

# Mail Call



Department of Louisiana

January 2025 | Issue 7

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- District Meetings– Page 2
- Mid Winter Conference– Page 3
- VOD District Winners– Page 3
- Patriot’s Pen District Winners– Page 3
- Blood Drive– Page 3
- Message from CIC, Al Liphardt– Page 3
- Commander in Chief’s Challenge– Page 4
- 100 % Districts & Post– Page 4
- Membership Monday Webinar– Page 4
- State Commander’s Membership Challenge– Page 5
- Community Service Reporting– Page 6
- State Commander’s Special Project– Page 6
- Department Challenge Coin– Page 6
- Conference/Convention Dates– Page 6
- State Commander’s Article– Page 7
- Sr. & Jr Vice Cmdr’s Articles– Page 8
- State Adjutant & Quartermaster Articles– Page 9
- State Surgeon & Chaplain Articles– Page 10
- Legislative Report– Page 11-12
- Mid Winter Conference VFW Agenda– Page 13
- Blackjack Tournament Fundraiser– Page 14
- Mid Winter Conference Auxiliary Fundraiser– Page 15
- State Commander Shirt Order– Page 16
- State Commander’s Testimonial Flyer– Page 17
- Brothers After War Movie Premier– Page 18-19
- Post Events– Page 20

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Mid-Winter Conference**  
January 23-26, 2025  
The Bentley Alexandria

**State Commander’s  
Testimonial**  
March 22, 2025  
Post 9854

**\*\*More information to come!**

**VFW Day of Service**  
May 3, 2025

**State Convention**  
June 26-29, 2025  
The Bentley Hotel Alexandria &  
Convention Center

*“Generations Continuing to Serve”*

# DISTRICT MEETINGS

## DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

**Feb 22, 2025**                      **Post 3750**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends**

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 3267**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass**

## DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

**Jan 11, 2025**                      **Post 4222**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Joint Meeting                      10:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:30 am  
 Lunch(\$8)                        12:00noon

**State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends**

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 4222**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Joint Meeting                      10:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:30 am  
 Lunch(\$8)                        12:00noon

**St. Rep, SVC. James Prestenback**

## DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

**Feb 15, 2025**                      **Post 1982**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch(\$8)                        12:00noon

**State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish**

**May 3, 2025**                      **Post 9822**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch(\$8)                        12:00noon

**State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass**

## DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 3619**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon

**St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon**

## DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

**May 17, 2025**                      **Post 6720**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch(\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass**

## DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

**Jan 18, 2025**                      **Post 3785**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon

**State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass**

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 3784**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

**Feb 15, 2025**                      **Post 5735**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                11:00 am

**St. Rep, SVC. James Prestenback**

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 3652**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                11:00 am

**State Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish**

## DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

**Feb 15, 2025**                      **Post 3139**  
 Registration                      10:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:30 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends**

**May 3, 2025**                      **Post 7643**  
 Registration                      10:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:30 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish**

## DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

**Jan 18, 2025**                      **Post 3615**  
 Registration                      9:30 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon

**State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends**

**May 10, 2025**                      **Post 1809**  
 Registration                      9:30 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon

**St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon**

## DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

**Jan 11, 2025**                      **Post 4588**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, JPC, Ron Delaney**

**May 10, 2025**                      **Post 5951**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch (\$10)                      12:00noon

**State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends**

## BUDDY POPPY ORDERS:

Post Commanders should begin organizing their 2025 Memorial Day “Buddy”® Poppy Campaign. Every Post is urged to order and distribute VFW “Buddy” Poppies. **NOW** is the time to order your Poppies to be sure you have them for Memorial Day. Visit our website to order [www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org) under Resources - Forms - Buddy Poppies to order today!

