

Illinois

2025-2026 Series General Orders No. 4 October 2025

HOLIDAY CLOSURE

State Headquarters will be closed on October 13, 2025, for Columbus Day.

SECTION 703 - BONDS

Please refer to Section 703 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure regarding the bonding of officers. We quote in part from Section 703: "Each officer accountable for funds or property pursuant to any provision of these Bylaws shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, he may be accountable. If you have not yet submitted your bond application, one is available on the State of Illinois Website by visiting www.vfwil.org. Go to "Resources" and click on "Reports & Forms" in the drop-down menu. You will find a blank Bond Application on that screen. Complete the application and submit it, along with the payment, to State HQ. All bonds not renewed expired on August 31, 2025.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District Meetings are intended to serve as a school of instruction. District Commanders must make sure instruction is taking place at their meetings. Training is essential to the success of our organization; without it, we lose members and Posts. The national website, www.vfw.org, contains a wealth of information that can be utilized in educational settings. Use these materials and more to cause your attendees at District Meetings to leave the meeting knowing more than they did when they arrived. Department representatives are available, from time to time, to provide training at District Meetings or at Schools of Instruction called outside of the regular District schedule. If two districts combine for a school of instruction, a Department representative is almost sure to attend if invited. Post are required to send a representative to all District meetings.

REGULARLY HELD POST MEETINGS

Sec. 203 Regular, Special, and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meetings, Posts shall hold at least one regular meeting each month. Failure to comply can result in immediate revocation of the Post Charter notwithstanding the provisions of Section 211 of the Manual of Procedure."

Posts MUST meet each month. Those who do not comply with this bylaw are subject to adverse action. Post and District Commanders are expected to ensure compliance with this policy.

MEETING MINUTES

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, section 48 states, "The minutes should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members." Minutes are not meant to be verbatim; this means the minutes should only include the decisions made, motions proposed (whether adopted or rejected), and any notices given, without including the entire discussion or the exact wording of speeches.

If there are no corrections or additions to the minutes, they stand as read.

Regarding corrections to the minutes, if a member disputes a proposed correction, the assembly must decide the matter. A motion can be made to amend the minutes, and then the assembly votes on whether to adopt the correction. If there's a disagreement about what occurred, the assembly as a whole decides what the correct record is through debate and vote.

Meeting minutes must include the following.

- The date, time, and type of meeting
- Meeting location
- > Officers/members present
- > Any subject brought to the meeting floor for a vote
- > The result of that vote
- Anything brought to the meeting floor for a discussion

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, 2026, 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.

POST QUARTERMASTERS

The Online Membership System (OMS), available at www.vfw.org, is a quick and easy way to handle all membership reporting, order new membership cards, update information on your post members, such as address changes, or report the death of a member. If you are not currently using OMS, please log in and start using the system today. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact State Headquarters at (217) 529-6688 for assistance.

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.

FEBRUARY COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEETING

The February Council of Administration Meeting and Voice of Democracy Banquet will be held February 6-8, 2026. Hotel Reservation information will be published in the November General Orders. 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. Tickets will be \$50.00 each, or a table of 10 for \$500.00 and must be purchased by

January 26, 2026. No tickets will be sold after that date and no tickets will be available at the door. District Tables will once again be available; they are to be ordered and paid for by the District Commanders. They are only available in tables of ten.

PODIUM EDITION

The new VFW Podium Edition, which contains the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, manual of Procedure and Ritual, is available online at vfw.org. It is located under Member/Post resources, then click on "Bylaws- training, forms and templates".

VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2025

Posts are urged to start planning suitable programs for the observance of Veterans Day, November 11, 2025 - see Sec. 223 of the Manual of Procedure. National Headquarters will provide an updated speech on their website in early November. Once signed in on www.vfw.org, it can be found under MY VFW by clicking on Patriotic Holiday Speeches.

ILLINOIS DAY AT THE VFW NATIONAL HOME

Illinois Day at the VFW National Home was held on Saturday, September 20, 2025. Special thanks to all who attended this year's activities! Over \$42,700 was donated by Illinois posts, districts, and the State HQ.

RED. WHITE AND BLUE VETERANS SERVICE SUPPORTER PROGRAM

Districts, Posts, and Individuals can once again show their support for our Veterans Service programs through our Red, White, and Blue Support Program. There are three levels of Sponsorships: Red for a minimum donation of \$1,000, White for a donation of \$500, and Blue for a donation of \$250. Donors will receive a plaque noting their level of support. Signs acknowledging contributions will be displayed at the Mid-Winter Conference in February and at our 107th annual State Convention in June 2026.

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.

