

MARCH

2024

MAIL CALL

23-24 GENERAL ORDER-09 PAGE 4 - 8



Commander Ron and President Lisa Delaney welcomes 23-24 VFW Auxiliary National President Carla Martinez to the Department of Louisiana

23-24 STATE COMMANDER
RONALD K. "RON" DELANEY



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STATE OFFICERS MESSAGES

Ronald K. "Ron" Delaney, State Commander	Post 4588
Debbie McElhannon, Senior Vice Commander	Post 9854
James M. Prestenback, Junior Vice Commander	Post 3665
Elvin "Ray" Bass, State Quartermaster	Post 3337
Mitchell R. "Mitch" Cota, State Adjutant	Post 3750

contact: adj@vfwdola.org

**Editor Mail Call/Louisiana Combat Veteran
 State Historian**

Sheree M. Arends, State Surgeon	Post 5951
David Fields, State Chaplain	Post 5951

NATIONAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

DUANE T. SARMIENTO

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024



**STATE CONVENTION 2024
 JUNE 27 - 30, 2024**

THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131



**NATIONAL CONVENTION 2024
 JULY 27 - AUGUST 1, 2024**

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
 Housing opens 3/18/24
 Closes 6/10/24

**COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION 2024
 AUGUST 9 - 11, 2024**

THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE 2025

JANUARY 23 - 26, 2025

THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131

STATE COMMANDER MESSAGE

Greetings Comrades,

Despite recent Membership, recruitment and retention activities and efforts being conducted across the state, the Department of Louisiana is still struggling to climb out of the Membership “cellar”. Recruiting and retention efforts are essential to building and maintaining a strong Membership base that ensures we can continue to accomplish the VFW mission of doing more for our veterans. Contacting expired and lapsed members may not only lead to renewal opportunities, it is also an important “buddy check” with these prior members.

I know I may sound like a broken record regarding the need to do Buddy checks. We may never truly know the positive result of making a call to check on someone shows we care and that may be exactly what a comrade needs at that moment in time. Across our nation we are losing too many comrades daily and if a phone call can prevent even one loss, it is an effort well worth the time spent.

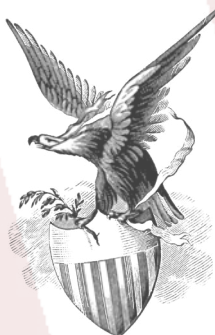
As I write this, I am on my way to Washington DC. Lisa and I are looking forward to the honor of escorting Josephine Ciuffi during the VOD parade of winners. We will also meet up with Matt West and an excellent team from the Department of Louisiana, VFW, and Auxiliary for the National VFW Legislative Conference. Louisiana team will be meeting with our legislators to discuss important legislation affecting our veterans and their families. We will be making sure our elected officials are fully aware of the VFW Priority Goals and the importance of supporting legislation to make sure our country meets the needs of the service men and women who gave so much defending our freedoms.

It is that time of year for VFW Posts across the state to receive nominations for officers. We need officers to keep our VFW healthy at the Post, District and Department level. If you are already serving as a VFW officer at any level thank you. if you are considering serving the VFW as an officer at the Post or District level you will need to be nominated during March and April, post meetings and elections, as well as April and May district meetings and elections.



RON DELANEY
Air Force - Post 4588

Lisa and I have planned a fun party and a good meal on March 16 from 10 AM until 2 PM. You can also plan to stay and celebrate with us all afternoon and evening. Tickets tickets are \$20 and are good for both the testimonial and Post 4588 Saturday night dance that begins at 6:30 PM. This is a casual St. Patrick’s Day themed party so put your “green on” and join us.



23-24 General Order-08

ONLY PAGE 4- IS TO BE READ AT MEETINGS THEN POSTED

Please share Mail Call with Post Members by EMAIL.

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.

1. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee. Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that will be mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing going out later this month. Registration forms for the 124th National Convention may be mailed to: Convention Registration, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.
2. Attention is directed to Section 217 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure covering the nomination, election and installation of Post Officers. Post Election Report forms are being mailed to Post Quartermasters with instructions that they complete the form online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or they can complete the form and return directly to National Headquarters immediately following the election of Post Officers but not later than June 1.
3. Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure provides that delegates and alternates for the District Convention and meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Posts are entitled to one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post as of March 31.
4. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, each District shall hold an annual District Convention for the purpose of electing District officers, such convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws – Regular Meeting, Districts shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year for purposes of transacting business and conducting schools of instruction. Pursuant to Section 417 of the National Manual of Procedure, District officers shall not assume the duties of their office until the Department Commander is installed. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed in accordance with Section 416 of the Manual of Procedure.
5. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 (a)(11) of the National Manual of Procedure, Officers: Duties and Obligations. Trustees Report of Audit must be prepared in detail within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, one of which ends March 31.

During our Department Inspection in January, one change to our Department Bylaws was recommended by the National Inspection Team. That of moving one of our committees under the section with Standing Committees and taking it to of a section to itself. Doing a search in order to ensure everything else was up to date with our Bylaws.

I discovered in some areas we were out of compliance as far back as five **(5) years**. Our current Department Bylaws is dated June 20, 2021, and these are the three (3) changes that are vital to Posts, Districts, and our Department to become compliant with National's Bylaws.

Election and Appointed Officers; Chairman and Committees.

1. Taken from the 2019 Podium Edition, as amended July 25, 2018 and effective August 24, 2018. The following changes in Section 216, 416, and 516 were made concerning Officer election at the Post, District, and Department levels.

Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The Post shall elect the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three Trustees. (Chaplain was removed as elected in the 2023 Podium Edition)
- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chaplain, and Service Officer.
- (c) The Post may elect or the Post Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day and/or Guard if required by Post Bylaws.
- (d) The Post Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Post or as may be required by Post Bylaws.

Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of each District shall consist of a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and three (3) Trustees. (Chaplain was removed as elected in the 2024 Podium Edition and placed under (b) as a appointed officer)
- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chaplain, and Service Officer and Inspector.
- (c) The District may elect or the District Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if required by the District Bylaws.
- (d) The District Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the District or as may be required by District Bylaws.

Sec. 516 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

- (a) The elected officers of each Department shall be a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster and Chaplain.
- (b) The Department Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Inspector and Service Officer.
- (c) The Department may elect or the Department Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if so required by Department Bylaws.
- (d) The Department Commander may appoint such chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Department or as may be required by Department Bylaws.
- (e) With respect to salaried officers, the appointment shall be made subject to confirmation of a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration.

This means if the Post, District, or Department Bylaws do not reflect that an Officer (i.e. Judge Advocate, Surgeon, and Chaplain at Post and District levels) is elected in their Bylaws, that position is appointed by the Post, District, or Department Commander's. The Chaplain at the Department level is still elected for now but the Department Bylaws must state that the Judge Advocate and Surgeon shall be elected at conventions or when vacant.

I realize every Post or District has or may not have a National approved Bylaws or any Bylaws at all as some do not. This brings me to the third discrepancy listed that I discovered and needs to be addressed and updated in our Department. But this second one concerns meetings.

Regular, Special, and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

2. Taken from the 2022 Podium Edition, as amended August 3, 2021 and effective September 2, 2021. The following changes in Section 203, 403, and 503 were made concerning Bylaws at the Post, District, and Department levels.

Sec. 203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meetings. Posts shall hold at least one regular meeting each month. Failure to comply can result in immediate revocation of the Post Charter notwithstanding the provisions of Section 211 of the Manual of Procedure.

Special Meetings. Special meetings will be called in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Manual of Procedure.

Committee Meetings. Meetings called by Post Committee Chairmen, or as authorized by the Post Bylaws, for the purpose of conducting the business of that committee.

Quorum. The Post Bylaws may specify the minimum number of members required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or special meeting, provided that in no case shall the quorum be less than five (5) members. (Change removed physically present.)

Electronic Attendance. Any of the above stated meetings may be conducted or attended electronically that allows participating members to communicate with each other Simultaneously.

Authorized Attendees. Any member of the Post and those on official business shall be recognized by the Post Commander for the conduct of business.

Guests. With the approval of the Post Commander/Committee Chairman, any visiting member or guest may attend a Post/Committee meeting. Such visiting member or guest shall have no voice unless recognized by the Post Commander/Committee Chairman, and shall have no voting privileges.

Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Regular Meeting. Districts shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year for purposes of transacting business and conducting schools of instruction.

Special Meeting. Special meetings will be called in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Manual of Procedure. No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting was called. **Committee Meeting.** Meetings called by District Committee Chairmen, or as authorized by the District Bylaws, for the purpose of conducting the business of that committee. **Convention.** Each District shall hold an annual District Convention for the purpose of electing District officers and for the transaction of business; such Convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

Quorum. The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the

transaction of business at District meetings and Conventions shall not be less than one (1) delegate each from fifty (50) percent of Posts in the District.

Electronic Attendance. Members may be allowed to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Authorized Attendees. Any member, not a member of the District Convention, may attend the Convention, however, they shall have no voice in business discussions unless requested by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business.

Sec. 503 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Each Department shall hold one Convention each year, which shall begin no earlier than ninety days prior to the convening of the National Convention and shall be concluded no less than thirty (30) days prior to the conclusion of the National Convention.

The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Department Convention shall be not less than one delegate each from ten Posts in the Department unless the Department Bylaws may prescribe a different number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Any member in good standing or one on official business may visit a Department Convention; however, such visitor shall have no voice in business discussions unless recognized by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business.

The Department Council of Administration or Department Convention may allow delegates to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Bylaws

3. Taken from the 2023 Podium Edition, as amended July 19, 2022 and effective August 20, 2022. The following changes in Section 202, 402, and 502 were made concerning Bylaws at the Post, District, and Department levels.

Sec. 202 - Bylaws.

Posts shall, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting adopt Bylaws provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed Bylaws. Bylaws approved by a Post shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure prior to becoming effective.

Amendments. Unless otherwise provided in the Post Bylaws, the Post Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed amendments.