### MID WINTER CONFERENCE

January 23-26, 2025  
The Bentley Hotel

#### REGISTRATION:

Submit your Registration and Payment online by visiting [www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org) under Events - Mid Winter Conference

#### BANQUET TICKETS:

Purchase your Banquet Ticket now! See form in this Mail Call or visit our website to purchase online. ([www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org) under Events - Mid Winter Conference) Tickets are \$30.00 per

### MESSAGE FROM OUR CIC ABOUT THE RECENT ATTACK IN NEW ORLEANS

VFW National will be releasing an official statement on January 3rd from condemning this act of cowardice in regards to the recent attack in New Orleans. In the meantime, here is brief message from CIC Al Liphardt: "As our nation's largest Combat Veteran Service organization, we call on our members to be hyper-vigilant. Be aware of your surroundings prepared to call on your training and experiences, and possibly act if capable, to stop cowardly acts by those who attack innocent citizens.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The Global War on Terror is real and here. That means our enemies are on our soil and in our cities. We the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have faced terrorists and defeated them time and time again as history has confirmed. Thomas Jefferson is quoted as saying that "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance". If you see something, say something!

### VOICE OF DEMOCRACY DISTRICT WINNERS

Congratulations to the students and their sponsoring Post for placing 1st in their Districts!

DIST 2	ASHLYN C. ROGERS	3750
DIST 3	ETHAN HAMMONDS	12182
DIST 4	LINCOLN TRUMPS	9822
DIST 5	GRADY REEVES	12203
DIST 7	ANNA BOURQUE	9903
DIST 8	AVA RUSSELL	3693
DIST 9	RYLEIGH VUTERA	3652
DIST 10	RYAN LEMOINE	3139
DIST 11	HAVEN WILHITE	1809
DIST 12	OMAR BENITES	5951

We look forward to announcing our First Place Department winner at the Saturday Night Banquet during our Mid Winter Conference.

### PATRIOT'S PEN DISTRICT WINNERS

Congratulations to the students and their sponsoring Post for placing 1st in their Districts!

DIST 2	PHOENIX LEMOINE	3267
DIST 3	BRENNA M BAYE	3665
DIST 4	CARLIE A SIMON	9822
DIST 5	MATTIE SMITH	4759
DIST 7	CALEB J BARRON	2885
DIST 8	JUDE M ROBERT	3693
DIST 9	REED COOKSEY	8720
DIST 10	LANDON NOEL SMITH	1736
DIST 11	BRETTON J WILLIAMS	3615
DIST 12	SAVANNAH G O'GLEE	2885

We look forward to announcing our First—Third Place Department winners during the Joint Opening of Mid Winter Conference.

# STATE COMMANDER'S MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE/TOP RECRUITER AWARD FOR JANUARY!

\*\*SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE DETAILS!

## STATE COMMANDER'S MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE WINNER FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

The top recruiter for the month of **December** is Paul Stone from Post 5951!



## COMMANDER IN CHIEF'S CHALLENGE

The monthly Commander's Challenge is rolling along as we see our Posts making great strides in recruiting and upgrading members to Life membership! To remind everyone, every month during the 2024-25 membership year, we will reward our Posts who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades.

Every month, we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a new annual member into the Post: 1 point
- An annual or lapsed member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a new Life member into the Post: 10 points

Every month a different award will be given out to the Posts that lead their divisions, and at the end of the year at our National Convention, each Post will be recognized for their achievement on a video display at the Membership booth.

**NOVEMBER'S winners will receive a 3' x 5' VFW outdoor flag to fly proudly at the Post, parades, and events.**

### 100 % POST

Congratulations to the Districts & Post that have reached 100% already this year!

1982	2885	3665	3693
3793	4158	4201	4215
4224	5187	5442	5951
7017	8678	8852	9608
9822	12065	12182	12203

Dist 4  
Dist 8  
Dist 12

### MEMBERSHIP MONDAY WEBINAR VIA ZOOM

# JANUARY RECRUITER

*Howard*



**Supdex 1:18 RC Tank,  
2.4Ghz US M26 Pershing  
Remote Control Model, RC  
Army Tank That Shoots BBs  
and Water Bombs.**



## EVENT FLYERS:

Any District/Post that has upcoming events and would like to include a flyer in our monthly Mail Call, please send the information to [adj@vfwdeptla.org](mailto:adj@vfwdeptla.org)!

## Future National Convention Dates:

**August 9-14, 2025**

Columbus, OH

**July 31-Aug 4, 2027**

Milwaukee, WI

**Aug 15-20, 2026**

Salt Lake City, UT

**Aug 5-10, 2028**

San Antonio, TX

## VFW Department of Louisiana Headquarters CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office- 225-928-5025 | [www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org)

\*Please note the Department NO longer has a Fax Number!

