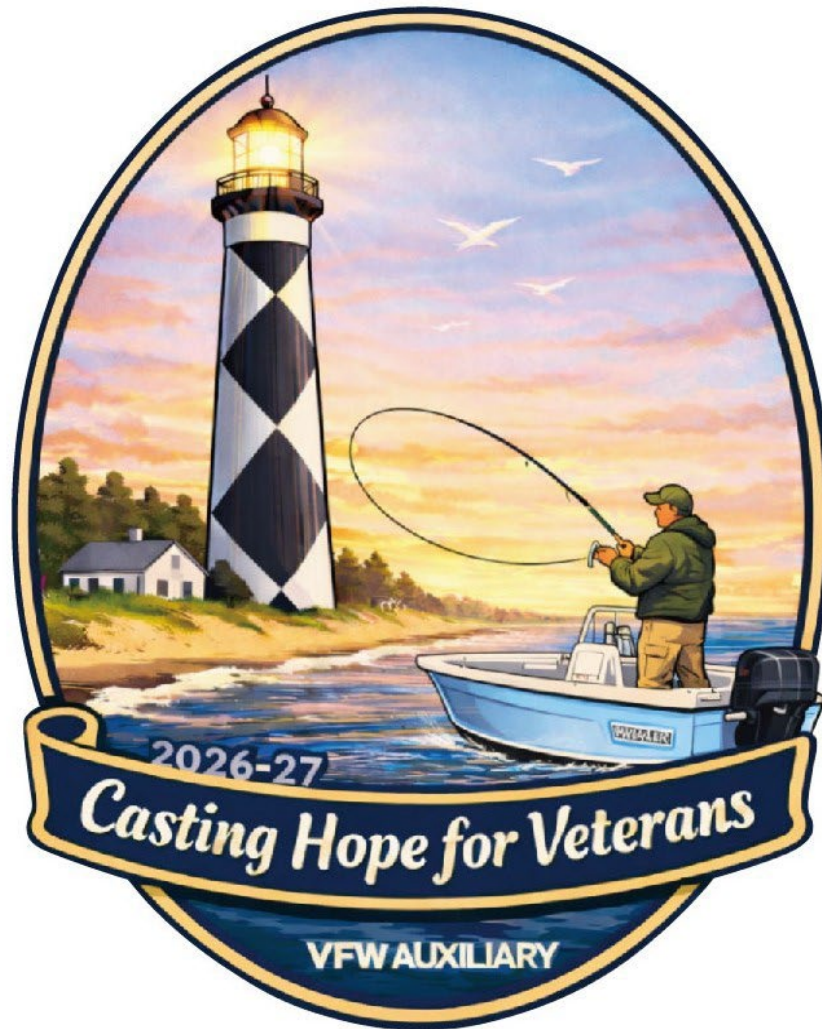




Lin Moore

2026-2027

Dedication

*Dedicated to
my father and husband—
two veterans whose love of fishing
and the peace of Cape Lookout
inspired this journey of
Casting Hope for Veterans.*



Carl E. Nelson
US Marine Corps
World War II



Gary L. Moore
US Marine Corps
Vietnam War



Family Members that also served our country.



Richard "Pearl" McKaughn
US Navy



Austin Hall
US Marine Corps



Glenn Weavil
US Army
Purple Heart Recipient

Roger Nelson
US Marine Corps

Lee Nelson
US Marine Corps

Michael Nelson
US Marine Corps

Ralph Nelson
NC National Guard



Richard Nelson
US Navy



Betty Nelson
VFW Auxiliary 5352
Member since 1955

My mother never looked for recognition or praise but believed that service is not something you do when it is convenient- it is a way of life.

She taught me that hope is cast one act of kindness at a time. I learned that the greatest catches in life are not measured by fish but in the lives we touch and the hope we leave behind.

Both my father and mother were charter members of VFW Post and Auxiliary 5352.





CASTING HOPE FOR VETERANS

My theme "Casting Hope for Veterans" reflects the heart of the VFW Auxiliary's mission- to reach outward with compassion, support, and unwavering dedication to those who have served our country.

When I was thinking about what my pin should represent, my thoughts went immediately to two important veterans in my life- my father, Carl E. Nelson and my husband, Gary L. Moore. Both served in the U.S. Marine Corps, and both found a kind of peace fishing near the Cape Lookout Lighthouse. In the quiet moments on the water, they found calm, reflection, and hope.

"Casting Hope for Veterans" reflects that same idea. Just as a lighthouse guides ships home, the VFW Auxiliary helps guide veterans toward peace, support, and renewed hope. Through our service, friendship, and dedication, we keep that light shining for our veterans.

"Casting Hope for Veterans" is a commitment. A commitment to honor, to serve, and to uplift. It reminds us that every act of kindness, every moment of support, and every effort we make sends ripples of hope into the lives of those who have given so much.

