

SEPTEMBER

2023

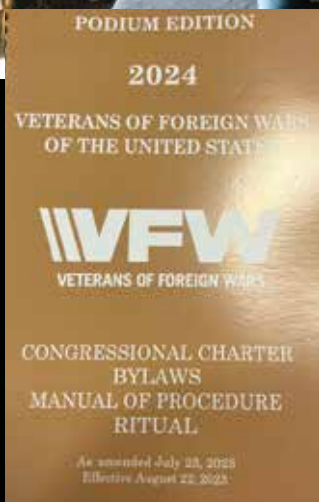
MAIL CALL

23-24 GENERAL ORDER-03 PAGES 4-5

2023 SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

AND

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AT THE HOTEL BENTLEY



[Click here](#) 2024 Podium Book

National Recognition Day
SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

23-24 COMMANDER DELANEY'S

PIN AND MOTTO



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NATIONAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

DUANE T. SARMIENTO

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE 2023



NOVEMBER 2-5, 2023

RIVER SPIRIT CASINO

River Spirit Casino Resort, 8330 Riverside Pkwy
Tulsa, OK 74137

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION



JANUARY 25-28, 2024

THE HOTEL BENTLEY

200 Desoto Street
Alexandria, LA 70131

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION



JUNE 27 - 30, 2024

THE HOTEL BENTLEY

200 Desoto Street
Alexandria, LA 70131

STATE COMMANDER MESSAGE

Greetings Comrades. I want to inform you that we as a department are doing great so far this year. But there are some things that need to be addressed.

One thing is that as the District Meetings are starting to get gear up, be sure to get the word out about membership and the programs that are needed to become All-State and All-American.

In the Bylaws and Ritual book, you know, the Podium Book. In section 218, page 74, para k. states “Assure that the Commander or their representatives attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Councils (if applicable).

The meaning of this is to ensure that all posts in a district have the information from the meetings. Does it mean that the Commander is the only person to attend these meetings or conventions? No, but it does mean that someone needs to be in attendance. And Commanders, if someone other than you are attending, please don't send them without your commander's report and other info about what is happening in your post.

One item of great concern of mine is that everything we do is governed by the Podium Book. If your post is striving towards All-State or All-American, **DO IT BY THE BOOK**. This also pertains to the Commanders Book. Post, District, and State Chairman need to pay attention to the due dates for Americanism, Patriot's Pen, and Voice of Democracy, Safety, and other programs.

The question about “geographical area,” Some people have stated about mileage between posts. Section 214 – Solicitation of Funds defines what you can do. But if you have 2-3 posts within a 50–60-mile radius, that geographical area can get cloudy. In the past, it's sometimes handled by just an email to inform that post of your intentions in their area. Usually about 30 days or so before your event. Common Courtesy goes a long way!!

Community Service is a program that never ends. What I mean is that even little things mean so much to the people we help. Spend some time in a retirement



RON DELANEY
Air Force - Post 4588

facility and talk to the residents, they love it. Help others that are less fortunate or are having problems.

Let's talk about Suicide Awareness. I recently lost a friend to suicide. He was only 51. He sent me a friend request on FB and I thought it was a scam, as he and I were already friends on FB. Was this his way of trying to reach out for help? I don't know and that question will stay with me for the rest of my life. We need to watch out for these hints or keywords in a letter.

Buddy checks continue to work. Reach out to members on your roster. The Quartermaster can print out a roster and anyone can start calling or visiting. This can also help with membership and retention. I have talked to a Korean War veteran who was an annual member. All he wanted to do was to talk to someone, drink coffee, and when I left, I had the dues in my hand. But Buddy checks could also help with a veteran need.

We can and will do great things this year with everyone working together towards our goal “No one does more for veterans.”

23-24 General Order-03

PAGES 4 - 5 ARE TO BE READ AT MEETINGS THEN POSTED

MANDATORY:

General Orders: All material in the State General Orders is directive in nature and will be read to the membership at the Post regular membership meetings each month. Some of these have remained the same and will remain for a while longer to instill their importance to our order. New Items will be added to the General Order and will have some highlighted in Red areas.

ARTICLE X - RULES OF ORDER

Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.

25. The dispensation and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of smoking/vaping products in VFW

meeting rooms during VFW meetings are **prohibited**.

Post Commanders: If you, your Quartermaster, or Adjutant do not have an email address please designate a member of your Post, with an email address, to disseminate information from District and Headquarters. Also, please ensure the Post roster is always up to date and accurate.

Article I, Sec. 103 - Election.

Applications. After the applicant has filled out the application card, it should be provided to the Post Adjutant or Quartermaster, together with the dues (and admission fee, if applicable). A receipt shall be given to the applicant.

An applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the Post Reviewing Committee. With respect to a Department Member-at-Large, the National Organization and/or the Department Headquarters will be responsible for eligibility determination.

The original application of every member will be retained on file with the Adjutant. **Balloting on Applications.** Before voting on the application during a Post meeting, the Commander shall allow the members present an opportunity to state their objections, if any, to the admission of the applicant. Unless one member present shall request a written ballot, a vote shall be taken and a majority of the votes cast shall decide acceptance or rejection of the application.

WEARING OF HATS: Attention of Commanders, at all levels, are directed to action of the National Council of Administration prohibiting the wearing of VFW sport caps and/or western style caps at VFW meetings in place of the regulation cap of the VFW official uniform as set forth in the **National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure Article VIII, Section 803**; Cap. A cap of the overseas type, lettered with VFW initials, Post numerals, state, rank of office (when applicable), and bearing the Cross of Malta emblem, shall be the regulation cap to be worn with or without the uniform. The color shall be green, shade 51. Lettering on each cap shall be in gold.