### State Quartermaster

Elvin R. Bass

Email: [lavfwqm@yahoo.com](mailto:lavfwqm@yahoo.com)

### State Adjutant

Carl Karnish

Email: [adj@vfwdeptla.org](mailto:adj@vfwdeptla.org)

### State Administrative Assistant:

Tori LeBlanc

Email: [lastatevfw@yahoo.com](mailto:lastatevfw@yahoo.com)

### State Commander:

Debbie McElhannon

Email: [debbiemc4vets@gmail.com](mailto:debbiemc4vets@gmail.com)

## State Commander's Special Project Brothers and Sisters in Arms

[Click here for more information, please visit https://  
www.brotherandsisterptsddogs.org](https://www.brotherandsisterptsddogs.org)

## COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING:

All reports should be submitted **MONTHLY** by logging onto the Department's Website - Members Only Section. It's very important that Community Service Activities are reported in the month that they take place!

## Department Conference/ Convention Dates:

**2024-2025**

**Mid Winter**

January 23-26, 2025

**State Convention**

June 26-29, 2025

**2025-2026**

**CofA/Officer Training**

August 22-24, 2025

**Mid Winter**

January 22-25, 2026

**State Convention**

June 18-21, 2026

**CoA/Officer Training**

August 28-30, 2026



## CHALLENGE COIN

We invite all of our Post to join us in honoring our local law enforcement officers, EMTs, and firefighters by purchasing Challenge Coins to show our appreciation to them.

Cost \$10.00 each + shipping

All Posts should check with their District to see if they have placed an order to distribute to Post!

*Click the link below to order yours today!*

<https://form.jotform.com/242673672339162>



## From the desk of the State Commander...

Happy New Year to Everyone! I hope you had a joyous holiday season. We are already halfway through our 2024-25 program year. It's like I blinked, and it was already December and now January. I am truly enjoying this year. I look forward, to what the next six months will bring.

Mid-Winter Conference (MWC) is this month. If you can make it, I would love to see you. We have so many activities scheduled. We will have training, suicide prevention class, veterans' affairs informational training, tours of the Bently Friday afternoon, recording oral interviews on Friday and Saturday from 9-12 and 1-5, Karaoke contest on Friday, food trucks on Saturday at lunch, and a blackjack card tournament on Saturday to raise money for National Veterans Services (NVS) to help veterans in need. Anyone wanting to play will pay a \$10.00 donation fee. The winner of the card tournament will get half of the money collected and the other half goes to NVS. You will need to register for the tour, suicide prevention and oral interviews. Call the Department to register because spaces are limited. Please remember to pay conference registration fees ahead of time.

We also get to announce the winners of our annual program contests. We will announce Americanism, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year at the Joint opening session and our Voice of Democracy winner will be revealed at the Saturday night banquet. I look forward to seeing and hearing our winning entries.

Louisiana VFW membership was going strong for a few months then, in December we dropped back to 26th in the Nation. Hopefully, everyone got reenergized during the holiday season and we added some steam back into the engine. We have some special incentives coming out this month. Let's put the wheels back on the bus and move forward.

Some announcements and upcoming events. Districts get your inspection reports turned in and ensure discrepancies are corrected. First and Second Quarter trustee reports should be complete. We have the Legislative Conference coming up in DC the beginning of March. We will have more information at MWC and a sign-up sheet for anyone going, so we can keep up with everyone. If you want to go to DC, let us know ASAP, so we can add your name to the list. If you haven't reserved a room for DC yet, you need to call because the rooms book up. My Commander's Testimonial will be 22 March. If anyone would like a ticket to the upcoming Commander's Testimonial see the flyer below and give us a call. Come out to the big town of Vinton and enjoy some comradery, good food, door prizes, auction and music.

Remember to keep checking on your buddies and neighbors. Invite them to a fun event at your post, go out to lunch or have coffee and share stories. Comradery and helping veterans are our main purpose.

Thank you for you for what you do. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to serving and helping veterans. Look forward to seeing you at MWC.