Together, let us keep the light shining and the lines cast- so that every veteran knows hope is always within reach.



2026-2027 Important Dates to Remember

Fall Legislative Conference	September 14-17, 2026
Commander-in-Chiefs Homecoming	September 24-26, 2026
Fall Council of Administration	October 2-4, 2026
Southern Conference (Mobile, AL)	October 22-25, 2026
Winter Council of Administration	January 22-24, 2027
VFW Auxiliary Mid-Year Conference	February 2-7, 2027
Spring Legislative Conference	February 27- March 4, 2027
National President Visit to NC	May 19- 21, 2027
NC State Convention	June 3-6, 2027
National Convention (Milwaukee, WI)	July 31- August 4, 2027
Fall District Meetings	Held during August or September
Spring District Meetings	Held during March or April



2026-2027 National President
Donna K. Mills

SERVING AMERICA'S HEROES

Joint Special Project
with VFW Commander Cory L. Geisler

OPERATION BRING THEM HOME

RETURNING ALL OF OUR HEROES TO THEIR FAMILIES
AND BRING THEM HOME WITH HONOR



Contributions made to this project will help
fund the DPAA's (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency)
efforts.



CASTING HOPE FOR VETERANS SPECIAL PROJECT

Fishing Adventures for Military Heroes



At Take A Warrior Fishing, Inc. we're not just about fishing — we're about creating memories, fostering connections, and showing appreciation for our military community.

Starting as a humble initiative in North Carolina, our vision has always been clear: to offer solace, joy, and camaraderie to those who've worn the nation's uniform because we know that "Fishing Heals." From organizing fishing events on Lakes of North Carolina and to extending our reach towards the Coast of North Carolina and beyond, we're constantly expanding our horizons to ensure every warrior gets a chance to cast their line.

Our commitment is unique and unwavering. We cater to not just Veterans, but the entire spectrum of the military community, be it Active Duty, Reserve, or Retired personnel. With the unwavering support of our boat owner/operators and volunteers, we've carved a niche in offering unparalleled, zero-cost fishing experiences.



TAKE A WARRIOR FISHING, INC.

EMPOWERING OUR MILITARY COMMUNITY
ONE FISHING TRIP AT A TIME



**FREE INDIVIDUAL
FISHING
EXPERIENCES**



**FREE FISHING EVENTS
THROUGHOUT THE
YEAR**



**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
-GET INVOLVED**

*"Providing Active Duty and Veterans
with a zero-cost fishing experience"*

SIGN UP NOW ON OUR WEBSITE

WARRIOR/VOLUNTEER/DONATE/SPONSOR



● (919) 869-9452

● Warriorfishing.org

● info@warriorfishing.org

● FEDERAL TAX ID: 92-1616747

Grab your tackle, cast your line, and help us create something bigger than a day on the water- help us cast hope in the lives of our veterans.

Fishing is more than catching fish. It is quiet conversations, laughter shared at sunrise, friendships built at the water's edge, and moments of peace that many veterans seek after service. For some, it becomes a place to heal, reconnect, and simply breathe.

We need your support. Every dollar raised helps create opportunities for veterans to step away from stress, enjoy fellowship, and experience the healing and hope that can be found with a fishing rod in hand and friends by their side. Together we can ensure that no veteran stands alone and that hope keeps flowing, one cast at a time!



Cast a line of hope



Reel in support for our veterans



Help us turn compassion into action

TAKE A WARRIOR FISHING- because sometimes hope begins at the end of a fishing line!

My goal is to raise enough funds to sponsor four events: deep-sea adventure, a pier fishing event, a surf fishing event, and a freshwater event. (Estimated cost: \$20,000)



Americanism

Contact

Sherry Brooks

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65 S Park Road

N Wilkesboro, NC 28659

The definition of Americanism originated in 1927 and is defined as “an unfailing love of country: loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and posterity.”

Our focus this year will be **POP** signs and displays. POP is **Point of Purchase** displays using our American symbols, the Flag, Eagle, Statue of Liberty, and other imagery that promote Americanism. This is a “new “old way of catching the attention of people in a few short seconds, Think UNCLE SAM and ROSIE the RIVERTER. This is going to be somewhat technology driven using memes, Facebook and Instagram posts, posters, etc. National Program Awards will be looking for the most creative ways to showcase the VFW Auxiliary using the POP signs or memes.

For North Carolina, I would like for auxiliaries to focus on FLAG Education and also engage our communities in displaying more flags.

Our focus for 2026-27 should be the following:

1. More flag education in our schools
2. Recognizing our local businesses on outstanding flag displays. Create a certificate to present to them
3. Celebrate PATRIOTIC holidays with your post or in your community
4. Participate in flag retirement ceremonies with your post and local scout troops.
Invite other groups to participate in order to make it a community event,

I CHALLENGE ***each*** auxiliary in this state to participate AND report in at least 1 or more Americanism programs this year.