Sec. 402 - Bylaws.

The District Convention shall adopt or may amend Bylaws governing the District as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such Bylaws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the Bylaws of the Department having jurisdiction.

Sec. 502 - Bylaws.

The Department Convention shall adopt or may amend Bylaws governing the Department as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such Bylaws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

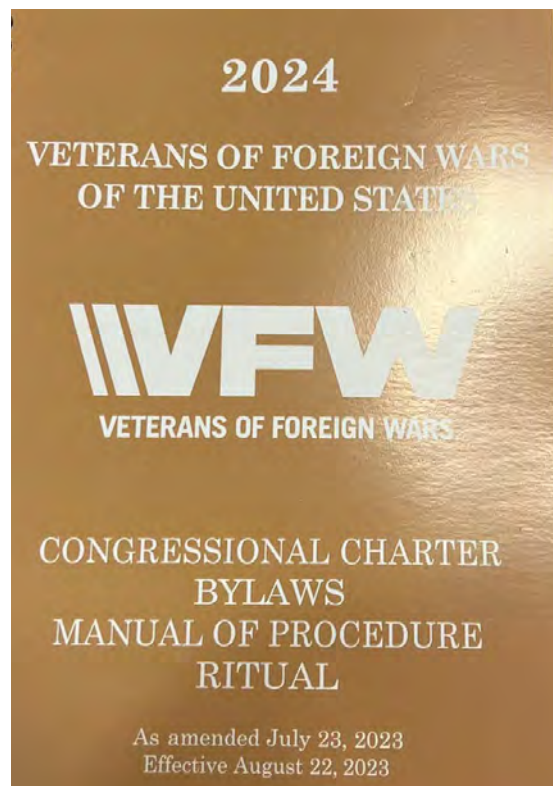
Each Post and District should have Bylaws in accordance with the change above , email me at adj@vfwdola.org for a copy of the current Post and/or District Bylaws Templates if any of you one or download them from the VFW National website.

BY COMMAND OF
RON DELANEY
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:



Mitchell R. Cota, PSC
State Adjutant



[Download the Podium pdf](#)

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

MARCH MANIA IS HERE!



It's that time of year when we're all filling out our brackets for the tournaments, but it's also time for the VFW to focus on our own goals for growing our membership!

For the month of March, we've divided our 52 Departments into six divisions based on size. The Department that leads each division at the end of March will receive a special commemorative championship belt, and will continue on to our Championship Bracket in April!



In addition, any Department that reaches 97% membership by the end of March will earn a special championship ring to commemorate that glorious achievement!

Division 1 California Florida Illinois Michigan New York Ohio Pennsylvania Texas Virginia	Division 2 Arizona Georgia Indiana Minnesota Missouri New Jersey North Carolina Washington Wisconsin	Division 3 Colorado Europe Kansas Kentucky Maryland Massachusetts Nebraska South Carolina Tennessee	Division 4 Alabama Arkansas Connecticut Iowa Louisiana Oklahoma Oregon Pacific Areas West Virginia	Division 5 Alaska Idaho Maine Mississippi Montana Nevada New Mexico South Dakota	Division 6 Delaware Hawaii New Hampshire North Dakota Rhode Island Utah Vermont Wyoming
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It's time to make a full-court press and prove that when it comes to making a championship effort for membership, we're all determined to do our best and

MEET THE CHALLENGE!

This contest will count total membership percentage as of close of business on March 31st, 2024. Applications and payments 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.

MARCH 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Easter Sunday		Notes				

March 1 - Scout of the Year entries due to Post deadline

March 2-6 - Voice of Democracy student trip to Washington, D.C., March 2 - 6

March 3-7 - Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.

March 21 - Start planning National Volunteer Week (April 21-27) and Loyalty Day activities

March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 31 - Easter Sunday

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 REP - St Adj Cota</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3750--- 140 Angus Dr., Luling, LA 70070 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>	<p>District 2 April 20, 2024 REP - St Cdr Delaney</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 REP - SJVC Prestenback</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 REP - St Adj Cota</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 REP - SSVC McElhannon</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 May 4th REP - PSC Wesley</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 <i>REP - St. Surgeon Arends</i> 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 <i>To Be Announced</i> 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 <i>REP - SSVC McElhannon</i> 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 <i>REP - SSVC McElhannon</i> 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 February 3, 2024 <i>REP - St Adj Cota</i> District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3652 15800 Demarco Lane., Hammond, LA 70403 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am meeting dates changed due to weather</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 April 20, 2024 <i>REP - SJVC Prestenback</i> 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

District 10 September 16, 2023 District Meeting Meetings place: Post 3841 2471 Leglise St., Mansura, LA 71350 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)	District 10 February 17, 2024 REP - SSVC McElhannon District Meeting Meetings place: Post 8852 2419 3rd St., Alexandria, LA 71302 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)	District 10 May 25, 2024 To Be Announced District Meeting Meetings place: Post 3139 412 Elmo S., Marksville, LA 71351 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)
District 11 August 26, 2023 District Meeting Meeting place: Post 5442 (Farmerville) 100 Hudson Rd., Farmerville LA 71241 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:	District 11 January 13, 2024 REP - St Cdr Delaney District Meeting Meeting place: Post 3615 (Ruston) 200 E. Mississippi Ave., Ruston LA 71270 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:	District 11 May 4, 2024 REP - PSC Lobrano District Convention Meeting place: Post 1809 (Monroe) 1499 Highway 594, Monroe LA 71203 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:
District 12 September 9, 2023 District Meeting Meetings place: Post 5187 860 Dahlia Vines St., Zwolle, LA 71486 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)	District 12 January 20, 2024 REP - St Cdr Delaney District Meeting Meetings place: Post 4588 1004 Jeter St., Bossier City, LA 71111 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)	District 12 May 11, 2024 REP - St Cdr Delaney District Convention Meetings place: Post 5951 1315 Northgate Road, Bossier City, LA 71112 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)

FUTURE NATIONAL 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

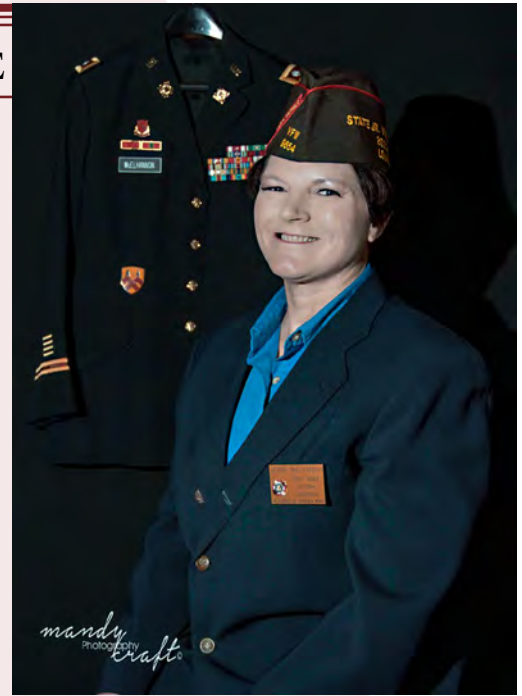
The legislative Conference and Voice of Democracy Parade is 3-7 March. Looking forward to speaking with our representatives about bills that need to be passed for veterans. We also get the privilege of seeing our State VOD winner being escorted to the stage by our State Commander and State President and hearing the National VOD winner read his or her essay.

I want to thank Commander Derek Poore, members of VFW Post 4158 and Auxiliary 4158, and community members for inviting us to Troops and Tusks and for completely welcoming me to the event. The amount of selfless service, commitment, and camaraderie among all involved was top notch. I even got to skin a hog; hopefully next year, I can be there the whole event and maybe even participate in hunting with other veterans. Every veteran that I spoke to were overjoyed with the experience and plan to come back next year. Great job to all who helped with this event.

Remember to get your tickets to the State Commander and State President's Testimonial. The event will be 10 AM to 2 PM and you can attend the dance later that night. Hope to see everyone there!

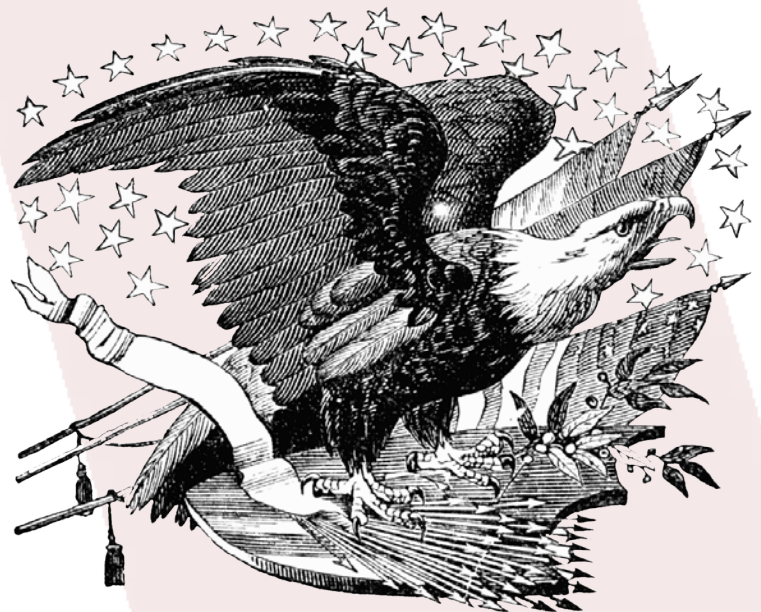
This month we start nominations for next years officers. Please remember to double check all elected and appointed officers' eligibility and submit proof of eligibility to the adjutant. Help your officers with their duties. If they are new, show them how to do the job or call your district or state officers for assistance. As a reminder the national Bylaws Sec. 216, (paraphrased) that the Commander appoints the Adjutant, Chaplain, and Service Officer and the post decides and puts in the post bylaws if the Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day and/or Guard is elected or appointed. According to Sec. 416, the district members elect a chaplain, and the District Commander appoints an Adjutant, Service Officer, and Inspector. The district members decide and put in the district bylaws if the Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff and Officer of the Day is elected or appointed. Each of the sections also state what officers are elected and in what order.

