

INFORMER

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WAR[®]

Post 2866

July-August 2026

Randal Wansing *Commander* *2026-2027*



One Team, One Mission: Stepping Up for the 2026-2027 VFW Year

As we begin the 2026–2027 term, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our immediate past leadership team. Their dedication, long hours, and behind-the-scenes sweat kept our Post steady. They set a high bar, and we owe them our deepest gratitude.

Now, the clock resets. To answer the National Commander-in-Chief's directive—"One Team, One Mission, Veterans First"—our Post must immediately focus on three critical objectives:

•**Membership Retention & Family Outreach:** We aren't just looking for new faces; we must retain our current comrades and actively engage younger veterans and their families. Our future relies on creating a welcoming, family-friendly environment where spouses and children feel valued.

•**Urgent Need: Scholarship & Teacher Program Chairman:** Our first major initiative is upon us: the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year programs. We need a dedicated individual to step up and chair this effort immediately. If you want a meaningful challenge that directly impacts local schools and youth, this is your call. Program Description and Chairman duties found on the next page.

•**All Hands for Thursday Night Bingo:** Bingo is our primary financial engine. Without the revenue generated on Thursday nights, we cannot fund community outreach, host family events, or keep our doors open. We desperately need consistent weekly volunteers to call numbers, sell pull-tabs, and manage the floor.

The Stakes of Inaction We must be candid about the consequences of empty positions. If we do not step up to fill leadership roles and volunteer slots right now, we will be forced to drop vital community programs and scale back veteran support. In the long term, it threatens the very survival of our Post. Empty chairs today mean a closed building tomorrow.

This Post belongs to every generation of wartime veterans. Let's protect it, build it, and ensure it stands strong. See you at the next meeting—let's get to work.

Fraternally yours,

Randy Wansing
Commander

Program Spotlight:

Our Youth & Education Competitions

We are seeking a dedicated coordinator to help facilitate three incredibly rewarding programs in our local community this fall.

- Voice of Democracy (Grades 9–12): Our premier audio-essay contest. High school students write and record a 3-to-5-minute broadcast script.
- Patriot's Pen (Grades 6–8): A traditional written essay competition (300–400 words) encouraging middle schoolers to examine America's history and society.

The 2026–2027 Shared Theme: “What a Veteran Taught Me About America”

- Teacher of the Year: A program where we recognize top local K-12 educators who actively foster citizenship, innovation, and deep patriotism in their classrooms.

The Program Timeline:

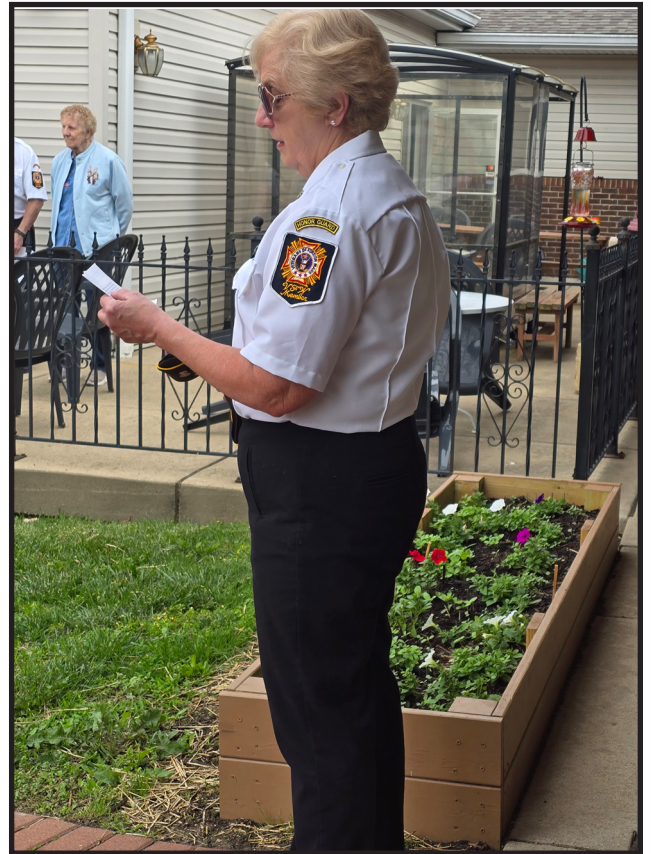
- October 31, 2026: Student and teacher submissions are due to our Post.
 - November 10, 2026: Post-level judging must be finalized and our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners selected for each category.
 - November 15, 2026: Winning entries must be packed up and sent to the District Chairman.
- What the Chairman Actually Does:

•You Won't Fly Solo: The Chairman serves as the main point of contact to drop off promotional info at local schools in September, coordinate a small committee of Post members to help judge entries in early November, and lead the outreach for our spring awards banquet.