Organizational echelons will be designated by the color of the braid (piping) and letters on the caps as follows:

Post officers, members and Past Post Commanders -- gold braid; County Council officers and Past County Council Commanders -- bright blue braid; District officers, except District Commanders and Past District Commanders -- bright green braid; Department officers and Past Department officers, Conference officers and Past Conference officers, and District Commanders and Past District Commanders -- bright

red braid; National officers and Past Commanders-in-Chief -- silver braid.

The National Council of Administration may designate other colors or color combinations of the cap, braid and lettering to be worn on the caps of All-American and All- State honorees, life members and aides-de-camp. Past Commanders-in-Chief and National officers with a Council vote, other than National District Council Members, may wear white caps with gold lettering and braid.


Regulation caps shall be worn by elected and appointed officers at all official meetings. Uniforms. Subject to the approval of the sponsoring units, color guards, drill teams and similar units may adopt optional uniforms and campaign hats, berets, helmets or other headgear for wear at parades, assemblies and similar events and at official functions in the performance of duties. Headgear shall be uniform for all members of the unit. If organizational emblems are worn on VFW Color Guard Headgear, one of them must be the Cross of Malta.

and VFW Ritual;

General Rule 13, (a) All members who are able will stand during the offering of the prayers; (b) members will follow the action of the Chaplain or presiding officer relative to removal of caps during prayers; if uncovering, the hat shall be placed on the extended closed fingers of the right hand in such a way that the Cross of Malta is exposed and held over the heart; (c) official caps will not be worn during luncheons, banquets or other meals; (d) Official caps will be the only head covering allowed to be worn at regular meetings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF
RON DELANEY
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:


Mitchell R. Cota, PSC
State Adjutant

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	7	8	9 District 5 Meeting District 8 Meeting District 12 Meeting
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 District 9 Meeting District 10 Meeting
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		Notes National Suicide Prevention Month				

September 2 - Sport Clips Help-A-Hero 200

September 4 - Labor Day

September 10 - National Suicide Prevention Week, September 10-16

September 11 - Patriot Day - National Day of Service/Remembrance (flag at half-staff)

September 15 - POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 17 - Constitution and U.S. Citizenship Day

September 18 - U.S. Air Force Birthday

September 24 - Gold Star Mother's/Family Day

September 29 - VFW Established (1899)

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District Meeting/Workshop	District Meeting/Workshop	District Convention
<p>District 2 August 26, 2023</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3267 1133 Hickory Ave., Harahan, LA 70123 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>	<p>District 2 January 13, 2024</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3750--- 140 Angus Dr., Luling, LA 70070 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>	<p>District 2 May 4, 2024</p> <p>District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3750 140 Angus Dr., Luling, LA 70070 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>
<p>District 3 August 26, 2023</p> <p>School of Instruction</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p>District 3 January 13, 2024</p> <p>Business/Awards</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p>District 3 April 20, 2024</p> <p>Business/Elections</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>
<p>District 4 August 19, 2023</p> <p>Workshop Following C of A</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 9822 120 VFW Road, Duson, LA 70529 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>	<p>District 4 November 18, 2023</p> <p>Programs</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 4158 102 Jimmy C Vorhoff Jr Dr. Abbeville LA 70510 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p> <p>District 4 February 10, 2024</p> <p>Mid-Year Update/Awards</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 1982 1907 Jefferson Terrace Blvd., New Iberia, LA 70562 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>	<p>District 4 April 13th</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 4158 102 Jimmy C Vorhoff Jr Dr. Abbeville LA 70510 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>

DISTRICT MEETINGS

<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 September 9, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3802 5416 Hwy 27 S., De Quincy, LA 70633 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 November 12, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 9854 2292 Highway 109 S, Vinton, LA 70668 Registration 1pm Sessions start at 2pm. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 April 20, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 7321 2668 Hwy 171 North, Lake Charles, LA 70611 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 August 19, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8971 3809 Highway 190, Eunice, LA 70535 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 October 28, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 2484 123 N Liberty St., Opelousas, LA 70570 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 May 18, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5153 1020 VFW Drive, Arnaudville, LA 70512 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 September 9, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3784 13214 S Choctaw Dr., Baton Rouge LA 70815 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 January 13, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3693 42430 Church Point Rd., Gonzales, LA 70737 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 April 27, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nomination and Elections</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 4224 3215 Ben Williams Lane, Baker, LA 70714 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 September 16, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8290 28000 Main St., Lacombe, LA 70445 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 January 20, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3652 15800 Demarco Lane., Hammond, LA 70403 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 April 20, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8720 21470 Mire Dr., Abita Springs, LA 70420 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am</p>

DISTRICT MEETINGS

<p style="text-align: center;">District 10 September 16, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3841 2471 Leglise St., Mansura, LA 71350 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 10 February 17, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8852 2419 3rd St., Alexandria, LA 71302 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 10 May 18, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3139 412 Elmo S., Marksville, LA 71351 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 11 August 26, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 5442 (Farmerville) 100 Hudson Rd., Farmerville LA 71241 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 11 January 6, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 3615 (Ruston) 200 E. Mississippi Ave., Ruston LA 71270 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 11 May 4, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Convention</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 1809 (Monroe) 1499 Highway 594, Monroe LA 71203 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 12 September 9, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5187 860 Dahlia Vines St., Zwolle, LA 71486 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 12 January 20, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 4588 1004 Jeter St., Bossier City, LA 71111 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 12 May 11, 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5951 1315 Northgate Road, Bossier City, LA 71112 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>

FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

July 27 - August 1, 2024 - National Convention, Louisville, KY

August 9 -14, 2025 - National Convention, Columbus, OH

August 15 - 20, 2026 - National Convention, Salt Lake City, UT

July 31 - August 54, 2027 - National Convention, Milwaukee, WI

August 5 - 10, 2028 - National Convention, San Antonio, TX

STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

The Department of Louisiana has completed our State Council of Administration (COA). By now, the District COA meetings have started in full swing. Hopefully, each district has some great training scheduled for the members of their district. This is the time of year that everyone learns what is expected for this program year. I hope each member, post commander and district commander accomplish your goals this year. If you need any help or have questions, feel free to call.

