



Department of Oklahoma
Veterans of Foreign Wars



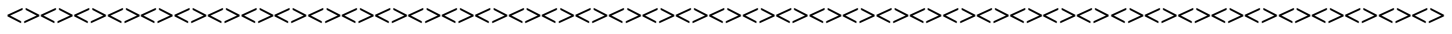
P.O Box 1126 OKC. OK 73101-1126
580 515-0567/ www.vfwoklahoma.org



March 2025

2024-2025 Series

'The world of the future is in our making. Tomorrow is now.'
~Eleanor Roosevelt



DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA HEADQUARTERS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

General Orders No. 09 2024-2025 Series

1. Attention is directed to Section 217 of the National Bylaws, Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office. Post officers shall be nominated, elected and installed as prescribed in Section 217 of the Manual of Procedure.

Manual of Procedure, Section 217, Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office:

Nomination: Nominations of Post Officers shall open in March and remain open until the Post is ready to vote, provided, however that when a poll system is used, as hereinafter described, nominations must be closed at the meeting prior to the election to allow the Adjutant to prepare a printed ballot.

Election: Post Officers shall be elected in April. Balloting for Post officers may be conducted by open vote or written secret ballot (handwritten or printed) at a regular Post meeting, or, if required by Post Bylaws or authorized by Post vote prior to the opening of nominations, by a poll system. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited.

2. Attention is directed to: National By-Laws, Sec 222, Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions: provides that (a) delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. (b) Delegates elected under this section shall not be considered instructed and may exercise full authority in the duty to be performed. (c) Each Post will pay, in accordance with its Department Bylaws, a delegate registration fee for each and every delegate to which the Post shall be entitled. (d) Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified register delegate for the National Convention.

Pursuant to MOP, Sec 222, Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st. Delegate and

alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided, they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.

3. Proof of Eligibility Requirements for Officers: All Posts, Districts and Departments should be reminded of the provisions of Sections 216, 416, and 516 of the Manual of Procedure that officers, elected and appointed, shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.
4. Commanders on all levels are reminded that according to Section 105 of the National Bylaws, a member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They shall not attend meetings or conventions and shall not participate in Post, County Council, District, Department or National functions.

/os/
DAN FULLER
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:

/ os /
Heidi Teeter
Adjutant

*Commander
Dan Fuller*

Greetings from the Nation's Capital,

The Department of Oklahoma has done a lot of important work here during the VFW legislative week. We spoke with all of the congressional staff and senatorial staff. The Oklahoma delegation in addition were able to speak directly with Congressman Kevin Hern and with Senator J. Lankford.

The CIC Al Lipphardt spoke, and he wanted to pass on his appreciation of all the work the members of Oklahoma VFW have done working to reach our membership mission goal.

The Department staff have been working steadily to secure a State Convention site. I believe we will have one very soon.

Our VOD winner, Lydia Kent, received a \$1,000.00 scholarship. She wants to thank the members of Oklahoma VFW for our assistance in her trip to DC.

Please continue to Recruit, Retain and Reinstate members as we are now 5th in the nation and nearing 99%.

I would like to thank all the members that made our Winterfest a great event. Special thanks to Ron Albert (Public Safety) and Jim Basset (VO, PP, and ToY) for all their hard work.

Respectfully,

Dan Fuller

State Commander
Department of Oklahoma

"Where liberty dwells, there is my county"
Benjamin Franklin

*Senior Vice Commander
Jeff Harris*

Comrades,

Hello and greetings. I pray that everyone is well and not sick. There were a lot of comrades and sisters that did not attend the Mid-winter meeting due to sickness. When I got back home, I somehow had pneumonia. So please check on your family and friends that are not doing very well.

The State membership is doing very good. The state is in second place in the Southern conference now with the state of Kentucky in first. The state of Oklahoma is in 5th place Nationally. We are at 98.10 % and climbing. We just need 399 to make 102%. We have 4 months to do this comrades. If you know of an event that troops are coming home, tell me so we can have people there to welcome them back and to say Thanks.

We had all three contestants that are running for the office of National Jr Vice Commander-in-Chief at Mid-Winter. Oklahoma will be voting for one of these men at the National Convention in Columbus Ohio Aug. 9-14.

