



April 2026 Newsletter



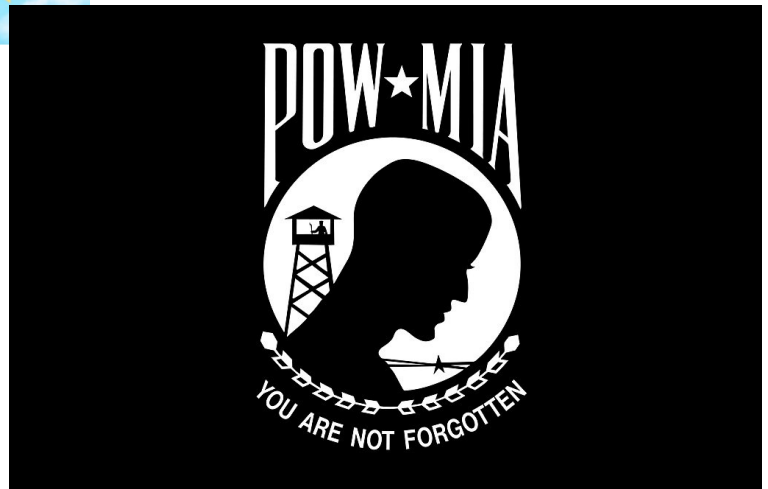
All American Post

VFW POST 3349

3201 REID ST., PALATKA, FL 32177

Phone: 386-328-2863

VFW3349.org



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



VFW POST 3349
P.O. BOX 218, PALATKA, FL 32178
PHONE: 386-328-2863



FROM THE POST COMMANDER
Gerald Donnelly
April 2026



From Commander Gerald Donnelly

Greetings Comrades:

Our monthly meeting will be April 8th where we will nominate and elect officers for next year. Please attend and show your support for the candidates that can best support the business of the Post and Veterans of Foreign Wars. This is the most important meeting of the year.

On April 9th, the Post is attending the City of Palatka Council meeting to present the Post Fireman of the Year and Police Officer of the Year with recognition and awards. Congratulation to Firefighter Ben Stevens and Police Officer Mathew Keith. The City Council Meeting will be at city hall at 6 PM.

On Saturday April 11th, the post will feed the 993rd Army Reserve Unit at 1130 hours at the Post. The event will be catered.

On Tuesday April 14th from 0900 to 1100 hours, the Post will hold a Veteran Benefits Seminar on VA benefits. The Pact Act will be explained in detail. We have scheduled two Veteran Service Officers (VSO) for the event; Al Buquo of Putnam County VSO and Charles Foster from the state of Florida VSO.

On Saturday April 25th, we will be attending the Veterans Freedom Fest at the Palatka Fair Grounds. Please come out and support this event which is designed to support our veterans community and provide camaraderie between all county veteran organizations. This will be a major membership drive opportunity.

I would like to have someone step up and help me with the Memorial Day Parade. I am working with the American Legion on planning the parade. The parade starts at 1000 hours. We will have more details in next months newsletter.

Gerald Donnelly
Veteran of Foreign War Post 3349
Commander





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FROM THE AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Marian Chialastri

March 2026

Hello Members,

We will be having nominations elections and installing new officers at our April meeting for 2026 to 2027.

April 8th Auxiliary lunch at Burnt Ends (hwy 20 across from Putman Feed Store)

April 8 Monthly meeting 7 p,m, elections of officers for 2026 to 2027

April 11 the auxiliary will be serving lunch for the Army Reserve 11 to 1. Post is having lunch catered auxiliary will serve the food

April 15 sewing at 10a.m.

April 17 Auxiliary dinner Spaghetti (postponed from March) \$7.00

Aprill 25 Freedom Fest at Palatka Fair Grounds

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Chialastri

Auxiliary President



VFW POST 3349 ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2017 the Post has made All State status on 6 different years and received All American recognition from National Headquarters for the past 5 years in a row.

To achieve these awards the Post had to meet or exceed all of the State and National requirements to include:

The Post had to achieve 102% membership objective by not only retaining 100%, but also recruiting new members to reach or exceed the 102% objective.

Complete a Voice of Democracy voice recorded essay contest for high school students in grades 9-12 and submit 1st place entry to District, State and National for All State and All American judging.

Complete a Patriot Pen essay contest for middle school students in grades 6-8 and submit 1st place winner to District, State and National for All State and All American judging.

Hold a teacher of the of the year recognition program for grade K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 and submit winners of each category to District, State and National for All State and All American judging.

Select a EMT, Police Office, and Firefighter of the year for local recognition and submit the winners to State and National for recognition. The Post submittals to State for EMT and Firemen of the Year were recognized on two different occasions as the all state winner for those categories with the entries forwarded to National to compete for All American recognition. The VFW Post recognizes and presents these awards at Palatka City Council and Putnam County Board of County Commissioner meetings.

The Post adopted the Army 993rd TPC Reserve Unit and has provided them a free lunch during drill weekends on several occasions.

The Post assists the Habitat for Humanity in building new homes for the local Veterans Village. We do an annual monetary donation and provide lunches to building volunteers on scheduled work days. Habitat has been working with the local VFW and other veteran organizations to build homes for veterans in a designated area of Putnam County for the past 5 years.

Anticipating growth to the local area the Post purchased a parcel of land adjoining our current property to expand our area footprint.

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

When it comes to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, membership remains the number one priority for supporting veterans. The larger the membership, the more voices there are to be heard in passing legislation that honors the contract to take care of veterans with needs.