October 11, 2025 Fox River Post 4600 3002 W. Rt 120 McHenry IL, 60051

October 12, 2025

Princeton Post 4323 1549 W Peru St. Princeton, IL 61356 October 25, 2025 Cronin Brothers Post 1756 915 5th St. Lincoln, IL 62656

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

ONLINE DEPARTMENT CALENDAR

There is a department-wide calendar on the website that all members can view. Any events a Post or District has scheduled can be added to the calendar. Let others know what is going on in your area! You can request that an event be added to the calendar by sending the information to Erin at erin@vfwil.org. This is one of the tools we are using to increase communication and support statewide.

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, and once a ticket wins, it will not be returned to the drawing. You do not need to be present 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.

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

Date of Drawing	Winner	Seller
9/5/2025	Mark Hersant	No Seller Listed
9/12/2025	William Brown	No Seller Listed
9/19/2025	George Sternisha	No Seller Listed
9/26/2025	Stephen Parr	No Seller Listed

By Order of:

Official

Joseph "Scott" Swinford

State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Eugene Blackwell State Commander

Lugene Blackwell

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD CITATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR SCHOOLS

Who is Eligible

- 1. Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime for this award. For example, do you know a teacher who plans field trips to city hall or organizes community volunteer projects? Maybe you know an instructor who invites veterans into the classroom to discuss their military experiences. Perhaps you are familiar with a teacher who fosters the development of democratic values and beliefs through special projects. If you know of such a teacher, honor them today.
- **2.** All current certified/licensed teachers in **K-12** are eligible previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

Documentation Required for all Candidates:

1. All post-level nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and shoulder photo of themselves, if available. Note print one side page only.

John Davin 630 632-9878

"My Voice in America's Democracy?"

We still have time to get the word out on our Youth Essay Program. If you haven't visited your school yet, get out and make that visit them. Discuss the program with your school superintendent. Have you downloaded the flyer from Scholars App.

This year we are using Scholars App. Where you can download your post flyer, with your post number and QR code for the student to visit

If you're having trouble with App.

Scholars Help Resources

Scholars App has a full-time staff who ready to help you with any questions.

Simply email hellovfw@shorlarsapp.com

Department of Illinois has the following Scholars App Coordinators to help you as well

David Long: sgtlongdis7@gmail.com 217 769-9810

Dave Darte: ddarte@yahoo.com 217 773-2218

Lawrence Miller: Irmsvm@comcast.net 217 899-3864

Kyna Simpson: fog4kat@me.com 708 977-5083

Jake Wyatt: jwyatt3@msn.org 630 347-8685

John Davin 630 632-9878

Program Bulletin VOD Oct. 2025

The Department Youth Scholarship Team hopes that your VOD and Patriot's Pen contests are in process and going smoothly. There is still ample time to reach out to students in your community to conduct the contests. Step-by-step instructions using the Scholars App reporting platform and a list of resources for help in the process can be found at the department website.

link: https://vfwil.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=150736

Also here is a list of important dates to keep in mind:

Deadlines Voice of Democracy Contest:

- October 31, 2025 Student entries to post
- November 15, 2025 Post judging complete. (This timeline may be unreasonable for posts with large student participation and may require coordination between post and district chairpersons)
- December 10, 2025 District judging complete
- December 15, 2025 District winners due to the State Headquarters

February 7, 2026- State Voice of Democracy Awards Banquet, Springfield

Marketing Report

Barb Wilson, Chairman

There has been a lot of questions asked about the 2026 Illinois VFW calendar program.

Since the 2026 Illinois VFW Calendar program was voted on by the Council of Administration in August 2024, the calendars have been printed and provided to the District Commanders to pass out to the posts.

The calendar raffle will begin on Jan. 1, 2026 and run daily through Dec. 31, 2026. The calendars are be numbered to ensure the prizes are given away rather than determining if the "winning" calendar has been sold. Each calendar will cost \$20. Only 5,000 calendars will be sold. The winning ticket will be returned to the drawing so you may be able to win multiple times throughout 2026.

State Headquarters has put together a prize structure and incentive package for Posts selling the calendars. Approximately \$21,500 in prizes will be awarded.

Below is the prize structure

Prize Structure

Prize Amount	# of Prizes	Total Prizes
a. 1000	7	\$7,000
b. \$500	7	\$3,500
c. \$250	2	\$500
d. 100	8	\$800
e. \$50	46	\$2,300
f. \$25	295	\$7,375
Total Prizes	365	\$21,475

Honoring Day

A. New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Hannukah, Christmas

B. Army Bday, Navy Bday, Air Force Bday, USMC Bday, USCG Bday, USSF Bday, NG Bday

C. VFW Anniversary, VFW Auxiliary Anniversary

D. Loyalty Day, Halloween, St. Patricks Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Valentine Day, MLK Day

E. All other Sundays

F. All other days

Incentive Program: To help aid State Headquarters in selling the calendars, we have developed an incentive program whereas each Post selling the calendars would receive \$2 for each calendar they sell.

