



Illinois

2025-2026 Series
General Orders No. 6
December 2025

STATE HEADQUARTERS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

State Headquarters will be closed on the following days: December 25th and December 26th for Christmas, December 31st, the office will close at 12:00 pm, and January 1st, New Year's Day.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AUDIT REPORTS

Quarterly audits must bear the signatures of the Commander and three Trustees. Audits can be submitted by fax, mail, or email to State Headquarters (admin@vfwil.org). If you are behind in your audits and need assistance, please either contact your District Commander or State Headquarters.

QUARTERLY REPORT OF AUDIT

Section 218, 11, b Trustees: Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.

Section 218, a, 1, j Commander: Assure that the Post Trustees have examined the books and records of the Post and prepared the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit no later than the end of the month following the last day of each quarterly period.

Posts that have Audit's delinquent are subject to suspension by the State Commander.

PEARL HARBOR DAY - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

Since Public Law 103-308 was passed in 1994, December 7th is designated as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. It requests that the American Flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on December 7, 1941. You can find a Pearl Harbor Day Speech on the National VFW website. After logging in, it can be found under Patriotic Holiday Speeches.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS

The Commander's Leadership Manual outlines the requirements for the Teacher of the Year and Public Safety Awards. The Public Safety Awards include the following five categories: Law Enforcement, Firefighter, EMT/Paramedic, Emergency Dispatcher, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician.

For a Post and District to achieve All-State status, it must submit a Teacher of the Year **or** a Public Safety Award nomination. The submission deadlines are:

Smart Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award

- December 22, 2025 District winners due to State HQ
- December 29, 2025 District participation due to State HQ
- January 10, 2025 Completion of Department judging
- February 1, 2026 Department winners and participation report due to National

Public Servant Recognition

- January 1, 2026 Nominations due to State HQ
- February 1, 2026 Nominations due to National

FEBRUARY COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The February Council of Administration Meeting and Voice of Democracy Banquet will be held February 6-8, 2026, at the Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, IL 62703. To reserve a reservation for February, you may call the hotel directly at (217) 529-7777, use option #1 and provide them group code: **Z0F** (Zero) or you may reserve a room online - go to our website www.vfwil.org, under News, go to the events page, Click on the link for VOD and February Council meeting room reservations. The room rate is \$112 a night plus tax.

FOUNDATION BOARD MEETING

There will be a Foundation Board meeting at 12:30 on Friday, February 6. The following members must be in attendance.

Todd Latham, President
Eugene Blackwell, Chairman
Rob Bailey, First Vice Chairman
Ryan Higginbotham, Second Vice Chairman
Scott Swinford, Treasurer
Crystal Gegec, Assistant Treasurer
Brett Nila, Vice President
Barb Wilson, Secretary
Fritz Mihelcic, Trustee
David Terrinoni, Trustee
Maurice Bridges, Trustee

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings will begin on Friday, February 6, 2026, at 1:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. All meetings will run consecutively, starting with the Veterans Service Committee, the Illinois VFW News, and the Budget & Finance Committee.

Members of the Veterans Service Committee are as follows:

Bobby Welch, Chairman
Brett Nila
Bobby Edwards
Maurice Bridges
Eugene Blackwell
Robert Bailey
Ryan Higginbotham
Scott Swinford

Illinois VFW News Committee:
Brett Nila, Chairman
Barbara Wilson, Editor
Robert Welch, State Historian
Eugene Blackwell
Scott Swinford
Maurice Bridges

Budget & Finance Committee:
Phil Maughan, Chairman
Scott Swinford, Assistant Chairman

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The Council of Administration will meet at the Crowne Plaza on Friday, February 6, 2026, at 3:00 pm and Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 8:15 am.

All officers and directors are expected to attend all sessions of the Council of Administration. Past Department Commanders who receive Department-paid rooms are highly encouraged to attend all sessions.

All Program Directors **must** forward their written reports to State Headquarters by Monday, January 26, 2026. All Program Directors are expected to be present to highlight any changes or important information contained within their written report when called upon. Please mail, fax (217-546-3415), or e-mail (Erin@vfwil.org) your reports to this office.