Past State commander Jim Bassett got a pie in the face, mainly due to his wife Sandy. This was a fundraiser for comrades in distress. I paid my money on Deric Duncan lol. We all had fun doing this.

Well, the weather is getting warmer now. It is March and rain is coming for all you green thumbs to get out and start your gardens.

In closing comrades, I will be running for the office of State Commander. I appreciate your support.

Respectfully,

Jeff Harris

State Sr. Vice Commander

***Junior Vice Commander
Tony McGrew***

Comrades,

I have a Word for you and that word is SYNERGY. It's not a word used often but can have a big or huge impact. First let's look at the definition of Synergy. Dictionaries define it as the cooperation of two or more organizations, for example Posts and Districts, or people producing a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

The most recent and greatest example of this effect, I can think of, happened on November 5th, 2024, when 77 million people decide what direction, our country should go. Take a minute and think about that and just imagine what we, the VFW, can do in our state with that type of synergy. Could it be more Veterans served, more benefits applied for and approved? Could it be more Veterans becoming members of the VFW?

Of course, we all want these things to happen. However, the only way this can happen is if we see the vision and commit to make it happen like November 5th.

I am open to any questions and covet your suggestions and support that may help us get there. This is Your VFW and only you can change it and make it better.

“All for One; One for All”

Respectfully,

TONY MCGREW

Candidate: State Senior Vice Commander.

*Surgeon
Larry Hurd*

Comrades,

Hello from the paw-paw patch. January and the snow and ice along with the colder than normal temperatures have come and gone. Today it was in the 70's and it sure felt nice. I hope everyone in the Department is in good health.

Here is some Veterans Affairs Council information from our last meeting. The VA medical director said that there is an A.I. generated text messages going out to veterans stating they should commit suicide and kill them self. If you receive one of these text messages, contact the Veterans Affairs police department and report it as they are looking into the text messages. The Department of Veterans Affairs has processed more than a million disability claims in fiscal year 2025. Through January, the VA has provided \$62 billion in compensation and pension benefit payments to 6.9 million veterans and survivors. The VA's accuracy rate has risen to more than 92% and to date, the VA has completed 375,691 PACT claims in FY 25. The new VA Secretary, Doug Collins, said under new leadership they are strengthening the VA, so it works better for the veterans, families, caregivers and survivors.

The Oklahoma Senate Education Committee has unanimously approved legislation expanding educational opportunities for the National Guard. Senate Bill 31 creates the Oklahoma National Guard Career Tech Assistance Act, providing tuition assistance to Oklahoma Guard members enrolling in programs leading to licensure or certification, making vocational education more accessible and affordable.

OKC VA is hosting in person login assistance for My HealtheVet on March 4, 5, 6, 2025, 8am to 3pm. The locations are, March 4, South OKC VA clinic, March 5, OKC VA Medical Center and March 6, North OKC VA Clinic for veterans, spouses and caregivers.

Also, I am a candidate for the Department of Oklahoma, Junior Vice Commander position. The elections will be at the state convention in June. Hope to see you at the convention and your vote will be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Larry Hurd

State Surgeon
Department of Oklahoma

*Adjutant/Quartermaster
Heidi Teeter*

Comrades,

I am starting this article off with the same request as last month, since this appears to be a continuing issue.

These emails started out coming from what appeared to be Commander Fuller. However, upon closer inspection it appears someone has created an email address using his name. When the response this person was looking to get was not achieved, they abandoned that one and tried again. This has happened several times with his name. I would like to reiterate that Commander Fuller would **never** send an email requesting anyone purchase gift cards. Recently these scammers have started doing the same thing but instead of using Commander Fuller's name they are using our Post and District Commanders' names.

Should you receive one of these emails, please forward them to vfwokadj@outlook.com. I am working to gather these fake email addresses and attempting to find out who is behind them, so that we can report them to the authorities. If you are unsure if your Post or District Commander actually sent said emails call them and verify. If you receive another email from Dan Fuller, please call or text me at 580-515-0567 to verify.

Following the "District Information" is an article from Judge Advocate Randy Traxler that highlights what to look for and what to do. I put it separate from the rest so that it would be easier to print and hang in your post if you desire.