VFW Scout of the Year

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Scout of the Year program stands as a testament to the power of youth leadership, community service, and patriotic citizenship. Each year, the VFW recognizes extraordinary young members of Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Sea Scouts, or Venturing crews who exemplify the highest ideals of scouting and service.

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for the VFW Scout of the Year award, applicants must meet several specific requirements:

- Be a registered active member of the Scouting America or Girl Scouts of the USA, or equivalent scouting organizations (such as Sea Scouts or Venturing crews).
- Have achieved the highest rank possible in their program (Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award, or Sea Scout Quartermaster).
- Demonstrate leadership in their troop, crew, or ship, as well as in their local community.
- Be no more than 18 years old at the time of application.
- Apply through a local VFW post, including documentation of their achievements, community service, and leadership roles.

Application Process

The VFW Scout of the Year award application is a multi-step process designed to be thorough and fair. Scouts begin by assembling a portfolio that includes:

- A completed official application form, available from local VFW posts or online through the VFW's website.
- Letters of recommendation from adult leaders, teachers, and community members who can attest to the scout's character, leadership, and service.
- A resume or list of scouting and community service achievements, including significant projects completed to earn their highest rank.
- Applications are submitted to a local VFW post, where they are reviewed and, if selected, forwarded to district and state-level competitions. State winners are then submitted to VFW National Headquarters.

Impactful Projects

Over the years, recipients of the Scout of the Year award have completed a wide range of impactful projects, from constructing community gardens and organizing disaster relief drives, to building memorials and leading educational campaigns on environmental stewardship. These projects not only meet the rigorous requirements of scouting's highest ranks but also leave lasting legacies in their communities.

For example, an Eagle Scout might design and build a wheelchair-accessible playground for children with disabilities, while a Girl Scout Gold Award recipient could spearhead a local campaign to improve recycling and waste management practices. Each project reflects the scout's personal passions and their commitment to serving others.

For further information contact

Ron Milton, Scouting Chair

618-604-0423

usafret1@att.net

ILLINOIS STATE CAPITOL

VETERANS DAY DISPLAY

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

FROM YOUR FAMILY ALBUM TO THE CAPITOL - HONOR YOUR HERO



This year, State Senator John Curran is paying tribute to the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Illinois' veterans. To ensure their courage and dedication are never forgotten, we invite you to take part in the 2025 Illinois State Capitol Veterans Day Display.

From Tuesday, October 28, through Thursday, November 13, the Capitol Rotunda will be transformed into a moving tribute, featuring photographs and stories of veterans from across our state. We want your loved one's story to be part of it.

Please consider submitting a photograph and a brief written story (up to 250 words) about a veteran who has touched your life. Be sure to include the veteran's name, military branch (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps,



STATE SENATOR JOHN CURRAN

1011 State Street, Suite 205 Lemont, IL 60439 630-914-5733 SenatorCurran.com National Guard, or Navy), and the conflict in which they served (Afghanistan, Iraq, September 11, Gulf War, Vietnam, Korea, WWII, WWI, Peacetime, or other). Military photos are especially meaningful, but not required. The submission deadline is Friday, October 24. Every story received will help ensure that Illinois heroes—past and present—are remembered, celebrated, and honored by thousands of visitors to the Capitol.

Springfield, IL
Gold Star Families Monument
Memorial Dedication
Ceremony
October 18, 2025
Time: 10:00 am
Oak Ridge
Cemetery near the
Illinois Vietnam Veterans and
Korean War Memorials at
1500 Monument Ave • W. Oak Ridge St,
Springfield, IL 62702

Followed by a reception at the Knights of Columbus • Casey's Pub
11:30 – 2:00 pm
2200 Meadowbrook Rd,
Springfield, IL 62711













TOP OF ILLINOIS VETERAN'S STAND DOWN

DATE: Friday, 31 October 2025

WHERE: SecondFirst Church 318 N. Church Street Rockford, IL 61101

TIME: 9 AM - 12 PM

Bring a copy of your DD 214, VA ID card, or other proof of your service to receive Veterans only services

AVAILABLE SERVICES INCLUDE:

Sack Lunch, Clothing Distribution Vet Center/V.A. & IDVA Help

Fellowship and much more

Plan on coming by and enjoy the company of fellow veterans and caring people who appreciate the sacrifice you were willing to make when you were on active military duty.

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

Contact: Ron Sodko usmc3030@yahoo.com

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/693002347434269