THANKS and let's show 250 years of Americanism



BUDDY POPPY

Denise Zink
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Winston Salem, NC 27107

CASTING HOPE FOR VETERANS

The VFW “Buddy”® Poppy is the official flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. It is a symbol for our remembrance of those sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms. The program “Honors the Dead by Helping the Living”. At the 1923 encampment it was decided that the “Buddy”® Poppy would be assembled by disabled and needy veterans who would be paid for their work to provide them with financial assistance. The “Buddy”® Poppy program also provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home.

The following information summarizes some of the awards for this program. Complete information for each, can be found in MALTA under member resources.

Auxiliaries can receive Awards for the “Buddy”® Poppy program:

- A Citation and \$25.00 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Membership Divisions for the most outstanding activity and/or event to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy. Entry form is required and is available in MALTA Member Resources. The Entry form must be sent to the VFW Auxiliary Department “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman (me) by March 31, 2027, for judging. The Department Chairman (me) will send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the VFW Auxiliary National “Buddy”® Poppy Ambassador (Donna King) by April 30, 2027, for judging.
- “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest-displays created by using “Buddy”® Poppies that must be purchased through the VFW Store, are submitted on the Department level each year for judging at the Department conventions held in the first quarter of the year. There are 3 categories, Category 1-Public promotion of Poppy campaign, 2-Memorial or Inspirational Displays, 3-Artistic or Decorative use of Poppies. The winners can choose to enter their winning display in the contest held at the National Convention in April 2027. The winning Department Adjutant will have to notify the National Programs Director, in writing, by June 30, 2027, of the Posts that will represent the Department in each category.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. A Citation and \$25.00 to one VFW Auxiliary Department “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman in each of the 10 Membership Divisions for best promotion of activity and/or event to educate the community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy. Winners will be announced at the 2027 VFW National Convention.

2. The Outstanding Performance Awards and Second Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded to each of the 10 Membership Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador's Program goals. Winners will be announced and will be presented at the 2027 VFW National Convention.

For the year 2026-2027 it is my goal to educate and increase awareness in our communities on what the "Buddy"® Poppy represents - "Serving America's Heroes". This can be achieved through various events in addition to/and along with "Buddy"® Poppy drives during Memorial and Veterans Day. Try reaching out to local schools, scout troops, JROTC, etc. to ask for assistance from the school youth groups to help with the drives. Figure out ways to hold "educational" events at local schools and various adult groups such as your local YMCA. Any social media site you belong to are great avenues to create awareness. We want to "cast that net of hope a little wider". Via the monthly newsletter, I hope to inspire you through the use of MALTA resources and various creative ideas to increase awareness.

Please reach out to me anytime with any assistance/questions you may have.

**Contact**

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High Point NC, 27262

Extension & Revitalization

Maintain and Strengthen Current Auxiliaries – Present to Unaffiliated Posts

Establish New Auxiliaries

As members of the VFW Auxiliary we must work together by helping our Auxiliaries that are weakening. We must also strengthen our organization by forming new Auxiliaries.

Do you have members that have lost interest in the VFW Auxiliary? Do you have members that do not support our programs and projects? If you do, we need to help retain those inactive members who have lost interest in the work of our organization.

The Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit along with tools available in Malta Member Resources, have proven to be valuable tools in helping VFW Auxiliaries be more productive.

Members need to feel accepted, listen to their ideas, be responsive to their concerns, keep them informed, support the unique talents of each and every member, so each member feels they are a part of the VFW Auxiliary.

The success of each Auxiliary is not the job of one, but each of us. One person cannot do it alone.....it takes TEAMWORK.

In order to be a Team player in any organization a member needs to know who we are, what we do. When you recruit a new member, present them a WELCOME BAG that tells them about our organization. Suggestions are, current Auxiliary roster, current Department Program book, current National Bylaws book, new member education folder, copy of Understanding Auxiliary Traditions.

Let us strive to honor those who made and are still making untold sacrifices to assure us of the freedoms we enjoy daily.



Historian/Media Relations

Barbara Beard

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Let's use media to share our story. The Department of North Carolina has over 70 Auxiliaries committed to serving veterans, their families, and fostering patriotism. Every Auxiliary, regardless of size, can leverage media to highlight its impact and history.

The Historian & Media Relations Chairmen is a memory keeper and collector of the five W's: the who-what-where-when-and-why of your VFW Auxiliary. These individuals compile and chronicle memories and events in written and digital formats, including photographs, memorabilia, print news, audio and/or video clips and social media posts. The Historian & Media Relations Chairman captures the narrative of the Program Year.

New Technology

Our auxiliaries need to keep up with changing technology to remain relevant. Technology allows us to preserve our history and provides constant access to it. It's important to train all members, regardless of age, on how to use new technology. Younger members are often well-versed in these skills and are willing to share their knowledge.

