



Convention Highlights

Sunday, Aug. 10, 2025
Memorial Service

Memorial Speaker Reminds Audience “Remembrance Can Build You Back Up”

Afghanistan veteran Kimberly Hazelgrove delivered the address during this morning’s Memorial Service. A life member of VFW Post 1662 in Amherst, Ohio, Hazelgrove honored the memory of her husband, Brian D. Hazelgrove, who died on Jan. 3, 2004, in a crash near Mosul, Iraq. “Our story is not just about loss – but about all of the reasons we gather here today; love, service, sacrifice and remembrance.”

As Vice President of Gold Star Spouses of America, Hazelgrove offered her support and understanding to the Gold Star families present during the service. “While loss can break you, remembrance can build you back up and provide purpose,” said Hazelgrove, who served in the Army for 9 years and deployed with JTF-170. “I used the grief, the anger and the disbelief of what I experienced during my casualty process and survivor journey to help others over the years, so maybe their path is a little easier to walk.”

Hazelgrove concluded her remarks by addressing those in attendance, saying, “I know I speak for so many here today, both family members and veterans when I say: the weight of sacrifice doesn’t end on the battlefield. It follows us home. No organization understands this more than the VFW.”

Led by VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt and VFW Auxiliary National President Brenda Bryant, national VFW and Auxiliary leaders preformed the honorary traditional rituals to honor all deceased veterans.

Past National VFW Auxiliary President Mary Sears was remembered. She was president from 1991-1992 and passed away on May 12.

Miss Ohio 2024 Stephanie Finoti performed “Amazing Grace” and “I’ll Stand by You,” while the VFW Auxiliary National Soloist Willa Watts sang the national anthem and “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” VFW Auxiliary National Chaplain Kim Harney provided the invocation and VFW National Chaplain Peter Hook offered the Chaplain’s Prayer. James G. Jenkins Jr., past VFW national chaplain, offered the benediction and VFW Auxiliary life member David Christiansen performed Taps to conclude the ceremony.

-The End-

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