COMMANDERS & ADJUTANTS: Pursuant to **MOP, Sec 222**, Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st. Comrades, on 31March 25, I will go into the On-line Membership System (OMS) and obtain the members in good standing for each Post within our department. Shortly after, I will be publishing a delegate strength roster showing the number of delegates for each Post. This will be your delegate strength for all conventions at District, Department, and

National Level. Included on the form will be the Department Delegate Dues owed by each Post. A delegate worksheet is also available with these General Orders. Delegate worksheets must be mailed, emailed, or turned into the Department registration table prior to convention voting.

Pursuant to **VFW-Oklahoma Bylaws, Article 5,**

Section 2, *Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st.*

Section 3, *A delegate registration fee established by the Council of Administration will be paid by each Post for every delegate to which it is entitled and by others authorized to cast a vote as defined by the national Bylaws. This fee may be increased/decreased at each succeeding convention by the Council of Administration. Said fees shall be paid to the State Quartermaster 15 days prior to the opening session of the Department Convention. Anyone wanting to register after this date will be assessed an additional fee of \$1.00 for each delegate registered. Post delegate fees are due and payable regardless of convention attendance. Posts that do not pay prior to the convention will be assessed the delegate fees at the plus \$1.00 rate.*

As always, if anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Charlie Mike,

Heidi Teeter

State Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of Oklahoma

***Judge Advocate
Randy Traxler***

Transformational Leadership in the Modern VFW: A Call for Presence and Growth

As we move into the nomination and election time of the year we need to reflect on leadership. Leadership is more than just holding a title or being in charge. It's about presence, growth, and the ability to inspire meaningful change. As Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts transition from leadership rooted in the Vietnam and Desert Storm eras to those led by Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) veterans, the need for transformational leadership is more critical than ever.

The challenge before us is clear: Do we want leaders who simply manage the status quo, or do we want leaders who actively shape the future of our organization? Transactional leaders focus on routine tasks, enforcing rules, and maintaining order. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, inspire growth, challenge outdated practices, and push for a future that better serves all veterans.

Leadership Measured by Action

To assess whether our current leaders are truly transformational, we must reflect on their actions over the past year. Leadership is not about making the easy choices—it's about making the right ones. And this is not just about commanders. This applies to every elected or appointed leader entrusted with serving our organization. Consider the following:

- Did they authorize pay raises without proper approval? A leader's integrity is measured by their adherence to organizational bylaws. If financial decisions are made outside the proper process, it signals a disregard for accountability and weakens trust within the organization.
- Do they follow procedures appropriately? Strong leaders understand that rules and guidelines exist for a reason. They don't bypass them for convenience or personal gain.
- Do they understand the bylaws and encourage others to abide by them? Leadership is not about personal interpretation of the rules; it is about understanding, upholding, and enforcing them consistently. A transformational leader ensures that bylaws are followed and holds others accountable when they fail to do so.
- Are they silent until forced to act? A leader who only speaks up when pressured is not leading—they are reacting. True leadership requires foresight, initiative, and the courage to address issues before they escalate.

The Need for Transformational Leadership

To navigate this generational shift, the VFW must foster leaders who are not just caretakers but changemakers. This means developing leaders who:

1. Embrace Change – The needs and expectations of today's veterans are different from those of past generations. Leaders must be willing to adapt while preserving the core mission of the VFW.
2. Inspire and Motivate – Transformational leaders create a sense of shared purpose, encouraging engagement from members at all levels.
3. Act with Integrity – Following procedures and upholding bylaws isn't just about compliance—it's about setting a standard of trust and accountability.
4. Are Present and Engaged – Leadership is not a title; it's a responsibility. Presence in meetings, responsiveness to concerns, and proactive decision-making are marks of a true leader.

Moving Forward

This evolution is happening, whether we embrace it or not. The question is: Will we actively shape the future of the VFW, or will we allow outdated leadership practices to hold us back? It's time to demand more from those in leadership roles—not just commanders, but every elected or appointed leader who has been entrusted with the responsibility to serve.

A transformational leader doesn't just occupy a position—they take action, inspire change, and hold themselves and others accountable.

The future of the VFW depends on it.

V/r

Randy Traxler

Judge Advocate

Department of Oklahoma

989-482-3876

Historian
Richard Elsheimer

Just a suggestion to posts that have web pages, why not include a brief description of your post and history of the post. Some include the overall makeup of the VFW goals, but many prospective members would like to know about your local individual post and some of your activities. Some feel the old saying that we cannot relive history, but that history is what brings our posts, districts, state and national units to the point it is today. Always remember what is important today becomes history in the future. Those posts that do not have web pages, creating one might encourage membership on a local level.