I look forward to more events like Troops & Tusks and to head to the Legislative Conference to fight for the rights of our veterans. I am ready to celebrate the



DEBBIE McELHANNON
Army - Post 9854

year with Commander and President Delaney. Hope to see all of you soon. Until we meet again, stay safe, do buddy checks and keep doing what you do for veterans!



STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Comrades,

I would to thank those Posts who donated to our VFW National Home Special Project!

We had two recruiting events this past weekend. Both were successful. Over 20 new member applications!

I look forward to attending the VFW Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. with our comrades and address ongoing Veteran issues.

Thanks for being member of this great organization.

James M. Prestenback
State Junior Vice Commander



JAMES M. PRESTENBACK
Army - Post 3665



FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

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

August 9 - 11, 2024 - C of A
Alexandria, LA

STATE ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

Comrades,

Election Season is upon us for the 24-25 VFW year. If you are considering seeking an officer's position at the Post, District, or State levels, please remember these positions come with responsibilities, commitments, and time to accomplish the job.

As a Post Officer accepting these positions, you are on the front-lines of our communities working programs, meeting future members, meeting with community and business leaders making your presences known. You are the one going door to door, whether recruiting, helping veterans, or helping needy families. You are the one visible in the community at local events, participating in Patriotic events, or setting up to take donations at a Buddy Poppy Drive. The members of your Post are the faces the public sees. So, make a difference in your Post and Community, make a difference if you take on the responsibility, read the current Podium Book, reach out to Past Post Officers that held the position before. If you are elected into one of the three Commander positions, be prepared for the next higher seat. You never know what could happen that may put you there.

As a District Officer, much of what I said before holds true at this level. The only thing I have heard and strongly disagree with is that a comrade should be a District Commander before seeking the State Commander's position. Many Past State Commanders have never held the District Commanders position as a case in point. We have even had a National Commander-In-Chief from the Department of Louisiana that was never a State Commander. That being said, a person should be knowledgeable with the Podium Book and VFW Programs if they want a successful year.

As for state positions, there were two we were voting on that became appointed positions, enacted by the 2019 National Bylaws changes, effective August 24, 2018, the Judge Advocate and the Surgeon.



MITCHELL R. "MITCH" COTA, PSC
Air Force - Post 3750

The top three positions everyone does it differently; you have to find what works for you as your leadership style and in getting the comrades to know you. Fred Wesley taught me to stay visible in the comrades eyes. Larry Raymond taught me to keep learning not only the book but the programs and to get to know the people. Other fellow PSC's have guided me along the way about many other things.

The point I am trying to make is to learn as you go, especially from your mistakes, seek out a mentor at any level, try to leave it better than you found it, and above all, after the serious stuff is done, have fun with your VFW family along the way.

Side note...I am moving my membership to District 9 and to Post 7286 next month.

Respectfully working in comradeship for veterans.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitchell R. Cota".

PSC Mitchell R. Cota
State Adjutant
Department of Louisiana

COMMITTEEMEN CORNER

Comrades,

Welcome to March Madness, the clock is ticking on this VFW Year to close out Programs, work on Membership and begin the planning for next VFW year. As members of this organization it is our responsibility to help it grow and be vibrant within our communities. I ask that each of you spend some time reflecting on your time in the service when you would gladly stand up and help where needed. Same goes within our Organization, we cannot depend on those certain few in each Post who always step up and do what's needed. It takes all of us to make things happen so please step up and make a difference.

March brings on the time for nominations of next year's Post Officers. Before you accept a nomination for a specific office I would suggest that you get a copy of the Podium Edition and read over each position's responsibilities. Live up to the expectations of the position and always strive to make things better for your Post by setting the example and becoming an active member.

By the time you read this the Louisiana delegation should be returning from the National Legislative Conference where we will meet with our representatives or their staff to discuss the VFW Priority Goals, we can bring the issues to them but when you get a Call to Action via Action Corps, respond and let them know that we are wanting them to be aware that we are watching what they are doing.

Housing for the 2024 VFW National Convention will open on March 18th, log into vfw.org and make your housing arrangements. Department of Louisiana will be housed at the Galt House Hotel for your information. Don't wait too late to make your reservations and find yourself without a room.

Remember for all those affected by the Camp Lejeune Toxic Water, the VFW has vetted with 2 law firms to assist you in filing a claim. These firms have both agreed to not charge more than 25% to represent you compared to the TV lawyers that are charging as high as 50%. The deadline for



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

registering for benefits to be paid out is August this year, don't wait until it is too late to file a claim. Be careful on who you get to represent you.

Until next month, let's keep pushing forward to improve our Department and raise the numbers back up by renewing, reinstating or recruiting new members. Have a great March and let's get the Louisiana Train back on track to the upper levels of the membership standings.

Robert "Bobby" Lovergne
National Council of Administration Member
Southern Conference Chairman
Past Department of Louisiana Commander
Department Budget Committee
West St Charles VFW Post 3750
(504) 251-5628

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEEMAN

Legislative Report February 2024

These are the key Topics from this month. Please read through these and let me know your thoughts on how we can continue to show Louisiana, that our Elected Officials are committed to our Veterans.

February 5th:

House Hearing on Survivor Outreach: The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing on gaps in VA's outreach to survivors for benefits and services. VFW Auxiliary member Gabriella Kubinyi spoke about the VFW's concerns regarding claims processing and delivery of health care, specifically in relation to mental health. She also addressed support for an increase in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Kubinyi said, "Every family should be fully aware that when the veteran dies, whatever benefits they were receiving will end." She continued by sharing her own survivor experience with Vet Center services and education assistance. As a former case worker for the VFW, she assisted many spouses who were not expecting or prepared for the abrupt end to compensation once their loved ones died. "Year after year, the VFW and advocates like me ask Congress to improve on a variety of survivor issues, and legislation is drafted but never receives the needed votes to enact significant changes," Kubinyi said. "I strongly urge this committee to find pathways necessary to make sure survivor benefits are taken seriously and not pushed off again for the next Congress." Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 4:15 mark.

End-of-Life Benefits Planning: VA has a campaign designed to inform veterans and their family members about end-of-life benefits. Being aware of available benefits and services before a veteran passes away can make it easier to navigate the process and plan accordingly. Learn more about resources and options for yourself and your family.

MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced two burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:



MATTHEW J. WEST, PSC
Army - Post 3619

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Henry L. Stevens, 23**, of Monroe, Louisiana, was assigned to the 557th Bombardment Squadron, 387th Bombardment Group, Ninth U.S. Air Force. He was killed in action on Dec. 23, 1944. He will be buried on March 8, 2024, in Bushnell, Florida. Read about Stevens.

February 12th:

VFW, Senators, and Partners Support Afghan: The VFW hosted Sens. Amy Klobuchar, Jerry Moran, Richard Blumenthal, and Chris Coons, along with other veteran organization partners at the VFW Washington Office for a press conference addressing the need to help Afghans who assisted U.S. troops. The participants called on all lawmakers to support our wartime Afghan allies by voting in favor of an amendment to the legislation.

VFW Updates County Service Officers on Claim: VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci joined the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) conference to discuss the scourge of predatory Claim Sharks, and ways the VFW and NACVSO's network of accredited representatives can work more closely to provide quality claims representation for veterans. The VFW accredits thousands of county service officers around the country to help reach communities so veterans can easily access their earned benefits. NACVSO leaders have worked

with the VFW on the Claim Sharks issue and asked for an update before advocating on Capitol Hill.

Senate Hearing on Vet Centers Supporting Mental Health:

The Senate Committee on Veteran's Affairs held an oversight hearing on how Vet Centers support the mental health needs of service members, veterans, and their families. The witness panel consisted of two representatives from VA and one from the Government Accountability Office. "Due to recent efforts by this committee, more veterans are eligible for services at Vet Centers than ever before. That's why it's critically important the Vet Center program is delivering high-quality services to the veterans who utilize it," said Chairman Jon Tester.

February 19th:

GI Bill Stifled by Overregulation: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan spoke on a legislative panel at the midwinter meeting of the National Association of State Approving Agencies. These agencies have responsibility to review, approve, and monitor all programs and schools to ensure quality education for those using VA benefits such as the GI Bill. Keenan presented the VFW's concern that overregulation has caused too many schools to stop participating in the GI Bill program due to increasingly burdensome requirements. She also stressed the need for student veterans who take some or all college courses online to receive a more realistic monthly housing allowance, currently set at half the national average. The VFW supports increasing this amount to ensure that veterans do not experience housing insecurity while pursuing an education.

VA Focus on Pacific Areas: The VFW National Veterans Service, in partnership with the Department of the Pacific Areas, hosted a virtual benefit forum for veterans living overseas. Andrew Szymczak, VA's program management officer, presented helpful information for how veterans can best navigate the VA Foreign Medical Program, and fielded numerous questions from the audience. Should you have questions on this topic, please reach out to a VFW accredited representative.

Veteran Hearings in the House: The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held four hearings on various issues facing veterans and one on VA itself. The full committee held an oversight hearing on reports of sexual harassment at VA. Subcommittee hearings included a deep dive into the VA Home Loans program, use of artificial

intelligence, the Electronic Health Record upgrade, and VA's spending in compensation and pension programs. Watch the hearings.

February 26th:

Independent Budget Released: Leading veterans service organizations — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2025-2026. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. "While this year's Independent Budget is once again complete, it is now imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority," said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. "We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served." Read the report.

VA Direct Deposit Consolidation: Starting April 20, 2024, VA will no longer send benefit payments for veterans or family members to more than one bank account. This is due to an IT modernization effort by VA for its GI Bill payment system. This change will impact approximately 50,000 students who receive the GI Bill and other VA benefits in separate direct deposit accounts. VA is sending weekly emails and text messages to this group of veterans and beneficiaries informing them of the upcoming change and asking them to select one bank account going forward. If students do not consolidate their bank accounts by April 20, VA will continue to send payments but will designate the non-education benefit payment account as the primary bank account. Read more for details on how to choose a single bank account for direct deposit.

