



# Department of Georgia Veterans of Foreign Wars Monthly E-Bulletin January 2008



Volume 2, Issue 1

1. OFFICIAL. The Monthly E-Bulletin is an OFFICIAL communication device of the Department of Georgia Veterans of Foreign Wars and is distributed "For the Commander/By Direction". The bulletin is intended to provide more timely information to the field than would be provided by the periodic Commanders' mail out or Quarterly Department newspaper. Target date for each issue will be the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month and it will be distributed in the Adobe and Microsoft Word formats. Adobe Reader is available free on the Internet.
2. SUBSCRIPTION. The bulletin is intended for Department Council of Administration members and Commanders and Quartermasters at all levels but any member of the VFW or LAVFW may request distribution by providing an e-mail address with identity and post number to the Headquarters by email ([gahq@gavfw.org](mailto:gahq@gavfw.org)) with the subject line: "Subscription to Monthly E-Bulletin".
3. VFW 109<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION – ORLANDO. Registration has opened for the 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention to be held in Orlando, Florida August 16-21, 2008. National has provided a helpful housing assistance link for you at <http://vfw.orlandomeetinginfo.com/> that provides *Event Information, What to See & Do, Other Information* (maps, security, transportation), and *Discounts*. Everyone is advised to make reservations as soon as practical because blocks of rooms are projected to book quickly.
4. 100 PERCENT DISTRICT COMMANDERS. Each district commander reaching 100 percent in membership (life, continuous, new/reinstated) by January 31 will receive a travel/trip award to help defray expenses to the Washington Community Service/Legislative Conference (March 2 – 5, 2008). This award will include the lowest available roundtrip airfare and \$300 to help with expenses. This award is not transferable.
5. NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO MID-WINTER CONFERENCE. Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot will represent the National Organization at the Mid-Winter Conference in Macon February 15-17, 2008. Tom was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 99<sup>th</sup> National Convention in San Antonio, Texas on September 4, 1998. He served in the United States Navy from January 1962 through May 1966 and served on three aircraft carriers – the USS Independence, the USS Midway, and the USS Coral Sea. He was aboard the Coral Sea when it conducted operations against North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin. He has been awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and several Navy Unit Commendations. He is a member of VFW Post 1116, Helena, Montana and was an All-American Department Commander in 1990-91. He has a private law practice and serves as a City Judge in East Helena, Montana.
6. MID-WINTER CONFERENCE. The Department of Georgia Mid-Winter Conference will be February 15-17, 2008. NOTE: The Friday Council meeting will start at 7:30 PM rather than the usual start at 7:00 PM, this meeting only. It is at the Mid-Winter Conference that we honor our VOD, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher Citizenship Education at the Awards Banquet in their honor. We will also announce the winner of the first Richard Branson Post Service Officer of the Year Award and other appropriate awards. The banquet tickets are available at \$35 and may be obtained by contacting Sheila at the Headquarters (478-474-3737). A special room rate (\$69) is available but you must contact the hotel directly at 478-476-1461 and request "In House Reservations" and ask for the VFW meeting rate. Do not call Ramada's 1-800-number. If you have not done so, call Sheila to reserve the banquet tickets. MARDI GRAS AT MID-WINTER CONFERENCE. The LAVFW has worked to provide an outstanding Cancer Aid and Research fundraiser at the Mid-Winter Conference with a Mardi Gras on the Plaza-level of the hotel after the Friday evening Council meetings.
7. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING. Continuous members who have not been credited with paying their dues for 2007-2008 by December 31, 2007 are no longer in good standing and will not receive the magazine, the Department newspaper, and may not use VFW facilities (e.g., the canteen). Commanders are encouraged to know who these members are and understand those not paid are not permitted to function as though they were members – that is: they may not attend meetings, work BINGO, or use the canteen until paid in full.

