

vfwmd.org

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

VFW

2025

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®

THE MARYLAND VFW COMBAT VETERAN

The Official Publication of the Department of Maryland Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR!**



Dear Members...

Happy New Year! As we step into the new year, it's a fitting time to reflect on the dedication and sacrifices made by our Veterans and their families. In this issue of our publication you will find very important information regarding Burial Benefits. Something none of us wants to think about, but all of us should plan for to make the burden lighter for those who have to plan for your final rites and rest. Also there is information about a new sign in process that the Veteran's Administration is implement-

ing very soon.

Congratulations to the Department VFW Membership Committee, under the leadership of Patrick Pierson, for recruiting 21 New Members at the Army—Navy Game.

Have you thought about becoming a Department Auxiliary Officer? Well now is your chance. There will be an election for the office of Conductor, and any other office that becomes vacant, at the Department Council of Administration Meeting on January 26, 2025. Read our Department Secretary's information for more details, and Best of Luck to all who are running.

The new year brings fresh challenges and opportunities. It's a reminder that, just as in service, the strength of our community lies in our unity and support for one another.

To our readers, thank you for your continued support and engagement. Together, we create a vibrant community that honors the past while looking forward to the future with hope and determination.

Wishing you all a year filled with peace, health, and new beginnings.
Until next time...
Jackie Kimball
Editor

The Maryland VFW Combat Veteran

STATE COMMANDER

Joseph Cicchillo

ADJUTANT

Orlando "Big O" Roberson, Sr.

EDITOR

Jacquelyn Kimball, PDP

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Send all communications for publication to jackie.kimball@comcast.net. Deadline for submissions is on the 20th, during the months of June, August, September, December, February and April.

WEBSITE

www.vfwmd.org

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



**DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1**

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Chat

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838255



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

STATE COMMANDER JOSEPH CICCHILLO

"Our primary goal is to reach 102% membership. This target is vital as it strengthens our voice and ensures more funding from the National level, which is crucial for our Service Office to assist more veterans.."



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am incredibly proud of all the community service efforts being carried out by our posts. Your hard work and commitment make a significant difference in the lives of veterans and our communities. **Keep up the fantastic work!**

As the State Commander of the Department of Maryland, I am excited to lead our dedicated members and potential recruits into a promising new year. Our primary goal is to reach 102% membership. This target is vital as it strengthens our voice and ensures more funding from the National level, which is crucial for our Service Office to assist more veterans. We must continue to strive forward to maintain this momentum and achieve our goals.

We are thrilled to share that our partnership with the Travis Manion Foundation at the Army-Navy Game tailgate was a significant success for the VFW in Maryland. Our presence at the event allowed us to connect with attendees, share information about the VFW, and celebrate the spirit of community and unity. We were honored to have National Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt join us at the tailgate, adding to the significance of the occasion. Thank you to everyone who participated and made this event memorable.

If you have any upcoming recruiting events, please contact me via email at commander@vfwmd.org. I am more than willing to help with planning or even attend events to support your efforts. Your success in recruiting new members is crucial to our mission, and I am committed to providing the resources and support you need to achieve your goals. Let's work together to grow our community and strengthen our organization.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support. Together, we can achieve great things!

Yours in Comradeship

Joseph Cicchillo

State Commander, VFW Department of Maryland

BEWARE



SCAM ALERT

If something seems too good to be true, it usually is, and this scam is no exception. Cybercriminals send you a message on a platform such as WhatsApp, offering you what sounds like an easy job. Supposedly, you will get paid to perform sets of easy tasks, such as liking videos or rating products online. This type of scam is known as a **“task scam.”**

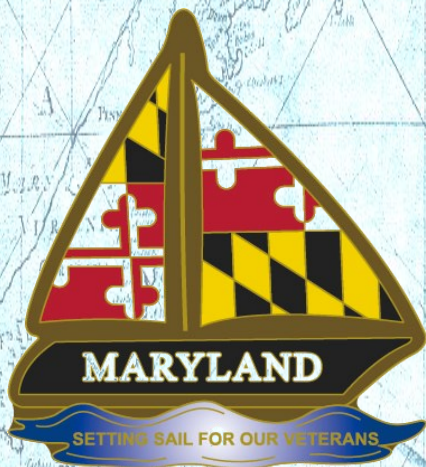
The cybercriminals will actually pay you in cryptocurrency for completing your tasks during the early part of this scam to try to make this “job” even more convincing. However, you will eventually be asked to send them a large deposit of cryptocurrency so that you can “unlock” your next set of tasks. The cybercriminals claim you will get your money back and that they will pay you an even larger commission. If you send any money, you won’t receive anything in return. Your money will go straight into the cybercriminals’ bank accounts!

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO AVOID FALLING VICTIM TO A TASK SCAM:

- ◆ Never respond to unsolicited texts or direct messages about job opportunities. Real employers will not attempt to contact you this way.
- ◆ A real job opportunity won’t ask you for money to get paid. You should always be suspicious if you are asked to deposit money before you can receive your paycheck.
- ◆ Trust your instincts. You should always be skeptical of unsolicited job offers, especially if they seem too good to be true!