VFW Washington Conference App Now Available: In anticipation of the Washington Conference being held next week, the VFW has provided a mobile app to give event attendees the tools needed to make the most of their visit to our nation's capital. The app is available for download at both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. View our VFW Events App Quick Start Guide for downloading assistance.

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026



Veterans Upward Bound



TRIO

TRIO programs have been established across the U.S. to help students attend and graduate from college. Funded by the federal government, TRIO programs provide support, services, and resources to nearly one million students nationwide.

Veterans Upward Bound is one of eight TRIO programs. This TRIO program encourages veterans to enroll in college, and it helps them develop the tools they need to succeed.

What does Veterans Upward Bound do?

Here are some of the ways that Veterans Upward Bound programs help and support veterans.

- ▶ Instruction in mathematics, science, foreign language, English composition, and literature
- ▶ Refresher courses for veterans who graduated from high school, but who put off college in favor of service
- ▶ Tutoring and academic counseling
- ▶ Assistance with securing education benefits through the Veterans Administration, as well as through other local and state agencies
- ▶ Guidance regarding GED and alternative education programs
- ▶ Mentoring programs
- ▶ Help completing financial aid applications



For info on TRIO, watch this video.

TRIO

EXCELLENCE UPWARD BOUND

Who is eligible for Veterans Upward Bound?

Participants must have served in the Armed Forces for more than 180 days, have received something other than a dishonorable discharge, and be income-eligible or potential first-generation college students.

What are the benefits of participating in Veterans Upward Bound?

Veterans Upward Bound helps veterans prepare for college. Through instruction, tutoring, and advising, Veterans Upward Bound helps veterans gain the skills they need to succeed in college and in life. In addition to academic support in subjects like math and writing, veterans gain important skills that will help them throughout their lives (e.g., time management, organization, networking).

Veterans Upward Bound builds learning communities. In addition to receiving academic support, career counseling, and more, Veterans Upward Bound connects veterans from similar backgrounds, providing them with a support system that can last for years.

Contact Information

Southeastern Louisiana University
900 B West University Ave
Main Bldg Rm 171
Hammond, LA 70402
(985) 549-3386
vub@southeastern.edu

woodburnpress.com

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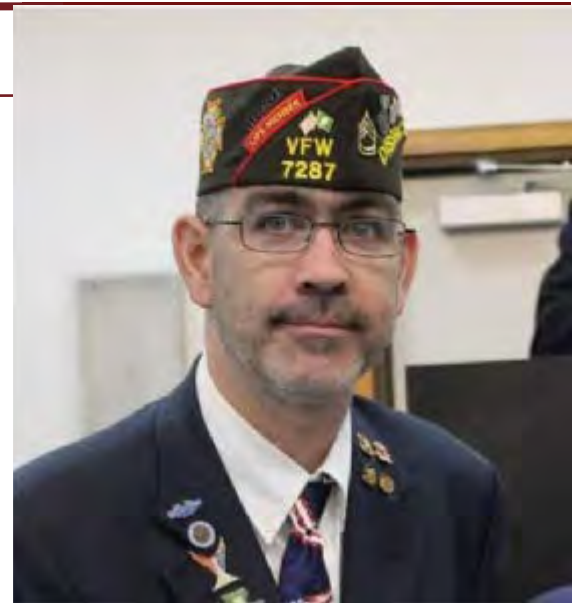
STATE CHAPLAIN' MESSAGE

Comrades,

I pray that this message finds each of you in good times. Recently, our State had the pleasure of hosting the VFW Auxiliary National President for a few days who just happens to be a VFW member as well as the Auxiliary. When she addressed those attending her dinner towards the end of her three days she challenged us to do everything to end veteran suicide. In this month's issue of the vfw magazine there was an article entitled "VA report shows slight increase in veteran suicide" shows that this is a task each of us needs to take up.

After 25.5 years serving in uniform I like many of you have lost multiple fellow soldiers in different ways. Some were in combat, some accidents, some due to old age, and some to injuries. Each time I lost a soldier to suicide and addressed my troops a lead with the same three points. First, that suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems, Second, that I am only a call or text or email away and would much rather listen to your problems than give a eulogy, and third that after I wondered what more I could have done. Suicide effects more people than we can imagine. In conclusion if you or any of our members need an ear to listen reach out to me

God bless each of you,



DAVID B. FIELDS
Army - Post 5951

David B. Fields
State Chaplain, VFW dept of Louisiana
(318) 402-9747
msgdfields@gmail.com

SURGEON'S MESSAGE

Greeting Comrades,

It is hard to believe that February is already over. I Hope that everyone was able to safely enjoy all the Mardi Gras festivities around the state of Louisiana!

As we get a start on March, remember we observe Daylight Savings Time on March 10th! Get that jump into Spring and warmer weather! As stated in last month's Mail Call article, with warm weather coming, it brings with it the dangers of Heat Exhaustion, Heat Stroke and Dehydration. However, there are other dangers that exist when warmer weather moves in, insects! Here are some tips if you are stung by either a flying insect or our Southern mound dwelling enemies... the Fire Ant.

Flying Insects

- While outdoors you are at risk of being stung by flying insects (bees, wasps, and hornets) and fire ants. While most stings cause only mild discomfort, some may result in severe allergic reactions that require immediate medical care and may cause death.

✓ First Aid:

If you, a friend, or a loved one are stung by a flying insect:

- o Have someone stay with the person to be sure that they do not have an allergic reaction.
- o Wash the site with soap and water.
- o Remove the stinger using gauze wiped over the area or by scraping a fingernail, or even a credit card, over the area. Never squeeze the stinger or use tweezers.
- o Apply ice to reduce swelling.
- o Do not scratch the sting as this may increase swelling, itching, and risk of infection.

✓ Protect Yourself

- o Wear light-colored, smooth-finished clothing.
- o Avoid perfumed soaps, shampoos, and deodorants.



SHAREE' ARENDS
Air Force - Post 5951

- ✓ **Do not wear cologne or perfume.**
 - o Wear clean clothing and bathe daily.
 - o Wear clothing to cover as much of the body as possible.
 - o Avoid flowering plants when possible.
 - o Keep all areas clean. Many insects are attracted to discarded food.
 - o Remain calm and still if a single stinging insect is flying around. (Swatting may cause it to sting.)
 - o If attacked by several stinging insects, run to get away. (Bees release a chemical when they sting, which attracts other bees.)
- ✓ **Go indoors.**
- ✓ **Shaded areas are better than open areas.**
- ✓ **Do not jump into water. Some insects (ex. Africanized honeybees) are known to hover above the water.**
 - o If an insect is inside your vehicle, stop slowly, and open all the windows.
 - o Anyone with a history of severe allergic reactions to insect bites or stings should carry an epinephrine auto-injector (Epi pen) and wear medical ID jewelry stating their allergy.

Fire Ants

- Fire ants bite and sting. They are aggressive when stinging and inject venom, which causes a burning sensation. Red bumps form at the sting, and within a day or two they become white fluid-filled pustules.

✓ **First Aid**

- o Rub off ants briskly, as they will attach to the skin with their jaws.
- o Antihistamines may help.

✓ **Follow packaging directions.**

✓ **Drowsiness may occur.**

- o Seek immediate medical attention if a sting causes severe chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling, or slurred speech.

✓ **Protect Yourself**

- o Do not disturb ant mounds.
- o Be careful when lifting items (including animal carcasses) off the ground, as they may be covered in ants.
- o Fire ants may be found on trees and in water, so always look over the area before starting to work.
- o Tuck pants into socks or boots.
- o Anyone with a history of severe allergic reactions to insect bites or stings should carry an epinephrine autoinjector (Epi pen) and wear medical ID jewelry stating their allergy.

Insect stings can result in any of the following symptoms:

✓ **Pain**

✓ **Redness**

✓ **Swelling (in area of sting and sometimes beyond)**

✓ **Flushing**

✓ **Hives**

✓ **Itching**

✓ **Anaphylaxis.**

How to recognize a serious allergic reaction:

- These symptoms could indicate a serious allergic reaction to insect stings. Seek first aid or emergency care if any of the following are presenting after being stung:

✓ **Tightness of the throat or upper airway**

✓ **Breathing difficulty**

✓ **Weakness**

✓ **Numbness and tingling**

✓ **Hives**

✓ **Anxiety**

✓ **Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, or vomiting**

✓ **Signs of shock.**

Lastly, but not least, I am running for the VFW, Department of Louisiana Jr. Vice Commander for the 2024-2025 year, and I would appreciate your support.

As always, stay safe and healthy each and every day!

V/R

Sharee' Arends
VFW, Department of Louisiana
Surgeon



VFW Foundation Grants

For nearly 124 years, VFW Posts have been the pillars of support in their communities. From building local playgrounds and organizing clothing drives, to military support events and disaster relief efforts, we take great pride in our long history of service to communities across the globe.

The VFW Foundation is proud to offer funding through various grant programs available throughout the year designed to help VFW Posts and their Auxiliaries provide the vital support local communities, America's heroes and their families all deserve,

The VFW Foundation is providing three grant opportunities during the 2023-2024 cycle. The VFW Foundation application period is now open!

Grants are open exclusively to VFW entities. All grants are reimbursement based as applicants will need to do a project and then submit an application with proof of how the funding was spent. Applicants are highly encouraged to contact the VFW Foundation prior to starting a project to ensure it qualifies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact VFW Foundation Grants Manager Jason Couch at JCouch@vfw.org.

VFW #StillServing Grant

The #StillServing Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts, Districts and their Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred while doing community service projects. Projects require direct involvement by the applying organization's members with members of their community to qualify.

Both a VFW Post and its Auxiliary, and a District and its Auxiliary, can receive funding of up to \$1,500, but each applicant organization must have its own unique project. Applicants are limited to receiving a total of \$1,500 during the cycle.