8. **RETENTION OF MEMBERS.** Over the past week, the Department officers and District Commanders have been provided more than 10,000 (yes, ten thousand) names of individuals that have been affiliated with the VFW as members within the last three years. All of those names have apparently current addresses, many have telephone numbers and many have e-mail addresses. Working these names would make a great Saturday afternoon or weekend recruiting project for the National Recruiters to work with the appropriate districts and posts.
9. **OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AND HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEE NOMINATIONS.** Outstanding Health Care Award, Outstanding Community Health Care Employee, and Outstanding Health Care Volunteer nominations must be submitted to Department Headquarters by March 1, 2008. NOTE: National will not accept if there are blanks on the nomination form – please ensure they are filled out in their entirety.
10. **WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.** As mentioned above, the Washington Legislative/Community Service Conference will be held March 2 – 5, 2008 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D. C. The Parade of Winners will be on Monday evening (March 3), Commander-in-Chief’s testimony before Congress will be Tuesday morning (March 4), and the Celebration of Achievement Banquet will be Tuesday evening (March 4). Check out and departures are on March 5, 2008. All tickets for the banquet except the actual VFW National Committee members must be purchased through the Department Headquarters by January 25, 2008. This includes spouses accompanying committee members and all members of the LAVFW attending the Conference.
11. **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (VFW-PAC).** The Veterans of Foreign Wars does take positions on various political issues such as the Budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Benefits and Compensation, VA Education benefits, Military Retiree benefits, Veterans Employment, Homeless Veterans, War on Terrorism/Homeland Security, Defense and Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, and POW/MIA. The VFW is necessarily non-partisan in its approach and does not endorse partisan political candidates at any level – to do so would violate our Congressional Charter. The VFW-PAC is a separately incorporated organization that does selectively endorse candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate who have in the past supported legislation endorsed by the VFW and who advocate for America’s veterans, military, and security. *The VFW-PAC does NOT endorse Presidential candidates.* The VFW-PAC has an eleven member Board of Directors that sets the endorsement criteria generally based on voting records regarding veterans and military issues not on political party affiliation.
12. **HEADSTONES PROVIDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.** If a veteran is buried in one the VA National Cemeteries or one of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service Cemeteries, cemetery personnel will ensure that the headstone is ordered and placed. When the veteran is buried in a private cemetery, the dependents must fill out VA Form 40-1330 and mail (or fax) along with a copy of the veteran’s discharge documents (funeral directors will usually assist in this). Headstones must be inscribed in English with the legal name, branch of military service. If space is available, it may also contain: rank, war service, military decorations and awards, and the month and day of death. Usually an emblem of belief may be inscribed; there are 38 authorized emblems of believe available to be inscribed including several Christian, Orthodox, Jewish, and other faiths/religions. There is even an emblem for atheists.
13. **VA AND HOMELESS VETERANS.** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is the largest provider of aid to the homeless and includes health care, outreach, case management, employment assistance, rehabilitation, transitional residential care, therapeutic care, and assistance with permanent housing. There has been a 22 percent reduction in homeless veterans in the past five years. Only about 30 percent of homeless veterans are chronically homeless and these are the hardest to reach of the homeless population. VA’s programs are designed to target this group. VA provides 15,000 beds in transitional housing, 100,000 veterans receive VA health care each year. This is provided at the cost of \$1.6 billion for health care and \$287 million for homeless specific programs this year. For more information go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/> or you can email the VA at [homelessvets@mail.va.gov](mailto:homelessvets@mail.va.gov) .
14. **WOMEN VETERANS.** Women are veterans, too. As of September 2007 the number of women veterans was 1,744,580. States with the largest number of female veterans are California, Texas, Florida, Virginia, and Georgia. Georgia has approximately 71,025 women veterans.
15. **SERVICE CONNECTED MILEAGE RATES.** The current Omnibus Appropriations Bill contains provisions and money for the mileage rate for C & P and other service connected mileage with the Veterans Administration to be paid at the rate of 28 cents per mile. Original legislation (for 48 cents) was introduced in

the House by Representative John Barrow at the urging of the Georgia Veterans of Foreign Wars. This is the first successful mileage adjustment in more than a decade.

16. DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL ADVISERS. The Department's financial advisers are willing and able to also work with posts and individual members to assist in their financial needs for the future. The Department works with Greg Davis (Edward Jones @ 866-581-9106) and Ron Woodford (SunTrust Investment Services @ 800-692-6564, ext 15441).
17. HONORING KOREA WAR ERA VETERANS. Highway US 80 will be dedicated through Georgia as the Korean War Memorial Highway in ceremonies conducted in Macon on March 28, 2008; Tybee Island on April 7, 2008; and in Columbus on a date yet to be announced. The Department will be selling Commemorative pins at the Mid-Winter Conference for cost (\$3.00).
18. NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE ESTABLISHED AT THE VA. Suicide is the eleventh (known) most frequent cause of death in the United States. Some studies show that suicide ranks as high as the eighth leading cause of death. There are approximately 30,000 deaths each year and someone dies by suicide every 16 minutes. The demographics of suicide mean that it is an issue with which we as veterans and veteran's advocates must deal. Although women attempt suicide more frequently than men, men more frequently complete suicide to a staggering degree. More suicides occur in white men over 65 years of age than any other group. In recognition of this demographic propensity, the VA has established a 24-hour, seven day a week hotline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) to assist a veteran or anyone concerned about a veteran.
19. PERSONAL APPEARANCE WHEN REPRESENTING POST OR DISTRICT AT PUBLIC FUNCTIONS. Just as a reminder that you are the public face of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States when you wear your official VFW hat and attend functions such as the unveiling of monuments, dedication ceremonies, flag raisings, and other activities in the public eye. Please, dress and act appropriately. Do not feed the stereotype that still portrays many of us negatively. Do not wear the official VFW cap during any meal.
20. REPORTING ACTIVITY. You do the work – fill out the report. Our reports are used to justify, in one way or another, our tax-exempt {IRS Section 501(c)(19)} status as well as demonstrating for the IRS our controls to safeguard the assets of the membership thereby fulfilling our fiduciary responsibilities to the membership. The Trustees' Report of Audit, the Post Inspection, Post bonding, Community Activities, Hospital activity – all are important to show what we do so that we remain tax-exempt. The Department's consolidated reports – Fiduciary Responsibilities Report, Community Activities/Americanism Reports, and Hospital Report – are considered by the Internal Revenue Service to be "contemporaneous business records" to support our claims of our work thus, the need for timeliness.
21. BUDDY POPPIES. Significant numbers of posts have not purchased any Buddy Poppies at all this year although many of you have ordered your Buddy Poppies for distribution on and around Veterans Day. In reviewing the Activities Report, it is surprising to see some of the previously outstanding posts that have not yet ordered. Please get your orders in so that you have them throughout the year. Remember that the National Commander-in-Chief's Buddy Poppy goal this year is five per member per post.
22. MEMBERSHIP PROCESSING AND TRANSMITTAL DATES. Remember that "Dues Notice" tapes are created on the last Friday of each month. To prevent Dues Notices from being sent to those who have remitted their dues to the post, transmittals of renewing continuous and transmission of the dues of new and reinstated for 2007-2008 are:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DEADLINE DATE at National</u>	<u>DAY</u>
January	January 25, 2008	Friday
February	February 29, 2008	Friday
March	March 28, 2008	Friday
April	April 25, 2008	Friday
May	May 30, 2008	Friday
June	June 30, 2008	Friday