**New Phone Number—VFW Service Office
410-230-4500—Ext 11022**

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT DEBBIE STURGIS



Happy New Year!

I would like to thank everyone that came out to the Christmas Conference on December 15th hosted by VFW Cecil County Memorial Auxiliary - Post 6027. Nancy Shenk did a wonderful job and everyone seemed to have a great day! I hope everyone had a beautiful Christmas and now we are ready to get back to work.

It's amazing how fast this year has gone. I want to remind everyone that membership is the Core of our organization and any member that has not paid their dues by December 31, 2024 will not be a member in good standing on January 1, 2025. Please get those dues paid before December 31, 2024. If they were to need to apply for a cancer grant; they would have to wait 1 full year before they would qualify if their dues lapse.

Just a reminder about the "Joint Project" that is required by National. Commander Joe Cicchillo and I have selected the "Baltimore Station" for our special project. I will be sending out additional information in the January mailer in reference to this project.

We will be having a "Special Council" meeting on January 26th at 11 am before the Department VOD/Patriots Pen Awards Ceremony at Wells McComas Post 2678. We will be having an election for Conductor. The VOD/Patriots Pen Award Banquet will follow.

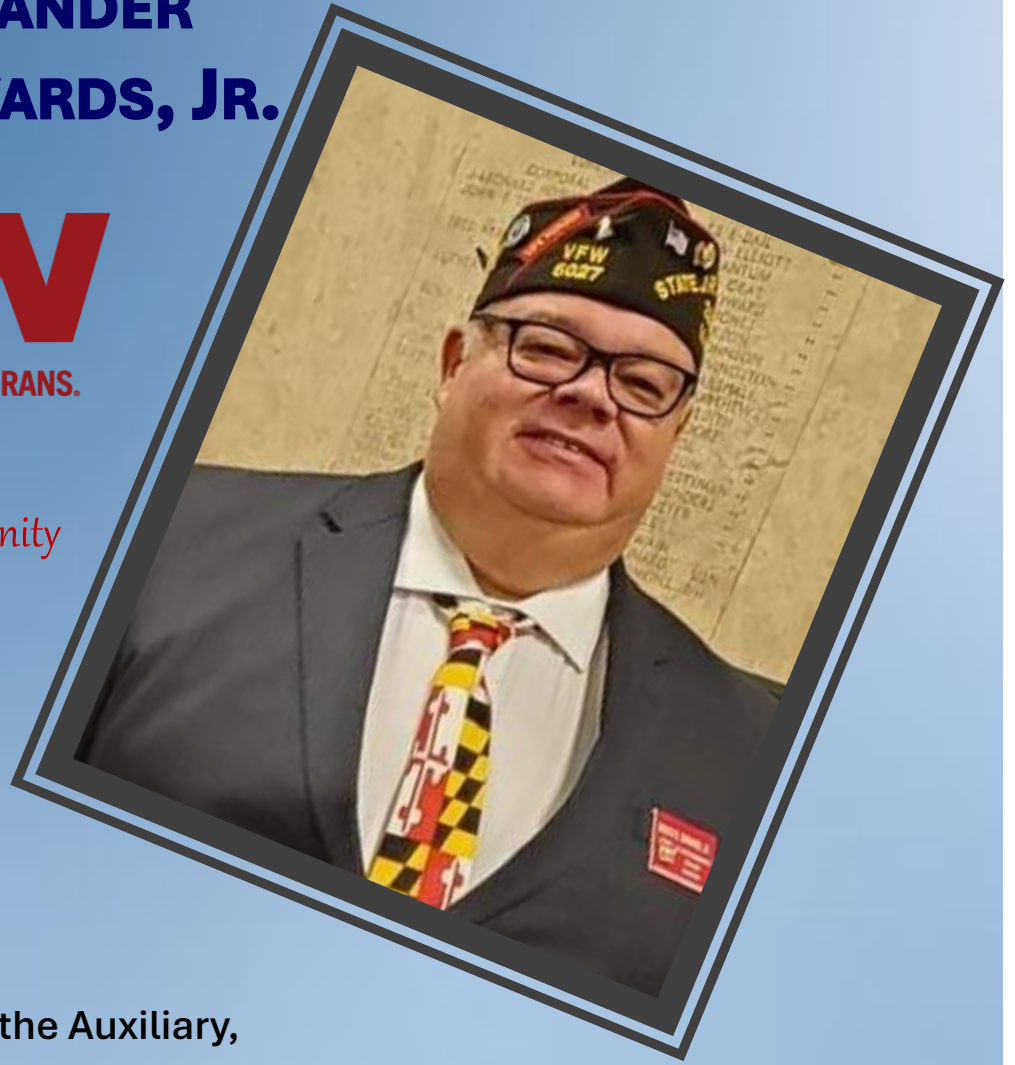
Thank you for all you do.
Debbie Sturgis
Department President

For the "Joint Project" that is required by National, Commander Joe Cicchillo and I have selected the "Baltimore Station" for our special project. I will be sending out additional information in the January mailer in reference to this project.