Applications for the VFW #StillServing Grant will be accepted through June 1, 2024, or until all grant funding is exhausted.

[Apply Today](#)

Post Assistance Grant

The Post Assistance Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts to offset expenses incurred for building repairs and equipment that enhances or restores the applicant organization's ability to serve veterans and their community. Auxiliaries, Districts, Departments and other VFW subordinate organizations, etc., may not apply.

VFW Posts may receive up to \$2,500 in reimbursement for qualifying projects. Applicants are limited to receiving this grant once every three years, with 2023-24 being the inaugural year.

Applications for the VFW Foundation Post Assistance Grant will be accepted until June 1, 2024, or until all grant funding is exhausted.

[APPLY TODAY](#)

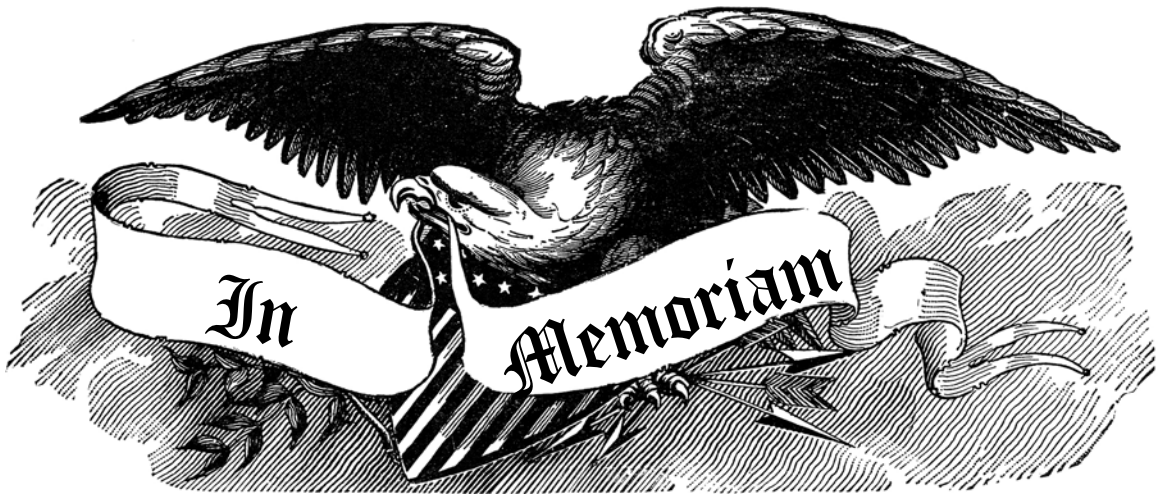
Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant

Join us in our fight against food insecurity! The Uniting to Combat Hunger Grant is a matching grant of up to \$1,500 available to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries for monetary and food donations to local food banks and pantries in their communities. The VFW Foundation will provide a \$1 match for every pound of food or dollar donated to food insecurity organizations. A Post or its Auxiliary may receive this grant but not both.

The 2023-2024 UTCH grant application period is now open. We will continue to accept applications until funding for the grant is exhausted.

[APPLY TODAY](#)

For more information, please direct any questions you may have to Foundation@vfw.org.



Loss of PSC Raymond, January 24, 2024.



The Department of Louisiana is saddened at the loss of Past State Commander Larry A. Raymond of VFW Post 8538. PSC Raymond served as the 82nd Department Commander from 2012 to 2013.



POW/MIA RECOVERED

Jack W. Coy

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army Air Force
(Ohio)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 12, 2024

Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Coy, J.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Force Staff Sgt. Jack W. Coy, 20, of Toledo, Ohio, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 20, 2023.

In early 1944, Coy was assigned to the 703rd Bombardment Squadron, 445th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force in the European Theater. On Feb 24, Coy, a tail gunner onboard a B-24J “Liberator”, was killed in action when his plane was hit by heavy anti-aircraft fire over Gotha, Germany. One of the surviving crewmembers reported seeing the plane on fire and in a steep dive, before eventually exploding on the ground. While two crewmembers survived, the others, including Coy, were killed in the incident. German forces garrisoned in the area documented the crash site north of Leimbach Bahnhof, near Bad Salzungen, Germany. After the crash, German troops recovered the remains of the ball turret gunner and buried them in a local cemetery. The other six crewmembers, including Coy, were unaccounted for following the war.

In March 1952, the [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel in the European Theater, took custody of comingled unidentified remains recovered from Bad Salzungen Cemetery. These remains, X-9093 Griesheim Mausoleum (X-9093), X-9094 Griesheim Mausoleum (X-9094), and X-9095 Griesheim Mausoleum (X-9095), were believed to be those belonging to Staff Sgt. Coy’s downed aircraft. At the time, identification of these remains was not possible, and they were interred in the Ardennes American Cemetery, Belgium.

In June 2021, DPAA historians and [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) personnel, exhumed X-9093, X-9094, and X-9095 from Ardennes American Cemetery and transferred them to the DPAA Laboratory for analysis and identification.

To identify Coy’s remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Coy’s name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Hombourg, Belgium, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

SSgt. Coy will be buried in Oregon, Ohio, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

For additional information on the Defense Department’s mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or <https://www.linkedin.com/company/defense-pow-mia-accounting-agency>.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Elmo F. Hartwick

Tech 4th Grade, U.S. Army
(Kansas)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 12, 2024

Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Hartwick, E.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Tech. 4th Grade (TECH4) Elmo F. Hartwick, 38, of Onaga, Kansas, killed during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 21, 2023.

In June 1944, Hartwick was assigned to Company C, 149th Engineer Combat Battalion in the European Theater. On June 6, Hartwick was aboard Landing Craft Infantry (Large) 92, along with roughly 200 other servicemembers, enroute to land on Omaha Beach, in Normandy, France. As LCI-92 steamed toward the shore, it struck an underwater mine which caused the craft to burst into flames. The craft was also hit by enemy artillery fire, causing an explosion that ignited the ships fuel stores and instantly killed everyone in the troop compartment. Due to the urgency of the situation, it was impossible for others to search for survivors. Hartwick's remains were not accounted for after the war.

Around June 10, members of the 500th Medical Collecting Company examined the wreckage of LCI-92 and noted the burnt remains of servicemen in the troop compartment, where Hartwick and others were last seen. [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel in the European Theater, removed small amounts of remains from LCI-92 and buried them in the United States Military Cemetery (USMC) St. Laurent-sur-Mer.

Beginning in 1946, AGRC analyzed the remains found in LCI-92, segregating them into four separate Unknowns (X-53, X-83, X-83B, and X-83C). Despite their efforts, AGRC were unable to identify the Unknowns at the time and they were interred in Normandy American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Normandy, France.

In June and August 2021, the Department of Defense and ABMC officials exhumed the comingled remains of the four Unknowns and transferred them to the DPAA Laboratory for analysis.

To identify Hartwick's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Hartwick's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

TECH4 Hartwick will be buried in Onaga, Kansas, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or <https://www.linkedin.com/company/defense-pow-mia-accounting-agency>.

Hartwick's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa->





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Charles R. Patten

Cpl., U.S. Army
(Missouri)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 12, 2024

Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Patten, C.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Cpl. Charles R. Patten, 24, of Lebanon, Missouri, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for June 7, 2023.

In July 1950, Patten was a member of Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He went missing in action after his unit was forced to retreat from the vicinity of Taejon, South Korea, on July 20. Due to the fighting, his body could not be recovered at that time, and there was never any evidence that he was a prisoner of war. The Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953.

After regaining control of Taejon in the fall of 1950, the Army began recovering remains from the area and temporarily interring them at the United Nations Military Cemetery (UNMC) Taejon. One set of remains recovered during this period was designated Unknown X-2 Taejon. A tentative association was made between X-2 and Patten, but definitive proof could not be found, and X-2 was determined to be unidentifiable. The remains were sent to Hawaii where they were buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu.

In July 2018, the DPAA proposed a plan to disinter 652 Korean War Unknowns from the Punchbowl. On February 24, 2020, DPAA disinterred Unknown X-2 as part of Phase Two of the Korean War Disinterment Project and sent the remains to the DPAA laboratory, for analysis.

To identify Patten's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as chest radiograph comparison and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Patten's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Cpl. Patten will be buried in Lawson, Missouri, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

To see the most up-to-date statistics on DPAA recovery efforts for those unaccounted for from the Korean War, go to the Korean War Accounting page on the DPAA website at: <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaFamWebKorean>.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Harold Hammett

Sergeant, U.S.M.C.
(Mississippi)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 9, 2024

Marine Accounted for from WWII (Hammett, H.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Marine Corps Sgt. Harold Hammett, 24, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Sept 25, 2023.

Originally born in Avery, Mississippi, Sgt. Hammett enlisted into the United States Marine Corps in San Francisco, California, in 1940. By November 1943, Hammett was a member of L Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Hammett is believed to have been killed while his unit attempted to secure Red Beach 2 on Nov. 20, 1943. His remains were not identified after the war.

In 1946, the 604th [Quartermaster Graves Registration Company](#) centralized all of the American remains found on Tarawa at Lone Palm Cemetery for later repatriation. However, almost half of the known casualties were never found. No recovered remains could be associated with Hammett, and, in November 1949, a Board of Review declared him “non-recoverable.” Unknown remains designated X-247 were recovered from Cemetery 11, along with Unknown X-251. Initially these remains were considered to possibly belong to Sgt. Hammett, but at the time an association could not be made. The remains recovered were interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the Punchbowl, in Hawaii.

In late 2017, X-247 was disinterred from the Punchbowl and transferred to the DPAA Laboratory for analysis and identification.

To identify Hammett’s remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial and material evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Hammett’s name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific along with the others still missing from World War II. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Hammett will be buried in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on Feb 16, 2024.

For family and funeral information, contact the Marine Corps Casualty Office at (800) 847-1597.

For additional information on the Defense Department’s mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Dan W. Corson

1st Lt., U.S. Army Air Force
(Ohio)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 7, 2024

Pilot Accounted for from WWII (Corson, D.)