**State Commander  
Debbie McElhannon**

## A message from our State Sr. Vice Commander....

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to this great organization. The Midwinter Conference is quickly approaching and look forward to seeing those who are attending! I also look forward to attending upcoming District meetings across this great state.

I would like to thank those students who participated in our VFW Programs. It's always a joy watching those students receiving an award for their winning entry! Thank you to those Posts and Districts who year after year participate in our programs which promote patriotism amongst our youth.

I hope everyone is doing great and hope to see you soon!



**Sr. Vice Commander  
James Prestenback**

## A message from our State Jr. Vice Commander....

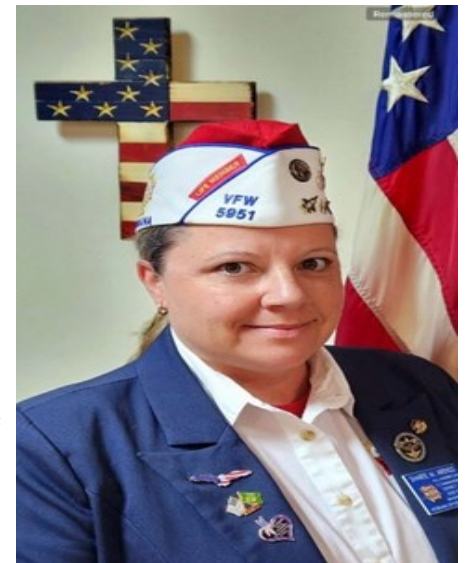
Greetings Comrades,

Happy New Year! I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas and a wonderful time ringing in the New Year! Make sure you are keeping your foot on the gas and recruiting and reinstating those members! We are moving into the next couple of months of district meetings and Mid-Winter!

Start planning now for your National Day of Service May 1st. The sooner you plan for this event, the greater it will be.

Remember, just because we have completed our programs and turned them into the department, we are not done with sharing the information of those programs. Now is the time to start planning for next year. Get set up with the schools, fire departments, police departments and other veteran organizations. Get out there in the community and make sure the VFW is getting the visibility it needs and deserves!

I look forward to seeing each of you during my travels to the District meetings and at Mid-Winter!



**Jr. Vice Commander  
Sharee Arends**



# A message from our State Adjutant....

Is Your Post Striving to be All-State ?

Being All-State and All-American is a very noble goal. Is it attainable? Absolutely! What does it take? A little time and a little effort by the members of your post. It starts with the Commander setting the goal and picking the right people for each program or membership requirement. To me the Membership requirement is a no brainer.....Have 40 Members and grow your membership by 1%. Program requirements require the right person for each program. The programs are the lifeline to the VFW. Without the schools continued participation the legacy of the VFW and Veterans will become a thing of the past. Americanism, Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy and Citizenship Education Teachers Award can impact every home in America in some fashion. It just takes effort and follow-up.

So why should we strive to be All-State ? When you accomplish attaining All-State you have done what the VFW Mission is asking us to do which is *"...to support past and present American Service members who have served in foreign wars, expeditions, or campaigns. The VFW Mission is to provide camaraderie among veterans who have served overseas in a war, conflict, or peacekeeping mission and to advocate for veterans' rights and benefits, and provide support to veterans and their families."*

**We owe it to our Veterans to make All-State .**



**State Adjutant  
Carl Karnish**

# A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. We are just a few weeks away from our 2025 Mid Winter Conference. Post should submit pre register the members that will be attending the conference on our website. It is important for Post to try to complete the pre registration prior to the conference as this helps the registration desk at the conference run smoothly. Banquet Tickets can also be purchased on our website. Remember seating will be limited, so make sure to secure your tickets early!

A recent review has highlighted an opportunity for Posts to recover unclaimed revenue held by the Louisiana Department of Treasury. Funds such as old bank accounts, forgotten refunds, or other assets that may belong to your Post.

To take advantage of this opportunity:

1. Visit the Louisiana Department of Treasury's website and use their "Unclaimed Property Search" tool.
2. Search under your Post's name, any affiliated entities, or previous leadership names.
3. Follow the instructions for claiming funds if you find a match.

If you recover unclaimed revenue, please ensure it is reported appropriately on your financial records. This could be a valuable boost to your Post's resources for the year ahead.

