



2026 – 2027

KAREN SHARP
DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT
VFW AUXILIARY
SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWS



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

KAREN SHARP, PRESIDENT

GENERAL ORDERS

SEPTEMBER 2026

Can you believe that school has started, SD State Fair begins this week, and we are two-thirds (2/3) through our first quarter (1/4) of our auxiliary year? Whew!!

We had a tremendous and enjoyable visit with National President Donna Mills in mid-August. If you were unable to attend, many photos have been posted on Facebook.

BIG TEN is October 16—18, 2026, in Kalamazoo, MI. If you have not registered and made room reservations, now is the time. We would like to see a good contingency of attendees from South Dakota.

DISTRICT dues are to be paid by September 30. Please do not miss this deadline. District meetings are scheduled for September and October. Each Auxiliary should have at least one member in attendance at these meetings. District Presidents have been very busy making their auxiliary visits and lending a hand to the Auxiliaries with the proper procedures for conducting a meeting and helping with audits, etc. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask District Presidents and/or Line Officers for assistance. Always refer to the Bylaws and Ritual for rules and procedures.

FALL COUNCIL will be in Rapid City on September 25—26, 2026. Again, if you have not yet registered and made room reservations, now is the time. Registration is only **\$50**. What a deal!!! At least one member from each Auxiliary should be in attendance for the Fall Council and School of Instruction. We will also be having some instruction jointly with the VFW. Looking forward to a great attendance.

GENERAL ORDERS from National President Donna Mills were distributed to all Auxiliaries and District in mid-August. If you have not already done so, **it is required** that these General Orders be read at your first meeting after receiving the same. You need not read them word for word, but you do have to go over the pertinent items. National General Orders and the Department General Orders are always read as the first items of official communications.

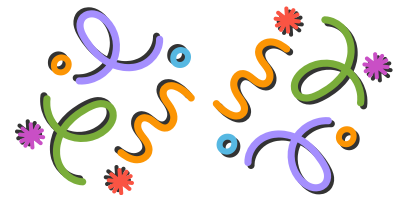
TINY HOUSES is the joint project of the SD VFW and Auxiliary. The more I learn of the benefits of these homes for veterans, the more excited I become. Please help us make this a successful project this year.

WEBSITE (VFWAUXSD.ORD) is your best source for General Orders, Positive Promotions and many other items for you to have a Healthy Auxiliary successful year. As we push more communication via the website, please remember that communication is a two-way street. We need to hear from you too.

Looking forward to seeing and visiting with many of you in September at District meetings and Fall Council.

Always remember, I am only a phone call, text or email away, and the door is always open.

Karen Sharp



Greetings to all Auxiliary Members
From your “We Need Your Help” Chief of Staff Pat

Do you have a list of members who live near but never come to a meeting? They pay their dues each year, they donate cakes for the bake sale, etc., but you do not KNOW them. I call them our **SATH** members – **Stay At Home Members**.

Would really like some ideas from you as to how to entice their participation. One example: find a place (city hall, museum, etc.) in town that would like a decorated Christmas tree. Pick a theme, such as red, white and blue, and ask every member to make a decoration. Pick the place and time and have everyone bring their decoration to decorate the tree. Maybe have coffee and cookies afterwards and ask each to talk about ‘their’ creation. Get to know one another and just maybe one or two might come to meetings. Worth a try.



You can probably come up with a better idea. Do it, share it and tell me about it!!!!

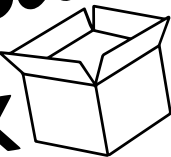
Some have mentioned they would like a better working relationship with their Post. Have you thought about challenging the Post to a Cornhole competition? Have teams, pick a date and maybe plan a pizza party afterwards. Of course, the losing group buys the pizza!