WASHINGTON D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Dan W. Corson, 27, of Middletown, Ohio, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 22, 2023.

In December of 1942, Corson was assigned to the 401st Bombardment Squadron, 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy), Eighth Air Force. On December 20, Corson was co-piloting a B-17F "Flying Fortress," nicknamed *Danellen*, when it was struck by anti-aircraft fire after a bombing raid on a German aircraft factory at Romilly-sur-Seine, France. Corson's aircraft was last seen spinning towards the ground, crashing near the village of Bernières-sur-Seine, France. Only one airman parachuted successfully, while the other eight crew members, including Corson, were still on board. A villager witnessed the crash and confirmed there was only one survivor. The War Department issued a finding of death for 1st Lt. Corson on Dec. 20, 1943.

Beginning in 1946, the [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#), Army Quartermaster Corps, was the organization tasked with recovering missing American personnel in the European Theater. Following the war, the AGRC disinterred four sets of remains later designated as X-83, X-84, X-85, and X-86 St. Andre from Evreux cemetery. They were unable to identify the remains and were interred at the Normandy American Cemetery.

In 2011, a family member of one of the *Danellen* crew contacted the Department of Defense after visiting the crash site and interviewing a witness who had artifacts belonging to the *Danellen*. In April 2011, DPAA historians re-analyzed the unknowns associated with the crew and determined there was enough evidence to pursue the case. In October that year, a DPAA Investigation Team traveled to Bernières-sur-Seine to interview the witness and learned the crash site was completely destroyed. In March 2019, the Department of Defense and the [American Battle Monuments Commission \(ABMC\)](#) exhumed the unknown remains designated X-83, X-85, and X-86 St. Andre believed to be associated with the crew of the *Danellen*, including 1st Lt. Corson, from Normandy American Cemetery.

To identify Corson's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y-chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Corson's name is recorded on the memorialized on the Wall of the Missing at Cambridge American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments Commission site in Cambridge, England, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Corson will be buried in Middletown, Ohio, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Joseph M. Robertson

Seaman 2nd Class, U. S. Navy
(Ohio)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 7, 2024

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted for from WWII (Robertson, J.)

WASHINGTON D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Navy Seaman 2nd Class (S2c) Joseph M. Robertson, 18, of Cincinnati, Ohio, killed during World War II, was accounted for on June 18, 2020.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Robertson was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Robertson.

From December 1941 to June 1944, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uauu Cemeteries.

In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. The laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 35 men from the USS Oklahoma at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains in 46 plots at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable, including Robertson.

Between June and November 2015, DPAA personnel exhumed the USS Oklahoma Unknowns from the Punchbowl for analysis.

To identify Robertson's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), Y chromosome DNA (Y-STR), and autosomal DNA (auSTR) analysis.

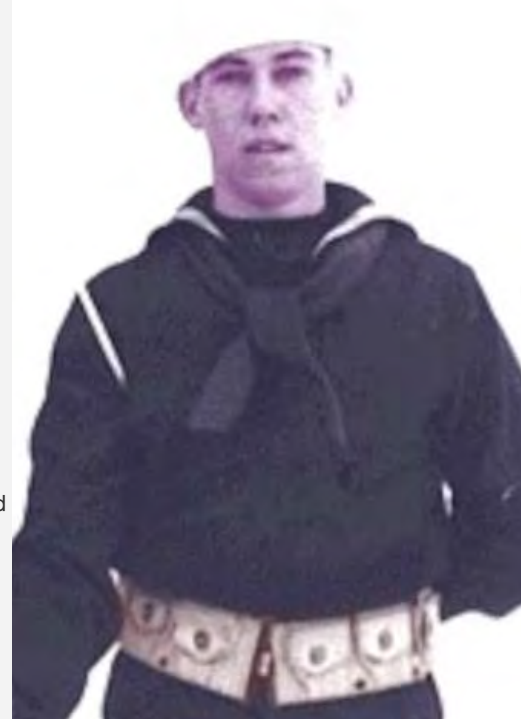
Robertson's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Robertson will be buried on July 9, 2024, in Arlington National Cemetery.

For family and funeral information, contact the Navy Service Casualty office at (800) 443-9298.

DPAA is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Navy for their partnership in this mission.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, or find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or





POW/MIA RECOVERED

James H. Marrah

2nd Lt, U.S. Army Air Force
(Ohio)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 7, 2024

Pilot Accounted for from WWII (Marrah, J.)

WASHINGTON D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. James H. Marrah, 22, of London, Ohio, killed during World War II was accounted for August 3, 2023.

In the summer of 1943, Marrah served with the 415th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Marrah was serving as a co-pilot, crashed as a result of enemy anti-aircraft fire during Operation TIDAL WAVE, the largest bombing mission against the oil fields and refineries at Ploiesti, north of Bucharest, Romania. His remains were not identified following the war. The remains that could not be identified were buried as Unknowns in the Hero Section of the Civilian and Military Cemetery of Bolovan, Ploiesti, Prahova, Romania.

Following the war, the [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel, disinterred all American remains from the Bolovan Cemetery for identification. The AGRC was unable to identify more than 80 unknowns from Bolovan Cemetery, and those remains were permanently interred at Ardennes American Cemetery and Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, both in Belgium.

In 2017, DPAA began exhuming unknowns believed to be associated with unaccounted-for airmen from Operation TIDAL WAVE losses. These remains were sent to the DPAA Laboratory for examination and identification.

To identify Marrah's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis and autosomal DNA (auSTR).

Marrah's name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Florence American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Impruneta, Italy, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Marrah will be buried in London, Ohio, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

DPAA is grateful to the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) and to the U.S. Army Regional Mortuary-Europe/Africa for their partnership in this mission.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Harold L. Seifreid

Tech. Sergeant, US Army Air Force
(Pennsylvania)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 6, 2024

Airman Accounted for from WWII (Seifreid, H.)

WASHINGTON D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Harold L. Seifreid, 31, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Nov. 21, 2023.

In December 1943, Seifreid was a member of the 436th Bombardment Squadron, 7th Bombardment Group during World War II. On Dec. 1, he was serving as the radio operator onboard a B-24J Liberator bomber while on a bombing mission from Panagarh, India, to the Insein Railroad Yard north of Rangoon, Burma. After reaching the designated target, Seifreid's plane was reportedly hit by anti-aircraft fire, causing the left wing to burst into flames. Witnesses from another aircraft noted seeing Seifreid's aircraft enter a steep dive while disappearing below the clouds. It was noted that 3 enemy aircraft were also seen following the crippled plane into the clouds, and no further contact was made with the Liberator. The remains of the crew were not recovered or identified after the war, and they were all later declared Missing In Action.

In 1947 the [American Grave Registration Service \(AGRS\)](#) recovered the remains of what they believed to be eight individuals involved in a potential B-24 Liberator crash near Yodayadet, Burma. According to local witnesses, there were no survivors from this aviation loss and Japanese forces had instructed local villagers to bury the remains in two large graves. The AGRS designated the remains recovered from these graves as Unknowns X-505A, X-505B, X-505C, X-505D, X-505E, X-505F, X-505G, and X-505H Barrackpore (X-505A-H). The remains could not be scientifically identified at the time and were interred as Unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), Honolulu, Hawaii, also known as the Punchbowl.

In early 2019, DPAA received a family disinterment request for Unknown X-505A-H based on past attempts to associate the remains with other unresolved losses from southern Burma. DPAA historians reviewing the associated files believed a more likely association for the remains was possible in X-505A-H. The Department of Defense approved the disinterment request, and in October, 2020, DPAA personnel exhumed the remains from NMCP where they were accessioned into the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify Seifreid's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial and material evidence. Additionally, the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Seifreid's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in the Philippines, along with the others missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Seifreid will be buried in Marana, Arizona, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, call the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

William L. Leukering

Tech. Sergeant, U. S. Army Air Force
(Illinois)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 6, 2024

Airman Accounted for from WWII (Leukering, W.)

WASHINGTON D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Tech Sgt. William L. Leukering, 28, of Metropolis, Illinois, killed during World War II, was accounted for March 20, 2023.

In the summer of 1944, Leukering was assigned to the 816th Bomber Squadron (Heavy), 483rd Bomber Group (Heavy), 15th Air Force based. Leukering was a radio operator on a B-17G Flying Fortress that was struck by enemy anti-aircraft during a bombing raid on German air defense installations in Memmingen, Germany. Due to the damage to the B-17G the pilot ordered the crew to bail out. Six of the airmen parachuted successfully while the other five crew members including Leukering were believed to still be on board. The surviving crew witnessed the aircraft explode in an area south of Memmingen, Germany.

Leukering's body was not recovered, and the Germans never reported him as a prisoner of war. The War Department issued a finding of death on July 19, 1945.

Beginning in 1946, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC), Army Quartermaster Corps, was the organization tasked with recovering missing American personnel in the European Theater. In 1946, AGRC investigators searched the area of the crash site, they discovered two sets of remains however neither were associated with Leukering. He was declared non-recoverable July 26, 1951.

In 2012 a German researcher notified Department of Defense investigators to an aircraft crash site near Kimratshofen, Germany, possibly associated to Leukering's B-17. This information subsequently led to an investigation in 2013 and, excavation efforts in 2018. The excavation team located possible human remains and material evidence.

In 2019, DPAA partner teams from the University of New Orleans, and Cranfield University, continued work at the Kimratshofen site, recovering additional material, which was also transferred to the DPAA laboratory.

To identify Leukering's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Leukering's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Epinal American Cemetery an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Epinal, France., along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Leukering will be buried in Round Knob, Illinois, on a date to be determined.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Adin C. Norris

Cpl., U. S. Army
(Missouri)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 6, 2024

Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Norris, A.)

Washington –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army CPL Adin C. Norris Jr., 21, of Kansas City, Missouri, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Dec. 5, 2022.