Digital Platforms and Proper Storage

When an Auxiliary has been established for 20-plus years, displaying or storage becomes an issue. A digital platform such as a computer or tablet will condense materials and save space. It is always a smart idea to have more than one storage platform. Here are a few ideas:

- Storage platforms: iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive | Flash Drives | External hard drives

Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in the younger generation today. Social media is used to communicate through feeds, profiles, groups and different forms of content such as photos, text and videos. By creating a Facebook account, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube channel or TikTok you can share your Auxiliary experiences, stories, events and programs. It even helps you to retain and gain members. Please continue to use traditional methods of communication to get information out. Email, monthly or quarterly newsletters, flyers, newspapers and magazines are time-tested ways to share Auxiliary news and events.

Monthly Tips

Each month I will provide valuable tips and information on how to use different types of media to better communicate with your auxiliary and the public. Be on the lookout for information about the following:

- Types of Media | Do's and Don'ts of Social Media | Examples of how National Uses Social Media

National Awards for Auxiliaries:

Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that creates the most unique digital record of their VFW Auxiliary history since being established and publishes it to a digital platform for future members of their VFW Auxiliary.

VFW National Year-End Report Historian/Media Relations 2026-207 (Include information in electronic reporting)

- Auxiliaries must communicate quarterly with their members by email, mail, text or phone.
- Auxiliaries must have Facebook page with or without Post
- Auxiliaries must conduct a Media Relations "how to" training to educate their members (Examples: how to log into MALTA, email, navigate Facebook and other social media.)



Hospital

Debra Smith

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Address: 1065 S. Oakgrove Ext.

Millers Creek, NC 28651

The Hospital Program of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary plays a vital role in supporting veterans receiving medical care and rehabilitation. The Hospital program is one of the oldest in the VFW Auxiliary, dating back to 1914. There is so much we can do through this program to support our Veterans: fundraising, donations, visits, activities, and volunteering. The ways can be endless. Through compassion, dedication, and community involvement, the Hospital Chairperson coordinates volunteer activities, promotes outreach programs, and encourages Auxiliary members to provide comfort and assistance to hospitalized veterans.

The hospital program serves as a bridge between the Auxiliary, medical facilities, and the veterans we proudly serve. By organizing donations, visits, special events, and volunteer efforts, the Hospital program helps ensure that every veteran feels remembered, appreciated, and supported. It reflects the Auxiliary's continuing commitment to honoring those who have made sacrifices for our nation and improving the lives of veterans and their families.

Remember, recruitment is important. But recruiting someone with a servant's heart keeps this program alive.

North Carolina has the following VA Hospitals to serve:

Asheville Charles George VA Medical Center, Auxiliary Representative - Joyce Preston

Durham VA Medical Center, Auxiliary Representative – Sandra Johnson-Leu

Fayetteville VA Medical Center, Auxiliary Representative – Wanda McCall

Salisbury W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center, Auxiliary Representative – Farres Upton

Please remember to make your contribution to the Hospital Reserve fund. It is with this contribution that the Department can donate to each of the 4 VA medical centers on behalf of the members.

For the 2026-2027 term, I would like to see the Post Hospital Chairperson partner directly with the Post Chaplain to launch a unified care network. This initiative guarantees that hospitalized and home-bound veterans and auxiliary members receive

consistent support, personal connection, and recognition. Ensuring no member is forgotten.

- Care Packages: Assemble seasonal comfort kits containing toiletries, non-perishable snacks, and Post newsletters.
- Thinking-Of-You Cards: Coordinate with Auxiliary members to mail handwritten cards monthly to home-bound individuals.
- Holiday Commemorations: Deliver specialized tokens, flags, or certificates on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and birthdays.
- Privacy-Compliant Intake: Build a secure roster of hospitalized and home-bound individuals requiring outreach.
- Referral Pipeline: Establish a direct line where Post members can report new hospitalizations immediately.
- Status Dashboard: Maintain a shared digital log to track visit dates, completed tasks, and follow-ups.
- Joint Scheduling: Align the schedules of the Auxiliary Hospital Chairperson and the Chaplain for home-bound and/or facility visits.
- Geographic Mapping: Group home-bound veterans and auxiliary members by ZIP code (if multiple zip codes) to optimize travel time.
- Dual-Role Impact: Provide both administrative support (Chairperson tracking needs) and spiritual/emotional care (Chaplain) during one visit.



Membership

Contact

Lyndsey Bowlus

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At our NC Department, we're more than just a group — we're a team of dedicated anglers casting lines together for a greater purpose. Every Auxiliary member brings their own unique "bait," talents, and experiences to help us reel in support for veterans, military families, and communities across NC. Whether we're organizing events, lending a helping hand to those in need, or building stronger connections within our VFW Auxiliary family, it takes all of us working together to keep the waters strong and our mission moving forward. The friendships, service, and camaraderie we share are the true "big catch" that make our Department so special.