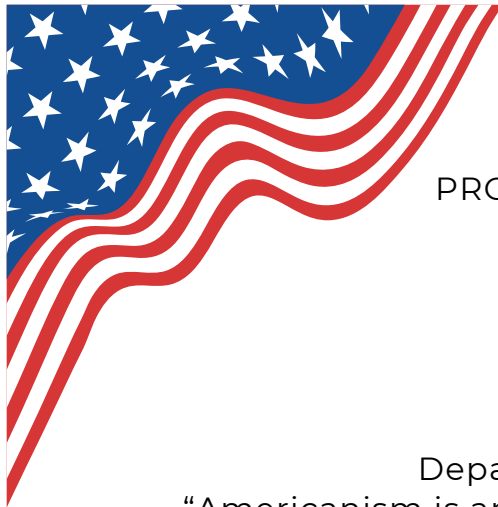
Think outside the box and have some fun. Again, I would like to hear your ideas, what you did and how fun it was.

Pat Cerny, Department Chief of Staff
bpcerny@gwtc.net

Fill my mailbox!!!!!!

**THINK.
outside
THE
BOX**





PROGRAM PROMOTIONS SEPTEMBER 2026

AMERICANISM

DEPT CHAIRMAN MICHELLE PAYNE

PO BOX 8; PLANKINTON, SD 57368

605-770-3693

chellepayne@hotmail.com

Department Theme: Bee a Veterans Sunshine

“Americanism is an unfailing love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideas; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty and posterity.”

The Americanism Program:

- Promotes Patriotism by celebrating America's Patriotic Days
- Teaches respect and proper care for the U.S. Flag
- Brings attention to Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action by hosting POW/MIA ceremonies to both educate the public and honor these special veterans.

September 11, 2026 marks the 25th anniversary, can you believe it?! Like many, it is a day I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing. I remember the discussions of disbelief of what was happening with those around me and the uncertainty of what exactly it meant to life as we knew it. Does your Auxiliary or community do anything in remembrance of this day?

September 18, 2026 is National POW/MIA Day, a solemn remembrance of the sacrifices, honor and bravery of those who served and were unable to return home, are still missing or suffered at the hands of our enemies. This day shows our commitment to finding them and remembering their sacrifices. This month I encourage you to set up a Missing Man Table.

Check out our State (<https://vfwauxsd.org>) and National (<https://vfwauxiliary.org>) websites; you can find a lot of great information and ideas!



POW-MIA MISSING MAN TABLE



You may notice this small table here, in a place of honor. This table is our way of symbolizing that members of our Armed Forces are missing from our ranks. They are commonly called P.O.W.'s or M.I.A.'s, the VFW calls them comrades, and we call them heroes.

This table set for one is small... it symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his oppressors.

The tablecloth is white... it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

The single red rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep faith awaiting their return.

The yellow ribbon tied on the vase is reminiscent of the yellow ribbon tied around trees and worn on the lapel of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing.

The candle...is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors and into the open arms of a grateful nation.

A slice of lemon is on the plate... to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is salt upon the plate... symbolic of the family's tears as they wait.

The glass is inverted... they cannot drink with us today.

The chair is empty... they are not here.

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN



Department of South Dakota

VEW Buddy Poppy



Kim Geppert, Chairman

I would like to introduce myself as the
Buddy Poppy Chair for the Dept of South Dakota—
I am excited for this adventure! ❤️

A LITTLE ABOUT ME:

- I reside in Plankinton and a member of Auxiliary 6554 in Plankinton.
- I joined under my Son Josh who served in the Iraq.
- I love to knit! 
- I have 2 grandchildren who are the apple of my eye. 

Trivia Question!

What does the
Buddy Poppy represent?

- A flower
- Remembrance
- Holiday



The Buddy Poppy represents
REMEMBRANCE,
HONOR, and
SUPPORT
for our nation's veterans,
active duty military,
and their families.



Contact Me!



kim.geppert1907@gmail.com



605-933-0685



Looking forward to meeting everyone at Fall Council!



PLAN EVENTS

for Buddy Poppy Distribution

- Community events
- Parades
- School activities
- Veterans programs
- Local businesses

Every poppy makes
A DIFFERENCE!



ALSO START THINKING...

- ★ About your Buddy Poppy **Display** for State Convention
- ★ And your Buddy Poppy **Hat** for the State Convention

Let's have
EVERYONE
participate!