In July 1950, Norris was a member of K Company, 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on July 20 after his unit sustained heavy casualties while withdrawing from Taejon, South Korea. Due to the fighting, his body could not be recovered at that time, and there was never any evidence that he was a prisoner of war. The Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953.

After regaining control of Taejon in the fall of 1950, the Army began recovering remains from the area and temporarily interring them at the United Nations Military Cemetery (UNMC) Taejon. One set of remains recovered during this period was designated Unknown X-266 Taejon. After extensive analysis by the Central Identification Unit-Kokura in Japan was unable to identify X-266, the remains were declared unidentifiable. They were later sent to Hawaii where they were buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu, with other Korean War Unknowns.

In July 2018, the DPAA proposed a plan to disinter 652 Korean War Unknowns from the Punchbowl. On July 15, 2019, DPAA disinterred Unknown X-266 as part of Phase Two of the Korean War Disinterment Project and sent the remains to the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify Norris's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Norris's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Norris will be buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

To see the most up-to-date statistics on DPAA recovery efforts for those unaccounted for from the Korean War, go to the Korean War Accounting page on the DPAA website at: <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaFamWebKorean>.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Walter F. Schleiter

Fireman First Class, U. S. Navy (USS Oklahoma)
(Washington)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 5, 2024

USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted for from WWII (Schleiter, W.)

Washington –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Fireman First Class (F1c) Walter F. Schleiter, 22, of Massillon, Ohio, killed during World War II, was accounted for on May 18, 2018.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Schleiter was assigned to the battleship USS *Oklahoma*, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS *Oklahoma* sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Schleiter.

From December 1941 to June 1944, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uanou Cemeteries.

In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the [American Graves Registration Service](#) (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. The laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 35 men from the USS *Oklahoma* at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains in 46 plots at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable, including Schleiter.

Between June and November 2015, DPAA personnel exhumed the USS *Oklahoma* Unknowns from the Punchbowl for analysis.

To identify Schleiter's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Schleiter's name is recorded in the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Schleiter will be buried on April 11, 2024, in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.

For family and funeral information, contact the US Navy Casualty office at (800) 443-9298.

DPAA is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Navy for their partnership in this mission.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or <https://www.linkedin.com/company/defense-pow-mia-accounting-agency>.





POW/MIA RECOVERED

James A. Deeds

1st Lt., U. S. Army Air Force
(California)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 5, 2024

Pilot Accounted For From WWII (Deeds, J.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. James A. Deeds, 23 of Oakland, California, killed during World War II, was accounted for Jan. 3, 2023.

In the summer of 1943, Deeds was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 “Liberator” bomber *Kate Smith* piloted by Deeds was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed during Operation TIDAL WAVE, the largest bombing mission against the oil fields and refineries at Ploiesti, north of Bucharest, Romania. His remains were not identified following the war. The remains that could not be identified were buried as Unknowns in the Hero Section of the Civilian and Military Cemetery of Bolovan, Ploiesti, Prahova, Romania.

Following the war, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel, disinterred all American remains from the Bolovan Cemetery for identification. The AGRC was unable to identify more than 80 unknowns from Bolovan Cemetery, and those remains were permanently interred at Ardennes American Cemetery and Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, both in Belgium.

In 2017, DPAA began exhuming unknowns believed to be associated with unaccounted-for airmen from Operation TIDAL WAVE losses. These remains were sent to the DPAA Laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, for examination and identification.

To identify Deeds’ remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), and Y chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Deeds name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Florence American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Impruneta, Italy, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Deeds will be buried in San Diego, California, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

DPAA is grateful to the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) and to the U.S. Army Regional Mortuary-Europe/Africa for their partnership in this mission.

For additional information on the Defense Department’s mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or





POW/MIA RECOVERED

Richard G. Pitsor

Pfc, U. S. Army
(New Mexico)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 2, 2024

Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Pitsor, R.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Pfc. Richard G. Pitsor, 18, of Ft. Bayard, New Mexico, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for March 20, 2023.

In late 1941, Pitsor was a member of G Company of the 200th Coast Artillery Regiment, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Pitsor was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war.

According to prison camp and other historical records, Pitsor died Aug. 28, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 305.

Following the war, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Three of the sets of remains were recovered from Common Grave 305 but were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns.

In January 2019, the remains associated with Common Grave 305 were disinterred and sent to the DPAA laboratory at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, for analysis.

To identify Pitsor's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Pistor's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) (ABMC).

Pitsor will be buried in Ft. Bayard, New Mexico, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

DPAA is grateful to the ABMC and the United States Army for their partnership in this mission.



National General Orders Number 8

General Orders No. 8

2023-24 Series

1. INSTALLING OFFICERS:

Installing officers will see that the provisions of Section 216 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure are properly carried out and that all officers are members in good standing and qualified to hold office prior to installing Post officers for the current year. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed.

Post Election Reports must be submitted following Post election of officers in April and no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We highly encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

2. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee.

Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that was mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing that went out in February. Advanced registration for the 125th National Convention should be mailed with each delegate's name and address to: Convention Registration, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

3. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, each District shall hold an annual District convention for the purpose of electing District officers, such convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department convention. District officers shall not assume the duties of their office until the Department Commander is installed. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed in accordance with Section 416 of the Manual of Procedure.

4. LOYALTY DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE:

Section 223 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure provides that each Post shall make the necessary arrangements for proper observance of Loyalty Day and Memorial Day. Officers should see that suitable grave markers, wreaths and flags of the United States are placed on the graves of deceased veterans.

5. “BUDDY”[®] POPPIES DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution of VFW “Buddy”[®] Poppies will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in Section 711 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure. Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders should arrange now for the distribution of Buddy Poppies in their respective areas.

In the ongoing effort to provide as much assistance as possible to those serving in the military, we recommend that proceeds or portions from this year’s annual poppy distribution be designated for the purpose of providing VFW support to our military. Posts and Departments now have the opportunity to assist qualified military personnel through the VFW Veterans and Military Support Programs.

In keeping with the intent of Sections 219(a)(c) and 704(a)(c) of the Manual of Procedure “Relief Fund,” this year’s poppy campaign can play a direct role in demonstrating to those who are charged with protecting and defending our way of life that we appreciate and value their sacrifice.

6. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Posts:

Post Nos. 508 and 9663 consolidated as Post No. 508, Dubuque, Iowa

BY COMMAND OF
DUANE T. SARMIENTO
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

OFFICIAL:



Dan West
Adjutant General

Membership

MARCH MANIA IS HERE!

It's that time of year when we're all filling out our brackets for the tournaments, but it's also time for the VFW to focus on our own goals for growing our membership!

For the month of March, we've divided our 52 Departments into six divisions based on size. The Department that leads each division at the end of March will receive a special commemorative championship belt and will continue onto our Championship Bracket in April!

In addition, any Department that reaches 97% membership by the end of March will earn a special championship ring to commemorate that glorious achievement!

Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4	Division 5	Division 6
California	Arizona	Colorado	Alabama	Alaska	Delaware
Florida	Georgia	Europe	Arkansas	Idaho	Hawaii
Illinois	Indiana	Kansas	Connecticut	Maine	New Hampshire
Michigan	Minnesota	Kentucky	Iowa	Mississippi	North Dakota
New York	Missouri	Maryland	Louisiana	Montana	Rhode Island
Ohio	New Jersey	Massachusetts	Oklahoma	Nevada	Utah
Pennsylvania	North Carolina	Nebraska	Oregon	New Mexico	Vermont
Texas	Washington	South Carolina	Pacific Areas	South Dakota	Wyoming
Virginia	Wisconsin	Tennessee	West Virginia		

It's time to make a full-court press and prove that when it comes to making a championship effort for membership, we're all determined to do our best and **MEET THE CHALLENGE!**

MEETING THE CHALLENGE AWARD

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 102% membership by April 1, 2024, will each be awarded:

- **A five-night hotel accommodation at the National Convention.**

POST COMMANDER AND QUARTERMASTER DIVISION CHALLENGE

For every 10 new/reinstated members recruited between July 1, 2023, and April 1, 2024. Posts will earn one entry for both Post Commander and Quartermaster entered into a drawing. One post per division will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend each for the Post Commander and Quartermaster to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**

DEPARTMENT “102%” INCENTIVE

Any Department that attains 102% in membership by close of business on June 30, 2024, will be entered into a random drawing. The Commander and the Quartermaster for the Department that is selected will each receive:

- **A \$2,500 voucher through Veterans Travel Service (VTS) applied toward airfare, accommodations, and transportation for a trip of their own choice.**

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT AWARD

We have had a pretty good year with Departments chartering new Posts this year; five to date. With overall recruiting numbers looking good, a hard look is still needed in retaining our members whether at the Post or Department level. In some cases, recovering members could be what is needed for a Post revitalization. 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 toward 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 March 11, 2024, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: **Roles of the Officers**. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook to view the latest membership news, Post Shout-Outs, and important resource information throughout the year - facebook.com/VFWmembership/.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters (as of 2.22.24):

Steven L. Woodward – 514
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

Timothy M. Borland – 402
VFW Post 9972, Dept. of AZ

Ed Stefanak, Jr. – 262
VFW Post 9539, Dept. of SC

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

A VFW Foundation Board meeting was held on Tuesday, Feb. 6 at VFW Headquarters. Of special interest was the Foundation's Financial Report for the Period Ending Dec. 31, 2023, presented by Marc Garduno, Secretary-Treasurer. Other main topics included Bylaws review and nominations for future Board members. Additionally, updates were provided for National Convention and Washington Conference sponsorships, donations, and grants.

Of special note, Oracle Health has confirmed \$40,000 in total sponsorships for the Washington Conference, the National Convention, and a specialty NVS roundtable discussion event in North Chicago on Feb. 24 in conjunction with Mike Figlioli, VFW Director NVS and Tony Lowe, VFW Foundation Consultant.

