

# Mail Call



## Department of

November 2024 | Issue 5



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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Southern Conference**  
November 7-9, 2024  
Nashville, TN

**Veteran's Day**  
November 11, 2024

**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:

**Nov 2, 2024**                      **Post 3106**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon  
**State Rep, COS, Max Arends**

**April 26, 2025**                      **Post 3619**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                12:00noon  
**St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon**

## DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

**Nov 2, 2024**                      **Post 8971**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch(\$10)                      12:00noon  
**State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish**

**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:

**Oct 26, 2024**                      **Post 8720**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                11:00 am  
**St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon**

**Feb 15, 2025**                      **Post 5735**  
 Registration                      9:00 am  
 Meeting                              10:00 am  
 Lunch                                11:00 am  
**St. Rep, SVC. James Prestenback**

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

**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**

# WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR COMMEMORATING VETERANS DAY THIS YEAR?

On Veterans Day, November 11th, organize a community event to honor all veterans. Refer to the VFW Manual of Procedure and Ritual, as well as the Citizenship Education Program Chairman's booklet, for guidance on ceremonial procedures and speeches. Alternatively, you can visit the VFW website at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) and click on the "Programs" section for additional resources.

## VFW NATIONAL BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

The 2025 VFW's National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual is now available from the VFW Store.. All Posts should have the latest copies of the Bylaws. Visit the VFW Store at [www.vfwstore.org](http://www.vfwstore.org). (Product Code: 04108). You may also download the Digital PDF Edition [HERE](#)  
**Order or download your copy today to stay informed on the latest VFW policies and procedures!**

### 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

**\*\*PLEASE ONLY REGISTER THE MEMBERS FROM YOUR POST THAT WILL BE ATTENDING THE 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 person!

### DUTY OF TRUSTEES

**Attention of Post Commanders** is directed to Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure, "**Duty of Trustees.**" Trustees Report of Audit must be completed in detail at the close of each quarter. Commanders are reminded that accurate and complete records shall be kept by all persons handling Post funds, including the Club Manager and Bingo Chairman These records **shall be audited by Post Trustees** in the same manner as Post Quartermaster and Adjutant records.

### YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST DEADLINE

The deadline for the annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay contests has passed. The students must have turned in their completed entry form with the (audio and/or written) essay submitted to their local participating VFW Post by Oct. 31, 2024.

**Post must have their entries to their District by December 5, 2024!**

### BUDDY POPPY



By the time you read this, VFW and VFW Auxiliary members will have spread out across the landscape distributing the familiar red poppy.

Although we emphasize "Buddy"® Poppies on Veterans 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

IN LOVING  
*memory of*



Past State Commander, Carroll Knott

Carroll served as an exemplary State Commander for our Department in 2008-2009, earning the prestigious title of All American Department Commander that year. Even after his tenure as State Commander ended, Carroll continued to be a dedicated member and mentor to other members within our organization over the following years. His steadfast commitment and invaluable guidance made him an irreplaceable asset, and his absence will be deeply felt.

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

**LSU Tigers 100th Anniversary Embossed football and mahogany display case!**

**\*\*See Page 5 for more details!**

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



The winner of the Paul Stone from VFW 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 7 x 3 vinyl banner to display at the Post or any Post events.**

### 100 % POST

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

1982	2885	3665	3793
4201	4215	4224	5187
7017	9608	12065	12203

### MEMBERSHIP MONDAY WEBINAR VIA ZOOM

Membership Monday training webinar will be on **NOVEMBER 4, 2024 @ 2:00 P.M.** Veterans Day is around the corner, and it's one of the best opportunities we have to get out there and recruit! But how can you make sure that your recruiting booth is the very best it can be?

<https://www.facebook.com/share/4zypxaz56Tq6vpn0/>

# NOVEMBER RECRUITER AWARD



Three panel embossed football. The 100th anniversary of LSU Tiger Stadium, also known as "Death Valley," is a significant milestone that celebrates a century of rich history, tradition, and unforgettable moments in college football.