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS!



Together, we keep the promise.



Kim Vennard, Chairman
kjb57103@gmail.com



TAKE THE PICTURE!



BEFORE YOU START

- Clean your lens
- Find the direction for the photo
- Check the light

- The background should be free from clutter
- * Watch for trees, poles, trash cans that distract from the photo
-

Don't just take a picture - Preserve the history!!



DURING THE SHOOT

CAPTURE THE ACTION!

- Don't use ONLY posed photos
- Action photos tell the story

GET CLOSE TO THE SUBJECT

- Don't stand across the room
- Make sure the photo is clear
- Take 3-5 photos, someone will blink!!

CHECK THE BACKGROUND

- * Double check your background
- Remember you are photographing the people and activities



BEFORE YOU POST

CHECK AND RE-CHECK!

- Choose the Best Photo
- Make sure photos are clear
- Tell the story in the caption

REMEMBER THE 5 W'S

WHO??
WHAT??
WHEN??
WHERE??
WHY!!

Good photos preserve our moments, Tell our Story and Honor our Veterans!!



Your Camera is a History Making Tool!!!

Document it. Record it. Share it. Preserve it.

GENERAL ORDERS #3
LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026
LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN WANDA MIX
Address: 205 Mustang Pass, Brookings, SD 57006
Phone: 605-690-0170
Email: wandarmix@gmail.com

I have been given a challenge by the National Legislative Chairman, Kim McWilliams, to have an Auxiliary Legislative Day. This Day is just for Auxiliaries, not to be with the Posts Legislative Day, to invite any Political members from their City, County, and State and talk to them about how they stand for our Veterans. Also invite Community members to come and hear how the Political members support our Veterans.

This Auxiliary Legislative Day should be designed to mirror the VFW Day in Washington DC. We need to have the voices of the Veterans and their families be heard through our voices and our stories as an Auxiliary member.

Coming soon will be a training video on how to talk with representatives and make the "ASK". As soon as I receive the video I will put it on our website, vfwauxsd.org.

I will be emailing ideas about the Auxiliary Legislative Day to the Auxiliary Legislative Chairman of each Auxiliary and on our website.

If you have any questions please contact me.



"BEE" A VETERAN'S SUNSHINE

Bee a Veterans Sunshine
Membership Department of South Dakota
September 2026
Pam Vissia, Chairmen



Happy September everyone!

The kids are back in school and we can now get into a routine. Start planning your membership recruiting events. With school starting what perfect time to hold a recruiting event. It can be at a school activity or just walking in the homecoming parade and handing out information about our great organization.

If you haven't sent out your dues notices, please be doing this as soon as possible. Remember that your auxiliary will receive funds from National as well as the Department of South Dakota if we meet the goals they have set for us.

We are currently setting at 86.59% in our membership. We are setting at 3461 in paid membership and the magic number to reach 95% by November 30 is 539 members to pay dues. The Department will receive \$400.00 for reaching this milestone. Let's do this everyone.

I continue to stress asking those that are annual members to become a lifetime member. It makes things so much easier for everyone.

I am going to get a letter out to all the Auxiliaries in the Department and will also share the at large list with everyone. We lost 2 auxiliaries last year and our at large list increased. Please review the list and see if you have any at large members near you and contact them about transferring to your auxiliary instead of being an at large member. We want these auxiliary members to have an auxiliary that they can call home.

Pam



VFW National Home

September 2026



Q: What is the VFW National Home?

A: A community helping military and veteran families with children overcome challenges and build stronger futures.

Q: Who can stay there:

A: Eligible active-duty military families, honorably discharged Active/Guard Reserve veterans, surviving spouse with dependent children and qualifying VFW/Auxiliary families

Q: What does the National Home provide?

A: No-cost support and resources for the whole family, including: *housing, *daycare and school programs, *education and job training, *financial education, *veteran resources, *a safe supportive community

Q: How long can families stay??

A: The program is phased, based on the individual goals of the family. Normal stays range from 3-5 years. Families are transitioned when ready.

Q: Can families get help without living there?