23. 2008 CONSTITUTION, BY-LAWS, AND RITUAL PODIUM EDITION. Every post should by this point in the year have at least one copy of the current Podium edition. The Podium edition may be ordered from the National Emblem and Supply. There are significant changes in certain requirements and procedures – get a copy and find out what they are.

24. CONSOLIDATED HOSPITALITY ROOM. The consolidated hospitality room concept has received overwhelmingly favorable response from most posts/districts and attendees. The Department Headquarters has secured the booking of the largest meeting room on the Plaza level of the Ramada Plaza Hotel – the Plaza Room. The room is much larger than the Lanier Room where we previously had the Hospitality Room. After a review, we believe that we can continue to coordinate for the individuals to manage and work, the food, the spirits, and etc. for \$200 from each of the districts for the Fall and Mid-Winter Conferences and very likely no more than \$225 to \$250 for the Convention in June 2008. District Commanders, please remit \$200 for the February 2008 Meeting to Department.
25. DEPARTMENT MEETINGS. Any member of the VFW is welcome and may attend Department Council of Administration meetings. In fact, members are encouraged to attend such meetings. These are not closed-door meetings and post members and officers can learn much about the organization by the “LBWA”.
26. EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DRAWINGS AT STATE MEETINGS. The names of those making their reservations (as listed by the hotel) by the official post card or telephone registration 45 days or more before the start of the first day of the conference/meeting will be placed in a drawing for \$250. All of those registered at least 15 days prior to the first day of the conference/meeting will have their names placed in a drawing for \$100. For the Mid-Winter Conference that will mean that all those registered NLT December 31, 2007 will be in a drawing for \$250 and all those registered by January 31, 2008 will be in the drawing for \$100. For the State Convention (June 12-15, 2008), the cut off for the \$250 will be NLT April 28, 2008 and the \$100 will be NLT May 27, 2008. The Fall Conference is currently planned for October 17-19, 2008.
27. CHECKS TO DEPARTMENT. Checks written to Department should clear your bank within at least two weeks of being sent to the Headquarters. If you have written a check to Department that has not cleared your bank within 15 days after you mailed it, please notify Judy so that we can determine whether or not there is a problem. As a reminder, please cash Department checks to you expeditiously so that we may keep our books up to date.
28. MEMBERSHIP. As of today, the Department has met the 5 percent New/Reinstated portion of the goal given the Department by the Commander-in-Chief All-American Department of 100 percent with 5 percent New or Reinstated. We must also work the Unpaid Continuous rosters. The District Commanders also have lists with more than 10,000 names of other “unpaid” members. You can print your post's and district's *unpaid* and *prior unpaid* at VFW MEMSTATS website. We are currently 1668 members short of our 100 percent goal. Currently the district shortages are 1<sup>st</sup> District –61, 2<sup>nd</sup> District –280, 3<sup>rd</sup> District –324, 4<sup>th</sup> District –184, 5<sup>th</sup> District –256, 6<sup>th</sup> District –78, 7<sup>th</sup> District –144, 8<sup>th</sup> District –32, 9<sup>th</sup> District –147, 10<sup>th</sup> District –232, 11<sup>th</sup> District –252, 12<sup>th</sup> District –133; District's total shortage –2123.
29. This bulletin may also be used to advertise items that your post may have for sale or to list items of interest to others in the Department such as your monthly fishing tournament, your annual golf tournament fundraiser, or the need for bottled water for fire fighters in your area.

Dedication Equals Success,

Dean E. Smith  
State Commander

Official:



Albert R. Spears  
State Adjutant/Quartermaster