•Auxiliary Partnership: You will work hand-in-hand with your Auxiliary counterpart. This is a team effort across the entire Post family, meaning the workload, school visits, and dinner planning are fully shared. This position is currently open and if you have a spouse in the Auxiliary, this is a perfect opportunity to work together on a worthwhile Program



Jan Radcliff Post Chaplain



I signed up for July 3rd at the Riverfest to work our VFW tent. In my heart and head it was about the last thing I wanted to do especially when it got so hot and I had a broken toe BUT I did it anyway to support Candace and Randy's efforts to "get us out in the community." Little did I know what was ahead.

At first, I stayed behind the tables in the shade to stay cool. When I ventured to the outside of the tables and handed out Patriotic trinkets and talked to all ages of people, I experienced the most gut-wrenching reality that I will cherish forever. Two young boys who looked 10 and 12 approached the table quiet and respectful. I talked with them, they chose a couple of small wrist band and one head band then the oldest pointed to a very small, blue, light Veteran Crisis Awareness back pack and asked if he could have it. I hesitated and slowly said, "Yes, do you know what that means?" He quickly, quietly said, "Yes." I went on to explain 22 Veterans a day commit suicide and that information is for the Crisis Suicide line. As he took it, he said, "Just like my dad, he committed suicide." I told him I was so sorry for his loss, then he added, "and he was also a Veteran." I maintained my composure and looked him in the eye and said I was sorry then reflected to the bag and few things they had chosen and thanked them for coming by the tent, visiting us and to have a safe 4th of July. I asked if they were brothers and they both said yes. This encounter really made the whole experience come to life that we have reached out into the community and many come to us with their stories. MANY CAME TO OUR TENT because they were Veterans, they had a loved one who was a Veteran and they felt comfort to reach back to the VFW Tent who had Veterans and Auxiliary members present reaching back to them.

As we move from one Administration to the next, may it be seamless with continued support for our different program areas. We need YOU and invite YOU to join us in one or more of the committee areas that keep this Post alive, fun and interesting.

May God Bless All of Us and our families in this 250th year of our nation!

IMPORTANT DATES

- JULY 8TH - POST MEETING 7PM
- JULY 12TH - DISTRICT MEETING (UNION MO)
 - AUGUST 12TH POST MEETING 7PM
 - SEPTEMBER 9TH POST MEETING 7PM
- VFW POST PROGRAM SEMINAR FOR MEMBERSHIP
 - SEPTEMBER 20TH POST FAMILY PICNIC
 - EVERY THURSDAY IS BINGO
 - EVERY TUESDAY IS QUEEN OF HEARTS

Letter from the Editor:

As we start a new year, I want to begin by saying thank you to all who volunteered for the 4th of July community outreach. Although our spot was not ideal, we still made it a point to educate the public, show up for our veterans in the community and assist those who needed to make a connection with a VSO. We even made an appearance on the news.

I meant a lot to hear veterans say that they were happy to see us out in the community.

The weather provided us with many challenges. From extreme heat to a monsoon of a downpour. We still mustered through to be there for our community. I am proud of our volunteers and proud that our post is making an effort to get back to the foundations of the organization.

I look forward to many more events like these.





DON FRETZ
BUY - A - BRICK

Want to honor your Veteran this Memorial Day and every day after that? Reach out to Post member Don Fretz to discuss buying a brick at the cost of \$100.





AUXILLIARY PAGES

***Auxiliary President
Jan Buehrle***

No report

***Auxiliary Quilters,
Earline Baker***

Auxiliary Quilters, Earline Baker:
If anyone would like to quilt or learn
how to quilt, please come to the Post
on Monday and Tuesday where we quilt
from 830am-1100am. You can also
call me so we know to expect you and can
direct you to the room we are in.
Earline Baker phone: 636-697-8157