



Illinois

2025-2026 Series
General Orders No. 5
November 2025

STATE HEADQUARTERS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The State Headquarters will be closed on the following days: November 11th Veterans Day
November 27th and 28th Thanksgiving

SPAM EMAILS

If you receive an email from a Department Officer with a suspicious request, check the actual email address of the sender. Keep in mind that a Department Officer will not ask you send them money or gift cards. Scammers are very skilled at making an email appear that it came from someone else.

LOGGING ONTO THE STATE WEBSITE

There have been issues with members trying to login into to the state website, so here are the steps for logging into the state website.

Go to www.vfwil.org.

Click on "Login" on the top right hand corner. A drop down menu will appear.

On the drop down menu, click on "Members Only".

The next screen will have prompts for a Member ID # & Password.

For "Member ID #", enter the number that's on your personal VFW Card.

For "Password", enter your last name with the first letter capitalized at the beginning. (Ex. John Smith will enter "Smith")

If you have questions or cannot login, contact Department.

BENEFITS ADVISORS

The NVS Policy and Procedure, under the section VFW Representation – General; states:

6. Post/District Benefits Advisor (formerly Post/District Service Officer)

The primary task of a Post Benefits advisor or District Benefits Advisor is to advise members of the Post, their family members and survivors of benefits and services that are available in the local community such as homeless services, employment opportunities, and companies that offer discounted goods or services to veterans.

In this capacity, the Post Benefits Advisor shall direct individuals seeking Federal benefits assistance to the Department Service Officer or an accredited representative.

The Post/District Benefits Advisor:

A. Must have access to the current edition of the VFW Guide for Post Benefits Advisors and shall perform duties in accordance with instructions contained therein.

B. Performs their duties under the general supervision of the Post Commander and shall participate in scheduled Post/District Benefits Advisor training facilitated by the DSO.

C. Will not establish or solicit to establish office hours at VA facilities (not limited, but to include, Regional Benefits Offices, hospitals, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, & Vet Centers).

D. Must not make direct contact concerning a claim or other matter, with the Department of Veterans Affairs or with any other governmental department or agency without a VA Form 21-0845 Third Party Consent from the claimant to do so. All status updates and other inquiries must be routed through the DSO. Should a Post/District Benefits Advisor inquire on the status of a claim or other benefits on behalf of a claimant, the DSO must only provide their response to the inquiring claimant, as disclosing information about specific claims is a violation of the law.

E. When acting as a recorder, the Post/District Benefits Advisor is simply transcribing information provided by the claimant. At no time should the Post/District Benefits Advisor make suggestions on how to frame information to make it appear more favorable or less harmful to the claimant. Under no circumstances will the Post/District Benefits Advisor take possession of any form, record, or evidence furnished by a claimant for the purpose of filing a benefits claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under no circumstances will the Post/District Benefits Advisor retain any personally identifiable information (PII) concerning the claimant or the claimants' family. Any forms, records, or evidence furnished by the claimant must be immediately returned to the claimant with instructions on how to submit their benefits claim with the DSO or to the appropriate federal authority.

F. Under no circumstances should a Post/District Benefits Advisor counsel a claimant on their individual claim. While a Post/District Benefits Advisor provides information concerning various government benefit programs, he/she should not offer any guidance or opinion as to the individual claim itself. General statements about the types of evidence necessary to support a claim can be described; however, a Post/District Benefits Advisor must never discuss the nature or merits of any particular claim.

G. The Order of Business for VFW Posts prescribed in the VFW Ritual requires that the PSO submit a report at each Post business meeting. The report should summarize the activities of the PBA since the last report but should never include any personally identifiable information concerning any veteran, family member of a veteran, a survivor nor any other person living or dead.

H. The VFW Manual of Procedure requires that District Benefits Advisors assist their Post Benefits Advisors. This includes ensuring Post Benefits Advisors located within their District attend District and/or Department Benefits Advisor receive training.

...In a nutshell, only trained and accredited service officers, shall obtain and maintain records pertaining to Veterans personal information, for the purposes of VA claims benefits, in accordance with federal HIPAA laws. VFW accredited service officers are given 80 hours a year of NVS training, and have to stay up-to-date with VA training procedures, to maintain their VA accreditation, through the VA Office of General Counsel.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE FORM 990

The deadline for filing the Federal IRS Form 990 is November 15th and the IRS can levy a \$10.00 per day penalty for every day the 990 Form is late. The forms are available on the IRS's website at www.irs.gov. It is the responsibility of the Post Commander and Quartermaster to make sure this form is prepared and submitted on time to the IRS.