Many wildfires have burned across areas in the state of Louisiana. The fires have caused residents to evacuate and unfortunately, some have lost everything. I ask each post and district commander to do buddy checks. Check on your members to make sure they are ok and find out if they need anything. Remember, the Department has a form that can be used to sign up for disaster relief assistance.

We have received good news for many of you. I wrote in a previous Mail Call that the only cap allowed in official VFW meetings is the cap with the color 51 green. As of 27 August, the sandstone cap is now allowed. Those of you that have the sandstone caps, you can now legally wear them during official VFW meetings.

I will be starting my post visitations about 7 September. I will send an email, text or phone call to the post commanders of each post that I plan to visit. I look forward to seeing each of you at your post and district meetings. I hope each of you have a great year!



DEBBIE McELHANNON
Army - Post 9854

FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

June 27 - 30, 2024 - State Convention
Alexandria, LA

STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Comrades,

It was great seeing those who attended the Counsel of Administration. The Department of Louisiana is here to assist all Posts and Districts. Let's continue to grow our organization and mentor our future leaders. Let's work together with our Auxiliary. We are much stronger and can accomplish more when we work together.

If you haven't already, it's time to distribute all our VFW programs to local schools. Americanism, Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy are great programs to promote Patriotism with our youth. I challenge all Posts to participate in these programs. I would also like see our Post participate in the Citizen Education Teacher and Safety programs.

I have attended District 3 and 4's School of Instruction/ District meetings so far. Excellent presentation and information presented at these meetings. I look forward to attending other District meetings around the State.

Thanks for all you do!



JAMES M. PRESTENBACK
Army - Post 3665

STATE ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

Comrades. I hope this issue finds you well.

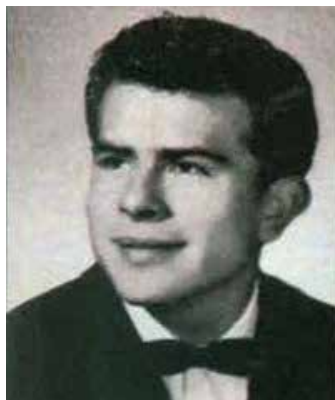
My message is personal this issue. Each September during the observance and recognition of those held as POW or in my Cota family, MIA, has a deeper meaning for us.

My Cota family service to our country stems from my father George F. Cota Sr., who began his service in 1942 during World War II, and again in 1951 in Korea. We have had someone from our family in uniform each decade until 2020, when my daughter Jessica K. (Cota) now Thomas left the Air National Guard after serving 12 years.

My father also was a Charter Member of VFW Post 6706, now defunct, and served during the 40's and 50's, I served during the 70's, 80's, 90's, and retiring from service in 07. My daughter's service started in 08, through the 10's, and ending her service in 2020. If you noticed I left the 60's out of our timeline but for a reason. What I would like to share with you all now, that some of you may know about my Uncle but I believe most of you do not.

After my father passed away in 1996 we discovered he had had a half brother that was lost and listed as MIA in Vietnam. And my brothers and sister had an uncle we never knew. Below is a description of my uncles case file.

Engineman Second Class (EN2) Ernest Keno Cota, who joined the U.S. Navy from California, served aboard the USS Harnett County (LST 821). On May 14, 1968, the Harnett County was anchored in the Bassac River near the Naval Support Activity



(EN2) Ernest Keno Cota

Detachment at Binh Thuy, South Vietnam. That evening, EN2 Cota and two other soldiers were waiting for the liberty boat to take them back to the ship when EN2 Cota fell into the water. Several men jumped in after him, but were quickly exhausted by the strong current, and were unable to retrieve him. An extensive search was performed, but



MITCHELL R. COTA, PSC
Air Force - Post 3750

EN2 Cota was not seen again. Today, Engineman Second Class Cota is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed along with all his fallen comrades on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC.



USS LST 82, Harnett County

I was 11 when my uncle fell into the river waters of Vietnam, a young man of 23 forever on duty. Mine and my family's hope and wish is one day everyone missing that can be found, will be found, and returned home. For this branch of Cota's living in Louisiana, based on all information available, DPAA assessed that my uncle's case to be in the analytical category of Non-recoverable. May he and all other MIA's unable to return home find peace and well as their waiting families.

COMMITTEEMEN CORNER

Greetings Comrades, what a busy August, I want to first thank all of you who have reached out offering assistance and prayers for Nellie. Glad to report that as of 30 August, she was released from the rehab hospital and back home to let the ankles heal and continue therapy on an outpatient status. Let the healing and recovery continue so she can resume her normal activities.

Now onto Council business, the weekend of 25-27 August I attended the National Council of Administration Meeting in Kansas City, over the weekend a detailed and very open discussion during the Budget Committee Meeting trying to get the questions answered and justification for the line items that were requested. After 6-7 hours of deliberations and explanations, the committee was satisfied with the amendments made to bring before the entire Council the Budget for the 2023-2024 VFW Year that passed unanimously. Many other items brought up during our workshop were reports concerning the different programs and the use of AI by students to create VOD/PP essays, Lyn Rolf has sent out an email with a link to check the entries your Post receives. Also with the success of the 1st National Cornhole Tourney it has been decided that this will be a continuing event at upcoming Conventions, modifications to the format and times will be made as part of lessons learned. Over \$120,000.00 was donated from Posts, Districts and Departments to assist the Dept of Hawaii with the relief efforts in Maui. National Sr Vice CIC Al Lippardt did inform me that he would be the National Rep for our Mid-Winter Conference in January.

Look forward to seeing all of you who are attending the Southern Conference in Tulsa 2-5 November and the Southern Conference Cruise 12-17 December. We have many things going on within our Department and the Southern Conference, keep those affected by the wildfires and hurricanes in your thoughts and prayers. Until next month let's keep pushing forward and doing those buddy checks.