LSU Tigers 100th anniversary embossed football and Mahogany Logo Display Case

## 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

## 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!

## 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)

## 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

## 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)

## 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...

I can't believe October has already come and gone and we are heading into November. It's so much fun getting to see all the costumes and hand out candy. I want to congratulate Paul Stone for earning the October membership award. Congratulations Paul and great job. Thank you, Louisiana, for getting out and working with veterans. I love seeing posts of our comrades helping veterans, like the events that are held at the Veterans Home. I appreciate your hard work and look forward to what the future brings.

November is a month of celebration. President H.W. Bush approved a resolution in 1990 to celebrate Native Americans and declared November as the National American Indian Heritage Month. We also begin the month with All Saints Day and then we commemorate those who have passed on 2 Nov for All Souls Day. The Marine Corps Birthday is celebrated on 10 November. On 11 November, we honor and celebrate all who served and then we round out the month by giving thanks at Thanksgiving. So much to celebrate. There are many other areas that we celebrate in November, but these stand out to me for reasons to celebrate. I hope each of you take time out this month to celebrate one of these events. Many restaurants and businesses give free or discounted items for Veterans Day. Look at the list ahead of time because many businesses honor our veterans on a day other than Veterans Day.

Please remember that the State office is here to help you, but we don't read minds. If you have a problem, call the headquarters or one of your state officers. Call before the issue gets larger. If we don't know the answer, we will make calls to find out. We want to see each post thrive and be successful. I don't want to close posts, I want to help each post brainstorm on how you can improve and continue to be a post. With that being said, we must follow the bylaws. If your post is not following the bylaws, then we will need to have a discussion. We want to be successful while following our bylaws. Our bylaws are voted on by the membership and they are in place for a reason. I would like to mention a couple bylaws. According to Sec 518 of the bylaws, among the duties of the Quartermaster is the responsibility to file a 990 with the IRS. The 990 must be for your named post. Another bylaw states "the corporation shall file, with the secretary of state or other designated official of each State, the name and address of an agent in that State on whom legal process or demands against the corporation may be served." All posts are required to register each year with the Secretary of state.

Lately, each time someone brings to our attention an issue that a post is having that has been ongoing, we have found that the post inspection and sometimes trustee reports, don't reflect the issues that the post has. I ask that each inspector do a thorough inspection with each post in your district. Be honest, we can't identify an issue if it is not being reported. Post Commanders and Quartermasters ensure that you give required information, and that the inspector accurately marks the inspection sheet before you sign. The inspections are not designed to say aha, I got you; they are designed to help identify problems that the district and state can use to help the post.

Last bylaw for this month. General rules pg. 3 discusses removing caps. All members follow what the Chaplain does during prayer. If the cap is removed, "the hat shall be placed on the extended closed fingers of the right hand in such a way that the Cross of

Malta is exposed and held over the heart;" the cap is also not worn during luncheons, banquets or other meals and the official cap is the only head covering allowed during regular meetings. Article VIII Section 803 discusses what is considered the official cap.

On a positive note, I hope you get out and celebrate what this month has to offer. Every day should be veterans' day, but this month Veterans Day is brought to light, so go out and get a free meal and give thanks for our freedom. If anyone would like a ticket to the upcoming Commander's Testimonial on 22 March (see flyer for more information), give us a call. We will have some really good food, auctions and a DJ. I look forward to Mid-Winter where we get to celebrate many achievements with comrades and students. Come out to Mid-Winter and celebrate with us.



**State Commander  
Debbie McElhannon**



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

Comrades,

October flew by and we are now approaching Veterans Day & the Holidays! Great time for some camaraderie and time spent with family. Also, Election Day is November 5, 2024, so let's get out there and exercise our right to vote.

Americanism, Patriot's Pin, Voice Democracy and Teacher of the Year entries should have been collected by all posts and in the process of being judged. Good luck to all students who submitted an entry.

Commanders, please periodically check the VFW Department of Louisiana dashboard your Post and/or District status. We have several Trustee Reports that are past due. Please contact your Quartermasters & Trustees to have those reports completed and forwarded to the Department Headquarters. Also, first responder coins are still available for purchase at Headquarters.

Our Leadership will be attending the Southern Conference from November 7 - 9. Looking forward to our team representing Louisiana.

Great Job Recruiting! Louisiana is creeping up to the top! Keep it going!