Any posts or districts that would like some recognition in the General Orders, you are encouraged to send me information such as when the unit was chartered, special awards, and any other pertinent information about your history. Every unit within the VFW is of interest to others and may become an inspiration.

Richard Elsheimer

State Historian

richelsh@att.net or text 918-371-6632

Voice of Democracy/Patriot Pen
Teacher of the Year
Jim Bassett

Congratulations to all of the VFW Department winners of this year's Voice of Democracy audio-essay Patriot Pen's essay competitions! The national winners of the VFW's Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth scholarship contests will be announced during the Washington Conference next month in Washington, D.C. Listen to the winners here: <https://bit.ly/3XfkXur>.

Reminder: If you won't be in Washington, D.C., for the Parade of Winners, please join us live on Facebook March 3 at 5 p.m. CST and vfw.org/VFWDC2025 to follow along as the \$35,000 grand prize winner is announced! To hear all the contestants go here <https://bit.ly/3XfkXur>.

Total count for this year's Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen essay contest are 104 and 919, (1,032 for those that don't want to add). We had a total of 201 complete applications through the Scholars App. Roughly 20% of the applicants came from the app. Considering only a ¼ of the post used it, not bad.

Reporting statistics out of 76 posts:

- Voice of Democracy Patriot's Pen
- 17 Post/5 Aux 18 Posts/6 Aux
- 9 Districts 8 Districts

Currently, the plan is not to make Scholars App mandatory next year. I do encourage all posts and districts to sign up and receive their QR code. It makes everything easier. While we did have a few issues, the company fixed them all on the same day.

This is a great recruiting tool. When recruiting, ask about family members. Using the programs is a great way to encourage potential members to join.

We have some great competitors this year, let's see how this year's winners do.

Jim Bassett

State VoD/PP/ToY Chair
Department of Oklahoma

VMS *Jim Bassett*

\$191,900 to 46 military recipients in Oklahoma as part of the Help-A-Hero Scholarships. That is a huge impact and a great recruiting informational tool to tell potential members. When you tell them that this can be used in conjunction with other scholarships and oh, yeah, you do not need to be a VFW member. Education is something important to most military, Active, Reserves, or Guard. Talk to them about Help-A-Hero scholarships, or the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program, Voice of Democracy, or Patriot's Pen. The VFW Auxiliary even offers a continuing education scholarship as well as Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest.

All of these are great recruiting tools that you can use to encourage potential members to join. We do more for Veterans, their families, and the communities that we all live in. All of these are the VFW helping others.

I have been given permission to set up permanent tables at four locations on Tinker AFB. I will be setting them up soon.

Jim Bassett

State VMS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Training and Development *Randy Traxler and Jim Bassett*

Building Strong Foundations: Creating and Validating Onboarding Processes for Newly Elected VFW Leaders

When a new leader steps into an elected or appointed role within the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)—whether at the post, district, or department level—there is no time for uncertainty. The mission of the VFW is

too important to leave to chance. That's why developing and validating a structured onboarding process is essential. A well-designed process ensures new leaders understand their responsibilities, adjust smoothly, and contribute effectively without putting the organization's mission at risk.

The Importance of a Structured Onboarding Process

Newly elected leaders often step into roles with enthusiasm but may lack clarity on the full scope of their responsibilities. Without proper onboarding, they may struggle to make informed decisions, follow bylaws correctly, or effectively engage with members. A structured onboarding process should:

- **Ensure Continuity of Leadership** – A smooth transition prevents gaps in knowledge or disruptions in operations.
- **Build Confidence and Competence** – Leaders who understand their roles are more effective in decision-making and problem-solving.
- **Protect the Mission** – When leaders are well-prepared, they uphold VFW standards, ensure financial integrity, and maintain compliance with policies and bylaws.

Core Elements of an Effective Onboarding Program

1. Mentorship: Guiding the Next Generation of Leaders

Mentorship is the backbone of any successful onboarding process. Assigning an experienced leader as a mentor provides new officers with a trusted resource who can guide them through challenges, answer questions, and offer practical insights. A strong mentorship program should include:

- **Structured Meetings** – Regular check-ins to discuss progress, answer questions, and provide feedback.
- **Shadowing Opportunities** – Allowing new leaders to observe experienced counterparts in action.
- **Knowledge Sharing** – Providing historical context, lessons learned, and best practices for the role.