Representatives from Humana, the VFW and the VFW Foundation convened virtually on Monday, Jan. 28, 2024, for the annual Strategic Initiatives Planning Meeting. Special emphasis was given to better organizational coordination between VFW and Humana (at all levels) which will positively impact overall health and wellness in the veteran community. Additional joint venture opportunities were discussed to support food insecurity (Uniting To Combat Hunger), NVS training initiatives and its anti-shark predatory claims campaign, the upcoming VFW National Convention activities, etc.

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

VFW National Convention

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING – 125th National Convention housing will open, **Monday, March 18, 2024**. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website accessed through the main VFW website at vfw.org/Convention. The convention website will also have general convention information including the registration form and links to other convention related information for Louisville, Kentucky – July 27-Aug. 1, including a tentative agenda.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION – Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the VFW National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee provided the Post has paid the mandated \$25 advance registration fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to the VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. **ATTN:** Convention Registration, Quartermasters are strongly encouraged to register delegates utilizing the on-line membership system (OMS).

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 17% 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.*

Soon to Arrive – Spring Edition VFW Birthday Cards – This spring, the VFW is mailing the 2024 Card Collection and other gifts in recognition of your commitment to the VFW and our nation's struggling veterans of all generations. More importantly, there is a special Independence Day card included in the package. Please sign and return it right away so that we can deliver your message of gratitude to one of America's service members or hospitalized veterans in time for Independence Day. It means so much to them to know their fellow veterans remember and care.

Right now, thousands of veterans are living with the physical and mental trauma of war. The physical wounds can be seen, but what about those veterans who suffer in silence? There are thousands of veterans who carry the invisible wounds of war, such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress.

The VFW wants to be sure when veterans from all wars and conflicts turn to us for assistance, we have the programs available for them. When you send back the signed card, please send a donation in honor of your fellow veterans who now face a long road to recovery from injuries sustained in battle. Your gift will mean that these programs stay available and strong for all veterans, right in *your* Department.

2024 Voice of Democracy Winners – It's almost time to announce the 2024 Voice of Democracy National Winner. We hope you will take the opportunity to [listen to the essay](#) given by your state winner as well as the winners from other states. The grand-prize winner will be announced on Monday, March 4, at the VFW Washington Conference in Washington, D.C. [Watch a livestream](#) of the Parade of Winners on March 4, at 6:00 p.m. (EST). If you are not currently a member of the VFW Friends of Freedom, you can sign up to receive these important alerts at vfw.org.

Relax This Tax Season With These Tips – Filing your taxes doesn't have to be painful if you follow these four simple steps. Make sure you're prepared. Consult with a professional if you need help navigating tricky laws. File electronically. And finally, plan for your future. With your finances top of mind, consider how to support the organizations most important to you. You can extend your legacy of kindness by including a gift to the VFW through your estate plan. Contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or plannedgiving@vfw.org to learn more.

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 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

2024 VFW Day of Service

Make your state stand out! We're kicking off 2024 VFW Day of Service, a nationwide community service effort, and we are counting on you to help make this year bigger and better. Please visit todaysvfw.org/Day-of-Service/ to learn more, check out helpful tools and resources — and most importantly — sign up!

We are counting on 100% participation and are looking to VFW leaders at every level to make it happen. Thanks for your support!

Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Programs All-American Requirement

To qualify for All-American, a **minimum donation of \$100** must be donated to VMS by **June 30, 2024**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the "VMS Donation" tab on the Dashboard to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send 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 submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

Do not use the red donate link in the upper right-hand corner of this webpage. This is for general donation purposes only.

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

125th National Convention – Louisville, Kentucky

As we plan for the **2024 National Convention**, there will be a new design for the **VMS Lapel Pins** for **2024-25 Program year!** VMS Chairs will be able to pre-order their pins and will be able to pick them up at the convention again this year. **Departments that are delinquent will not be able to pre-order.** Request forms will be provided sometime in March/April 2024.

VMS Program Chair Tools

The Veterans & Military Support Program Chair Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is vfw.org/VMSPChairTools.

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2024 Fall Semester** application is available now and can only be found online at vfw.org/Scholarship with a **deadline date of April 30, 2024.**

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.

PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD) Please encourage Posts to read the 2023-24 Membership program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants and VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD.

Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level (if applicable) are completed. The Department Teacher winners that are received at National Headquarters will receive a VFW National citation for both the winning teacher and their school in each grade category. The National Teacher Award winners will be announced soon.

Order the Citizenship Education Teacher Recognition Citation from VFW Store, product #4320, vfwstore.org/products/23980. Present to all teachers nominated at all levels for the national award.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS. Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards being raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot’s Pen National Awards total is \$55,000.

NEW UPDATES. VFW National Programs has updated the Fred C. Hall and Outstanding Community Service Post Award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

FRED C. HALL MEMORIAL AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE. Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Fred C. Hall Memorial Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR. Each Department will have an OCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community

“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

Identity theft can occur at any time. Don’t ignore any of these red flags:

- Inaccurate information on your credit report.
- Odd activity on your bank or credit statements. Often fraud starts with small withdrawals so it’s not as noticeable.
- Mail you weren’t expecting or hospital bills where you didn’t receive services.
- Losing a wallet with personal information in it.
- Phone calls from bill collectors for services you haven’t purchased.
- Receiving unexpected authentication codes.
- Unrecognizable income tax information.

ID Resolve helps you stop identity thieves in their tracks when they target your good name. Give yourself peace of mind knowing you’re protected. Enroll at youridresolve.com/pp/VFW or call 1.833.203.9232.

“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 Jan. 1, 2024:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 90 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) 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.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.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 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.

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 in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently, we have no plans to replenish inventory due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of the Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years’ sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 3.5 years of the Gold, 5 years of Diamond and 52 years of the Silver.

National Veterans Service

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR FOR 2023-24

On Feb. 20, 2024, all Departments were notified that nominations for the John A. Biedrzycki Service Representative of the Year for 2023-24 are now being accepted.

We encourage every Department to submit a nomination to show that Department leaders are aware of the significant contributions your service office staff and service program make in your community every day.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- VFW Department Service Officers
- VFW Assistant Department Service Officers
- VFW Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- Any State or County VFW accredited representative
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award
- Individuals who do not have VFW accreditation

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30 deadline.
2. A brief summary of no more than two pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to):
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted.
 - Community outreach conducted.
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided.
 - Meticulous use of Tyler Veterans Benefits (TVB) or another electronic claims processing system (specify system).
 - Submission of TIMELY monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office).
 - Number of VFW members recruited.

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient will be provided with round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights' hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Nominations can be submitted to taldana@vfw.org by no later than **April 30, 2024**.

ORDER YOUR VFW UNIFORM CAP TODAY! Officer changes will be taking place soon. The peak season for ordering caps is April to August, when the VFW Store processes thousands of cap orders. During this period, it can take up to 10 weeks to receive your cap. To order today go to vfwstore.org/category/vfw/uniformcapandnametags or call 833.839.8387.



Show your community that you're #StillServing. Shop the VFW Store's collection of #StillServing apparel. vfwstore.org/category/vfw/stillserving



WOMEN VETERANS

WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE

BY VFW DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA

APRIL 27, 2024

10 AM-2 PM



LOCATION: GDIT

(GENERAL DYNAMIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

6310 E TEXAS ST. BOSSIER CITY, LA 71111

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

KONNIE MOLL KMBRAT@HOTMAIL.COM

405-351-0548

WOMEN VETERAN CHAIRMAN

PAULA BALDWIN COMBATSOULSISTER@YAHOO.COM

337-424-1379

WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE

BY VFW DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA

MAY 25, 2024

10 AM-2 PM



LOCATION: VFW 6640

2809 HARVARD AVE METAIRIE, LA 70006

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

KOLLEEN HERNDON 504-452-2550

WOMEN VETERAN CHAIRMAN

PAULA BALDWIN COMBATSOULSISTER@YAHOO.COM

337-424-1379

SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE



Elect Debbie McElhannon 2024-2025 State Commander Dept of LA

VFW Accomplishments	Goals
<p>Joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in 2004 Transferred to Harrington-LeBouef VFW Post 9854 in Vinton, LA 2012 Post 9854 Junior Vice CDR 2012 Post 9854 Commander 2013 – 2015, 2017-2023 Department Chairman for Americanism 2013-15, 2022-23 Department Chairman for Patriot’s Pen 2017-2022 All State Post Commander 2019, 2020, and 2021 Co-chairman for Women Veterans 2019-2022, 2023 All American Post Commander 2021 District 5 Commander 2021, 2022 All State District Commander 2021 All American District Commander 2021 Dept of LA Junior Vice CDR 2022-2023 Dept of LA Senior Vice CDR 2023-2024</p>	<p>Keep Louisiana on top of the Departments within the National Organization and continue to increase in membership.</p> <p>Remember our promise of helping Veterans and partner with other organizations to increase our ability to help veterans.</p> <p>Communicate with all members of the organization to work as a team to provide service to veterans and our communities.</p> <p>Mentor members to become VFW leaders.</p> <p>Encourage Comrades to sponsor fun events to promote camaraderie and mental wellness.</p>



DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

REVISED 10/01/2023

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

DISTRICT # _____

DATE: _____

POST # _____

AUXILIARY # _____

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"**

ORIGINAL BUDDY POPPY (500 Minimum)			
QUANTITY:	ITEM:	PRICE:	TOTAL:
	ORIGINAL BUDDY POPPY PER 500	\$145.00	\$
	PER 1,000	\$290.00	\$
TOTAL=			

METAL TAB BUDDY POPPY			
QUANTITY:	ITEM:	PRICE:	TOTAL:
	METAL BUDDY POPPY PER 500	\$80.00	\$
	PER 1,000	\$160.00	\$
TOTAL=			

SHIP TO: _____

VFW MEMBERSHIP #: _____

STREET ADDRESS: (NO PO BOXES!)

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY:

_____ QUANTITY ORDERED FROM NATIONAL DATE: _____

_____ QUANTITY SHIPPED FROM DEPT. HQ DATE: _____

DATE RECEIVED: _____ CHECK #: _____ AMOUNT: _____