I'm excited and honored to serve you again as your Membership Chairman for 2026–2027! Keep your tackle boxes ready and remember to read the monthly mail — you won't want to miss the opportunities to help your Auxiliaries and Districts "hook" additional funding and support throughout the year!

Thank you for all you do to keep our mission afloat.

Awards for Members!

1. **5 Member Recruiter Pin** to each VFW Auxiliary member who recruits five (5) new and/or rejoined members to the Auxiliary. The pin will be mailed directly to you from National HQ about every 2 months.
2. **5 Member Recruiter Drawing!** Each VFW and VEF Aux member who recruits 5 new and or rejoined members to the Auxiliary will be entered into the 5 Member Recruiter drawing to receive a \$100 Visa Gift Card!
3. **National Membership Achievement Recruiter Award** to each VFW Auxiliary member who recruits twenty (20) new and/or rejoining members to the VFW Auxiliary will receive a National Membership Achievement Recruiter Award. VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.
4. **National Membership Achievement Recruiter Drawing:** Recruit 20 or more new and or rejoining members to the Auxiliary and you'll be entered into the National Membership Achievement Recruiter Drawing to receive a \$400 Visa Gift Card. VFW Recruiters and VFW Auxiliary Treasurers on all levels are not eligible for this award.

New and/or rejoined members must be recruited to the VFW Auxiliary from July 1, 2026 thru May 31, 2027. The Department Treasurer must enter memberships into MALTA with credit given to the recruiter by June 10, 2027.

Awards 2, 3, and 4 will be announced and the awards will be presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. \$50 to each Auxiliary that reaches 100% PLUS in membership June 30, 2027*.

Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.



LEGISLATIVE

Emily Ball

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VFW Auxiliary Legislative Goals for 2026–2027: How North Carolina Auxiliaries Can Lead the Way

As we enter the 2026–2027 program year, the VFW Auxiliary remains firmly committed to advocating for veterans, service members, and their families through meaningful legislative action. In North Carolina, our auxiliaries play an essential role in elevating these priorities—educating our communities, engaging elected officials, and amplifying the voices of those who served. This year brings renewed focus, clear priorities, and exciting opportunities for auxiliaries to shine in statewide legislative contests.

Priority Legislative Goals for 2026–2027

The VFW National Legislative Agenda continues to champion issues that directly impact veterans' quality of life. Key priorities for this program year include:

- Strengthening access to timely, high-quality VA healthcare, including expansion of mental health resources and improved rural care delivery.
- Protecting earned benefits—disability compensation, pensions, survivor benefits, and educational opportunities—while ensuring processing systems remain fair and efficient.
- Advancing policies that support military families, including spouse employment initiatives and improvements in transition assistance programs.
- Safeguarding national defense programs that maintain military readiness and support service members at home and abroad.
- Promoting accountability, transparency, and budget stability across all VA and DoD agencies.

By understanding and communicating these goals, auxiliaries help build momentum for legislation that improves the lives of veterans across North Carolina and beyond.

The Power of Action Corps

The VFW Action Corps is one of the most effective grassroots advocacy tools available to our membership. Each week, subscribers receive timely legislative updates along with “Action Alerts” that make it easy to contact federal lawmakers in just a few clicks.

Encouraging your members—and even non-members within your community—to join Action Corps is one of the simplest and most impactful steps an auxiliary can take. Every new subscriber strengthens our collective voice.

For reporting purposes, auxiliaries can highlight:

- The number of new Action Corps sign-ups generated this year
- Creative strategies used to promote Action Alerts
- Community involvement in completing calls-to-action
- Outreach conducted at events, meetings, and through social media

How Your Auxiliary Can Stand Out in Reporting

North Carolina auxiliaries have a long history of excellence, and legislative work is no exception. Here are ways your auxiliary can build a strong program, demonstrate impact, and stand out in competition:

- **Host a Legislative Education Night:** Offer a simple presentation on the year's priority goals. Invite elected officials, community leaders, and fellow VFW members.
- **Create a Legislative Resource Table** at post events with Action Corps QR codes, brochures, and information sheets.
- **Write Letters or Emails** to lawmakers as a group. Document participation and include photos for reporting.
- **Partner with Local Schools or Colleges** to teach civic engagement while raising awareness of veterans' issues.
- **Submit Articles to Local Newspapers** summarizing important legislation or reporting on your auxiliary's advocacy activities.
- **Share Legislative Updates** at each meeting to promote ongoing member awareness and involvement.

The key is consistency, creativity, and community connection. Every action—big or small—moves the mission forward.

Working Together for a Stronger Future

Advocacy has always been a cornerstone of the VFW Auxiliary's mission. By embracing this year's legislative priorities and actively engaging with the Action Corps, North Carolina auxiliaries can ensure veterans' needs remain front and center.