ROBERT "BOBBY" LOVERGNE, PSC
National Committee Member
Air Force - Post 3750



STATE CHAPLAIN' MESSAGE

Have you ever been on a journey or task, hit a slight roadbump, lost your focus, and thought you can't continue forward? Often times when I was in the military my Soldiers would do the same thing. So often that I used it to teach or drive home a point. The point was actually quite simple, When we go through a difficult or hard task and emerge on the other side we do so a bigger person. I can reflect clearly on a rotation in the desert of Fort Irwin and it's the difficult times that looking back made the biggest memories.

Our VFW journey is no different than the ones in the military. When aren't deployed or carrying weapons but it overcoming adversity that we develop the most. Large or small VFWs at the end have the same mission. To assist our community and most importantly our Veterans. We all might not have quite as large a team or have the same tools at our disposal but always remember that to each veteran we serve that we never know how important our jobs might be for them.

If you need anything of me I am only a text, call, email, or Facebook message away. The only stupid question is the one you should have asked but didn't.

God bless and best wishes

MSG David Fields, Retired
State Chaplain
Msgdfields@gmail.com
318-402-9747



DAVID B. FIELDS
Army - Post 7287



Service Member **2D LT FRED L. BREWER**



Conflict	WORLD WAR II
Service	UNITED STATE ARMY AIR FORCES
Status	ACCOUNTED FOR
Date of Identification	AUGUST 10, 2023

On August 10, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified the remains of Second Lieutenant Fred L. Brewer Jr., missing from World War II.

Second Lieutenant Brewer, who joined the U.S. Army Air Forces from North Carolina, was a Tuskegee Airman and member of the 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group. On October 19, 1944, he piloted a single-seat P-51C Mustang (tail number 43-25108, nicknamed “Traveling Light”) out of Ramitelli Air Field in Italy as one of fifty-seven fighters on a bomber escort mission over enemy targets in Regensburg, Germany. The flight left Ramitelli and split into three groups over the Udine area of Italy to continue on to the target area. However, heavy cloud cover forced nine fighters to return to Ramitelli early, and none of the other fighters could locate their bomber aircraft or the target. Forty-seven fighters eventually returned to base, and 2nd Lt. Brewer was not among them. Reports from other pilots on the mission indicate that 2nd Lt. Brewer had been attempting to climb his aircraft out of the cloud cover but stalled out and fell into a spin. After the war, a body was recovered by U.S. personnel from a civilian cemetery in the area, but the remains could not be identified using techniques available at the time and were interred as an unknown. In 2011, researchers examined the case of those unknown remains and discovered that an Italian police report indicated they were recovered from a crashed fighter plane on the same day as 2LT Brewer’s disappearance. German wartime records corroborated this information. In June 2022, the remains were disinterred and sent to a DPAA laboratory for further study. The totality of evidence allowed a positive identification of the remains as those of 2LT Brewer.

Second Lieutenant Brewer is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at the Florence American Cemetery in Impruneta, Italy.



LT. FRED L. BREWER

2D LT FRED L. BREWER

**Unit 100th Fighter Squadron,
332 Fighter Group**

Loss Italy

Home of record NC



Service Member **2D LT FRED L. BREWER**



Conflict VIETNAM WAR
Service UNITED STATE MARINE CORPS
Status ACCOUNTED FOR
Date of Identification AUGUST 8, 2023

On August 2, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified the remains of Captain Ralph Jim Chipman, missing from the Vietnam War.

Captain Chipman entered the U.S. Marine Corps from Utah and was a member of the Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 533, Marine Air Group 15, 1st Marine Air Wing. On December 27, 1972, he was the pilot aboard an A-6A Intruder (bureau number 155666, call sign "Tiny 05") which took off from Royal Thai Air Base Nam Phong, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, carrying two crew members on a night combat mission over North Vietnam. The Intruder was last heard from when an airborne controller received a radio transmission indicating "Tiny 05" was beginning its entry into the target area. No subsequent radio contact was made, and an aerial search conducted over the area was unsuccessful in locating the aircraft or crew. On July 1, 1974, the Marine Corps changed Capt Chipman's status from Missing in Action to Killed in Action. Investigations following the incident continued for decades, with investigators eventually discovering remains and material evidence which are believed to be associated with Capt Chipman and the other aviator in the area of the crash site.

Captain Chipman is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed along with all his fallen comrades on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC.



CAPT RALPH JIM CHIPMAN

Unit VMA 533 (AW) MAG 15

Loss North Vietnam

Home of record UT





Veterans of Foreign Wars Legislative Priorities

Fall Legislative Conference
Washington, D.C.
September 11-13, 2023

Visit us at: www.vfw.org/LegislativePriorities

Issue Contact: Brittany Dymond at bdymond@vfw.org

Transition from the Military

The VFW's Concern:

Leaving service is often complicated by service-related ailments, family needs, loss of identity and support networks, and the required training to enter a new career field. Sadly, the initial year following discharge also comes with increased suicide risk among new veterans, heightening the need to ensure all transitioning service members are connected to post-service benefits and resources as quickly as possible.

One of the best resources to have during this period are accredited representatives who can help file Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims. Through BDD, service members can file expedited claims and complete medical evaluations before leaving service, enabling VA to provide disability ratings upon discharge. Receiving accelerated claims decisions means BDD participants are better able to minimize gaps in essential care like mental health counseling and medication management once they officially leave service.

Unfortunately, not all service members going through the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP) have access to BDD accredited representatives, resulting in lost opportunities to receive timely care and benefits upon discharge. The VFW believes there is immense value in incorporating these accredited representatives into the TAP curriculum itself. Specifically, we would like to see these representatives physically present in TAP classrooms during VA briefings on resources that can be applied for prior to discharge. Accredited representatives would not only be able to highlight the BDD program, but also help transitioning service members file claims. VA contract employees who largely teach the VA curriculum cannot legally assist with claims.

