY SERVICES CHAIRMAN

Veterans and Military Services Committee Chair ***Tony McGrew***

Hello Comrades of the VFW Department of Oklahoma. First, allow me to introduce myself. My Name is Tony McGrew and I am the new Department VMS Programs Committee Chair and I look forward to visiting as many Posts as possible in the coming year.

Yes, another year has come and gone and we are starting a new and exciting adventure in the Department of Oklahoma VFW. New ideas, new ways to think, news ways to move forward and support Veterans and the Military, these are needed to move our VMS programs forward. I encourage each and every one of you to send any thoughts, ideas, suggestions you think may be useful to the program. All ideas are welcome no matter how small, silly, or not main stream you may think they are. I don't have all the answers but, with your help we can accomplish great things for the VMS Programs in Oklahoma.

At the current time there is not much to report due to the effects of the Corona Virus. Events have been cancelled and looks like more will be cancelled but, don't let it get you down, this too will pass so be Veteran Strong and keep moving forward.

It seems like we are taking one step forward and two steps backward in the Corona Virus fight, just remember that our Military has not been quarantined and they keep moving forward all over the world. We will keep you updated on opportunities to show your support for our Military and their families with Yellow Ribbon Events and Family Day get togethers.



I am sending out a challenge to all Posts: My Post, 8706, has pledged to donate 10% of all funds raised and ensure a minimum of \$100 donated to VMS each year.

Now is the time to be thinking about the Military Assistance Program (MAP). It's a great opportunity:

- To Recruit
- Get Involved in your Community
- Puts the Oklahoma VFW image in a positive Roll.

If you are unsure of how to apply for a MAP Grant contact me and I will help you through the process.

The Community Grants Program is a great way to make your Post visible to the community and help in supplying needed resources for, Police, Firefighters, Schools, Parks and much more. All Community Grant Applications must be submitted on September 1st before midnight to be considered. I will be posting in more detail about VMS Programs in future GO's.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Events:

July:

Military Appreciation Night with the OKC Energy is pending. If you would like to help with the event, please contact Jim Bassett at Bassettj15@yahoo.com Or 405-664-3929. This is a great recruiting event.

Military Appreciation Night with the OKC Dodgers is pending. If you would like to help with the event, please contact Jim Bassett at bassettj15@yahoo.com or 405-664-3929. This is also a great recruiting event.

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Be Safe, Be Strong

Tony McGrew

State VMS Chair

Department of Oklahoma

Veterans of Foreign Wars

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

- 02 Jul> U.S. Army Air Corps Established (1926)
- 04 Jul> Independence Day
- 27 Jul> Korean War Ended (1953) National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28 Jul> World War 1 Began (1914)
- 15 Aug> VFW Oklahoma School of Instruction, (Eufaula Post
- 22 Aug> VFW Oklahoma School of Instruction, OKC

Oklahoma VFW Shirts \$40

Department Fundraiser

A choice of emblems and three different Moisture wicking polo shirts. One with left sleeve pen pocket, and all available in multiple colors.



**#1: 6.5 oz. pique
adult tactical
wicking polo.**

Made from a 100% polyester. Polo features anti-microbial BLU-X-DRI protection, stain release, snag resistance, matching buttons, a rib knit curl-free collar, side vents and hemmed sleeves. It also offers a raglan sleeve, mic clips on the center placket and shoulders, reinforced dual pen pockets on the left sleeve. Comfortable in any environment and meeting IL-50 standards.

Available from men's small to 6 XL.

Available colors are: Red, Light Blue, Royal Blue, Navy Blue, Hunter Green, White, Tan, Graphite and Black.

#2: Ultra-light 100% polyester moisture wicking three button polo shirt has breathable mesh back, sleeve, and shoulder inserts to help you stay cool. 100% polyester embossed print smooth wicking knit with true hue technology®.

100% polyester Dry-Excel™ small grid mesh back and inserts.

Available from men's small to 4 XL.

Colors: Navy Blue, Royal Blue, White, Black, Forest Green, Graphite, Scarlet, Burgundy. Lettering will be in white.



#3: Dry-Excel™ 4.1 ounce 100% polyester moisture wicking horizontal textured stripe knit with high mechanical stretch and snag resistant technology.

Contrast color inserts.

Available from men's small to 4 XL

Color combination: black/graphite, black/light gold, black/orange, black/scarlet, black/white, brown/white, cardinal/white, navy/light gold, navy/scarlet, navy/white, forest/white, graphite/black, Kelly/white, maroon/white, purple/white, royal/light gold, royal/white, scarlet/white, university blue/white, Vegas gold/white and white/graphite.



When requesting shirt, please include the number for the shirt, the color, and which emblem (Cross of Malta or New emblem) you prefer. Shirt orders are placed when there is at least a minimum total order of 12 shirts being requested. When email requesting shirts, please provide a good contact method (phone and email). The new VFW emblem is authorized for Auxiliary members to wear.

Contact Jim Bassett (bassettj15@yahoo.com).