AG-990 STATE OF ILLINOIS

Any Post that has applied for a Bingo License, Las Vegas Night License and Gaming License or a Pull Tab License will probably be receiving an AG-990 Form from the State of Illinois Attorney General's office for filing and if you have one of the above licenses, you are required to file this form unless your Post has received an exemption from the Attorney General's Office.

IRS FORM 990-T

VFW Posts that have unrelated business income must file an IRS Form 990-T. The 990-T must be filed by November 15th of each year and this form is available on the IRS's website at www.irs.gov. It is the responsibility of the Post Commander and Quartermaster to make sure this form is prepared and submitted on time to the IRS.

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING NOTICE

The next Council of Administration meeting will be held on Saturday November 22, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom. A Zoom link, along with reports and necessary documents, will be emailed closer to the meeting date. Please ensure that all reports are submitted to State Headquarters no later than November 15, 2025.

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 give them out 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. **Program reports are due to Headquarters by Tuesday, January 20, 2026.**

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

\$500.00 per table of ten

Ticket deadline:

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 on a first come first serve basis

4th place PP- 300.00 Sponsored by 15th District

14th Place - \$300 Sponsored by 15th District

15th Place - \$300

16th Place - \$300

17th Place - \$300

Ice Cream Social for kids - \$300

Pizza Party for kids - \$300 In Memory of Sharon L. Edwards, donated by David J Edwards

Lunch for kids - \$300

Tours for kids - \$400

Book Bags for kids - \$400

Please contact 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 ad copy and any photos your Post/District wants included in the ad to Editor, 2026 Voice of Democracy/Patriot's 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 make sure to 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 deadline for submission is December 15, 2025 and books will be distributed at the State Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Banquet in February.

POST RELIEF FUND

Section 704 of the Manual of Procedure outlines the various things for which the Post Relief Fund can be used.

Aid, assistance, relief, and comfort of needy or disabled veterans or members of the Armed Forces and their dependents, and the surviving spouses and orphans of deceased veterans. Maintenance and expansion of the VFW National Home for Children and other facilities devoted exclusively to the benefit and welfare of the dependents, surviving spouses, and orphans of disabled, needy or deceased veterans or members of the Armed Forces. Necessary expenses in providing entertainment, care, and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the Armed Forces Veterans rehabilitation, welfare and service work. To perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces, and to comfort their survivors. To foster true patriotism through historical and educational

programs. Relief funds may be invested in approved securities but shall not be loaned to the Post or other units, or transferred from the relief fund in any manner or under any guise, except that relief funds may be transferred to the general fund for remission of dues of sick, needy or disabled members

The Trustee Report of Audit MUST show a Relief Fund!

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMANDER

Your attention is drawn to Section 218 of the National By-Laws. Among the duties of a Post Commander, the Commander shall:

Assure that the office of the Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of the By-Laws

Assure that all dues and other monies due the National Headquarters and Department are forwarded promptly together with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto.

Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all the business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the ensuing year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.

Ensure Post Trustees review all books and records and complete the Quarterly Audit Report by the end of the month after each quarter

RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES

Each VFW Post shall have **three elected trustees** who will, at least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, they should properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster and submit a Post Trustee's report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector. Please see Sec. 218 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure for complete information on the duties of Post Officers. **PLEASE NOTE:** Before the Department Headquarters accepts an audit, it must be signed by the trustees. You may mail or fax the form to HQ, or you may scan the signed form and email it to HQ, at vfwil@vfwil.org.

VETERANS DAY-NOVEMBER 11TH

All V.F.W. Posts are urged to make plans to observe Veterans Day on Monday, November 11th, 2025. *Patriotic Speeches can be found on National Headquarters' website at www.vfw.org.*

TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS

The Commander's Leadership Manual for 25-26 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 to achieve All-State, it must submit either a Teacher of the Year nomination **or** a Public Safety Award nomination.

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

Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award

- October 31, 2025, Entries to the Post
- November 15, 2025, Completion of Post judging
- December 22, 2025, District winners due to State HQ
- December 29, 2025, District participation reports due to State HQ
- January 10, 2025, Completion of Department judging
- February 1, 2026, Department winners and participation report due to the National.

Public Servant Recognition

- January 1, 2026, Deadline to submit nominations for Public Safety to State HQ
- February 1, 2026, State Public Safety nominations to National.