Legislative Program Awards for Auxiliaries

2026 Mid-Term elections are happening this fall and your potential Senators and Representatives, both national and state will be campaigning in your district. Invite them to an Auxiliary/VFW event to "meet the candidates" and let them know the Priority goals for this year.

The most outstanding events to meet candidates and convey the goals and priorities will receive citations!

Let's make 2026–2027 a year of strong voices, informed members, and meaningful change.



SCHOLARSHIP

Contact

Leslie Chew

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Monroe, NC 28118

As your first-time North Carolina Department Scholarships Chairperson, I am truly honored and excited to help promote the incredible scholarship opportunities offered through the VFW Auxiliary. These programs give us the chance to recognize students who demonstrate patriotism, creativity, leadership, and dedication within their schools and communities. I look forward to working together to increase awareness and participation across our Department this year.

Scholarships and youth contests are more than awards—they are opportunities to encourage students to use their voices, share their talents, and connect with the values of citizenship and service. Whether students are writers, artists, musicians, or leaders in their schools, there is a place for them within our programs.

One of my goals this year is to celebrate every student who participates at the local, district, and department levels. Our young people put tremendous effort into their entries, and they deserve to be recognized for their hard work and achievements. I encourage Auxiliaries to find creative ways to honor participants and winners. Consider hosting recognition events, featuring students on social media, or highlighting their accomplishments within your communities. A little recognition can make a lasting impact on a student's confidence and future success.

Please continue sharing photos and success stories throughout the year so we can showcase the amazing work happening across North Carolina. By promoting these programs together, we strengthen our communities and help inspire the next generation.

Continuing Education Scholarship

The Continuing Education Scholarship is a wonderful opportunity that supports members of the VFW Auxiliary, their spouses, and children who wish to further their education. This scholarship is not only a valuable member benefit, but also a meaningful way to encourage personal and professional growth.

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest

For more than 45 years, the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest has celebrated the talents of young artists across our nation. Students use their creativity to express patriotism through original artwork, and the results are always inspiring.

I encourage Auxiliaries to actively promote this contest within local schools, art programs, and community organizations. Display posters, connect with art teachers, and share information on social media so students have every opportunity to participate. Once permission is granted, place information in areas where students and families are likely to see it.

The Scholarships section of the [VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters website](#) provides complete information regarding eligibility, deadlines, applications, and submission requirements.

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

The 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest gives students in grades 9–12 another exciting opportunity to showcase their artistic talents. Entries should reflect patriotism while demonstrating originality and craftsmanship.

Please remember that submissions must include a photograph of the artwork along with the mailed entry. While every effort is made to package artwork carefully, items can occasionally be damaged during shipping. The photograph helps judges evaluate the student's original design and presentation.

VFW Patriot's Pen

The VFW Patriot's Pen program encourages students in grades 6–8 to express their thoughts and ideas through writing. This essay contest continues to inspire middle school students to reflect on patriotism, leadership, and their role within our country and communities.

Our Auxiliaries play an important role in supporting and promoting this program. Through encouragement and outreach, we can help students discover the power of their voices and build confidence in their writing abilities.

VFW Voice of Democracy

The VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program gives high school students in grades 9–12 the opportunity to record and present original essays on patriotic themes. Year after year, students share thoughtful, inspiring messages that remind us why these programs matter so much.

I encourage every Auxiliary to continue growing participation through creative outreach and strong community partnerships. Together, we can make this another successful year for our scholarship programs and continue investing in the future of our students across North Carolina.

I cannot wait to see what our students come up with this year!

Leslie Chew



VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Johnnie T. Cox Jr.
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J269NFAYNC@ICLOUD.COM

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be your VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT CHAIR for the 2026-2027 membership year.

The goal of the VFS program is to enhance the wellbeing of veterans and their families, assist veterans with financial aid, and mental health resources, while also helping veterans to navigate benefits. A specific goal of the VFS program that is important to me is that the veteran's caregivers should be able to access the support that is available. We will accomplish these goals by promoting and working VFW-Based Veterans Assistance Programs.

We will focus on Veterans' Mental Health Awareness, Veteran and Veteran Spouse Support and Military member and Spouse Support Programs and Veterans National Services.

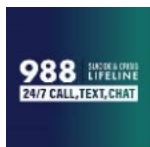
The Auxiliary must always focus on suicide and mental health awareness, promoting the education of warning signs and the fact that help is always a text or phone call away -988 (press 1).

The VFW has a Veteran Service Officer in every Department, dedicated to helping our veterans obtain the benefits they earned and sacrificed so much for. The Auxiliary members can be instrumental in directing Veterans to this resource.

The Military Assistance Programs provide financial aid, educational resources, and other forms of support to active-duty service members, veterans, and their families.