**Sr. Vice Commander  
James Prestenback**

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

Greetings Comrades,

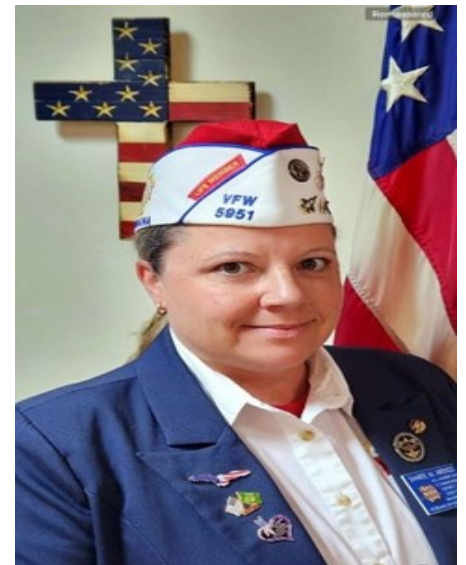
I cannot believe October has come and gone! We are now into the Holiday months and need to make sure we are reaching out to those that we do not see often and making sure they are doing alright.

I attended the Jr. Vice Commanders Conference in Kansas City, MO October 10-13. What a fantastic trip and learning experience! My fellow Jr. Vice Commanders and I had a fantastic time getting to know each other and planning to work together to strengthen the VFW. I cannot say enough about the knowledge passed on in the short timeframe we were there, but I gained a lot of information that will definitely assist in my coming years.

I hope all VOD, Patriot's Pen and Americanism entries have been collected and are now in the voting process, let's get those kids the recognition they deserve.

Keep working hard on membership! Remember, its not just a number when you treat them like they belong. Be welcoming, invite them to your Post and District activities so they can see what we do! If you sign up a member at large, provide them the contact information of the Post they are closest too, even provide that members contact information to that Posts commander so that they may reach out to that new member and invite them to an event.

While working on membership, do not forget there are other areas that will need to be accomplished if you are looking to obtain All-American and All-State. Keep up the great work! I look forward to seeing each of you during my travels to the District meetings!



**Jr. Vice Commander  
Sharee Arends**

# A message from our State Adjutant....

## Win / Win

In today's world and today's society is it possible to have a Win / Win? Yes, it can! Think about the alternatives "Win / Lose" or "Lose / Win".

**Win / Lose** - I win you lose. If I own a car repair business and you come in for service, I may win today because I overcharge you, the chances of you coming back are slim.

**Lose / Win** - I lose, and you win. Again, I own a car repair business, and you bring your car in and I do an oil change for \$9.95 and the oil cost me \$15.00 how long will I stay in business? Not long.

**Win / Win** - How about something creative.... I still own the business but when you bring the car in, I fix it properly for a price that you and I feel is fair. You continue to bring your car back to me and you even start recommending me to others. My business grows and you get great service at a great price.

I believe that at the start of every meeting the Commander reads "Comrades, we are assembled again to transact business of mutual benefit. Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations. Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization and the government of the USA". I believe that this message is the essence of **Win / Win**



**State Adjutant  
Carl Karnish**

# A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

On behalf of our Department, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the Posts that have sent in donations for Disaster Relief. We understand all too well the devastation caused by disasters, and it is great to see our Posts come together to support one another during these difficult times.

Please remember that all Posts must file their 990 Forms before November 15th. If your Post is unable to meet this deadline, you must file for an extension by submitting IRS Form 8868 to obtain a 6-month extension. Failure to file the extension by November 15th will result in the 990 being considered late by the IRS.

Additionally, all Posts that own property or buildings should have a copy of the deed on file. This important permanent record should be kept in the Post's files, and the Post Quartermaster should have access to it. If your Post does not have a copy of the deed, you can obtain one by visiting the Parish Clerk of Courts office, provided you have a valid state-issued ID and can demonstrate that you are the Post Quartermaster. As per the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure (Section 218 (5)(b)), the Post Quartermaster is the custodian of all Post property and funds.

Last, the Department Headquarters will be closed Wednesday, November 27th to Friday, November 29th for the Thanksgiving Holidays. We will reopen on Monday, December 2nd.

I hope you all enjoy the Holiday Season.