**STATE SENIOR
VICE COMMANDER
BRUCE R. EDWARDS, JR.**



*If you are helping the community
you are helping veterans!*



Comrades and Members of the Auxiliary,

We have started a new year and a **NEW YOU**. As I travel across I meet new people every time. They say, I know you. Then all of sudden, you was up on the screen in a hospital bed during Maryland convention. That was me. I can't believe you are up and walking. Yes, I'm doing well, from the help you gave me.

This year we are celebrating 125 years of tradition with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. **Do something special this May that stands out.** Help your community. Show them what you got! If you are helping the community you are helping veterans. The Commander and his staff are doing great things. The Posts are doing great things. The Auxiliaries are doing great things.

I have been out in the state visiting Posts and attending functions. If you have an upcoming event or meeting please notify me, so I can attend. I would love to attend your event. The Department VFW Team is here to help you if you need help. How can I help you, to help me? Email or call me, svrice@vfwmd.org, 443-206-1588.

This year we are celebrating 125 years of service and tradition with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Do something special this May that stands out. Help your community. Show them what you got!

STATE JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER TODD A. WALTER



The Department of Maryland post and districts are doing an outstanding job of reporting their Community Service and Good Standing. Keep up the great work. Reminder for Post to register for Day of Service: Sign up at <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/>, this site also provides FAQ and other information. For how the All-American Dashboard updates is still TBD, will have further info at later date. Note: once event in May is completed must enter in- to State reporting website under Community Service.

ALL AMERICAN PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS

Post-level Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen entries must be entered by midnight on January 31st. The system will not accept any further post-level entries after the deadline.


MARYLAND COMMUNITY REPORTING TOTAL APPROVED REPORTS 2,200

National Ranking	Volunteer Hours	Value of Hours	Dollars Donated	Total C/S
15th	20760.55	\$695,270.82	\$1,251,366.95	\$1,946,637.77

**ALL POST SHOULD REGISTER FOR VFW DAY OF SERVICE—SIGN UP AT :
<https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/>**

GET AHEAD OF WINTER EMERGENCIES

TIP FOR STAYING SAFE THIS WINTER



Winter weather can be dangerous and unpredictable, bringing risky conditions due to snow, ice, and freezing temperatures that can lead to unexpected injuries and accidents. Common injuries during this season include frostbite, hypothermia and heart strain from overexertion outdoors.

Frostbite occurs when skin freezes from exposure to extreme cold. Hypothermia in cold conditions can set in when your body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Heart strain can arise when shoveling snow, considering the sudden exertions and lifting heavy snow. Accidents are more likely to due to icy roadways and slippery paths.

By preparing ahead of time you can avoid emergencies, protect your health and keep your loved ones safe. If you live in an area that experiences harsh winters, follow these tips to stay safe and be prepared in the months to come.

10 WINTER SAFETY TIPS

1. Stay informed. Listen to local officials for weather updates and safety guidance before, during and after storms.
2. Prepare emergency supplies. Keep essential items like food, water, and first aid kits at home and at work.
3. Use heat safely. Use heating devices according to instructions and install a carbon monoxide alarm if you rely on alternative heat sources.
4. Use generators carefully. Place generators at least 20 feet away from doors and windows and shield them from rain or flooding to prevent electrical shock.
5. Avoid unnecessary travel. Stay off the roads during and after storms unless absolutely necessary.
6. Dress in layers when outdoors. If you must go outside, wear warm layers and limit your time outdoors.
7. Watch for cold-weather injuries. Particularly when outdoors for extended time, check for frostbite symptoms (numbness, pale skin) and hypothermia (shivering, confusion, or drowsiness).
8. Avoid overexertion. Cold weather can constrict blood vessels, which means your body will need to work even harder to shovel snow and walk in deep snow. This can put a strain on your heart and increase the risk of a heart attack. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
9. Maintain your car. Routine vehicle maintenance is especially important in winter to prevent breakdowns in severe weather. If possible, switch to snow tires or carry snow chains.
10. Pack a car emergency kit. Include a cell phone charger, blankets, warm clothes, a snow shovel, a flashlight with batteries, jumper cables, water and non-perishable snacks. If possible, keep a full gas tank.

Winter safety starts with preparation. By following these tips, you can reduce risks and manage unexpected challenges. Staying informed, having emergency supplies, and taking care of yourself and your family can make a big difference during winter storms. Stay safe, stay warm and enjoy your winter season.



STATE ADJUTANT ORLANDO "BIG O" ROBERSON SR.



COMRADES, DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS IN FREDERICK, WASHINGTON COUNTIES AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE?

The District Court of Frederick and Washington Counties has launched a new regional Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) that serves both counties. This program is specifically designed to offer treatment, accountability, and mentoring for veterans involved in the justice system. It is a crucial step in connecting our fellow service members to the benefits they have earned while offering the support needed to help them resolve criminal cases and regain stability in their lives.

WHAT IS THE REGIONAL VETERANS TREATMENT COURT?

The Frederick and Washington County Regional Veterans Treatment Court is the second multi-county problem-solving court in Maryland. The court offers a court-supervised, intensive treatment program to veterans who have committed criminal offenses and may be dealing with conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries, mental health issues, or substance use disorders.