I encourage you to follow the monthly mail. There is so much to be learned about the programs in the mail and reminders about important deadlines as well.

I look forward to serving with each of you this year as we CAST out HOPE far and wide.





VFW National Home

Jaclyn Jones

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Jacksonville, NC 28546

The National Home Program Chairman is dedicated to providing leadership and support that strengthens the mission and legacy of the VFW National Home, while continuing its tradition of serving America's heroes. Founded in 1925 and located in Eaton Rapids, MI the VFW National Home offers housing, counseling, childcare, education support, and other essential services to military and veteran families in need. Originally established to keep families together after wartime loss, the program now helps families overcome modern challenges such as PTSD, reintegration, unemployment, and recovery from combat-related injuries.

The vision for the upcoming program year is to strengthen awareness, engagement, and support for the VFW National Home through dedicated leadership, education, and outreach while promoting its vital role in supporting active-duty military and veteran families. Through expanded promotional efforts and financial support initiatives, the Program Chairman aims to inspire greater participation from Auxiliary and Post members, as well as the greater veteran community, to sustain and grow the National Home's services for the next century and beyond.

The goals for the 2026–2027 program year focus on strengthening awareness, engagement, and financial support for the VFW National Home and its mission of serving military and veteran families through member education, expanded housing support, and innovative fundraising initiatives such as quarterly Change Competitions and the Department of North Carolina VFW National Home Plank Owners recognition program. The program also emphasizes consistent storytelling through social media, monthly communications, success stories, and community outreach to highlight the National Home's legacy as a living memorial to veterans and its lasting impact on families in need.

Awards for Auxiliaries:

Citation and \$25 to one in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative activity or event promoting what and where the VFW National Home is and who is eligible for its services.

Awards for Departments & Department Chairmen:

- Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary Department National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for outstanding promotion of the VFW National Home and its services.
- Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on program criteria and promotion of the Ambassador Program goals.

Winners will be announced at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.



YOUTH

CONTACT

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I'm truly excited to step into the role of Youth Activities Ambassador for the NC VFW Auxiliary. For me, this isn't just a position—it's an opportunity to invest in the next generation of members and leaders who will carry our mission forward. There are countless ways to involve our youth—each one an opportunity to instill patriotism, strengthen community ties, and ensure the continued legacy of the VFW. I look forward to seeing everyone's ideas and seeing more youth helping out with our Auxiliaries. Let's strive to teach the next generation about patriotism and service!

VFW Auxiliary Lending Library

The National Ambassador Debbie Little's goal this year is to place Lending libraries in our community to make reading easily accessible for everyone. You can get help with this by contacting a youth group, scout group, or high school shop club to help build a **Lending Library**, or you can easily purchase one on Amazon.

Fill your library with books for our youth and place it in the community where they are easily accessible. And use the #auxlendinglibrary to promote what you are doing for the VFW Auxiliary Lending Library.

Patriotism through literacy.

For me, this is one of my favorite youth activities. As a mother to a school age student I simply choose a book from the suggested book list to read to my child's class. If you have a child or grandchild this is a simple way to introduce our youth to historical figures and teach them about events in our nation's history while fostering a love of reading that can lead to a lifetime of learning. You can find the suggested book list at:

<https://vfwauxca.org/uploads/Documents/25-26%20Programs/PatriotismThroughLiteracyUpdatedList001.pdf>

I would love for our department to strive to make it their mission to spread patriotism through literacy. You can do this by hosting a reading event, supporting your local libraries, reading at schools, or donating books.

Youth Groups

Invite youth to join in Auxiliary activities under the supervision of their adult group(s) leader and/or parents and guardians.

They can help with:

- Serving and bussing tables for fundraising dinners or events.
- Participating in holidays and activities at nursing homes or VA homes.
- Organizing a military night during a local school sporting event.
- Building your lending library.

Illustrating America

DEADLINES: There have been changes to this year's due dates so please take note.

Entries need to be received by:

- VFW Auxiliary – December 15, 2026
- District (optional)- January 2027
- Department – January 15, 2027
- National Headquarters – January 31, 2027

Illustrating America is open to any student in grades K-8. The official form, details on requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA Member Resources or on the VFW Auxiliary website.

Patriotic Youth Award

The Patriotic Youth Award is designated to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, service members, and their families. A fillable, printable version of The Patriotic Youth Award is available in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.

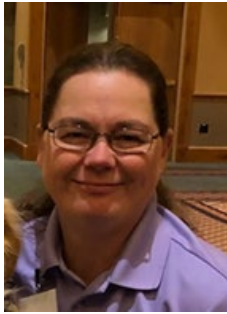
Youth Group Supporting our Veterans Citation

The youth groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation is one way for VFW Auxiliaries to recognize youth groups for their efforts and service projects honoring our veterans and assisting service members and their families. The Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation is available in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.