**State Quartermaster  
Elvin Ray Bass**

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

Comrades, as October is now behind us and we move closer to the holiday season, please keep all of our Brothers and Sisters in you thoughts. This is the most difficult time of the year for many people and our family isn't immune to this. We need to reach out and do BUDDY CHECKS on those members and friends that we don't see or hear from regularly. That could be the one thing that keeps them from making a terrible decision this holiday season.

This is also the beginning of flu season. So, if you are of a mind to, get vaccinated. But just as important, eat healthy and get some exercise. Healthy folks are WAY less susceptible to getting sick. You can always get free vaccinations from the VA...

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.



**State Surgeon  
Lawrence Koons**

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

You know after I was medically retired a few years ago from the military I did a lot of reflection on my 26.5 years in uniform. I like many of you have a lot of memories from my time in uniform. Over my career I moved from the person who took care of almost every menial task to a Platoon Sergeant, who also often did those same menial tasks while handing pay, schools, drill management, and soldiers issues that popped up. At every level you can't wait to get to the next level, thinking it would be that much better

Our VFW paths aren't that much different than my military one was, Working bingo instead of military drilling, a lot of meetings, reports, getting beat up from higher ups about things you did or didn't, and working your members problems that arise. In both the military and VFW always remember that when others stopping coming to you with issues often times you failed as a leader. And to always confide in others because both are team efforts. Hope all good for each of you and remember that I as your State Chaplain am always one of those people you can confide in.



**State Chaplain  
David Fields**

# COMMITTEEMAN'S CORNER

November is here and hopefully all of you have done your civic duty and voted for the candidate of your choice to lead our great nation. As members of the veteran community, we hold a very large and strong position in the election of our countries leaders. Do your part and vote.

As November 11th quickly approaches reach out to your community leaders and get involved in the many Veterans Day Celebrations that will be held around our state. What better way to recruit members than being out representing the VFW spreading the word about the many accomplishments that your Post has done within your community. Take advantage of the opportunities afforded to your Post and make the most of it.

On October 8th, CIC Lipphardt and AG West signed the order to cancel Post 12226's Charter. This issue has been resolved and the By-Laws Committee have been instructed to look over the eligibility of members to prevent this from happening again.

Our Department has sent monetary donations to the states affected by the recent hurricanes, to help rebuild our Relief Fund within the Department see if your Post can donate to the Louisiana VFW Relief Fund and send all donations to our Department QM. Let us work together to replenish the funds we sent to the states that have supported us in the past.

As we approach the Holiday Season, take time to contact those members you have not heard from in a while and make sure they are doing ok. Do not just wait until it is time to collect dues to contact your members, do it on a regular basis. Until next month, let's continue to renew, reinstate and recruit members into the Department of Louisiana VFW.

Robert "Bobby" Lovergne  
Louisiana Council Member

# Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Louisiana Legislative Report OCTOBER 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.

## October 7th:

**VFW National Capital Region Open House:** Members from VFW Departments of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia met with staff from National Legislative Service and National Veterans Service at the VFW Memorial Building to discuss the latest legislative and benefits initiatives. Speakers included VFW Junior Vice Commander Tim Peters and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. Attendees shared plans to encourage more collaboration and participation in volunteer opportunities in and around the nation's capital. [Learn more](#) about our grassroots advocacy.

**Vietnam Dustoff Crews to Receive Congressional Gold Medal:** President Biden has signed the Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act into law. Long sought by advocates, this legislation recognizes the pilots, crew chiefs, and medics who served honorably during the Vietnam War aboard helicopter air ambulances. The honor is collectively awarded to the more than 3,000 service members who flew between combat zones and field hospitals. Plans for the official Congressional Gold Medal presentation ceremony are under way and will be announced by the White House. [Read more.](#)

**VA to Review Possible Toxic Exposure and Kidney Cancer Connection:** In the first step of the presumption of exposure process, VA will assess scientific literature and historical claims data to determine if an association exists between per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) exposure and kidney cancer, potentially streamlining the VA disability claims process for PFAS-exposed veterans. These synthetic chemicals are found in many common products including clothing, non-stick cookware, and adhesives. They are also a major ingredient in aviation fire-fighting foams. [Read more.](#) learn more about [toxic exposures](#), or locate an [accredited representative](#) for help in filing a claim.