COMBAT TESTING GAMING (CTG) PROGRAM

The Department of Illinois is pleased to announce that Comrade Victor Levy has accepted the appointment to serve as the Chairperson of the newly established Combat Testing Gaming (CTG) Program. This initiative is designed to become a dynamic avenue for camaraderie, wellness, and engagement among our veterans. CTG will provide a welcoming platform where service members and veterans can enjoy competitive gaming, build fellowship, and combat social isolation—advancing our VFW mission in a modern and meaningful way. Comrade Levy brings strong enthusiasm and a commitment to fostering connections through innovative outreach. Members are encouraged to support and participate in this emerging program as it develops statewide. Comrade Levy is a member of VFW Post 12014 in Crystal Lake. For inquiries or to get involved, please get in touch with Comrade Levy at: Email: victorlevyusmc@gmail.com or his Mobile: 312-520-0471

ASSIGNED TO THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the top three chairs and the seventeen District Commanders, the following State Officers and Program Chairmen are called to the Council of Administration Meeting...

State Chaplain	Poppy Chairman
Chief of Staff	POW/MIA
State Surgeon	Safety
State Inspector	Historian
State AQM	MOC Coordinator
State Judge Advocate	VOD
National Council Member	Youth Activities
Membership Chairman	Veterans Service Committee
Student Veterans Liaison	Illinois VFW News

Blood Donor
Community Activities
All-State Chairman
Homeless Veterans
State Legislative
National Home
Public Relations

State Sergeant At Arms
Officer of the Day
Scouting
Assistant QM
Assistant Youth Activities
VFW Riders
Veterans and Military Support

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY & PATRIOT'S PEN WINNERS' TRIP TO SPRINGFIELD

Each student will receive accommodations for two nights at the Crowne Plaza, 3300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703. If the student would like to stay longer than two nights or book additional rooms, the District should assist with making these arrangements and help cover the costs. District Commanders or Chairmen may call State Headquarters to have these arrangements made.

Upon the students' arrival on Friday, February 6, 2026, State Headquarters will be hosting a pizza party! The following morning, the students will meet in the hotel lobby at 8:45 am for the Land of Lincoln Tour. The tour will make the following stops: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Stabb Funeral Home, Lincoln's Tomb, and the Illinois State Military Museum. Only Students and assigned personnel will be allowed on the bus. Following the 79th Annual State of Illinois Voice of Democracy Banquet, the students will be invited to enjoy an ice cream social.

LINCOLN PILGRIMAGE

The Lincoln Pilgrimage will take place at Lincoln's Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery at 3:00 pm on Saturday, February 7, 2025. Please be present at the tomb no later than 2:45 pm.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY BANQUET

The Annual Voice of Democracy Banquet will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2026. Join us in celebrating our outstanding youth and the Voice of Democracy program at this year's annual banquet.

Tickets:

\$50.00 per person or \$500.00 per table of ten.

All tickets must be purchased by January 26, 2026

No tickets will be sold after this date, and no tickets will be available at the door.

District tables: District tables will once again be available and must be ordered and paid for by the District Commanders. These are available only in tables of ten.

Sponsorships are still available.

Book bags - \$300

Flowers - \$300

Bus-(last year's cost was \$1125.00), call headquarters to confirm the price for this year

Dinner tickets for the kids - \$1100.00

Military Museum - \$150

Please get in touch with State HQ if your District or Post wishes to sponsor any of these events.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AD BOOK

If you would like to place an ad in the Voice of Democracy ad book, the form is included in the back of these general orders. The costs of the ads are as follows:

Full Page \$200

½ Page is \$125

¼ Page is \$75

Please make sure to fill out the form and mail a copy and any photos your Post/District wants included in the ad to Editor, 2026 Voice of Democracy/Patriots' Pen Program Book at 3300 Constitution Dr., Springfield, IL 62711, or send via email to: barb.wilson2@outlook.com (Please cc vfwil@vfwil.org). Also, please ensure you enclose the appropriate payment. You can send a check with your ad, or you may pay for your ad through the "donate now" button located on the state website: www.vfwil.org. The submission deadline is December 15, 2025, and books will be distributed at the State Voice of Democracy and Patriots' Pen Banquet in February.