QUARTERLY REPORT OF AUDIT

Manual of Procedure

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.

2025-2026 TOWN HALL MEETINGS

State Commander Eugene Blackwell will be conducting five (5) Town Hall Meetings this year at VFW Posts across Illinois. 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 in a Town Hall is a requirement for eligibility for the All-State Award. Each Post must ensure one member attends one of the scheduled Town Hall sessions. Your commitment is vital to the success of VFW-IL. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming Town Halls and to hearing your ideas and concerns as we continue to move forward together.

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
Bloomington, 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. The total number of calendars printed is 5,000, and once a ticket wins, it will not be returned to the drawing. The Council of Administration approved this fundraiser in August 2024.

The total number of calendars printed is 5,000 you do not need to be present to win. Winners will be reentered for a chance to win again.

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 weekday

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>
10/3/2025	Robert Edwards Sr.	No Seller Listed
10/10/2025	Jimmie Curls	No Seller Listed
10/17/2025	Gerald Lewis	No Seller Listed
10/24/2025	Joseph Riedel	No Seller Listed
10/31/2025	Jeffery Britt	No Seller Listed

POST CONSOLIDATIONS

Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore has approved the consolidation of Post 11018 in Bartlett and Post 6791 West Chicago, to be known as Leon Richardt Post 6791 in West Chicago, Illinois. Please update your records accordingly.

Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore has approved the consolidation of Post 5696 in Lisle and Post 3873 in Naperville, to be known as Judd Kendall Post 3873 in Naperville, Illinois. Please update your records accordingly.

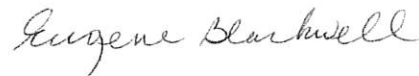
Happy Veterans Day and Happy Thanksgiving!
From State Commander Eugene Blackwell, State Officers and Staff

By Order of:



Joseph "Scott" Swinford
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Official



Eugene Blackwell
State Commander

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

Program Bulletin VOD December 2025

As of midnight October 31, 2025 the door is closed to utilize the Scholars App platform to recruit students to enter the VOD/PP contests. However, the window is still open to utilize Scholars App to upload a manual entry using the paper entry form that we have used for years and qualify your post for participation in these programs. The only deadline for doing so is to submit your completed entry to your district chairman by November 15, 2025. Step-by-step instructions can be found at the department website with this link: [Manual Entry](#)

VFW Scout of the Year Key Dates

Important Deadlines for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Scout of the Year Program

Ron Milton, State Scouting Chair

Usafret1@att.net

618-604-0423

VFW Scout of the Year Program Timeline

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Scout of the Year program recognizes outstanding members of the Scouting America, Girl Scouts. Below are the key dates and deadlines for the program:

Key Dates and Deadlines

- March 1: Deadline for Scouts to submit their completed application, including all required supporting materials, to their local VFW Post.
- April 1: Deadline for VFW Posts to submit their winning entry to VFW State Chair.
- May 1: Deadline for State to submit their selected candidate to the VFW National Headquarters.

Additional Information

- Applicants should confirm specific deadlines with their local VFW Post or Department.
- All applications and materials must be complete and submitted by the corresponding deadlines to be considered for the program.
- For application download and additional guidance go to <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/scout-of-the-year>



CI

A CALL TO ACTION: PLUS COLLECTION DRIVE



for

VETERANS' HOME at MANTENO

In honor of Veteran's Day and to support those who so bravely served our country,

**The PADS Ministry of St John Neumann Parish
and
American Legion Post 1139, East Hazel Crest, IL**

will sponsor a collection drive for clothing, snacks and personal care items for our Veterans at the Veterans' Home at Manteno, IL

Date: Saturday, 8 November 2025

Time: 9am to Noon

Where: St John Neumann Parish-17951 Dixie Highway, Homewood, IL

Enter: North Parking Lot (follow the signs)

Place donations in bags or boxes in your trunk, drive in, pop trunk... we'll do the rest.

Requested Items: See List Below

NOTE: You can also write a check made payable to American Legion Post 1139, East Hazel Crest and designate it for the Veterans' Home Manteno.