Let's continue working together to make 2024-2025 a year of growth and success for our Department Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.



**State Quartermaster  
Elvin Ray Bass**

## A message from our State Surgeon....

Comrades, as we end 2024 and move into the New Year, I would like to thank everyone that has taken steps to maintain a healthy life. Please remember to keep all of our Brothers and Sisters in your thoughts. This is still the most difficult time of the year for many people and our family isn't immune to this. We need to continue to reach out and do BUDDY CHECKS on those members and friends that we don't see or hear from regularly. As our Mid-Winter Convention approaches, please keep in mind that we will be hosting a blood drive. Please come prepared to donate what you can.



**State Surgeon  
Lawrence Koons**

The ASIST Training that was hosted by Post 3619, went very well. It is an extremely informative workshop that anyone can attend. Please visit their website if you are interested. You can also contact them if you would like to host this workshop for your post or district. We will also be hosting our own Operation Daily Battle QPR training at mid-winter. If you are interested, please sign up early as our class is limited to 30 members. This is sponsored by the VFW Riders Group.

If you do decide to reach out to me, both my phone number and email are below. However, if you call, please leave a message as I don't answer my phone during my work day...my Boss doesn't like that.

## A message from our State Chaplain....

As we were going through the holidays, I had lots of memories come back and some thoughts that came to mind. I had memories of both Christmases when I was deployed both times to Iraq. The first deployment I was able to come home for leave and the second we were back in time for me to get back home although only for the two days before Christmas. Both of these Christmases and so many others give me immense joy watching my kids open all their gifts under the tree.

One of the things I have always enjoyed about the Christmas season is that for the most part people are nicer, they tell people happy holidays or merry Christmas, give people presents, send cards, call people they haven't spoken to for a while, or visit friends and family. You donate money to people collecting, give to toys for tots, or give collections to angel trees. Just imagine how more enjoyable our world would be if these things became the norms and not only for just a few weeks. In general, I want to wish that each of you had an awesome Christmas season and I look forward to the awesome things each of you will accomplish in 2025.



**State Chaplain  
David Fields**

**Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Department of Louisiana  
Legislative Report DECEMBER 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.

December 2nd:

**VFW Action Corps Readership Survey:** The VFW wants to hear from you! Tell us about yourself and what topics you would like to see covered next year in the VFW Action Corps Weekly. Your input as a subscriber is vital to the success of the VFW's legislatively focused digital newsletter to support our advocacy efforts to further improve veterans' benefits, the transition assistance process, and military family quality of life. Please take our survey.

December 9th:

**VFW Hosts Veterans Justice Commission:** The VFW Washington, D.C., office hosted the Veterans Justice Commission to discuss the work it does to examine the extent and nature of veteran involvement in the criminal justice system, and to develop recommendations for evidence-based policy changes that can enhance safety, health, and judicial fairness. VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray moderated a panel presentation with former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Commission Director Jim Seward during which they presented both state and federal policy proposals. Learn more about the Veterans Justice Commission.

**VFW Meets with Congressional Hispanic Caucus:** VFW Post 7420 Commander Livier "Livy" Lizaro from San Diego addressed the House Congressional Hispanic Caucus during a roundtable focused on the challenges faced by Hispanic veterans and their families. The event brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss the issues affecting Hispanic service members and veterans nationwide. Lizaro highlighted the VFW's support for deported and repatriated veterans who were unable to naturalize during their service and emphasized the need for Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, ensuring all transitioning service members have access to accredited representatives for VA claims assistance before discharge.

**VFW Responds to The Economist:** VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray publicly posted a vehement response to a poorly written and unattributed article titled, "American Veterans Now Receive Absurdly Generous Benefits," published by The Economist. Murray said, "I'd challenge the anonymous cowards at The Economist to illuminate us on which parts of veterans' healthcare and benefits are inappropriate, illogical, or wildly unreasonable?" Read Murray's response.

**VFW Health Care Survey Closing Soon:** The VFW Health Care survey will be closing at midnight on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024. Please share your health care experiences with us. Your feedback is vital to our next report and ongoing advocacy efforts on this important topic. Help the VFW hold VA and Congress accountable by taking this quick survey, no matter where you receive care. Please take the survey.