2025-2026 TOWN HALL MEETINGS

State Commander Eugene Blackwell has two of the five Town Hall Meetings left this year. These meetings are designed to provide updates, share information, and offer direct feedback from our members. All Town Hall Meetings will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and will conclude no later than 2:00 p.m. Lunch arrangements will vary by host Post. Participation is a requirement for All-State eligibility. Each Post must ensure one member attends one Town Hall session.

December 7, 2025

Cox Post 4753
302 W Coal St
Sesser, IL 62884

April 11, 2026

John H Kraus Post 454
1006 E Lincoln St
Blooming, IL 61701

ILLINOIS VFW 2026 WALL CALENDAR

The Illinois VFW 2026 wall Calendars have been distributed to all District Commanders. We are asking Posts and Districts to assist in selling the calendars for \$20 each. Posts or Districts that make the sale keep \$2 per calendar and send the remainder to HQ. The daily drawing begins January 1st. A total of 5,000 calendars have been printed, and winners will be reentered for another chance to win.

The daily prizes are as follows:

- \$1,000: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Hanukkah, and Christmas Day.
- \$500: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, and National Guard birthdays.
- \$250: VFW and VFW Auxiliary anniversaries.
- \$100: Loyalty Day, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Valentine's Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- \$50: All other Sundays.
- \$25: All other weekdays

ILLINOIS VFW NEWS

The VFW News is now published every two months, and the next issue will be in January 2026.

Submission Deadline: Articles for the January edition are due no later than 15 December 2025.

How to Submit: Please share with your Posts and Auxiliaries: if they have an article, announcement, or event recap they would like published, send it directly to Barb Wilson at barb.wilson2@outlook.com.

Photos Reminder: When submitting pictures, please include a short write-up or storyline that explains the photo and connects to the event or activity shown.

Thank you for helping us highlight the outstanding work happening across Illinois VFW Posts and Auxiliaries.

NEW CENTURY RAFFLE

The New Century Raffle has officially started and will run through June 30, 2026. The tickets are just \$10.00 each. Each ticket entitles you to participate in a weekly drawing of

\$100 from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Drawings will be held every Friday. The winning ticket will be returned to the barrel for future drawings. This means each ticket has multiple chances to win. The seller of each ticket also has a chance to win \$10.00. If the seller prints their name on the ticket, they will receive \$10.00. If the seller does not sign the ticket, the \$10.00 will be automatically donated and split between the Department's Unmet Needs Program and Children's National Home. Winners will be announced each month in the General Orders and posted on the <http://vfwil.org> website

WEEKLY WINNER

<u>Date of Drawing</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Seller</u>
11/7/2025	Ronald Hedglin	No Seller Listed
11/14/2025	Joseph Sommers	No Seller Listed
11/21/2025	Robert McGraugh	Robert McGraugh
11/28/2025	Thomas Zilla	Thomas Zilla

POST CONSOLIDATIONS

Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore has approved the consolidation of Post 1376 in Mount Vernon and Post 9233 in Mount Vernon, to be known as Mike Flanagan Memorial Post 1376 in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Please update your records accordingly.

Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a joyful holiday season. Merry Christmas

From State Commander Eugene Blackwell, State Officers and Staff

By Order of:

Official



Joseph "Scott" Swinford
State Adjutant/Quartermaster



Eugene Blackwell
State Commander

Scout of the Year Requirements

Contact: Ron Milton. Scouting Chair, usafret1@att.net

Eligibility Requirements

- Age: The applicant must be under 18 years old and must have reached their 15th birthday at the time of application submission.
- Scout Affiliation: The applicant must be an active member of one of the following organizations:
- Scouting America (Eagle Scout)
- Girl Scouts of the USA (Gold Award Recipient)
- Venturing (Summit Award Recipient)
- Sea Scouts (Quartermaster Award Recipient)
- Good Standing: The applicant must be in good standing with their scouting unit and organization.
- Completion of Award: The highest award (Eagle Scout, Gold Award, etc.) must have been achieved prior to the application deadline.