## October 14th:

**VFW Answers Call for Hurricane Relief:** As Hurricane Helene relief efforts continue in North Carolina and other impacted regions, the VFW is now taking action to provide aid to veterans, service members, and military families in Florida following Hurricane Milton. "My deepest gratitude goes out to all VFW and Auxiliary members, and our supporters for the time, supplies, financial contributions, and forward efforts in assisting those whose lives were suddenly thrust into devastation and despair in the wake of these natural disasters," said VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt. To support the VFW Disaster Relief Fund, you may donate [online](#) or mail checks payable to the VFW and earmarked "Disaster Relief" to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation Disaster Relief, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

**VFW at Military Influencers Conference:** VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt shared the VFW's message of veteran assistance and advocacy at the 2024 Military Influencers Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This conference gathers industry leaders, transitioning service members, and entrepreneurs connected to the military and veterans' communities. The VFW announced it will soon be including one of the world's most popular social media platforms as part of an overall social media strategy. "Look for some great things coming from VFW and TikTok!," Lipphardt said. "Stay tuned!"

**DOD Health Care Supplement Pilot Program:** The Department of Defense (DOD) has announced a one-year pilot program for DOD civilian employees serving in Japan to provide no-cost supplemental health support services. This program is expected to begin on Jan. 1, 2025, and will help enhance the patient care of approximately 11,000 civilians. Employees must be enrolled in a participating health plan through the Federal Employees Health Benefits program to be eligible. Open enrollment season runs this year from Nov. 11 through Dec. 9. [Read more.](#)

**New VA Character of Discharge Regulation:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is implementing a new regulation pertaining to character of discharge determinations that will allow more former service members to qualify for VA benefits regardless of discharge type. Generally, a former service member must have a discharge under honorable conditions. Though VA cannot change the status of a DOD military discharge, it will review less than honorable discharges for benefits eligibility. VA encourages former service members to whom it previously issued a negative character of discharge determination to reapply under the new regulation using a [VA Form 21-0995](#), Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. [Contact an accredited service representative](#) for more information.

## October 21st:

**Tell Congress to Include VFW Priority:** As we speak, the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933, TAP Promotion Act, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the TAP Promotion Act in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.

**VFW Junior Vice Commander Conference:** The VFW held its annual three-day foundational training conference in Kansas City, Mo., to prepare Department Junior Vice Commanders for their command year. Attendees received briefings from various business lines of the organization. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan provided information about the VFW's current legislative priorities and how to encourage participation from our members. A primary recommendation is to stay informed about legislative activism through the VFW Action Corps Weekly and periodic Action Alerts. [Take action](#) on the latest alert!

**Legislators Urge VA to Evaluate Radiation Exposure at K2:** In a recent letter to VA Secretary Denis McDonough, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jon Tester, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Mark Takano, and Senator Richard Blumenthal are urging evaluation of the effects of radiation exposure on veterans who served at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base in Uzbekistan. The legislators wrote, "Veterans who served at K-2 are suffering from adverse health conditions at high rates. That is why Congress included Uzbekistan in the list of locations where veterans are presumed to be exposed to hazardous airborne toxins," and they "...respectfully request VA utilize its authority under the PACT Act to ensure those harmed by radiation exposure at K-2 are provided the health care and benefits they have earned." Read the letter [here](#) or [learn more](#) about the PACT Act.

**Defense Department to Restore Honorable Discharges:** Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced that a review of military records this past year has resulted in more than 800 service members who were administratively separated under the since repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy now having honorable discharges. Veterans who leave the military without honorable discharges usually suffer some loss of eligibility for VA benefits, including educational and health care. Any veteran discharged due to sexual orientation is eligible to apply for a review to potentially have the status upgraded. [Read more](#)

## October 28th:

**New VFW Health Care Survey:** The VFW has developed a new survey to evaluate your health and your experiences navigating health care. Your feedback is vital to our advocacy efforts and to compile a report on this important topic. Help the VFW hold VA and Congress accountable by taking this short survey no matter where you receive care. **Take the survey here:** <https://www.research.net/r/FYJ2PLT>