A: Yes. Nationwide Support provides referrals, support and guidance to military and veteran families across the country.

Q: Does National Home provide emergency housing?

A: No. Families must apply and be approved to enter the on-campus program.



**Every family has goals,
Every goal deserves**

a chance.



WE CAN HELP CONNECT THEM.



Your awareness can open the door to hope for a family in need.

Kim Vennard

SD VFW National Home Chairman

kjv57103@gmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP



Promotions September 2026 SCHOLARSHIPS 2026-2027

I know schools are just starting up. Be reaching out to schools' teachers, counselors, superintendents, principals, and students for our VOD and PP. Put fliers in your libraries, churches, and businesses around town. Let's get the word out. Like Ambassador Kim Davis said: "Let's start getting ready to roll out the **RED CARPET** for these students and teachers!" Let's make this year a great year! I'm so excited to see how many we can get entered this year! Remember we are here to help you.

All scholarships have their own deadlines and requirements, which are available at:

<https://vfwauxsd.org> under "Programs" then "Scholarships"

In MALTA Membership Resources <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org>

Please remember to read through all requirements for the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen.

☐ **Voice of Democracy Scholarship (essay and oral presentation)**

Theme **"WHAT A VETERAN TAUGHT ME ABOUT AMERICA?"**

Post/Auxiliary Deadline: October 31, 2026

District Deadline: November 22, 2026

Department Deadline: December 6, 2026

National Deadline: December 13, 2026

☐ **Patriot's Pen Essay Scholarship**

Theme **"WHAT A VETERAN TAUGHT ME ABOUT AMERICA?"**

Post/Auxiliary Deadline: October 31, 2026

District Deadline: November 22, 2026

Department Deadline: December 6, 2026

National Deadline: December 13, 2026

☐ **Continuing Education Scholarship**

Department Deadline: February 15, 2027

National Deadline: February 15, 2027

☐ **Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship**

2-Dimensional

Post/Auxiliary Deadline March 31, 2027

Department Deadline: April 15, 2027

National Deadline: May 5, 2027

3-Dimensional

Post/Auxiliary Deadline March 31, 2027

Department Deadline: April 15, 2027

National Deadline: May 5, 2027

Remember if you need any help with scholars app or have other questions please feel free to contact me or VFW Dept Scholarship Chairman Dale Greenfield dale.greenfield@yahoo.com (605)350-2319

Dept Scholarship Chairman Margaret Greenfield 20539 401ST Ave., Huron, SD 57350 (605) 350-5254

m.greenfield69@myyahoo.com

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

South Dakota Department VFW Auxiliary
Veterans & Family Support Welcome Information 2026-27

www.vfwauxsd.org

Tammy Chase – 45980 SD Hwy 10 – Sisseton, SD 57262

cbchase@venturecomm.net

home: 605.698.7438 cell: 605.742.4179

Program Goals for 2026-2027

VFW National Veterans Service (NVS)

Military Appreciation Program (MAP)

VFW Veterans & Military Support Programs

Assist Veterans, Service Members & their Families

Promote Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Awareness

#3

September 2026

We are in full swing again for the 2026-2027 Auxiliary year. School, sports and lots of big days to honor and celebrate, coming up. Please don't forget the 25th Anniversary of 9-11.

I have attached the Veterans & Family Support year end report that will be due before April 15, 2027. We now that every Auxiliary does something that involves the Veterans, Military and Families. Working together as a team and reporting what you do for the Veterans & Family Support program is very important. Through promoting programs available to Veterans, Military and their families we can help bring a solution to the problems faced by them every day. Reporting how you were able to reach your community, military, veterans and families will help other auxiliaries reach even more veterans with the information they need.



September is Suicide prevention Awareness Month, but did you know September 10th is also World Suicide Prevention Day and National Suicide prevention Week from September 13- 19th. The National Guard Volunteer Training Team (VTT) will be having 2 webinars in September. Hope that you can join.