2. Tailoring Onboarding to Individual Needs

Not every leader comes into their role with the same experience, knowledge, or skills. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Instead, onboarding should be flexible enough to address individual strengths and weaknesses. Key considerations include:

- **Assessing Prior Experience** – Understanding a leader's background helps determine how much guidance they need.
- **Providing Targeted Training** – If a new leader struggles with finances, focus training on budget management and compliance. If they need help with public speaking, offer communication coaching.
- **Encouraging Open Dialogue** – Leaders should feel comfortable asking for help without fear of judgment.

3. Ensuring Bylaws and Procedures Are Understood and Followed

A leader who does not understand the bylaws and procedures of their position is a risk to the organization. Proper training on governance ensures leaders operate within their authority and uphold the integrity of the VFW. Onboarding should include:

- **A Review of Bylaws and SOPs** – New leaders must be familiar with the governing documents of their level (post, district, or department).
- **Scenario-Based Training** – Walking through real-world situations where bylaws must be applied.
- **Accountability Measures** – Leaders should understand how they will be held accountable for following policies.

4. Validating the Effectiveness of Onboarding Processes

An onboarding program is only successful if it produces capable, confident leaders. To ensure effectiveness, organizations must regularly assess and refine their processes. This can be done by:

- Gathering Feedback – Surveying new leaders on what worked and what could be improved.
- Monitoring Performance – Evaluating how well new leaders execute their responsibilities.
- Adapting for Future Leaders – Using lessons learned to make improvements for the next cycle of onboarding.

Protecting the Mission Through Strong Leadership Development

The VFW's mission—to serve and support veterans—is only as strong as its leadership. Failing to onboard leaders properly creates unnecessary risks, from financial mismanagement to policy violations to disengaged members. A structured, adaptable, and mentor-driven onboarding process ensures new leaders' step into their roles prepared, confident, and ready to serve.

Leadership transitions will always happen, but with the right onboarding approach, the mission of the VFW will never be at risk.

Respectfully,

Randy Traxler

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Randy Traxler and I would like to make our training even better. To do this we are asking for input and volunteers.

Concept:

- Mandatory classes for each officer/chair positions
- In-depth training on the job as well as how it interacts with other officers/chairs
- Available training to help members with programs, roles and responsibilities as well as proper recruiting practices.

To do this we are looking for volunteers who can help with curriculum development as well as classroom instruction. This role may include mobile training teams.

If you have ideas, requests, comments, please contact me at bassettj15@yahoo.com. I will share the emails with Randy so we can move forward.

Jim Bassett

State Education Co-Chair
Department of Oklahoma

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services *Tony McGrew and Jim Bassett*

Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services are looking for volunteers. They need drivers, book carts, popcorn or, well almost anything to include just visiting. To volunteer, contact Tony McGrew, tony.vfw8706@gmail.com.

The process is simple, fill out the application, fingerprinted, and a quick blood test and you are in. If there is a particular skill that you would like to take advantage of, let them know. They are looking for volunteers at the VA Center in Muskogee, on Fort Sill, and the OKC VA Center.

So, if interested, contact Tony McGrew, tony.vfw8706@gmail.com. Let him know where you would like to volunteer.

They hold meetings on a regular basis so information will be released about events at each location.

Tony McGrew, tony.vfw8706@gmail.com.

Tony McGrew

Jim Bassett

State VAVS Chair
Department of Oklahoma

VFW Foundation

Jim Bassett

First, I would like to apologize to anyone that wanted to attend the Oklahoma VFW Foundation meeting that was supposed to be held at Mid-Winter Conference in February. Events got the better of us and we could not meet. The foundation wants to be transparent to the members of the VFW and Auxiliary. Our next accessible meeting will be held at the State Convention. We also plan on holding one at each of the three events, Fall-Fest, Mid-Winter, and convention. So that you know, we are trying to build the infrastructure needed to be successful. If you have concerns, comments or suggestions, we are more than interested in hearing them. They can be mailed to okvfwfoundation@outlook.com or bassettj15@yahoo.com.