The program aims to provide the treatment and support veterans need, rather than simply focusing on punish-

The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) became operational this summer, and officials anticipate many participants within the first 12 months of operation. This new VTC is part of a larger effort to expand problem-solving courts across Maryland, with veteran-specific dockets now available in nine locations statewide. These include the VTCs in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Dorchester County, and Prince George's County.

ment. Veterans involved in the program will have access to services and resources that can help them stabilize their lives and resolve any legal issues they are facing. The court's goal is to reduce recidivism and help participants connect to vital resources like U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, local support networks, long-term housing, and employment assistance for those unable to return to the workforce due to service-related disabilities.

WHY THIS COURT MATTERS

Judge Eric W. Schaffer, the District Administrative Judge for Frederick and Washington counties, highlighted that the court will have a significant impact on veterans in the area. "Both Frederick and Washington counties have a higher-than-average percentage of veterans, making this initiative all the more important," said Schaffer, who is also a veteran himself. "This court will allow us to serve those who have served our country and community, providing the support they need to overcome challenges."

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SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

The Frederick and Washington County Regional Veterans Treatment Court is a collaborative effort involving several key partners. These include the Maryland Judiciary's Office of Problem-Solving Courts, the State's Attorney's Offices in both counties, the District Office of the Public Defender, and the Department of Parole and Probation. These agencies have worked together to ensure that veterans will have access to the resources and services they need to succeed.

A crucial aspect of the court's success is the involvement of peer mentors—veterans who have experienced similar challenges. Research has shown that peer mentoring plays a critical role in the success of veterans' treatment court programs, and these mentors will be an integral part of the program's framework.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The court has begun recruiting veterans to participate as peer mentors, and local nonprofits will be invited to submit proposals to provide case management and other services. Veterans and Nonprofits interested in contributing to the program should contact Julianne Klappert Julianne.Klappert@mdcourts.gov and Megan Kelly at Megan.kelly@mdcourts.gov for more information.

A CALL TO ACTION

As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is important that we support and spread the word about the new regional Veterans Treatment Court. This court offers an opportunity for veterans who are struggling to navigate the criminal justice system to receive the treatment and services they need, while helping them resolve their legal issues and get back on track with their lives.

The Frederick and Washington County Regional Veterans Treatment Court is the second multi-county problem-solving court in Maryland. The court offers a court-supervised, intensive treatment program to veterans who have committed criminal offenses and may be dealing with conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries, mental health issues, or substance use disorders.

The Veterans Treatment Court not only aims to help our comrades with mental health and substance use challenges but also works to reduce recidivism and connect them to the essential benefits they have earned through their service. The court will help ensure that our fellow veterans are given the opportunity to heal, succeed, and thrive.

If you or someone you know may benefit from the Veterans Treatment Court, please reach out to the court for more information. Together, we can support our veterans and make a difference in their lives.

For further details, please contact: Julianne Klappert at Julianne.Klappert@mdcourts.gov Or Megan Kelly at Megan.kelly@mdcourts.gov

Let us support this vital program for our Comrades!

Semper Fidelis,
Orlando "Big O" Roberson Sr.
State Adjutant
Department of Maryland
Veterans Of Foreign Wars
101 North Gay Street Suite J
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Happy
New Year
2025



Happy New Year 2025!!! Hope you and yours had a wonderful and safe holiday season. Have you made your traditional New Year's resolution? What is it? Exercise more? Lose weight? Save money? What about resolving to take an office in our Department of Maryland Auxiliary?

As we had a recent resignation by the Department Conductor, we will be having an election to fill this vacancy at a Council of Administration meeting on Sunday, January 26th @ 11:00 AM at Wells-McComas VFW Post 2678. Any member in good standing can run for this office. An endorsement from your auxiliary is not necessary, but personally, I would like to encourage the tradition of seeking endorsement and support from your auxiliary. It could have an impact on the outcome if we have a contested election. **Candidates for office need not be in attendance, but must send a letter of intent if running for office.**

Thank you to Cecil County Memorial VFW & Auxiliary 6027 for hosting our 2024 Christmas Conference and a special thanks to Chairman Nancy Shenk. President Debbie requested a day of fun and awards and I believe her wishes were granted. I certainly had fun challenging you to "Guess the Christmas Carol". Congrats to Kathy Williams for getting 22 of the 25 Christmas Carols. It was so satisfying to see the awards presented by the Department Program Chairman.

- Veterans and Family Support's **Good Job** award went to Karen Mallott of Fort Smallwood Auxiliary for Best Promotion of Veterans Crisis Hotline 9-8-8 and 22 a Day Veterans' Lives Matters.
- Buddy Poppy & National Home awards;

