District 10 Trustee Newsletter

⭐ OCTOBER THEME-🕰️ THEN & NOW ⭐

HOW THE VFW NATIONAL HOME HAS CHANGED OVER 100 YEARS

From One Farmhouse in 1925 to a Nationwide Mission of Hope

Dear VFW, VFWA, MOC, MOCA National Home Life Members, Department Chairmen, and Department Commanders/Presidents,

As we enter October, I want to thank each of you for your continued dedication to the VFW National Home and the veterans, military members, and families it serves.

Last month, we explored the **Veteran Resource Center and Veteran Services** and learned how the National Home's mission now reaches veterans and military families well beyond the campus in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

This month, we are going back to where it all began.

🕰️ THEN & NOW-HOW THE NATIONAL HOME HAS CHANGED OVER 100 YEARS

- The buildings have changed.
- The programs have expanded.
- The needs of veterans and military families have evolved.
- But one thing has remained constant for more than a century:

THE PROMISE TO HELP VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Please share this newsletter with your Department Chairmen, District Chairmen, Posts, Auxiliaries, Pup Tents, Grands, and members through newsletters, meetings, mailings, email, and social media.

- Our history tells us where we came from.
- **Our mission tells us where we are going.**

🏠 THEN — 1925

ONE FARMHOUSE • ONE FAMILY • ONE PROMISE

- The VFW National Home was founded in 1925 to fulfill the VFW's enduring promise:
    - "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."
- At the time, families of veterans had far fewer social programs or safety nets available when tragedy struck.
- Local cattleman Corey Spencer donated 472 acres near Eaton Rapids, Michigan, providing the land upon which that promise could become reality.
- And then came the family who would forever become part of National Home history.

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 THE POLLETT FAMILY

- On March 9, 1925, Annie Pollett and her six children became the first family to call the VFW National Home home.
- Annie's husband, Sgt. Edward Pollett, had died following a streetcar accident.
- His death left Annie and their six children facing tremendous uncertainty.
- The VFW stepped in.
- The family moved into a farmhouse on the National Home property, where the children were able to remain together and grow up in a safe and supportive environment.

THEN: One farmhouse provided one family with a new beginning.

NOW: The National Home continues providing military and veteran families with opportunities to rebuild their lives together.

Different century. Same promise.

🏠 THEN — A FARMHOUSE
🏘️ NOW — A COMMUNITY OF HOMES

The National Home grew rapidly during its early years.

- During the 1930s alone, 12 additional houses were constructed, bringing the campus to 20 homes by 1939.
- Over the decades, additional homes were built, remodeled, sponsored, and named in honor of organizations and individuals committed to the National Home mission.
- In March 2025, the National Home dedicated the Missouri II/Pollett House.
- It became the: 🏡 **43RD HOME ON CAMPUS** and was the first newly built veteran-family home on the campus in 14 years. The house also honors the Pollett family—the very first family to arrive in 1925.
- Think about that circle of history:**1925**
- The Pollett family moves into a farmhouse. **2025**

A modern veteran-family home bearing the Pollett name opens on the same National Home campus.

THAT IS 100 YEARS OF MISSION IN ACTION.

🌾 THEN — LIFE ON A WORKING FARM

- The early National Home looked very different from today's campus.
- The property was a working farm.
- There were:

🐄 Cows
🐔 Chickens
🌾 Fields of oats
🌱 Vegetable gardens
🐕 Farm animals
👧 👶 Children with daily chores

The children helped care for animals and participated in everyday farm life. Agriculture helped sustain the community while teaching responsibility and practical skills.

🌱 **NOW — AGRICULTURE STILL TEACHES**

A century later, agriculture continues to have a place at the National Home—but in new and innovative ways.

Today's programs include opportunities such as:

🌱 **Regenerative Agriculture**
🐝 **Heroes to Hives**
🐷 🐰 **4-H**

These programs can provide education, practical experience, responsibility, connection, and purpose.

- The tools may have changed.
- The lessons have not.

THEN: Children learned responsibility by helping on the farm.
NOW: Veterans and children can develop skills through agriculture, 4-H, beekeeping, and other hands-on programs.

👧 **THEN — HELPING WIDOWS & CHILDREN**

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 **NOW — STRENGTHENING MILITARY & VETERAN FAMILIES**

When the National Home began, its focus centered on widows and children of veterans who were left without support.

Today's mission has evolved with the needs of America's military and veteran community.

The VFW National Home now assists military members, veterans, and their families with children by providing services and resources designed to help them achieve personal and family goals and move forward in a positive, safe, and healthy environment.

Today, qualifying families may participate in a goal-oriented residential program on the Eaton Rapids campus.