**Reminder for VA Secure Sign In:** VA has issued changes for signing into your VA.gov or My HealtheVet accounts. Currently, there are four ways to sign in to your VA accounts: LOGIN.GOV, ID.ME, My HealtheVet, and DS Logon. Both My HealtheVet and DS Logon will be discontinued for accessing VA accounts. My HealtheVet sign in will be available until Jan. 31, 2025. Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors with VA accounts are encouraged to transition how they sign in to access these accounts prior to that date. Read more.

Christmas Joy Through Toys for Tots: Since 1947, Marine Toys for Tots has been bringing the joy of Christmas to America's less-fortunate children and fostering community engagement. Every holiday season, new unwrapped toys are distributed to children in need. Donated items may be dropped off at designated locations, or you may make a virtual donation. [Learn more.](#)

Defeating the Holiday Blues: For many veterans, the holiday season intensifies feelings of stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Creating a community and building connections are ways to combat the holiday blues and provide a sense of purpose. For those unable to meet in person with family and friends, you can schedule video calls, online game nights, or virtual dinners, workouts, and watch parties. You can also volunteer with local VFW Posts and veteran support organizations in your area. [Read more.](#)

December 16th:

VFW Provides Statement for House Subcommittee Hearing: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan provided a statement for the record for a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing that examined the effectiveness of the Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. Keenan commented, "Veterans have described VR&E as a life-changing opportunity that put them on a path for success. However, many informed the VFW that they did not receive sufficient guidance to navigate this process." [Read the testimony.](#)

Committee Leaders Press VA on Delayed Law Implementation: House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mike Bost and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Jerry Moran sent a letter to VA Secretary Denis McDonough questioning VA's delayed implementation of the MST Claims Coordination Act (P.L.117-303). Under this law, the Veterans Benefits Administration will automatically notify the Veterans Health Administration when a military sexual trauma (MST) survivor, who is also a VA health care recipient, files an MST-related disability claim. Though June 27, 2024, was the effective date, VA is now indicating a further delay until January 2025. [Read the letter.](#)

Take VFW Action Corps Readership Survey: The VFW wants to hear from you! Tell us about yourself and what topics you would like to see covered next year in the VFW Action Corps Weekly. Your input as a subscriber is vital to the success of the VFW's legislatively focused digital newsletter to support our advocacy efforts to further improve veterans' benefits, the transition assistance process, and military family quality of life. Please take our survey.

Space Force Celebrates Fifth Anniversary: The United States Space Force (USSF) was established on Dec. 20, 2019, as the sixth branch of the armed forces, marking the first new service in 72 years. Created to address growing importance and threats in the space domain, it focuses on building a specialized force by integrating expertise from various military sectors, including space operations, cyber, intelligence, and engineering. U.S. space capabilities are crucial for national security and influence critical capabilities such as GPS and communications. [Read more.](#)

Last two week of Action Corps will have to wait, Merry Christmas to all!

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, DEPT OF LA  
TENTATIVE MID WINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA**

JAN 23, 24, 25, 26, 2025

THE BENTLEY HOTEL  
200 Desoto St., Alexandria, LA.

**Thursday – January 23, 2025**

4:00pm – 5:30pm	Registration	TBD (2nd Floor)
6:00 pm	Convention Committee MTG	Board Room

**Friday – January 24, 2025**

(Officers dress is Business Casual or Cmdr.'s Polo)