1. First District to be 100% reported - District 14
 2. Outstanding Chairman—Pat McConville, Auxiliary 521
 3. The Most Creative Way to use a Buddy Poppy - Auxiliary 160, President Margaret Ehrlich.
- Chief of Staff Awards;
 1. Auxiliaries that met 3 of the five essentials of an auxiliary - the drawing was won by Weedon-Elliott Auxiliary No. 8126.
 2. Create a Newcomer's Welcome packet - 3 auxiliaries submitted entries, BIG thanks to Auxiliaries 6027, 7687 and 8185. Department Officers selected Jerry Skrivanek Auxiliary 8185 as the winner.
 3. Auxiliaries that increased their membership by 5 NEW members by October 30th challenge was accomplished by 19 auxiliaries.
 4. October mailer challenge had 5 members qualify. Prizes were awarded to Darlene Earehart, Kathy Williams, Nancy Shenk, JoAnne Bierly and Cynthia Davis.
 - Hospital Awards for donations of \$500.00+ for Hospital Fund and/or Hospital Treat-
 - Wells-McComas Auxiliary 2678, E.E. Streets Memorial Auxiliary 5118, Harford County Memorial Auxiliary 5337 Charles Evering Auxiliary 6506, Emmitsburg Memorial Auxiliary 6658, Chesapeake City Memorial Auxiliary 7687, Tyson-Walker Auxiliary 8509, Union Memorial Auxiliary 8806 and Gunpowder Auxiliary 10067.
 - Membership Awards -
 1. Member who adopts the most members - Pat McConville Aux. 521 with eleven members
 2. Auxiliary who adopts the most members - Auxiliary 6506 with sixty-nine members
 3. Auxiliary with the most New members joined - Auxiliary 5118 with eleven members
 4. Auxiliary with the most Rejoined members - Auxiliary 5118
 5. Drawing for auxiliaries in each membership group with 95% plus by November 1st;
 - Group 1 - Auxiliary 5633, Group 2 - None qualified, Group 3 Auxiliary 10078, Group 4 Auxiliary 8806, Group 5 Auxiliary 2632 and Group 6 Auxiliary 8672
 6. Drawing for Auxiliary Treasurer who reaches 95% in membership by November 20th;
 - Group 1 - Auxiliary 5633 Linda Poole, Group 2 - Auxiliary 5471 Angelica Brightwell, Group 3 - Auxiliary 8185 JoAnne Bierly, Group 4 - Auxiliary 8806 Brenda Sands, Group 5 - Auxiliary 7687 Cathy Estep and Group 6 Auxiliary 8672 Beth Anne Fimowicz
 7. Monthly "Convert to Lifetime" drawing - District 4, Auxiliary 5246 - Judy

Morthole.

- Scholarships awards - 34 Auxiliaries were awarded a special "graduation" pin for having reported in the Scholarships program.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MARCH 22nd

Special Zoom Meeting - ALL ABOUT APRIL ELECTIONS

We will be discussing...

- ✓ Election of officers
- ✓ Proper election of delegates to District, Department and National Conventions
- ✓ Installations and the required Installation Report
- ✓ How to register to attend National Convention in Columbus, Ohio in August

Stay safe, stay well and stay warm!

Sibby Dallas-Jones

VFW Auxiliary Department Secretary

The Department will be having an election to fill this vacancy at a Council of Administration meeting on Sunday, January 26th @ 11:00 AM at Wells-McComas VFW Post 2678. Any member in good standing can run for this office. An endorsement from your auxiliary is not necessary, but personally, I would like to encourage the tradition of seeking endorsement and support from your auxiliary. It could have an impact on the outcome if we have a contested election. Candidates for office need not be in attendance, but must send a letter of intent if running for office.

STATE JUDGE ADVOCATE MIKE “TRIKE” LECZA

GREETINGS FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE

Comrades,

I Hope that everyone had a pleasant Holiday Season.

Some of you may be aware that I worked for the National Cemetery Administration for a long time. One thing that a lot of us do not think about is our Burial Benefits. Veteran's, service members, spouses and dependents may be eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery as well as other benefits.

You can plan ahead to make the process of applying for a burial in a VA National Cemetery easier for your family members in the event of your death. To do this, you'll need to apply for a pre-need eligibility determination.

The pre-need eligibility determination is only for VA National Cemeteries. If you want to be buried in a state or tribal Veterans cemetery, check the site you want ahead of time since some state Veterans cemeteries require that you live in that state or have other rules around eligibility. Fill out an Application for Pre-need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery (VA Form 40-



“You can plan ahead to make the process of applying for a burial in a VA National Cemetery easier for your family members in the event of your death. To do this, you'll need to apply for a pre-need eligibility determination.”

10007). You can either print it and mail it or complete it online at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/>

Send your completed application (with copies of your supporting documents) to:

NCA FP Evidence Intake Center

PO Box 5237

Janesville, WI 53547

If both you and your spouse are applying, you'll each need to fill out your own application. To apply, you'll need your (or your sponsor's):

- Social Security number
- Date and place of birth
- Military status and service history (like service dates, discharge character, and rank—commonly found on the DD214 or other separation documents)
- Discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents)

***Note: If you don't have discharge papers, find out how to request the DD214.**

As always if there are any Questions or concerns about anything, Please feel free to contact me.

Keep your Powder Dry,
Mike "Trike" Lecza
Department of MD JAG



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January 26, 2025 at 1300

Our Department's Patriot's Pen, Voice Of Democracy, Loyalty Day, Buddy Poppy, Teacher of the Year and Civil Servant Awards will be held at VFW Post 2678, 6521 North Point Road, Edgemere, MD 21219.

Celebrating outstanding achievements and honoring exceptional individuals.