Checks can also be mailed to:

American Legion Post 1139 East Hazel Crest
P.O. Box 1256
Homewood, IL 60430

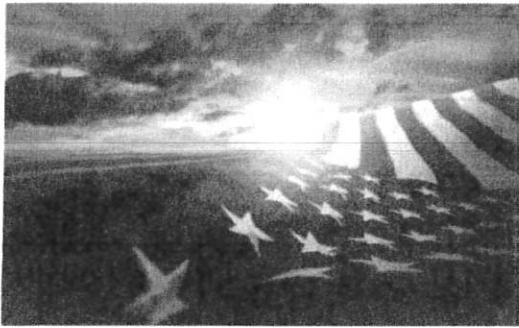
Throughout the month of November, look for updates on the collection drive and how we can help honor these true American heroes on Veteran's Day.

For more information, please contact:

John Kearns, Post Commander, 708.922.9202 or
Jim Bova, PADS Ministry, 708.625.2188



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**



ILLINOIS VETERANS HOME AT MANTENO

MEMBER NEEDS LIST

The following is a list of items that our Veterans use in their day today lives at the Illinois Veterans' Home in Manteno. We update this list multiple times a month, please contact us for an updated

copy as needed.

Items in yellow highlight are most needed at this time.

CLOTHING:

Men's button-down shirts, M to 2XL
Men's T-Shirts (not undershirts), XL to 4XL
Men's Zip Up Sweatshirts - Size M to 4XL
Men's Sweatpants - L, XL 4XL
Velcro Tennis Shoes, sz11W, 11.5W & 12W
Men's slippers, sizes 11 to 15
Military Branch Caps/Hats
Men's Long Sleeve T-shirts, L
Dress Shirts w/ Neckties (various sizes)
Men's & Women's Bathrobes (various sizes)
Men's & Women's Pajamas (various sizes)
Winter Coats - 3X and 4X
Winter hats, scarves, gloves & mittens

PERSONAL CARE:

Electric Razors
Men's Body Spray (Axe, etc.)
Non-Alcoholic Mouth Wash

MISCELLANEOUS

Pocket Talker Personal Amplifiers
Portable Bluetooth Speakers
Thermal Beverage Tumblers with handle, straw, and lid
Sunglasses - Men's, Women's, Unisex
Grabber reaching/pickup tools, various lengths
Paper Towels, napkins, disposable heavy duty plates and bowls

Forever Stamps

SNACKFOODS/DRINKS

Sugar/Sweetener packets (individual)
Individual liquid coffee creamers, original flavor, French Vanilla, Hazelnut
Canned Coffee - no Decaf
Miniature Candy Bars (assorted)
Individual bags of chips (assorted)
Gatorade - regular & sugar free
Pop - Regular & Diet, Cans
Rootbeer (cans)
Individually wrapped snack cakes
Individually wrapped mini-donut packs
Shelf Stable Microwave Meals (Mac & Cheese cups, Rice-a-Roni cups, Hormel Compleats)
Tuna/Chicken Salad & Crackers Snacks
Sardines
Bottled Water

PAPER/DISPOSABLES

Sturdy Coffee Cups w/ Matching Lids
Sturdy Paper Plates - no Styrofoam
Heavy Duty Cutlery

For regulatory reasons, we cannot accept:

- Used Clothing/Shoes/Personal Items
- Furnishings/Bedding/Towels
- Medical Supplies/Equipment
- Home-Made Food
- Expired Food/Drink

Please call (815) 907-3545 to schedule delivery - no weekends please.

Please only bring donated items to Volunteer Services.



2025 CHICAGO WINTER STANDDOWN

Food, "services", and giveaways for veterans who are homeless, housing
insecure, or in-need.