VFW Scout of the Year Program The VFW Scout of the Year program recognizes members of Scouting of America and Girls Scouts of the United States of America for their standout citizenship, patriotism, and love of country.

The official form, details and rules are located at:

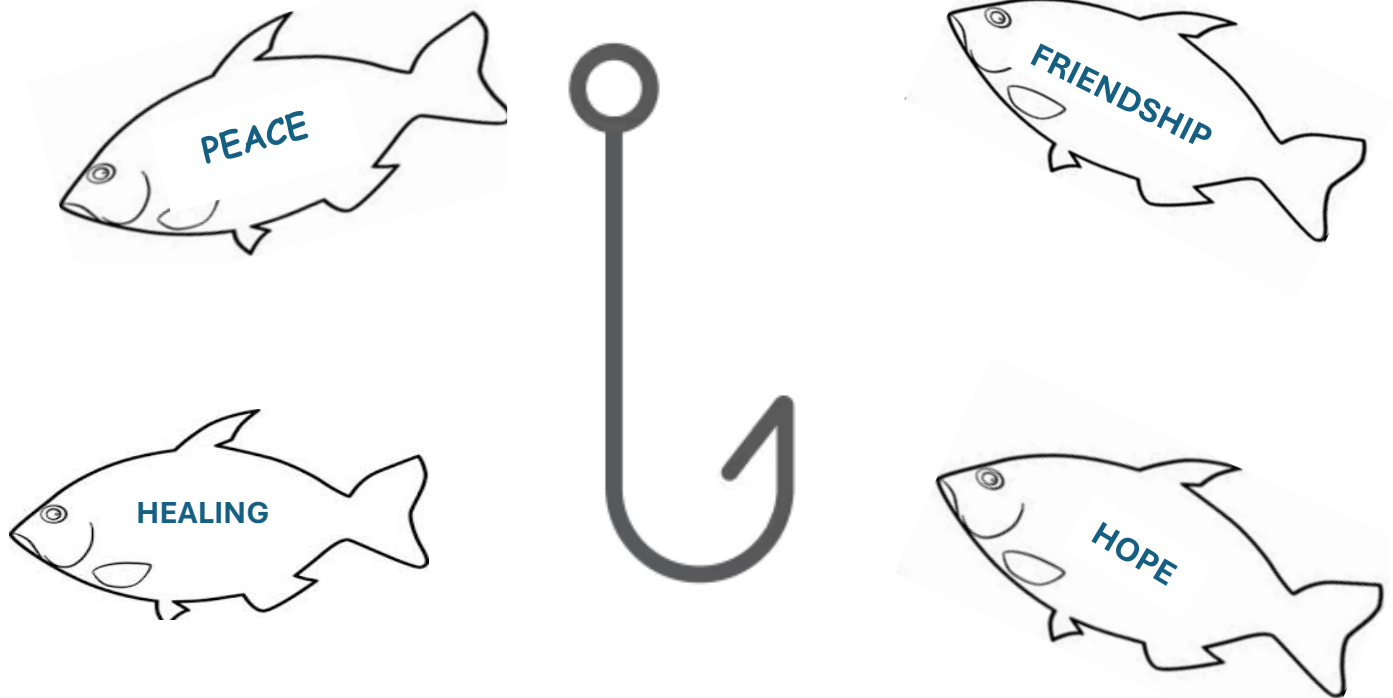
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/scout-of-the-year>



President's Special Project

MARGE GRAY
ml.gray@hotmail.com
PO Box 56
Sparta, NC 28675
704-902-8720

Take a Warrior Fishing



Every cast begins with hope. By supporting the special project- Take a Warrior Fishing, we are giving veterans more than a day on the water- we are providing friendship, peace, healing, and a chance to reconnect with others who understand their journey. Each dollar raised helps create memories, restore spirits, and remind our veterans that they are appreciated and never forgotten. Together, we can cast hope, one fishing trip at a time.

Every donation is another cast of hope for a veteran waiting for a chance to fish, heal, and smile again!

CASTING *Hope*



As we begin a new program year,
we do so with purpose, determination, and hope.

Each Auxiliary member holds a fishing rod in hand—
not to fish alone, but to reach veterans, service
members, and their families with compassion,
service, and support.

Some days our cast will be short. Some days it will
reach farther than we imagined. What matters is
that we keep casting.

May every meeting, every project, every volunteer
hour, and every act of kindness send ripples of
hope across our communities.

🪝 TOGETHER, WE CAN *make waves.*

🪝 TOGETHER, WE CAN *cast hope.*

🪝 TOGETHER, WE CAN *change lives.*

“Cast your line with purpose,
your heart with compassion,
and your hope without limits.”

Lin Moore
DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT

2026–2027
CASTING HOPE
OR VETERANS AND
THEIR FAMILIES



★ *The next cast begins now.* ★