Application Requirements

- **Photograph of the Scout** — must be attached to this form. The Scout must appear in correct, complete uniform for their current rank. Recommended size 3" x 5".
- **School Participation Record** — a single page, one-sided resume of the candidate's school activities indicating *academic achievements, offices held, honors received and significant participation in other activities*.
- **Scouting Record** — maximum of three pages, one side only, listing of all: Scouting participation beginning with Cub Scouts or Brownies years of participation, unit numbers and sponsors. Also include when Eagle, Gold, Summit or Quartermaster Award was received and Palms. Identify leadership positions held at all levels, participation in Scouting activities (jamborees, Order of the Arrow conferences, etc.) and the candidate's Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster Project.
- **Community Service Record** — a single page, one -sided resume listing participation in community and religious service organizations (excluding Scouting and school), noting leadership positions held and any recognition received.
- **Letters of Recommendation** — Submit three letters, no more than two pages in length from: A scout leader. A community member. A teacher/faculty member (if homeschooled, a parent letter is allowed). In addition, you may include one or two additional letters, no more than two pages in length, from local community members who have special knowledge of the candidate's abilities/accomplishments.
- Completed Entry Form – submitted to a local VFW Post.

Submission Process: Local VFW Post: Applications must be submitted to a local VFW Post.



Suicide & Solutions Workshop

3020 Milwaukee Avenue • Northbrook, IL 60062 • 877-734-4244 www.MilitaryOutreachUSA.org

Lake Zurich American Legion Post 964

December 6th @ 8:30am to noon

51 Lions Dr Lake Zurich IL 60047 (847) 438-9477

Mission. Invite any and all that will benefit from HOPE (Healing, Opportunity, Planning, Empowerment). Our 1:1 solutions are focused on reducing veteran suicides, **22+ per day**, across our **Veteran community** and the growing number to our **First Responders**. Speakers include:

James H. Mukoyama
Major General (retired)
Chicago born, served in
DMZ Korea, Vietnam



: MilitaryOutreachUSA.org

Allen J. Lynch
12th Calvary Regiment
1st Calvary Division
Medal of Honor/Vietnam



[ajlynchfoundation.org/about-us/
about-allen-j-lynch/](http://ajlynchfoundation.org/about-us/about-allen-j-lynch/)

Philip Chappy Ferrer
SGT 82nd Abn Division
1/505 Infantry/Signal
Iraqi Veteran



[militaryoutreachusa.org/
stand-by-me-heroes/](http://militaryoutreachusa.org/stand-by-me-heroes/)

We invite civilians, First Responders, Veterans, professionals. Solutions to Moral Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, Military Sexual Trauma and other invisible wounds. **Our focus is Mind-Body & Soul.** Please confirm attendance with an email to Sue.Brown@militaryoutreachusa.org

Healing. Moving forward we confront ourselves, forgive, then prepare with an accountability partner, aka Foxhole Soul Counselor, beginning the healing process.

Opportunity. Challenges from our past and present will come. We answer the call to 'Stand-by-me' turning lessons learned and best practices into awaiting opportunities.

Planning. Fail to plan and we have already failed! Foxhole Soul Counselors help with planning, accountability and next steps climbing mountains as a team.

Empowerment. As a small team we guard your six, provide mentors to gain strength. We may struggle but small experienced teams ensure lasting success.

Help us help others **Donate:** Militaryoutreachusa.org/donate/stand-by-me-heroes.