The National Home also provides support to military and veteran families throughout the country.

THE MISSION GREW BEYOND THE CAMPUS.

☎️ THEN — HELP WAS FOUND LOCALLY
🌎 NOW — HELP CAN BEGIN FROM ANYWHERE

In 1925, the local VFW learned about the Pollett family's circumstances and helped connect them with the newly created National Home.
Today, technology allows that same spirit of connection to reach families across the country. Through nationwide Veteran Services and outreach, military and veteran families can receive:

🎖️ Guidance
🤝 Referrals
💙 Emotional support
📋 Advocacy
🇺🇸 VA-benefits assistance
🏡 Resource connections

Veterans and families do **not** have to live on the Eaton Rapids campus to reach out for assistance.

VFW NATIONAL HOME
📞 800-424-8360
Please continue sharing this number.

A simple referral could connect a veteran or military family with resources they did not know existed.

📚 THEN — CHILDREN ATTENDED LOCAL SCHOOL
🎓 NOW — EDUCATION FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

- The Pollett children attended school in Eaton Rapids.
- As the National Home grew, education became an increasingly important part of campus life.
- Today, education and personal development can include:

👶 Early childhood education
📚 Educational support
💻 Technology resources
🎓 Scholarship opportunities
💰 Financial education
💼 Employment preparation
🌱 Hands-on learning programs

- Education is no longer only about helping children succeed in school.
- It can also help parents prepare for careers, develop financial skills, pursue education, and create a plan for independent living.

🏀 THEN — A FARM COMMUNITY

🏠 NOW — A CAMPUS COMMUNITY

- Over the decades, the National Home campus continued evolving.
- In the 1990s, the Community Center underwent a major expansion that added facilities including a full-sized gymnasium, workout area, licensed commercial kitchen, café, and patio.
- Educational spaces, a library, computer resources, recreation, family programming, and gathering areas became part of the growing National Home community.
- Today, the National Home isn't simply a collection of houses.
- It is a community designed to give families the time, resources, support, and stability they need to work toward their goals.

🚒 DID YOU KNOW?
THE NATIONAL HOME ONCE HAD ITS OWN FIRE DEPARTMENT!

- Here is a fun piece of National Home history.
- The National Home's fire department was established in **1957**.
- And there was something especially unusual about it:

THE CHILDREN OF THE NATIONAL HOME HELPED RUN IT!

- The department remained part of National Home life until the late 1980s.
- It even received national attention when it was featured on the television program "That's Incredible!"
- National Home history is filled with stories like this—stories showing how unique this community has been throughout the decades.

🌳 THEN — PRESERVING A PROMISE
🧱 NOW — PRESERVING A LEGACY

- The National Home has also developed ways to preserve the stories of those who came before us.
- Tribute Park, established in 2012, provides a peaceful place to honor veterans, active-duty military members, loved ones, and organizations.
- Personalized tribute bricks help preserve names and stories for future generations.
- The Pollett family itself is remembered at the National Home.
- More than a century after Annie Pollett arrived with her children, their story continues teaching new generations why this mission began.

💙 WHAT HASN'T CHANGED?

After looking at a century of change, perhaps the most important question is: **What has stayed the same?**

- **THEN:** A military family faced uncertainty.
- **NOW:** Military and veteran families still sometimes face unexpected challenges.

- **THEN:** The VFW community stepped forward.

- **NOW:** VFW, VFW Auxiliary, MOC, MOCA, donors, volunteers, Life Members, Departments, Districts, Posts, Auxiliaries, Pup Tents, Grands, businesses, and individuals continue stepping forward.

- **THEN:** A family was given an opportunity for a new beginning.
- **NOW:** Families continue receiving opportunities to build stronger futures.

THE PROGRAMS HAVE CHANGED.
THE CAMPUS HAS CHANGED.
THE WORLD HAS CHANGED.
THE PROMISE HAS NOT.

👧 COMMUNITY CENTER
YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE PROJECT

The project will transform an underused area of the Community Center into an engaging environment where National Home children can:

📚 Learn
🎨 Create
🎮 Play
🤝 Connect
🌱 Grow

The Community Center has served generations of National Home children. Now another part of this historic building is preparing for its next chapter.
That fits our October theme perfectly:
THEN: The Community Center grew to meet the needs of earlier generations.
NOW: The Youth Innovation Space will help it meet the needs of today's children.