The VFW firmly believes the BDD program is an underutilized tool in the fight against veteran suicide. Directly connecting transitioning service members to accredited representatives in TAP classrooms has the potential to save lives.

The VFW urges Congress to:

Pass H.R. 3933, *TAP Promotion Act*, to require accredited representatives from national, state, and local organizations to be included in TAP classes.

Issue Contact: Kristina Keenan at kkeen@vfw.org

VA Benefits Data for Suicide Prevention

The VFW's Concern:

The VFW has advocated for years that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must incorporate more Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) usage data into its suicide prevention efforts. This should include complete information on disability compensation; use of benefits for education, employment, home loans, and foreclosure assistance; and participation in housing and food insecurity programs. VA has recently begun reporting on the convergence of benefits and veteran suicide, but not in any substantive manner. We must identify, study, and utilize information regarding economic opportunity benefits, and leverage that information to successfully prevent suicide among veterans.

Education: A 2020 study of recently transitioned service members found those with fewer years of education had a higher hazard of suicide, with lack of education being a likely factor in difficulty finding post-military employment, potentially leading to financial instability.

Employment: Unemployment can be detrimental to mental health and is associated with an increased risk for suicide. Providing benefits to help veterans swiftly reemploy can moderate mental health issues and potentially mitigate suicidal ideations.

Compensation: Veterans can feel hopeless, unheard, and retriggered by their military trauma during the benefit claims process. They may also face financial hardship paying medical expenses until they receive care through VA. A 2021 study showed that veterans with a service-connected disability designation who utilized services were less likely to attempt suicide.

Housing: Data from one study of veterans who self-reported housing instability between 2012 and 2016 indicated over half of these veterans accessed homeless services, and associated the use of these services to a significant reduction in suicide risk.

Note: All of these programs are administered by VBA, but the VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention is operated out of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). It would make more sense for this office to be elevated to the office of the Secretary, and for both VHA and VBA data to be included in its reports on suicide. VA must study all resources from its administrations to effectively combat veteran suicide.

The VFW urges Congress to:

Pass S. 928, *Not Just a Number Act*, to direct VA to incorporate benefit usage data into its annual suicide prevention report, and to examine moving the office of suicide prevention to the enterprise level at VA.

Issue Contact: Quandrea Patterson at gpatterson@vfw.org

Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies

The VFW's Concern:

The VFW is concerned that bad actors have been preying on veterans by seeking to access their earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, unaccredited consulting groups that the VFW calls "Claim Sharks" viewed the chaos as an exploitation opportunity. Since the passage of the PACT Act they have ramped up their efforts even more.

These groups aggressively advertise online and make promises to increase veterans' disability ratings. Some charge thousands of dollars in fees for their services, and even request VA login credentials to track when veterans receive future ratings increases. If a veteran receives a disability percentage increase years later, often these companies return seeking more money. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical providers, which raises ethical concerns.

The VFW believes that penalties need to be reinstated to the already existing law. Anyone who assists veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims should adhere to established fee caps or be subject to penalties. A bipartisan coalition of forty-four attorneys general agrees with the VFW and sent a letter to House and Senate leadership expressing support for passage of the *GUARD VA Benefits Act*.

The states and territories that signed the letter are: California, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Provisional Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The VFW urges Congress to:

Pass S. 740 / H.R. 1139, *GUARD VA Benefits Act*, to reinstate penalties for charging veterans and survivors unauthorized fees relating to claims for VA benefits.

Support Today's Veterans and Military

Please contact or visit your congressional representatives and stress that these are the issues we will be fighting for in the 118th Congress. These priority goals reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW and its Auxiliary. To find your congressional representatives, visit [vfw.org/ActionCorps](https://www.vfw.org/ActionCorps).

Play a Role in the Process

Engage and help us ensure that these priority goals are enacted. Sign up today for the VFW Action Corps Weekly and VFW Action Alerts:

- Visit [vfw.org/JoinActionCorps](https://www.vfw.org/JoinActionCorps)
- Text "VFW" to 50457*
- Scan QR Code below

*Messaging and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Reply HELP and STOP to unsubscribe.



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

*Delivering the promise to our
veterans, service members,
and their families.*

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2023 PRIORITY GOALS

VFW
Washington Office
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Tel: 202.543.2239

VFW
National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Tel: 816.756.3390

www.vfw.org

Budget

To fully fund programs for veterans, service members, and their families, Congress must:

- Reform the dysfunctional federal budget process.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.

Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Properly implement comprehensive toxic exposure legislation.
- Review and assess military toxic exposures, and ensure health care and benefits are provided to all toxic-exposed veterans.
- Consider treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- Properly implement the modernized appeals process.
- Reinstate pre-decisional review authority for claims representatives prior to final rating decisions.
- Require VA to accept private medical evidence in lieu of VA examinations.
- Update regulations and laws governing claims to account for digital claims processing.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.
- Crack down on predatory claims providers.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits for survivors.
- Increase burial allowances to account for inflation.

Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD, and DOL must:

- Require oversight of transition assistance program pathways, timely attendance, and connections to community transition resources.
- Ensure equal access to pre-discharge claims assistance across the services.
- Mandate the inclusion of accredited representatives in transition assistance briefings.
- Expand transition services for spouses.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Improve education benefits through increased online student housing allowances, child care stipends, parity for Guard and Reserve members, and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Enhance outreach and counseling to veterans eligible for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program.
- Expand small business and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Expand preferences and tax incentives for hiring veterans and military spouses.
- Fund and track outcomes for career-focused training programs.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments, and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.

Health Care

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA, and DOD must:

- Reduce the number of service members and veterans who die by suicide to zero.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research and effectively treat health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- Expand geriatric extended care services, nursing home eligibility, and long-term care options.
- Improve VA's prescribing and deprescribing practices.
- Improve programs and services for women and minority veterans.