THOMAS C. WILLIAMS, PSC CHIEF OF STAFF

Comrades,

I hope everyone is doing well. **Go Navy!**

I know that winter is here but spring is just around the corner and all our posts should be keeping up to date with their paperwork. It's time to throw that touchdown pass and score a winning game for Department. We still have posts that are missing audits, bonds, and election reports! Check the dashboard to see your stats. Speaking of the dashboard, District Commanders please review the dashboard. There are still too many blank spots on it. It's obvious on the dashboard that there are still districts and posts that need more work. If your post or district needs help please contact us.

The Council of Administration meetings have been well attended and I'm glad to see more Post Commanders coming to the meeting. This is a member run organization and we need support from everyone. **We also need donations and support for our commander's special project.**

I know it's early, but, convention will be coming up fast. Make sure all your fees and paperwork are complete so you can participate fully at convention.

The Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen and other youth awards banquet is coming up in January. Please come attend and support our very hard working and deserving youth - especially if your post is sponsoring a contestant. Please call our adjutant with a head count of attendees so the dinner can be planned efficiently.

Everyone be safe this winter. Have a prosperous New Year with the VFW and Auxiliary working together.

Thomas C. Williams, PSC, Chief of Staff

"We still have posts that are missing audits, bonds, and election reports! Check the dashboard to see your stats. Speaking of the dashboard, District Commanders please review the dashboard. There are still too many blank spots on it. "



STATE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN PATRICK PIERSON



Combat Vets and our family,

As the Membership Chairman of the Department of Maryland, I am thrilled to continue driving an exciting year for our members and potential recruits, building on our successes so far. The Department is currently trending better than this time last year in membership recruiting, reflecting our collective efforts and dedication. However, we need to continue to push hard to maintain this momentum and achieve our goals.

OUR GOAL IS TO REACH 102% MEMBERSHIP. This number is crucial because it amplifies our voice and ensures more funding is directed to our Department from the National level. These funds are vital for our Service Office, which uses them to help more veterans.

We are excited to share that despite Army's unfortunate loss in the recent Army-Navy Game, the event was a great success for the VFW in Maryland. **We gained 21 new members**, showcasing the strong sense of community and support among veterans and their families. We had a tent at the tailgate party put on by the Travis Manion Foundation, where we engaged with attendees, shared information about the VFW, and celebrated the spirit of competition and unity. We were honored to have National Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt attend the recruiting event, adding to the significance of the occasion. Thank you to everyone who stopped by and joined us in this incredible celebration.

I have provided Unpaid and Relocated member reports to all District Commanders, broken down by VFW Post. Special thanks to PSC Brian Sturgis for the hard work in generating these reports. If you have any recruiting events coming up, please reach out to me via email (patrick.pierson@vfwmd.org). I am more than willing to assist with planning or even attend events to support your efforts. Your success in recruiting new members is vital to our mission, and I am committed to providing the resources and support you need to achieve your goals. Let's work together to grow our community and strengthen our organization.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support. Together, we can achieve great things!

GOT YOUR SIX,

Patrick Pierson
Department of Maryland Membership Chairman
patrick.pierson@vfwmd.org

If you have any recruiting events coming up, please reach out to me via email (patrick.pierson@vfwmd.org). I am more than willing to assist with planning or even attend events to support your efforts.

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

If you've got the **winter blues**, you may actually be experiencing seasonal affective disorder.

Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that comes and goes with the seasons. It usually starts in the late fall and early winter and goes away during the spring and summer.

SYMPTOMS:

- ❖ Sadness
- ❖ Gloomy outlook
- ❖ Feeling hopeless, worthless, and irritable
- ❖ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- ❖ Low energy
- ❖ Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- ❖ Carbohydrate cravings and weight gain
- ❖ Thoughts of death or suicide



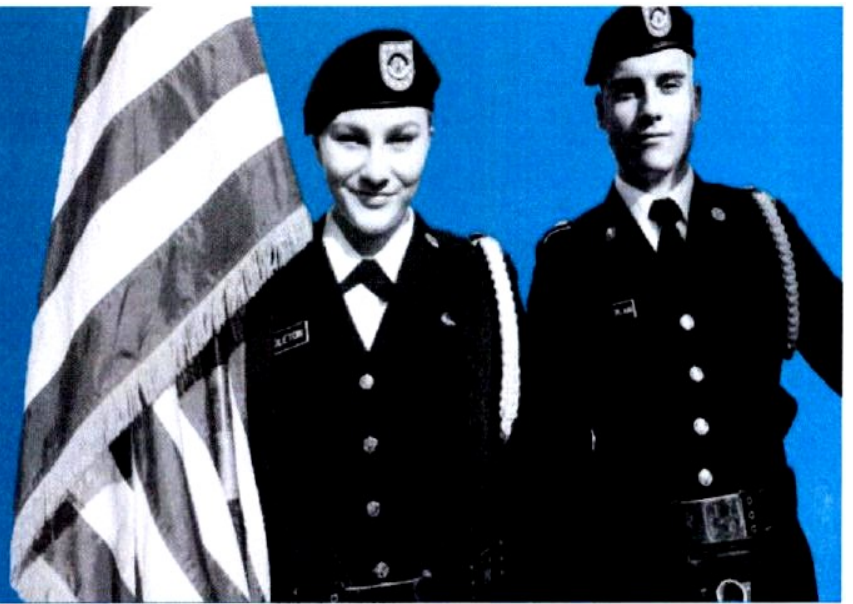
Are you or loved one may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder?
Help is just a click or a call away.