**VFW, SVA Announce 2024/2025 Student Veteran Fellowship Class:** The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) have selected six student veterans for the 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. In its 11th year, the fellowship is an academic experience during which students advocate for a policy proposal that addresses a legislative issue important to both organizations. The issue of focus for this class is parity of GI Bill benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve. The fellows have the opportunity to attend SVA's National Conference in January and the VFW's Washington Conference in March. The 2024/2025 legislative fellows are: Jose Ayon, Army veteran, University of Southern California -- Jennifer Ross, Air Force veteran, Cornell University -- Noah Sorseth, Army veteran, George Fox University -- Casey Stege, Army veteran, Baylor University -- Terry Traylor, Marine Corps veteran, North Dakota State University -- Polina Washington, Army veteran, The University of Texas at Austin

**President Signs Veteran Education Bill Into Law:** President Biden has signed VFW-supported [S.656](#), Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023, into law. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan provided testimony on this legislation to both the [House](#) and [Senate](#). To address the nationwide shortage of commercial truck drivers, this law will reduce unnecessary red tape and allow veterans to use their GI Bill benefits at more commercial driver license (CDL) schools. Prior to now, certain for-profit CDL schools with programs already approved by VA were restricted from accepting the GI Bill at newly established branches for a period of up to two years. Allowing new branches of VA-approved schools to receive education benefits will ensure veterans can attend these programs as soon as they are offered. [Read more](#).

**In Case You Missed It:** The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933, TAP Promotion Act, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the TAP Promotion Act in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.

**VA Expands Gravesite Benefit:** An outer burial receptacle (OBR) is typically placed in a gravesite before a casket is lowered. This contributes to safe and well-maintained cemeteries by preventing the sinking of headstones and the surrounding soil. VA already furnishes OBRs for casketed burials in national cemeteries, but beginning on Nov. 9, 2024, it will implement a new authority to provide OBRs in VA grant-funded cemeteries. Eligible beneficiaries may apply for a monetary allowance for OBRs that are privately purchased or provided by a grant-funded cemetery if the OBR is placed at the time of interment. [Read more](#)

**Korean War MIA Milestone:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) marked the identification of the 700th missing personnel from the Korean War. The achievement is a significant milestone for the agency which has increased identifications through several strategic initiatives including technological and process improvements, the use of multi-disciplinary teams, DNA analysis, and prioritizing the disinterment of remains of service members buried as "unknowns" in cemeteries. In the first quarter of 2024, DPAA identified 21 individuals, including 17 from World War II, three from the Korean War, and one from the Vietnam War. [Read more](#)

**Respectfully,**

**Matthew J. West**

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

# 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.

# Veteran's Day Events around the State

## **Saturday, Nov. 2**

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Community Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Nov. 2, 6-10 a.m.

The Grand Church

205 First Ave., Kinder, LA 70648

Veterans Day Celebration

Saturday, Nov. 2 at 9:30 a.m.

Mt. Zion #2 Missionary Baptist Church

113 California Plant Road, Dubach, LA 71235

## **Sunday, Nov. 3**

25<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Celebration

Sunday, Nov. 3, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.

East Beauregard High School Football Stadium

5364 Highway 113, DeRidder, LA 70634

7 a.m. memorial service, 1:15 p.m. ceremony

Guest Speaker: Brig. Gen. Jason A. Curl, Commanding General of JRTC and Fort Johnson

## **Wednesday, Nov. 6**

Veterans Field Day

Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 1:30 p.m.

Northwest Louisiana Veterans Home

3130 Arthur Ray Teague Parkway, Bossier City, LA 71112

## **Thursday, Nov. 7**

Veterans Day Program

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 10 a.m.

Louisiana Veterans Home

4739 Highway 10, Jackson, LA 70748

Veterans Day Parade and Program

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 10 a.m.

Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home

4080 W. Airline Highway, Reserve, LA 70084

Line up 9 a.m. at Regala Gym, parade 10 a.m., program to follow parade

Grand Marshal and Guest Speaker: St. James Parish Sheriff Claude Louis Jr., Air Force veteran and son of SELVH resident Claude Louis Sr.

Hats Off to Veterans Luncheon

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 11:30 a.m.

Yambilee Building

1939 Highway 190 West, Opelousas, LA 70570

Guest Speaker: LDVA Deputy Secretary Jerome Buller

**Friday, Nov. 8**

Flag Placement

Friday, Nov. 8 at 10 a.m.

Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home  
2413 Highway 425, Rayville, LA 71269

Veterans Day Program

Friday, Nov. 8 at 10:30 a.m.

CedarGrove Affirms Real Effort Neighborhood Association Inc. (CARE)  
7931 Thornhill Ave., Shreveport, LA 71106  
Luncheon and program

City of Ruston Veterans Day Ceremony

Friday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m.

2001 Champions Way, Ruston, LA 71270

Gerstner Field Memorial Dedication

Friday, Nov. 8 at 1 p.m.

Veterans Memorial Park

West Pryce St., Lake Charles, LA 70601

Event commemorates the role of Gerstner Field and training of fighter pilots during World War I

Veterans Day Ceremony

Friday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m.

Fletcher Technical Community College  
1407 Highway 311, Schriever, LA 70395

Guest Speaker: LDVA Secretary Charlton Meginley

**Saturday, Nov. 9**

Veterans Program

Saturday, Nov. 9 at 9 a.m.

Veterans Memorial Park

54042 Dollar Road, Franklinton, LA 70438

Veterans Day Parade

Saturday, Nov. 9 at 10 a.m.

8 a.m. line up at Walker High School  
12646 Burgess Ave., Walker, LA 70785

Registration deadline Monday, Nov. 4

Free meal for veterans, spouses and parade participants provided, but must RSVP to  
225.274.5800 or [samcaruso488@gmail.com](mailto:samcaruso488@gmail.com)

Military Appreciation Football Game

Saturday, Nov. 9 at 6 p.m.

Southeastern Louisiana University's Strawberry Stadium  
Ned McGehee Drive, Hammond, LA 70401

Tickets 50% for all military

Caddo Parish Veterans Honor Ceremony  
Saturday, Nov. 9 at 5 p.m.  
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium  
705 Grand Ave., Shreveport, LA 71101  
For more information call 318.773.2654 or  
email [veteranscelebrationcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:veteranscelebrationcommittee@gmail.com)

MAFC Veterans Outreach Event  
Saturday, Nov. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Lake Charles Event Center  
900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601

SWLA Veterans Association Family Day BBQ  
Saturday, Nov. 9, 2-4 p.m.  
Crying Eagle Brewery  
1165 E. McNeese St., Lake Charles, LA 70607

Shriners' Annual Veterans Appreciation Breakfast  
Saturday, Nov. 9, 8-9 a.m.  
St. Luke Community Center  
300 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Thibodaux, LA 70301  
Guest Speaker: LDVA Secretary Charlton Meginley

**Sunday, Nov. 10**

Ruck & Run for Heroes  
Sunday, Nov. 10 at 7 a.m.  
Youngsville Veterans Park  
2514 E. Milton Young Ave., Youngsville, LA 70592  
Cost for race only; parking next door or across street from park  
Speakers: Youngsville Mayor Ken Ritter, VFW Youngsville Commander, Acadiana Veteran Alliance Founder Andrew Ward)

Veterans Ceremony  
Sunday, Nov. 10 at 2 p.m.  
Baton Rouge National Cemetery  
220 N. 19<sup>th</sup> St., Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Caddo Parish Veterans Parade  
Sunday, Nov. 10 at 2 p.m.  
Louisiana State Fairgrounds  
3701 Hudson Ave., Shreveport, LA 71109  
Grand Marshal: Sam Archie Mattox, 105-year-old World War II Army veteran  
For more information call 318.773.2654 or  
email [veteranscelebrationcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:veteranscelebrationcommittee@gmail.com)

## **Monday, Nov. 11**

Veterans Appreciation Day

Monday, Nov. 11, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

Causeway Bar and Grill

2800 N. Causeway Blvd., Metairie, LA 70002

\$5 plate of red beans and rice, while supplies last or 50% off entire bill

Bossier Parish Community College Field of Flags

Monday, Nov. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Bossier Parish Community College

6220 E. Texas St., Bossier City, LA 71111

Field of Flags behind Building A

Guest Speaker: LDVA Secretary Charlton Meginley

Pelicans Veterans Appreciation Day

Monday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m.