**Volunteer Community Network (VCN) -
Suicide Prevention Through Connection, Community, and Courage –
Josephine Desiree Rollyson, MSW, LSW**

September 1st

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM, Eastern

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6077811564008568923>

September 3rd

9:00 PM – 10:00 PM, Eastern

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8176772664575456599>

Behind every uniform is a person with a story. Through the Seen. Supported. Strengthened. framework, this conversation explores how connection, honest conversations, and supportive relationships help us care for ourselves and one another. Together, we'll learn practical ways to recognize when someone may be struggling and how to respond with compassion, confidence, and hope.

You can find more information at <https://www.vrw.org/assistance/mental-wellness>



Special Upcoming Days

September	7	Labor Day
September	11	Patriot Day - 25 year anniversary
September	17	Constitution Day & Citizenship Day Air
September	18	Force Birthday & POW/MIA Day Gold
September	27	Star Mothers & Family Day Navy
October	13	Birthday
October 26		National Day of the Deployed

Our other focus this year will be Caregivers – we all know someone that is a caregiver for a Veteran, family member or community member. We cannot forget them! It is a thankless job.

Have you started planning something for your local caregivers?



Military Appreciation Program (MAP)

The VFW Military Appreciation Program (MAP) is the outstretched hand between the local VFW and military community, offering support around the world. Since 2005, MAP has sponsored events supporting service members and their families.

Lets work together and ROCK THIS YEAR!

Tammy Chase
45980 SD HWY 10 Sisseton,
SD 57262 605-698-7438 605-
742-4179
cbchase@venturecomm.net

*SD VFW Auxiliary
Veterans & Family Support*

SCAN ME





VFW AUXILIARY

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

★ Youth Activities ★

IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST

Illustrating America

**NEW DEADLINE
DECEMBER 15, 2026**

Encourage young artists in your community
to show their patriotism and creativity!
Get the information to your schools today!



★ YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS ★

★ *Let's Work Together!* ★

ASK YOUR LOCAL YOUTH GROUPS
TO GET INVOLVED!



4-H CLUBS



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY



GIRL SCOUTS



BOY SCOUTS



STUDENT COUNCILS

★ LIBRARY BOX IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Ask if the Industrial
Technology Class
at your school can
construct this for you.

*A great way to
share books and
build community!*



YOUTH INVOLVEMENT ★ *Makes a Difference!* ★

- ★ Assist with putting up flags in the community
- ★ Help plan a Veterans Day Program
- ★ Support veterans and their families
- ★ Make your community a better place!



Our youth are the future – let's support and encourage their involvement!



Questions or more information?
Contact Youth Activities Chair

Shelby Vissia
shelby.vissia27@gmail.com



*Proud to Support
Our Youth &
Our Veterans*

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
MAKE A LASTING IMPACT
IN OUR COMMUNITIES!**



HONORING VETERANS ★ SERVING COMMUNITY ★ SUPPORTING YOUTH



The VFW of Michigan Welcomes the
Departments of the Big Ten Conference
to the 2026 Annual Meeting
October 16-18, 2026 in Kalamazoo, MI.

Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
Ohio
South Dakota
Wisconsin



yes, there really is a
kalamazoo

**2026 BIG TEN CONFERENCE
VFW AND AUXILIARY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING**

Friday October 16, 2026 –Sunday October 18, 2026

Conference Meeting Registration Form

Registration Fee: \$175.00 per person

Registration Fee includes:

Friday night: **Heavy Hors d'oeuvres with cash bar**
 Fun group Trivia Pursuit
 (State Teams: MI & SD, IN & IL,
 WI & MN, MO & IA, OH & NE)
 Musical entertainment

Saturday Morning Breakfast Buffet

Saturday Noon Lunch Buffet

Saturday Night Banquet with cash bar

Name 1: _____

Department: _____ **VFW** _____ **Aux** _____

Office: _____

Name 2: _____

Department: _____ **VFW** _____ **Aux** _____

Office: _____

Pay by check: **payable to:** **VFW Department of Michigan**
 924 N Washington
 Lansing, MI 48906

Pay by credit card: **Email: 2026btconference@vfwmi.vet**

Credit Card Type: MC ____ VISA ____ Discover ____ AMEX ____

Card number: _____ **Exp Date:** _____

Additional registrations please use additional form

**2026 BIG TEN CONFERENCE
VFW AND AUXILIARY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING
Friday October16, 2026 - Sunday October18, 2026**

HOUSING INFORMATION

Radisson Plaza Hotel
100 W. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo MI 49007
Phone 269-343-3333

- Room Block will open on January 2, 2026
- Cutoff date is September 23, 2026 or when block fills, whichever occurs first.
- Please make your reservations as soon as possible after block opens.