Visit tricare.mil/crisislines to learn more.



Prepare for VA's sign-in changes

In 2025, we're moving to two secure sign-in options: **Login.gov** and **ID.me**. Read on to learn how this change affects you and how to prepare.



Why we're making this change

- To reduce the number of sign-in options Veterans need to choose from—just as Veterans have asked us to do.
- To continue to protect all Veterans' information and benefits—and meet the latest federal security standards.

What this change means for you

- After January 31, 2025, you won't be able to sign in to VA websites and apps with a My HealtheVet user ID and password. Don't worry. Your My HealtheVet health portal isn't going away. We're just changing the way you sign in.
- After September 30, 2025, you won't be able to sign in with a DS Logon username and password.
- You'll need to use either a Login.gov or ID.me account to sign in to VA.gov, VA mobile apps, and other VA online services.
- You'll need to use a unique email address and add multifactor authentication (MFA) as an added layer of protection for your account.

Not sure if you already have a Login.gov or ID.me account?

Try creating a new account with your email address. If you already have one, Login.gov or ID.me will help you reset your password.



Ready to [create your account or want to learn more?](https://www.va.gov/sign-in-changes)

Go to www.va.gov/sign-in-changes

What to do now to prepare

1 Create your Login.gov or ID.me account

If you don't have an account yet, we encourage you to create one soon:

- [Login.gov](#) is a government-provided account for accessing VA and other government services. Read Login.gov's privacy policy at www.login.gov/policy/.
 - [ID.me](#) is a private account provider that partners with government and non-government organizations. Read ID.me's privacy policy at www.id.me/privacy.
- 2 Both options meet modern security standards, protecting your data and providing access to VA and other government services.

Verify your identity and add multifactor authentication

Identity verification and MFA work together to protect your identity and personal information.

- **Identity verification** is a one-time process. You provide certain personal information and identification (ID). Verification helps us make sure only you can create your sign-in account—and no scammer can create one in your name.
- **Multifactor authentication (MFA)** adds an extra layer of security when signing in. You set up an MFA method, like an authenticator app, on a device you control. Each time you sign in, you'll use a code sent to that device, ensuring only you can access your account and manage your benefits.



Ready to [create your account or want to learn more?](#)

Go to www.va.gov/sign-in-changes



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND VFW

ANNUAL FUND RAISER

GRAND PRIZE DRAWING—\$2,000

ONE DRAWING FOR \$1,000

SIX DRAWINGS FOR \$500 EACH

TICKETS TO BE DRAWN AND PRIZES AWARDED

MAY 28, 2025

EARLY BIRD DRAWING ON MARCH 16, 2025

ONE DRAWING FOR \$1,000

FOUR DRAWINGS FOR \$500 EACH

**Raffle Tickets Have Been Mailed to All Members
More Tickets are Available and can be requested
by contacting the Department Adjutant, Orlando Roberson
at 410-752-6474**

Please Support Our Department Fund Raiser

STATE VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT

CHAIRMAN

TOM KIMBALL, PSC

It is true, there are Veterans in Maryland who are currently living on the streets or making their home in their cars trying to survive day by day. **In order to continue to give assistance the Department relies on donations from VFW Post and Auxiliaries our Department.**

Comrades and Members of the Auxiliary,

As the Chairman for the VFW State Veterans and Military Support Committee, almost everyday I receive request from veterans, and members of the military who have fallen down on their luck and need assistance to give them a hand up. **It is true**, there are Veterans in Maryland who are currently living on the streets or making their home in their cars trying to survive day by day. Even though the National VFW Organization has decided to abandon their assistance program, our Department still continues to receive request for assistance and would still like to continue to provide assistance the best we can. Last year our Department was able to give approximately \$15,000 of assistance to members of the veteran community who were facing troubling times in their life. **In order to continue to give assistance the Department relies on donations from VFW Post and Auxiliaries our Department.**

When considering giving assistance, the financial hardship cannot be caused by misconduct, civilian, legal, or domestic issues, any issues that are a result of spousal separation or divorce, and/or financial mismanagement by self or others, or due to bankruptcy.

All grants are paid directly to the creditor and not to the applicant. The applicant must provide the most current bills due. We will render payment for eligible current bills only.

Expenses Eligible for consideration of payment (daily necessities):

- Housing expenses - mortgage, rent, repairs, and homeowners' insurance (establishing residence/insurance or paying off expenses for a residence that is no longer being occupied will not be considered).
- Vehicle expenses – payments, repairs, insurance (purchasing/paying off loan, major repairs for vehicles over 10 years old, registering, establishing insurance will not be considered).
- Utilities (establishing/paying off utilities for a residence no longer being occupied will not be considered).
- Childcare.
- Medical bills (the patient's portion for necessary or emergency medical care only).