Smoothie King Center

1501 Dave Dixon Drive, New Orleans, LA 70113

Includes Pelicans challenge coin, \$5 food voucher and VIP pregame warm ups experience (limited to first 200 tickets; purchase military discounted tickets at <https://pels.group/Military>)

Natchitoches Veterans Day Program

Monday, Nov. 11 at 4 p.m.

Natchitoches Parish Veterans and Memorial Park

622 Second St., Natchitoches, LA 71457

Veterans Day Ceremony

Monday, Nov. 11 at 9 a.m.

Southeastern Louisiana University's War Memorial Student Union Flagpole

303 Union Ave., Hammond, LA 70402

RSVP to [veterans@southeastern.edu](mailto:veterans@southeastern.edu)

Veterans Day Concert

Monday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m.

Southeastern Louisiana University's Pottle Auditorium

548 Western Ave., Hammond, LA 70401

RSVP to [veterans@southeastern.edu](mailto:veterans@southeastern.edu)

Military Appreciation Women's Basketball Game

Friday, Nov. 15 at 6 p.m.

Southeastern Louisiana University's University Center

800 W. University Ave., Hammond, LA 70402

MAFC Veterans Day Program

Monday, Nov. 11 at 10 a.m.

Veterans Memorial Park

West Pryce St., Lake Charles, LA 70601

Guest Speaker: Commander Elizabeth Newton, USCG

Groundbreaking for the Louisiana Vietnam Veterans Memorial following ceremony

Iberville Parish Veterans Day Ceremony  
Monday, Nov. 11, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Iberville Veterans Memorial  
Corner of Railroad Avenue and Court Street, Plaquemine, La.

Veterans Day Assembly  
Monday, Nov. 11 at 9:30 a.m.  
Bossier Parish Community College's The Quad  
6220 E. Texas St., Bossier City, LA 71111  
Guest Speaker: LDVA Secretary Charlton Meginley

Veterans Day Ceremony  
Monday, Nov. 11, 11 a.m.-noon  
Louisiana State University Shreveport  
One University Place, Shreveport, LA 71115

**[Click here to view a list of Restaurants that are offering specials for Veterans this Veterans Day!](#)**

★★★★★  
**VETERAN'S DAY  
PARADE**

REMEMBER & HONOR

Saturday, November 9, 10am

Line Up: 8am, Walker High School, 12646 Burgess Ave



Registration by Monday, November 4th

No fee, American themed

Free Meal for Veterans, spouses, parade participants provided.

RSVP FOR MEAL.

*Meal provided by Swamp Donkeys Cooking Team.*

*Live music provided by 5 String Along Boys*

Walker Community Center

30225 Corbin Ave

Contact:

Sam Caruso 225.274.5800

SamCaruso488@gmail.com



**Golf Tournament sponsored by  
Post 3337 in LaPlace  
November 14th**

**Walker Veteran's Day Parade  
November 9th**



LAPLACE VFW POST 3337

**VETERANS DAY  
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**BELLE TERRE COUNTRY CLUB  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024**

111 Fairway Dr, LaPlace, LA 70068

7:00 AM REGISTRATION

8:00 AM SHOTGUN START

QUESTIONS OR SPONSOR DONATIONS CONTACT

Ray Bass (504) 273-3622 or Wesley Mitchel (985) 788-8807

**YOUR SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

**Does your Post have an upcoming event that you would like to  
feature in our monthly Mail Call? Email a flyer of your event to  
State Adjutant, Carl Karnish - [adj@vfwdeptla.org](mailto:adj@vfwdeptla.org)**



# Learn the skills. Help save a life.

**Suicide is preventable. Anyone can make a difference.**

- Two-day workshop in suicide intervention skills
- Learn and practice a life-saving intervention model
- Widely used by professionals and the general public

| Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training for Everyone 16+

Where: VFW Post 3619    Time: Day 1 - 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
1115 Hwy 27                      Day 2 - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
DeRidder, La

When: December 5-6, 2024

Cost: FREE (Must attend both full days)

REGISTER and more information: [SAVECENLA.COM](http://SAVECENLA.COM)  
Inquire: 337-519-1888; 337-288-0973

ASIST works. Learn more and see the evidence at [www.livingworks.net/asist](http://www.livingworks.net/asist)