- Eliminate copayment requirements for preventive health care, including medications.
- Research the efficacy of medical cannabis.
- Properly implement VA and DOD health IT systems.
- Ensure Affordable Care Act parity and access for VA and TRICARE users.

Military Quality of Life

To maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force, Congress and DOD must:

- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- Protect and improve on-base quality of life and support programs.
- Eliminate forced arbitration clauses in contracts for service members.
- Ensure that military housing is safe and free of toxic substances.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Ensure military family members are gainfully employed.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.
- Establish the Armed Forces University.
- Ensure equity of benefits for Reserve component service members.

National Security, Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA

To fully support service members, and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Preserve the all-volunteer force.
- Expand partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- Ensure DPAA is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.

VFW PROGRAMS DEADLINE DATES

Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award

- *October 31, Entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging
- *February 1, Department winners and reports due to National (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation)

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen

- *October 31, Student entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging
- January 10, Completion of Department judging
- January 15, District participation reports due to Department Chairmen
- *January 15, Department winners due to National
- *January 31, Department reports due to National

Scout of the Year

- *March 1, Scout entries to the Post
- *April 1, Post entries to Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs
- *May 1, Department entry to National from Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs

Community Service

- *April 30, Post Special Project & Fred C. Hall Award Submission (Department to National)
- *April 30, National Outstanding Community Service Post Submission(s) (Department to National)
- *June 30, Community Service Reports Deadline

Public Servant National Award (Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Emergency Services)

- January 1, Nominations due (from Post to Department)
- *February 1, (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), Nominations due from Department to National

National Certificate of Recognition

- April 1 (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), List due to National from Department

****Required deadline (by VFW National Headquarters.) All other deadlines are suggested, and can be internally set at the discretion of the VFW Department leadership. Post Chairmen, be sure to communicate with your District Chairmen to find out their official deadlines, and District Chairmen need to communicate with their Department Chairmen to find out their deadlines.***

Updated 8/1/2022



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento is issuing his first challenge to all our Posts to get a strong start to membership growth and to move us toward our goal of 102% for this membership year!

This membership year is already off to a strong start, and the Commander-in-Chief wants to keep that momentum going. To do that, he's set out the first of his membership challenges this year to encourage Posts to raise their membership numbers.

For this month's challenge, we're going to continue focusing on membership growth and see how many members a Post can bring in during the month of August. New members, renewing members, and reinstated members, as well as dues-paying transfers will all count towards this contest goal.

The Post in each membership division that shows the highest increase in their membership total will win a \$500 cash award and a framed citation for the Post!

This contest will specifically count Annual members; since Life Members will not show up in your Post's totals until September, they will not factor into this month's contest.

Membership is a continual process through the year, and it's always the right time to bring in new members, make sure your Annual members renew or convert to Life, and work those Unpaid/Expired lists to bring members back into the fold.

The goal for this year is 102%, and with hard work we know that it is within our reach. This is going to be the year that we show exceptional growth because this will be the year everyone will go out and

MEET THE CHALLENGE!

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024

This contest will measure a Post's increase in membership from August 1st through August 31st, 2023. Dues payments and applications processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. . Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.

Membership

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

We all know one of the key components of membership growth is recruiting, so for the month of September, Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento has issued a special challenge to all our VFW Posts to bring us closer to our goal of 102% membership! Throughout the month of September, the Commander-in-Chief wants to see everyone doing their part to recruit new members into the VFW, and that means everyone!

The Post in each membership division that has the highest percentage of members who bring in at least one new or reinstated member during September will win a \$500 cash award, plus a special Recruiting Plaque for the Post listing all those members who helped us by recruiting at least one new member!

This challenge will compare your Post's prior year total to how many members in your Post have recruited at least one member during the month of September. For example, if you ended the year at 100 members and you have 10 members go out and recruit, that's 10% of your Post who met the challenge!

The strength of the VFW is our membership, and this is how we will increase that strength. We all know at least one fellow veteran who is eligible but hasn't yet joined - now is the time to get them to take that step! The Commander-in-Chief has set a high bar for success this year, and if we all do our part to help grow our Posts, we will meet that goal of 102%! We are ready to put in the effort to have a record-breaking year as we go out there and **MEET THE CHALLENGE!**

ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

Members of an All-American Post may submit their cap order through the VFW Store.

2023-24 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The 2023-24 Membership Program is available online at vfw.org, under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2023-24 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES

As the membership year has begun, keep in mind our membership objectives, also written in the 2023-24 Membership Program.

- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- For Posts, District and Departments to reach 102% membership by June 30, 2024.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

From National Sources

- Provide membership assistance using teams from your conference to assist and mentor those who request assistance.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT AWARD

The new membership year is off and running! I am encouraged by the number of Membership Chairs who have inquired about the resources and help your National Membership team has for you. Membership committees should be planning and organizing their recruiting efforts now! Order membership recruiting materials early and often; membership applications are always shipped to you free! If you have questions about Memstats, Post query, or if you are trying to charter a Post and you have more than (15) members on a charter application, give me a call, Matt Nute at 816.968.1122. We have many resources available to help you.

New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award: For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:

- A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives, view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at vfw.org under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at membership@vfw.org or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Sept. 11, 2023, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: Recruiting basics and utilizing Post reports. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to vfw.org, click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life members and is now available in memoriam for past Life members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

<u>Levels</u>		<u>Posts</u>	<u>Departments</u>	<u>National</u>
Gold-	\$1,200.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Silver-	\$800.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Bronze-	\$400.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00

What will your Legacy be?

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation is proud to announce that \$419,500 was raised in sponsorships for the 2023 VFW National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona, July 22-27. Additionally, all convention special receptions and luncheons were sponsored or co-sponsored through the efforts of the VFW Foundation.

The VFW Foundation recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Veterans United Foundation.