🏠 A FAMILY'S STORY SHOWS WHY THE MISSION MATTERS

- Patrick and Brianna's family is one example of what today's National Home can make possible.
- After a 13-month deployment supporting the Southern Border Mission, the military couple and their three children faced the challenges of transitioning back to civilian life, continuing their military careers, pursuing education, and finding stable housing.
- They eventually learned about the National Home and were accepted into the Ohio House.
- Since arriving, their children have had opportunities to make friends, participate in summer activities, fish at the pond, and take piano lessons.
- Patrick found employment, while both parents continued their military service and worked toward bachelor's degrees.
- Their experience illustrates an important difference between Then & Now:
- The National Home of 1925 provided safety after tragedy.
- The National Home of today combines stable housing with resources and opportunities intended to help an entire family prepare for what comes next.

🎀 OCTOBER CAMPUS MILESTONE

NATIONAL AUXILIARY & FLORIDA HOUSES

Another chapter in National Home history is being written **right now.**
Construction has been underway on the:
NATIONAL AUXILIARY HOUSE
🌴 **FLORIDA HOUSE**
And an important date is approaching:
🗓️ **OCTOBER 23, 2026**

🎀 RIBBON CUTTING

- Think about what these houses represent within our October theme.
- In 1925, one farmhouse welcomed the first family.
- More than 100 years later, supporters are still helping create homes where military and veteran families can begin new chapters.

HISTORY ISN'T ONLY SOMETHING WE REMEMBER.
WE ARE STILL WRITING IT.

🪑 ATTENTION DEPARTMENT NATIONAL HOME CHAIRMEN

Please continue keeping your Department's National Home Life Membership records current. Send updated lists of deceased Life Members to:

Sue Alverson
salverson@vfwnationalhome.org

Keeping records current helps the National Home maintain accurate membership information and prevents correspondence from being sent to families following the loss of a loved one.

Thank you for helping protect the dignity of our Life Members and their families.

🗓️ COMING THIS YEAR
VFW NATIONAL HOME HISTORY & PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

We've traveled through 100 years of history this month.
Next, we turn our attention to the people whose lives give that history meaning.

- **NOVEMBER-** 💙 Stories of Hope — Families Who Found a New Beginning
- **DECEMBER-** 🎄 Holiday Traditions at the National Home
- **JANUARY-** 🐝 Heroes to Hives — Veterans Finding Purpose Through Beekeeping
- **FEBRUARY-** 🌱 R.A.V.E. — Regenerative Agriculture for Veterans
- **MARCH-** 🎸 Guitars for Vets — Healing Through Music

- **APRIL-**🐷 🐰 4-H at the National Home — Learning, Leadership, and Responsibility
- **MAY-**👧 Child Development Center — Investing in the Next Generation

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🛜 STAY CONNECTED

📱 Join our Facebook Group:
DISTRICT 10 — VFW NATIONAL HOME

- Throughout this program year, my goal as your District 10 Trustee is to keep our Departments informed about the services, programs, opportunities, improvements, history, and success stories of the VFW National Home.
- Every time we tell the National Home story, we introduce someone else to its mission.

🪖 HOME FRONT HEROES

When you finish reading your copy of **Home Front Heroes**, please pass it along. Share it with:

🎖️ A veteran
Another VFW or Auxiliary member
💙 A potential National Home Life Member
👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 A military family
🤝 A community member

- One magazine can be read by many people.
- One story can inspire a new supporter.
- One conversation can connect a family with help.

KEEP THE STORY MOVING.

😳 THANK YOU

For more than 100 years, generations of people have made the VFW National Home possible.

- Some built houses.
- Some sponsored them.
- Some volunteered.
- Some purchased Life Memberships.
- Some donated a few dollars.
- Some gave thousands.
- Some simply told another person about the National Home.
- Every generation found its own way to continue the promise.

NOW IT IS OUR TURN.

When we recruit a Life Member, make a donation, volunteer, organize a fundraiser, share a social-media post, or tell someone about the National Home, we become part of its history.

THEN: ONE FARMHOUSE.
💙 **NOW: A NATIONWIDE MISSION.**
🏡 **ALWAYS: A PLACE OF HOPE.**

TOGETHER, WE CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE—

ONE VETERAN • ONE FAMILY • ONE GENERATION AT A TIME.

DISTRICT 10 TRUSTEE'S
THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"In 1925, the VFW National Home began with a farmhouse, a family in need, and a promise. More than 100 years later, the farmhouse has become a thriving community and the programs have grown far beyond what our founders could have imagined. Yet the heart of the National Home remains unchanged. When a veteran or military family needs an opportunity to begin again, we are still there. As we honor those who built this legacy, let us remember that the next 100 years begin with what we choose to do today."

Shirlee Frias
District 10 Trustee
VFW National Home
2022–2028

TOGETHER, WE CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE—
ONE VETERAN • ONE FAMILY • ONE CONNECTION AT A TIME.