To reserve your room, please call 269-343-3333
Reservations must be guaranteed with a major credit card.

When calling to make your reservation to receive the group rate, you must identify yourself as a VFW DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN BIG TEN 2026 CONFERENCE ATTENDEE.

A credit card and valid photo identification will be required upon check-in.

Room availability check in time is 4:00 pm
Check out time is 12:00 noon

Standard Rooms (2 queen beds): \$ 131.00

King Rooms (single king bed): \$ 131.00

Suites: \$ 181.00

Rates are subject to 6% StateTax And 5%, Occupancy Tax Valet parking
is available.

Public self -parking access via skywalk to the hotel is available.

If you require assistance or have a question please contact Jan at 517-485-9456 or by email at **2026btconference@vfwmi.vet**

**2026 BIG TEN CONFERENCE
VFW AND AUXILIARY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING**

Friday 16, October 2026 – Sunday 18, October 2026

Transportation Assistance Request Form

The Department of Michigan will provide complimentary transportation to and from Kalamazoo Airport and the Kalamazoo AMTRAC Station beginning at 3:00 pm on Thursday thru all departures on Sunday.

To be scheduled for transportation please provide the following information:

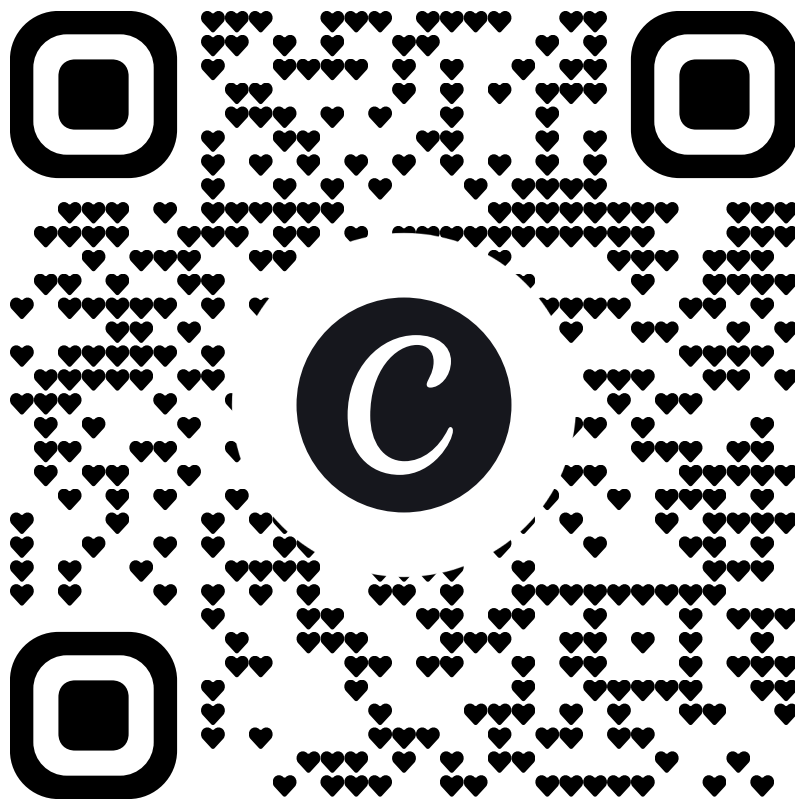
First and last name of each person on this trip request:

AMTRACor name of Airline: _____

ArrivalDate: Time: Air Flight#:

Departure Date: Time: Air Flight#:

Email Address and cell phone # of primary contact person in this group:



Resubmit and add an activity and the number of Veterans served