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
9:00am – 11:30am	Registration	TBD 2nd Floor
9:00am – 12:00pm	Veterans Oral Interview for Podcast (Sign up every 30 Minutes)	Boardroom
11:00am – 5:00pm	Cook Off (Any soup or gumbo)	Outside
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch	
12:30pm – 4:00pm	Registration	TBD 2nd Floor
1:00pm – 5:00pm	Veterans Oral Interview for Podcast <a href="#">(Sign up every 30 Minutes)</a>	Boardroom
1:00pm – 3:00pm	Workshop/Training (QM/CDR)	Ballroom 1st Floor
2:00pm – 3:00pm	VA Benefits Seminar	Bayou Robert 2nd Floor
3:00pm – 5:00pm	Tour of Bentley Hotel (30 mins ea.)10 ppl ea. tour	
3:30pm – 4:30pm	Suicide Prevention (limited seats)	TBD 2nd Floor
4:00pm - 5:00pm	Council of Administration Ballroom	1st Floor
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Suicide Prevention (limited seats) T	TBD 2nd Floor
	<b>*NOTE* Must Register ahead of time for Tour and Suicide Prevention</b>	
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Budget Meeting	Ballroom 1st Floor
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Buddy Poppy Hat Contest	Lobby 1st Floor
	Auxiliary Fundraiser / Auction Dinner	
8:15pm	Karaoke Contest	Ballroom 1st Floor
9:00pm	MOC & MOCA Meeting	Bayou Robert 2nd Floor

**Saturday – January 25, 2025**

(Officers dress is Blues & Grays and/or Suit for Joint Opening)

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
8:45	VFW & Aux Officers Line Up Lobby	1st Floor
9:00am – 12:00pm	Joint Opening Ballroom	1st Floor
9:00am – 11:30am	Registration	TBD 2nd Floor
9:00am – 12:00pm	Veterans Oral Interview for Podcast (Sign up every 30 Minutes)	Boardroom
10:00am – 2:00pm	Blood Drive	Pre-Function Area
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch(2 food trucks BBQ, hotdogs)	Valet area
12:00pm – 1:00pm	PSC Luncheon	Bayou Robert 2nd Floor
12:30pm – 3:00pm	Registration	TBD 2nd Floor
1:00pm – 5:00pm	Veterans Oral Interview for Podcast (Sign up every 30 Minutes)	Boardroom
1:15pm – 3:30pm	VFW Business Session	Ballroom 1st Floor
3:45pm – 4:30pm	Post Commanders or Rep Meeting	Ballroom 1st Floor
6:30pm	Banquet (Dress is Banquet Attire)	Ballroom 1st Floor
8:15pm	Black Jack Card Tournament \$10.00 entry Winner 50%, VMS 50%	Ballroom 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor

**VFW NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: NATIONAL ADJUTANT GENERAL  
DAN WEST**

**Sunday – January 26, 2025**

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
9:00am – 11:00pm	Final Business Session (if needed)	Ballroom 1st Floor

# Blackjack Tournament



Join us for a fun filled night of  
Blackjack to help raise money for  
National's VMS Program.

Saturday, January 25, 2025  
8:15 p.m. in the Bentley Ballroom

\$10.00 entry fee

Winner will receive 50%  
of the total collected



**MID-WINTER CONFERENCE**

**DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025**

**TIME: 6pm-9pm**

**PLACE: THE HOTEL BENTLEY  
ALEXANDRIA, LA.**

**PRICE: \$10/PERSON**

(Send reservations to Department Treasurer Margaret Nixon at 3526 Anthony Rd, Florien, LA 71429)

**COME CELEBRATE VFW NATIONAL HOME'S 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY WITH US IN STYLE. COME DRESSED IN YOUR BEST 1920'S ATTIRE, HAVE DINNER AND DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY WITH MUSIC PROVIDED BY A DJ. THIS IS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE AUXILIARY.**

**SPECIAL PRIZES FOR BEST DRESSED WILL BE AWARDED. ALSO DON'T FORGET THE TABLES WILL BE JUDGED AS WELL.**

# 2024-2025 Commander Shirts



**\$50.00 EACH**

**VFW Members**– Cash, Check (Made payable to Debbie McElhannon), Venmo (@debbiemc01), or CashApp (\$Debbie McElhannon)

**VFW Auxiliary Members**– Cash, Check (Made payable to Ella Wilson), or Venmo (ejwilson\_72)

Additional questions contact Debbie @ 337-526-3695



# SAVE THE DATE



## TESTIMONIAL

**STATE COMMANDER, DEBBIE MCELHANNON**

**March 22, 2025**

**Harrington LeBouef VFW Post 9854**

**2292 Highway 109 S**

**Vinton, LA 70668**

**Ticket Presale \$20.00**

**At the Door \$30.00**

**Doors Open at 4:00 P.M.**

**Auctions**



**Food**



**Music**



**Door Prizes and much more**

**Tickets may be purchased from District Commanders, at Mid-Winter Conference or by calling 337-324-0670 or 337-515-0811**

Hotel reservations can be made at Cobblestone Inn & Suites, by calling or 337-589-9420 or 337-313-5014 and using the code "testimonial", a block of rooms has been reserved for those coming in for the event. We were blessed to get a great deal at \$85.00 per night, which includes a hot breakfast. Limited number of rooms downstairs for those who may need, please call ASAP.