Your Foundation

<https://okvfwfoundation.org>



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Oklahoma Foundation

District Happenings

District 4

Antlers Post 3658:

- Gun show at the Antlers Fair Barn, Mar 22, and 23 0900 to 1700 on Sat, 0900 to 1600 on Sunday. Admission is \$10, children under 12 are free.

District 8

Sapulpa Post 1320:

- Friday, March 7th 11:30am - Sapulpa Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (Chamber of Commerce Facebook Live 12pm)
- Saturday, March 8th 6:00pm - Paint & Sip \$35
- Saturday, March 22nd - Poker Run

District 14

Ardmore Post 4574:

- Poker Run and Raffle April 5th.
- April 9th is The Medal of Honor Ride in Gainesville that the Post and Riders Support.

DISTRICT MEETING INFORMATION

- District 1
 - TBD
 - TBD
 - TBD
- District 3
 - May 3rd 11 am
 - Stigler, 10396 HWY 9 West
 - TBD
- District 4
 - May 3rd 11 am
 - Durant, 123 S 2nd ST
 - TBD
- District 5
 - May 4th 2 pm
 - Claremore, 1717 W DuPont
 - TBD
- District 7
 - May 3rd 11 am
 - Okmulgee, 1427 N Okmulgee
 - TBD
- District 8
 - May 10th 11 am
 - Stillwater, 5505 W 6th Ave
 - TBD

- District 9
 - May 17th 10 am
 - Guthrie, 5223 S Division St
 - TBD
- District 10
 - May 10th 10 am
 - Shawnee, 811 E Macarthur ST
 - TBD
- District 13
 - April 19th 11 am
 - Clinton, 1705 ½ US 183
 - TBD
- District 14
 - April 12th 10 am
 - Marlow, 305 W Arapahoe
 - TBD
- District 15
 - May 17th 11 am
 - Lawton, 926 SW 2nd ST
 - TBD

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Voice of Democracy >> March 1st -5th >> Washington DC
Washington Conference >> March 2nd -6th >> Washington DC
U.S. Navy Reserve Birthday >> March 3rd
K9 Veterans Day >> March 13th
Medal of Honor Day >> March 25th
Vietnam War Veterans Day >> March 29th
Gold Star Spouses Day >> April 5th
National Former POW Recognition Day >> April 9th
Dept Sr Vice Training (for Dept Sr Vices only) >> April 10th – 13th >> Kansas City, MO
Air Force Reserve Birthday >> April 14th
Army Reserve Birthday >> April 23rd
NVS Accredited Representative Proficiency Training Conference >> April 27th – 30th >> Annapolis, MD
Cinco de Mayo >> May 5th
Mother's Day >> May 11th
Armed Forces Day >> May 17th
National Maritime Day >> May 22nd
Memorial Day >> May 26th

EMAIL PHISHING

Randy Traxler

Scammers are working harder than ever to steal personal information through phishing emails and text messages (smishing). As part of the **VFW Oklahoma** community, we want to ensure you stay informed and protected.

How to Recognize and Handle Phishing Attempts

◇ **If You Receive a Phishing Email:**

- **Do NOT click on links or open attachments**—they may contain malware.
- **Verify the sender**—look for misspellings or unusual addresses.
- **Report the email:**
 - Use your email provider's "Report phishing" option.
 - Forward it to **reportphishing@apwg.org** (Anti-Phishing Working Group).
 - If it appears to be from a trusted company, report it directly to them.
- **Mark as spam and delete** the email.
- **Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)** on your accounts for added security.

◇ **If You Receive a Phishing Text (Smishing):**

- **Do NOT click links or reply**—this confirms your number is active to scammers.
- **Report the text** by forwarding it to **7726 (SPAM)** and to the **FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov**.
- **Block the sender** on your phone.
- **Check with the company directly** if the message claims to be from your bank, service provider, or another organization.
- **Keep your phone updated** to protect against security threats.

What to Do If You've Already Been a Victim

If you've clicked on a phishing link or shared sensitive information, take action immediately:

- Change your passwords** for any affected accounts.
- Contact your bank or credit card company** if you shared financial information.
- Report identity theft** to the **FTC at www.identitytheft.gov**.
- Scan your devices for malware** if you clicked on a suspicious link.

By staying vigilant, we can protect ourselves and each other from cyber threats. If you suspect a phishing attempt targeting VFW members, please report it immediately.