The May 2023 Burger King/VFW Unmet Needs campaign raised over \$430,000, which brings total fundraising for this fiscal year to \$745,000. Since the fundraiser's inception in 2007, Burger King and its supporters have donated over \$7.6 million to Unmet Needs!

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, rfreiburghouse@vfw.org.

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 18% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

VFW Christmas Cards, Tote and Socks – This month we are mailing VFW Christmas Cards, a VFW tote and VFW socks as our way of saying “Thank You” for your generosity in helping provide much-needed services to fellow veterans and service members. With the holidays quickly approaching, your support is urgently needed! Please help our heroes by sending a special donation when you receive this package. And take the time to visit a hospitalized or homebound veteran or current service member this holiday season. Your best wishes and thanks for their service mean more than you can imagine. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Volunteer to find out about volunteering at your local VA facility.

Simplify Your Will Planning While Supporting the VFW – If you are considering a gift to the VFW through your will or other estate plans, you can visit vfw.org/PlannedGiving for helpful tips, tools and other FREE resources! Request our Estate Planning Kit to help simplify and organize the estate planning process for you and your attorney. For assistance or more information, please contact VFW Planned Giving at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join with him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families and reduce the amount of mail you receive. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate fundraising mail. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join the VFW's Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at

From National Sources

1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at partners@vfw.org with “Partners in Patriotism Application” in the subject line.

VFW Friends of Freedom – If you are not already a member of the VFW’s online community, please visit vfw.org and look for the gold banner that says “**Find Out What’s Happening**” to sign up. As a member of the VFW’s Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation’s veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit vfw.org/VFWatWork and click on “**Read VFW success stories**” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. By visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools, you will find the latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department. Download ad slicks, ready-to-use articles and other items for your Department publications and/or website. Recent mailings and mail schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the tools found on the VFW Department Resources Page to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

Veterans & Military Support Programs

If your Department ordered and received the 2023-24 VMS Lapel Pins, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may utilize the VMS Donation link on the upper right-hand corner of the Dashboard.

As the Veterans & Military Support Program evolves and streamlines our operations, we have augmented the current Veterans & Military Support Programs Chair Tools webpage. This will be updated every month.

VMS All-American Requirement

VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard moving forward. An email was sent out June 29, 2023, annotating this change and explaining the NEW donation page. All Posts have to do is click on the VMS donation tab on the Dashboard to donate. The link will point them to OMS. No more checks to the National Headquarters.

If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will fill out the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. No more weekly updates.

Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. Again, this will automatically update for credit daily.

Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your continued support!

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The 2024 Spring Semester opened Aug. 1, 2023, and runs through Nov. 15, 2023. The application is available online only at vfw.org/scholarship.

VFW Programs

DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS. Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag.

PATRIOT DAY, SEPT. 11. Per Presidential Proclamation, Sept. 11 is designated as “Patriot Day.” The president requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) and a moment of silence observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day due to terrorist attacks on the United States. For flags and other patriotic items, click here vfwstore.org/category/patriotic/miscpatriotic.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, SEPT. 15. Posts should conduct an appropriate ceremony. Information on conducting a ceremony can be found in the current VFW Manual of Procedure. For POW/MIA merchandise, click vfwstore.org/category/memorial/pow-mia.

2023-24 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. The Veterans of Foreign Wars wants to recognize the nation’s top elementary, junior high and high school teachers (teaching at least half of the school day in a classroom environment) who teach citizenship education topics regularly and promote America’s history, traditions, and institutions effectively through this program.

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for the next competition. All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

All Post-level nominees should provide an entry form, a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available.

VFW Post Teacher Award chairpersons may submit one candidate, in each grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), to their District by Nov. 15. If a Department does not have a District judging, then the Post winning entries would be submitted to the Department Headquarters and/or Department Chairperson by Jan. 1. The Department may select a single candidate, in each grade level, and submit them to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1 for National judging.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” which will be available on the VFW website soon. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under “My VFW” in the Training & Support section.

VFW’s Department Citizenship Education Teacher award includes a citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

VFW’s National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher’s school; plaques for both the winning teacher and their school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

From National Sources

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. have the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2023-24 program year. The teacher entry form, information page, and Chairpersons Guide are available on the VFW website.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals and on the same page are all other program materials.

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME! It is the perfect time to contact schools, youth groups, parent organizations and others with information about Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen. Schools are making curriculum decisions now and parents are thinking about scholarships.

Please remember that Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen are VFW programs supported by the VFW Auxiliary. It is inappropriate for the VFW Auxiliary to conduct a separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email nlopez@vfw.org or call 816.968.1155.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2023-24 themes have been chosen by Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. The Voice of Democracy theme is **"What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"** and the Patriot's Pen is **"How are you inspired by America?"**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2023-24 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy for Voice of Democracy and vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen for Patriot's Pen.

NOTE: "NEW" Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are now available!

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. New this year, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal category has been added. Departments are asked to submit five nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2024. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D.) Award

All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the "VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form" through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters. Deadline for Department submissions to National is Feb. 1 to receive for Department Convention presentations.

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient's peers at a professional association event, city

From National Sources

council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the general public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EOD personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant.

NOTE: VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form has been developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairpersons with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry form along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging, by Oct. 31. Once a winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward the winning entries on to the next level of judging.

Simply visit vfw.org, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Public Servant Program**.

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: vfwstore.org/products/32134.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM. This program is designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time to outside organizations. Recognition is in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins which are given to volunteers who have completed the number of hours prescribed for those awards. For more information, see the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IN NOVEMBER. VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home front experiences to students. Invite your local military recruiter to join you to talk about military service today. Additional information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals, and on the same page are all other program materials.

Participate in this activity during the week of Veterans Day, which is part of "National Veterans Awareness week," as designated by Congress. Find Pledge of Allegiance pencils and coloring books, plus other citizenship education tools at the VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation.