“Honor The Contract” - “Our veterans didn’t ask what was in the air they breathed or the water they drank. And unlike many other public servants, they can’t just walk away if they don’t want to do it anymore. We serve in accordance with the contract we signed. We kept our promise. Now the nation must keep its word. It’s time for congress, the Administration, and every citizen to Honor the Contract.” Ryan Gallucci, VFW executive director before the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (October 29, 2025)

The collective strength of the VFW membership determines the influence in Washington D.C. The most important function of the VFW is legislative advocacy to help and improve veterans benefits. This influence is directly proportionate to size and engagement of our membership. Lawmakers pay attention to large organizations that represent significant constituencies.

VFW membership is more than advocating for veterans benefits. It brings about comraderies and support services at the local level. VFW Post can help provide assistance to members and families while navigating the veterans administration bureaucracy for benefits. Local community projects for schools includes our Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen Essay contest. Posts provide support and recognition for teachers, police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians.

Every member has the power to shape the future of the VFW by renewing their membership, becoming a life member, signing up new members, and contributing to the collective support of our war veterans. Membership is the core strength of our organization. Remember every member is a recruiter and should always be on the lookout for prospective new members.

VFW membership is available to U.S. military veterans who served honorably in a war, campaign, or expedition, with options for annual or life membership.

Membership Eligibility

To Join the Veterans of Foreign Wars you must meet two main requirement:

1. Honorable Service—Your must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and received an honorable discharge
2. Service in a War, Campaign, or Expeditionary medal—you must have served on foreign soil or in hostile waters, which can typically be proven by a DD214 form or certification of hostile fire pay.

April 2026

Canteen Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday - 3:00 to 9:00 PM Thursday, Friday - 12:00 to 9:00 PM Sat - noon to 5:00 PM

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
	Bowling 5:30PM	BINGO 6:00PM	Queen of Hearts 7:00P	House Cmty 6:00PM Darts 7:00PM	Fish Gene & Connie 6:00 PM	
<i>5th</i>	<i>6th</i>	<i>7th</i>	<i>8th</i>	<i>9th</i>	<i>10th</i>	<i>11th</i>
Easter Sunday	Bowling 5:30 PM	BINGO 6:00PM	Post Meeting 7PM Queen of Hearts 6:50PM	Darts Bowling 7:00PM	Grilled Pork Chops 6:00PM	11 Army Reserve Lunch In House Bowl- ing 1:00 PM Gulf War Cease Fire 1991
<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>
	Bowling 5:30 PM	9AM Veteran Benefits- Workshop BINGO 6:00PM	Queen of Hearts 7:00 PM Income Tax Day	Darts / Bowling 7:00PM	AUX Dinner Spaghetti 6:00PM	
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>
	Bowling 5:30 PM	BINGO 6:00PM	Queen of Hearts 7:00PM	Darts / Bowling 7:00PM	TBD 6:00PM	In House Bowling 1:00 PM Freedom Fest 10-4
<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>		
	Bowling 5:30 PM	BINGO 6:00PM	Queen of Hearts 7:00PM	Darts 7:00PM		

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POST OFFICERS

Commander	Gerald Donnelly
Sr Vice Commander	Tammy Spaulding
Jr Vice Commander	Jack Gibbs
Judge Advocate	Weldon Taylor
Adjutant	Gerald Shuler
Quartermaster	Gerald Shuler
Chaplin	Kevin Donnelly
Surgeon	Rubin Myers
Service Officer	Bruce Howe
Trustees 1 yr	Valerie Johns
2 yr	William Thompson
3 yr	Weldon Taylor
Membership Chairman	Commander
Employment Officer	Weldon Taylor
Legislative Officer	John Dillingham
Disaster Preparedness/Relief	Bill Thompson
Historian	John Dillingham
House Committee Chairman	Gene Nieman
National Home for Children	Quartermaster
Communications/Media Relations	Commander

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman	Gerald Donnelly
Members	Commander and ALL Members

COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA RELATIONS

Chairman	Commander
Members	Adjutant and Quartermaster

HOUSE COMMITTEE

Chairman	Gene Nieman	
Members	Gerald Donnelly	Kevin Donnelly
	Gerald Shuler	Rubin Myers
	Jack Gibbs	Bruce Howe
Canteen Manager	Vickie Dixon	

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

President	Marian Chialastri
Sr. Vice	Joyce Donnelly
Jr. Vice	Malinda Taylor
Treasurer	Lucie Barnette
Secretary	Jan Stephens
Chaplain	Kathie Thompson
Conductress	Valerie French
Guard	Betty Burnham
1Yr. Trustee	Joyce Donnelly
2Yr. Trustee	Valerie French
3Yr. Trustee	Robert Stephens
Patriotic Inst.	Kathie Thompson

DISTRICT 14 MEETING SCHEDULE

Qtr	Date	Post	Location	Time
4th	5/16/26	2811	Gainesville	10am

Useful Web Sites

Get copy of DD Form 214 or other discharge documents: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

Request Lost and Replacement Medals: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/public/awards-and-decorations.html>

VFW National Headquarters Web Site: www.vfw.org

VFW Magazine: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/vfw-magazine>

VFW Store Online: www.vfwstore.org

VFW Department of Florida Web Site: <https://vfwfl.org>

National Do Not Call Registry www.donotcall.gov

VFW Post Website <http://vfw3349.org>

From the Publisher:

Please forward any news, pictures, or article submissions to:

MediaVFW3349@gmail.com

by the 25th of each month.

Thank you

Newsletter Editors — Bill and Kathie Thompson