Expenses Ineligible for consideration for payment:

- Military debt/repayment, tuition assistance debt/repayment.
- Cable, internet, secondary phones.
- Taxes owed of any kind.
- Rentals of any kind (vehicle, furniture, and/or electronics).
- Any other expenses not determined to be a "daily necessity."

The eligible and ineligible expense lists are not all inclusive. Each case will be carefully reviewed for its own merits. Upon approval, payments will be made for the veteran directly to the creditor. All applications are individually reviewed, and the VFW reserves the right to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

VFW Post wishing to make donations can make their checks payable to:

VFW Dept. of MD

Earmark your check: **VMS**
Mail your donation to the following address:

VFW MD Department HQ
101 North Gay ST, RM J
Baltimore, MD 21202

VFW Auxiliaries wishing to make donations can make their checks payable to:

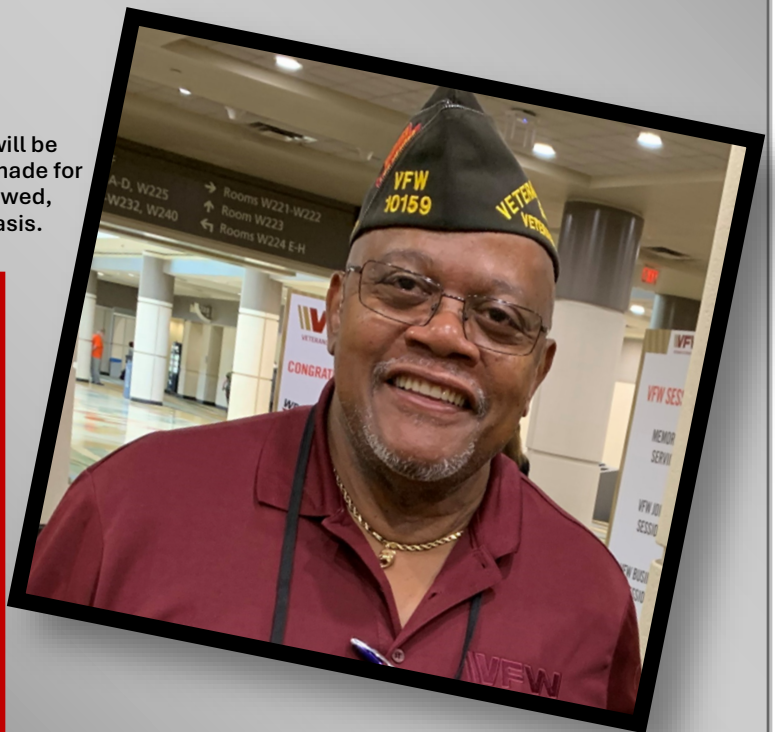
VFW Auxiliary Dept. of MD

Earmark your check: **VMS**

Mail your donation to the following address:

Jackie Kimball, Dept Treasurer
1019 Queen Ave
Salisbury, MD 21801

Sending your check to the Dept Aux Treasurer ensures you receive credit for your donation.



TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORING

STATE COMMANDER

Joseph Cicchilla

&

STATE AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Deborah Sturgis

March 15, 2025

VFW Post 5118 • 355 GLEBE ROAD • EASTON MD 21601

5:00 PM—10:00 PM SOCIAL HOUR (CASH BAR)—5:00 PM DINNER—6:30 PM

STARTERS: CRAB DIP—ASSORTED CHEESE & FRUIT

DINNER: FRIED CHICKEN—SIRLOIN BEEF TIPS—HONEY GLAZED HAM
MACARONI & CHEESE, POTATOES AU GRATIN, ROASTED VEGETABLE MEDLEY
ROLLS—ICE TEA, WATER, COFFEE

DESSERT: CHOICE OF WARM APPLE CRISP

Cost of Ticket: \$55 per person. Deadline for ticket request is February 24, 2025. Guest desiring to be seated together MUST send their ticket request and money together. We may not be able to accommodate your request if money is not sent together. Thank you for your cooperation. Love gifts and donations for the Special Projects will be accepted for the State Commander and State President. Music following dinner and program. Business Casual Attire Requested.

NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR

TICKET REQUEST—PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

SEND MONEY AND REQUEST FOR TICKETS TO: THOMAS KIMBALL, 1019 QUEEN AVENUE, SALISBURY, MD 21801

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND VFW. **GUEST DESIRING TO BE SEATED TOGETHER MUST SEND THEIR TICKET REQUEST AND MONEY TOGETHER.**

CONTACT NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

SEND TICKETS TO (NAME) _____

ADDRESS _____

NUMBER OF TICKETS (8 GUEST/TABLE) _____ x \$55.00 = \$ _____ NUMBER OF VEGETARIAN MEALS _____

TESTIMONIAL LODGING

**HAMPTON INN EASTON
8058 OCEAN GATEWAY
EASTON, MD 21601
410-822-2200**

**GROUP RATE: \$169 + TAX/NIGHT
GROUP NAME: THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
GROUP ROOM RATE AVAILABLE TO:
FEBRUARY 21, 2025
CHECK-IN TIME—3:00 PM
CHECK-OUT TIME—11:00 AM**