Bring Veteran ID or DD-214 for Registration

For questions, please call

(312) 569-5750 or (312) 569-8288

1551 N. KEDZIE AVE

CHICAGO, IL 60651

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH

8:30 AM- 2 PM

Illinois National Guard Northwest Armory

More information: www.chicagostanddown.org

DISTRICT 16 VFW AUXILIARY

Food Drive

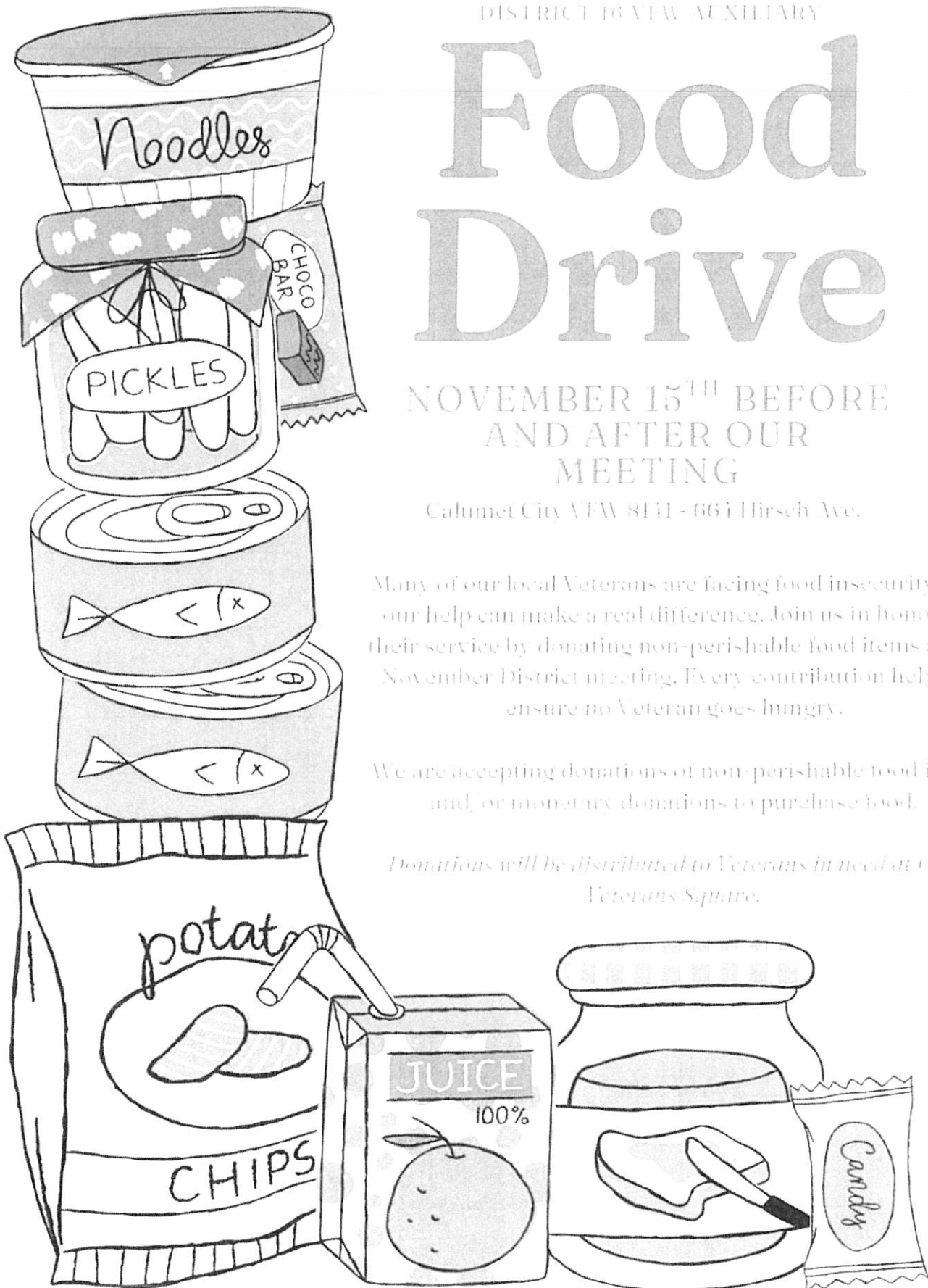
NOVEMBER 15TH BEFORE
AND AFTER OUR
MEETING

Calumet City VFW 8111 - 661 Hirsch Ave.

Many of our local Veterans are facing food insecurity, and our help can make a real difference. Join us in honoring their service by donating non-perishable food items at our November District meeting. Every contribution helps to ensure no Veteran goes hungry.

We are accepting donations of non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations to purchase food.

Donations will be distributed to Veterans in need at Otto Veterans Square.



VFW Bremen Post 2791 <vfw2791-yahoo.com@shared1.ccsend.com>

9/19/2025 10:52 AM

Attention All VFW & Auxiliary Members

To billbrowne1225@comcast.net



Children's



VFW 2791's Annual Children's Christmas Party is Coming On Saturday Dec. 13th Noon-3PM

You must sign up by Nov.21st. The sign-up sheets are now in the Canteen as you come in on the wall to your left. Children ages 6 mos.-10yrs. are eligible as well as 4 adults (2 Parents- 2 Grand-Parents), Doors Open 11:30 am. List their names, ages, genders & a contact phone number. You have more than enough time right now to get your kids and grand-kids signed up Don't hesitate do it now. More information will be coming soon!!!