VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

# VFW National Convention Returns to Kansas City

## JCS Chairman General Dunford to receive top VFW award Monday; President Trump headlines Tuesday

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**KANSAS CITY, Mo. —** President Donald Trump will be joining more than 10,000 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary as they bring the 119th VFW National Convention to the Kansas City Convention Center this Saturday through July 25. The business sessions are closed to the public, but a free, two-day weekend veterans walk-in claims clinic and four-day health fair are accessible to all veterans, service members and their families.

"Kansas City is home to the VFW's national headquarters, but it's been 11 years since our last national convention was held here, so it is great to be back!" exclaimed VFW National Commander Keith Harman. "We are also honored to be able to present our highest award to Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joe Dunford on Monday, and to have President Trump join us on Tuesday," he said. "The president's attendance continues a longstanding VFW tradition to provide our nation's commander-in-chief with the opportunity to address the nation's largest and oldest major war veterans' organization, which is especially important during a time of war and instability abroad and internal challenges at home."

Harman said the 10,000 VFW and VFW Auxiliary delegates will represent the organization's total membership of 1.7 million at the weeklong convention. Their mission will be to approve new national priorities to guide the VFW as it lobbies Congress on issues important to the nation's veterans, service members and their families. In addition, convention delegates will elect a new VFW national commander, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence of Alamogordo, N.M., as well as recognize prominent individuals and organizations for their support of the veterans and military communities. A number of elected officials from Missouri and Kansas will be appearing at the weeklong convention, as well as many VFW partners from the nonprofit community and the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs. Also attending will be retired Marine Corps Lt. Col. Oliver North, a VFW life member and former national award recipient who was recently selected to become the

new president of the National Rifle Association.

Receiving VFW national awards on Monday and Tuesday are:

- VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award to Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff;
- VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year Cynthia Archuleta;
- VFW Americanism Award to Navy SEAL and endurance athlete David Goggins;
- VFW Armed Forces Award to Army Command Sgt. Maj. William F. Thetford, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Central Command;
- VFW Citizenship Awards to Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, President, Give An Hour, and "Good Cemeterian" Andrew Lumish;
- VFW National Teacher Awards to Emily Cowan Ezell, Cowan Elementary School, Cowan, Tenn.; Sara Gibson Coan, Caroline Middle School, Milford, Va.; and Michael Rauenhorst, North Pole High School, North Pole, Alaska;
- VFW News Media Award to Marine Corps veteran and cartoonist Maximilian Uriarte;
- VFW Outstanding Post Special Project Award to VFW Post 12160, Sinton, Texas;
- VFW Voice of Democracy $30,000 scholarship winner Robyn Anzulis;
- And the introduction of the VFW National Home for Children Buddy Poppy Child for 2018 Chloe Johnson, age 7.

Also coming to town Sunday is country music legend Trace Adkins and the U.S. Army's own Six-String Soldiers for a free concert at Municipal Auditorium. The concert is a free, ticketed event, sponsored by the Texas VFW Foundation, Lockton Affinity, Cerner, Truman Library Institute, and Park University. Doors open at 6 p.m. Click here for ticket information.

Although not open to the public, the VFW will livestream its July 23-25 business sessions at www.vfw.org/convention beginning at 7:30 a.m. CDT on July 23 and 24, and 8 a.m. on July 25. Only registered and credentialed media from bona fide news organizations will be approved to cover convention activities. Click here to pre-register. Onsite registration begins Saturday, July 21, at the VFW Communications Office inside the Kansas City Convention Center Halls BCD.