2025 State VFW-VSO Visits

on the 2nd Wednesday of each month

VFW State Service Officer

will be available from 9am - 4pm

at

***Benjamin O. Davis, VFW Post 311**
22341 Governors Highway
Richton Park, IL 60471*

Dates at VFW Post 311

January 8th	May 14th	September 10th
February 12th	June 11th	September 13th**
March 12th	July 9th	October 15th
April 9th	August 13th	November 12th
		December 10th

****Saturday Session (Stand Down)**

The Department of Illinois VFW Service Officer will be available to assist you with the preparation of your claim for VA benefits. Services provided by the VFW Service Office are available to all veterans, their dependents and survivors without regard to organization membership status or era of service. Services are provided at no cost.



State Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Banquet Book Ad Form



**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
& AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS**



FEBRUARY 7, 2026

Please place an "X" in the box of the ad size you are requesting

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ INSIDE FRONT COVER \$350.00 | ☐ FULL PAGE \$200.00 |
| ☐ INSIDE BACK COVER \$300.00 | ☐ 1/2 PAGE \$125.00 |
| ☐ BACK COVER \$350.00 | ☐ 1/4 PAGE \$75.00 |

If wanted, please include a color photo with ad copy.
Print or type ad copy below, or attach a separate sheet.

PLEASE ENCLOSE PAYMENT IN FULL OR
PAY VIA CREDIT/DEBIT CARD AT www.vfwil.org

**BOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT STATE VOICE OF
DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN BANQUET IN FEBRUARY**

Please mail ad copy and any photos your Post/District wants
included in the ad, along with appropriate payment to:

Editor, 2026 Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Program Book
3300 Constitution Dr
Springfield, IL 62711

or send via email to: barb.wilson2@outlook.com (please cc vfwil@vfwil.org)
Questions? Contact State Headquarters at (217) 529-6688

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS DEC. 15, 2025



VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Illinois

State of Illinois

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Calendar Raffle

All proceeds will be used for VFW Programs

See inside back cover for all rules
and more information.

\$20.00

A complete list of all winners will be
posted on the website:
www.vfwil.org

Name _____ Date Purchased _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

2026 Calendar Raffle Rules

The winning stubs of the daily Calendar Raffle will be drawn each day at the Department Headquarters. Drawings may be conducted in advance due to scheduled closures. Prize money not exceeding \$599 will be forwarded to the purchaser of said calendar within 10 business days of the drawing. For prizes exceeding \$599, the appropriate tax form will be mailed to winner and must be returned to Department Headquarters prior to receiving prize money. Exactly 5,000 calendars will be printed. Winning names will be posted on the Illinois VFW Website - www.vfwil.org. You need not be present to win.

Proceeds benefit the Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars Veterans Service Programs supporting Illinois veterans.

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

\$1,000:	New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Hannukah, and Christmas Day
\$500:	Army birthday, Navy birthday, Air Force birthday, Marine Corps birthday, Coast Guard birthday, Space Force birthday, and National Guard birthday
\$250:	VFW Anniversary, VFW Auxiliary Anniversary
\$100:	Loyalty Day, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Easter, Valentines Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day
\$50:	All other Sundays
\$25:	All other Weekdays



VFW Service Office

2122 West Taylor St.
Room 105
Chicago, IL 60612

Office Telephone Hours
Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Phone: 312-980-4284
Fax: 312-980-4680

Office Walk-In Hours
Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Email: vso@vfwil.org
Website link: www.vfwilserviceoffice.com

The State of Illinois VFW Department Service Office is headquartered at the VA Regional Office in Chicago. The Department Service Office is under the direction of the Department Service Officer and the staff includes four Assistant Department Service Officers, two working in Chicago, one stationed at the Marion VAMC, and one stationed at the Danville VAMC. We also have a part-time Assistant Department Service Officer in the Metro St Louis area. The Regional Office staff includes one Claims Consultant and one clerical support staff member.