"UPDATED" POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot's Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

VFW Member Benefits

[According to the National Cancer Institute](#), men have a one in two chance of being diagnosed with cancer during their lifetimes; for women, the chance is one in three.

With these odds, it makes sense to be prepared, and the VFW makes it easy.

The VFW Cancer Care Insurance Plan, administered by AGIA and underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, helps alleviate the financial burden of cancer care should you be diagnosed with cancer, so you can focus on your health and recovery.

Cash benefits are payable for cancer related events and are yours to use as you see fit, including hospital bills, operations, mortgage, car payments or other expenses.

Help protect your financial future against the costs associated with a cancer diagnosis. For additional information including costs, benefits, limitations, exclusions, and rates of the Cancer Care Insurance Plan, click [here](#) or call 1.877.850.0183.

“Buddy”[®] Poppy

“BUDDY”[®] POPPY CAMPAIGN. Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as “They Gave, Will You?” is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY UPDATE: National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective Aug. 1, 2023:

- 1) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 2) If you do not report a missing order within 90 days of processing, the order will NOT be replaced free of charge, and you will have to resubmit your order.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at fwfstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot’s Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson’s guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the

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distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES. The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. Anniversary poppies are approximately three times as expensive for us to produce, but because of the small quantities we deal in, we do not pass those costs on to the Posts. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department and processed the same as the red poppies.

National Veterans Service

HUMANA SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING

For the second consecutive year, VFW was able to offer a scholarship for up to 10 exemplary cross-accredited state or county service officers/claims representatives to attend VFW accredited service officer skill training Sept. 10-14, in Annapolis, Maryland. Each scholarship covers hotel, transportation, conference fees and per diem for the recipient.

This scholarship is available thanks to a donation from Humana Inc. and the VFW has chosen to dedicate these resources to help provide quality training to service officers who may not usually have an opportunity to train with the organization, allowing the VFW to reach deeper into communities to provide high-quality, free claims assistance to veterans. All scholarship recipients are currently accredited with the VFW through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of benefit claims before VA on behalf of VFW claimants.

VFW's accredited service officer training is one of the ways the VFW satisfies VA Office of the General Counsel's continuing education requirements for its global network of accredited representatives and is subject to periodic audit from OGC.

We thank our Humana Partners for such an incredibly generous donation to further the goals and objectives of the National Veterans Service in providing world class representation on behalf of our veterans, claimants, their families, and survivors.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

PACT Act Claims Continue

The Department of Veterans Affairs extended the deadline to file a PACT Act claim and receive *retroactive benefits backdated to last year* through Aug. 14, 2023. Although that deadline has passed, veterans and survivors are still eligible to apply for benefits. If you have already submitted an Intent to File, be sure to contact an accredited representative to ensure your claim is submitted properly. The VFW-championed PACT Act added more than twenty presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxins. Learn more about your eligibility at PACTActInfo.org or connect with an [accredited representative](#) for assistance with your claim.

DISTRICT 2 - Post 3750

Right:

The PJ's owner Andrew Jones asked Post 3750 what he could do to honor veterans in the Luling community to go along with the VFW Branded packages of coffee he was selling in his store. So the first Sunday of each month he opens the door to PJ's for veterans within the community for coffee and comradeship with others.



Below:

Members of VFW Post 3750 along with Members for the American Legion Post 131 and veterans from the Luling community meet monthly for coffee at Luling's PJ's.



SR VICE CDR RAFFLE

DRAWING 27 JANUARY 2024 AT MID-WINTER CONFERENCE IN ALEXANDRIA

TICKETS \$10.00 EACH FOR 3 PRIZES

1ST PRIZE – RUGER AMERICAN 6.5

CREEDMOOR WITH VORTEX SCOPE

2ND PRIZE – WOODEN FLAG

3RD PRIZE – METAL LASER ART PIECE



RUGER AMERICAN® RIFLE WITH
VORTEX® CROSSFIRE II® RIFLESCOPE



19" X 36"



18" X 12"

For more information contact Jennifer Lockett @ 337-602-8418 or Debbie McElhannon @ 337-526-3695. Thank you for your support!

Return tickets by 26 Jan at MWC or mail by 18 Jan to 5455 Henderson Rd, Vinton, LA 70668



DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

PLEASE DISREGARD ANY OTHER BUDDY POPPY ORDER FORMS! THESE ARE THE PRICES YOU WILL BE CHARGED!!!!

DISTRICT # _____
 POST # _____
 AUXILIARY # _____

DATE: _____

BUDDY POPPY ORDER FORM

MAIL TO: VFW DEPT. OF LOUISIANA
 10185 MAMMOTH AVE.
 BATON ROUGE, LA 70814

ALL CHECKS ARE TO BE MADE
 PAYABLE TO "VFW DEPT. OF LA"

QUANTITY:	ITEM:	PRICE:	TOTAL:
	BUDDY POPPIES	Per 1,000	\$275.00
		Per 500	\$137.50
		SUB-TOTAL=	

All other VFW Buddy Poppy supplies may be purchased directly from the VFW Store Online by visiting their website www.vfwstore.org. See list of other Buddy Poppy Items and Product Codes that VFW Store Offers

ITEM NAME:	ITEM #:
Buddy Poppy Coin Canisters	A9703
Buddy Poppy Posters	09701
Buddy Poppy Volunteer Buttons	09705

Visit the VFW Store website listed above to order and view more items offered!

Please allow 10-12 weeks for processing!

GRAND TOTAL: _____

SHIP POPPIES TO: _____ TITLE: _____
 STREET ADDRESS: (PHYSICAL ADDRESS - NO -- P.O. BOXES!)

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY:		
_____	QUANTITY ORDERED FROM NATIONAL - DATE _____	
_____	QUANTITY SHIPPED FROM DEPT HQ	DATE _____
DATE RECEIVED _____	CHECK # _____	CHECK AMOUNT _____