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
GARY SINISE



# BROTHERS AFTER WAR



3 BROTHERS, 12 WAR FIGHTERS  
15 YEARS LATER

[www.brothersafterwar.com](http://www.brothersafterwar.com)

Here is what Veterans are saying about the film:

*"An emotional roller coaster in the best possible way."*

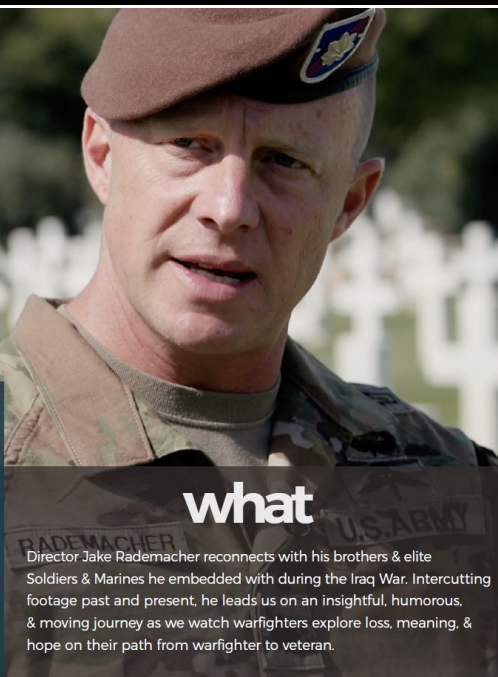
*"I love raw, unscripted videos of my brothers. It is who we are."*

*"In the media, Veterans are all broken. We are not. Loved the emphasis on families. They serve too."*

BROTHERS AFTER WAR IS A POWERFUL, AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY SEQUEL TO BROTHERS AT WAR.

THE FILM HAS BEEN GETTING STANDING OVATIONS FROM VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES.

Movie Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/918171279?share=copy>



## what

Director Jake Rademacher reconnects with his brothers & elite Soldiers & Marines he embedded with during the Iraq War. Intercutting footage past and present, he leads us on an insightful, humorous, & moving journey as we watch warfighters explore loss, meaning, & hope on their path from warfighter to veteran.

## why

A RECENT USC STUDY OF VETERANS WHO SERVED SINCE 2001 REPORTED THEM EXPERIENCING:

- Loneliness 58%
- Probable PTSD 45%
- Probable Depression 43%
- Risk for Suicide 30%
- Know someone who has died by suicide 60%

MOVIES MAKE TOUGH SUBJECTS EASIER TO TALK ABOUT.

*The film speaks in the unique language of Veterans to Veterans about:*

- Loss of identity
- Depression
- Suicide
- Divorce
- TBI
- Post-traumatic stress
- Substance abuse
- Anger
- Disillusionment
- Impact of war policy decisions





IN **BROTHERS AFTER WAR** VETERANS OFFER INSIGHT & SHARE WAYS THEY HAVE OVERCOME, SUCH AS:

- Counseling
- Helping others
- Art
- Comradery
- Dedication to family
- GI Bill
- Caring for children
- Sky diving
- Scuba
- Memorializing those who have died overseas
- Writing letters to the families of the fallen
- Making the most of the next chapter

*"The film helped me realize I'm not alone or broken. It gives me hope for my future. It helps to hear other's stories that are similar to mine and that it is okay to be vulnerable."*



**The first release date of February 28, 2025 will be held in the Baton Rouge/Denham Springs area! More information to come!**



**2025 1st ANNUAL CHARITY**

**May 17, 2025 at 7:30am**  
2100 Coppermill Blvd, Zachary LA

[www.vfwpost4224.org/golf@vfwpost4224.org](http://www.vfwpost4224.org/golf@vfwpost4224.org)