STATE HEADQUARTERS • 3300 CONSTITUTION DRIVE • SPRINGFIELD, IL 62711

TELEPHONE: (217) 529-6688 • FAX (217) 529-5347 • WEBSITE: WWW.VFWIL.ORG

WWW.CHICAGOMILITARYSHOWS.COM/LAKEMOOR

LAKEMOOR MILITARY SHOW

DECEMBER 6TH, 2025

9:00AM TO 3:00PM

ADMISSION: \$5

EARLY ENTRY: \$20 (8:15AM)

KIDS UNDER 10 FREE

100+
TABLES

FAMILY
FRIENDLY

BUY & SELL MILITARY ITEMS

28874 IL-120
LAKEMOOR, IL 60051

FUNDRAISER

FRIENDS OF POST 311



2025

MONDAY

**NOV
10TH**

UNITED CENTER | 7PM

VS

**SAN ANTONIO
SPURS**

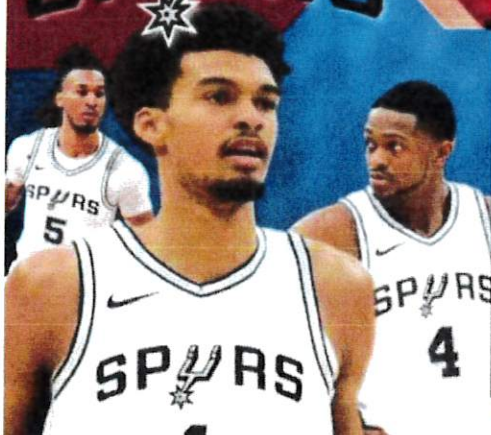
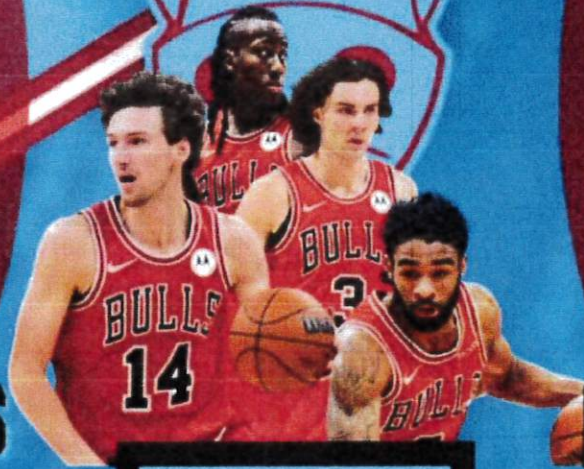
WEDNESDAY

**DEC
17TH**

UNITED CENTER | 7PM

VS

**CLEVELAND
CAVALIERS**



SCAN FOR TICKETS



Make Your Plans Now For New Years Eve

To billbrowne1225@comcast.net



The
"V"



VFW Post 2791 17147 S Oak Park Ave Tinley Park

"Rockin' New Years Eve Party"

VFW Post 2791 Wed. Dec. 31st from 8pm-12:30am. Doors will open at 7:15pm & open bar starts at 8pm.

Tickets are \$40 (Cash Only) & 120 are available now to purchase in the Canteen. You can reserve a table in your name by purchasing all 8. Music provided by the DJ Wally "Special K" will be spinning up your favorite dance/line dance tunes. He will also play your requests. When you enter you will receive a wrist band which will allow you to nibble on Our Food Entres, Appetizers, finger foods and desserts all night long! There will be OPEN BAR for all who bought tickets & have wrist bands, which includes Domestic Beer & Well Liquor. Donate Some Snacks yourself to the cause! Stick around with us for the countdown celebrate & have a champagne Toast afterwards. You will not go home hungry or thirsty!

Tickets Go ON Sales Wednesday November 19th

it's BAAACK!

(... and MORE!)

STEGER VFW'S

FISH FRY 4pm-7pm

Every Third Friday of the Month!

\$9 For a 2 pc dinner

\$11 For a 3pc dinner

\$13 For a 4pc dinner

Dinners include: Alaskan Pollack, Fries, Cole Slaw, Bread and dessert

\$9 5 pc shrimp dinner

\$9 3 pc chicken dinner

ADD 3 PCS OF SHRIMP TO ANY DINNER FOR \$3!!!

**Dine in
OR CARRY OUT!**

Steger VFW Post 8283
3332 Chicago Rd.