

# Mail Call

## Department of Louisiana



September 2024 | Issue 3

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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Patriot’s Day**  
September 11, 2024

**POW-MIA Recognition Day**  
September 20, 2024

**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!**

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

*“Generations Continuing to Serve”*

# DISTRICT MEETINGS

## DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

<b>Feb 22, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3750</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon
<b>April 26, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3267</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

<b>Jan 11, 2025</b>	<b>Post 4222</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Joint Meeting	10:00 am
Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch(\$8)	12:00noon
<b>April 26, 2025</b>	<b>Post 4222</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Joint Meeting	10:00 am
Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch(\$8)	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

<b>Feb 15, 2025</b>	<b>Post 1982</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch(\$8)	12:00noon
<b>May 3, 2025</b>	<b>Post 9822</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch(\$8)	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

<b>Nov 2, 2024</b>	<b>Post 3106</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon
<b>April 12, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3619</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

<b>Nov 9, 2024</b>	<b>Post 2483</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch(\$10)	12:00noon
<b>May 17, 2025</b>	<b>Post 6720</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch(\$10)	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

<b>Sept 14, 2024</b>	<b>Post 4224</b>
<b>State Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish</b>	
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon
<b>Jan 18, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3785</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon
<b>April 12, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3784</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

<b>Oct 26, 2024</b>	<b>Post 8720</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	11:00 am
<b>Feb 15, 2025</b>	<b>Post 5735</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	11:00 am
<b>April 26, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3652</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch	11:00 am

## DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

<b>Sept 14, 2024</b>	<b>Post 1736</b>
<b>State Rep, JPC, Ron Delaney</b>	
Registration	10:00 am
Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon
<b>Feb 15, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3139</b>
Registration	10:00 am
Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon
<b>May 3, 2025</b>	<b>Post 7643</b>
Registration	10:00 am
Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

<b>Jan 18, 2025</b>	<b>Post 3615</b>
Registration	9:30 am
Meeting	11:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon
<b>May 10, 2025</b>	<b>Post 1809</b>
Registration	9:30 am
Meeting	11:00 am
Lunch	12:00noon

## DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

<b>Sept 14, 2024</b>	<b>Post 5187</b>
<b>State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends</b>	
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch (\$7)	12:00noon
<b>Jan 11, 2025</b>	<b>Post 4588</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon
<b>April 12, 2025</b>	<b>Post 5951</b>
Registration	9:00 am
Meeting	10:00 am
Lunch (\$10)	12:00noon

## What is Action Corps?

The VFW Action Corps is our National grassroots advocacy network comprised of more than 300,000 VFW Members and patriotic supporters of Veterans. This group stays up to date on the issues facing our veterans, our military and their families, standing ready to email, write, call and visit our nation's lawmakers to make their voices heard. The VFW Action Corps is free and open to all patriotic Americans who care about the military and veterans' communities,

**Join the VFW Action Corps Today** and add your voice to the thousands of veterans' advocates making a difference every day!

**TEXT: VFW TO 50457**

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

Visit <https://vfwtn.org/default.asp?pid=136221> for Hotel and Registration information!

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

**Hotel Reservations can be made by contacting the hotel directly.**

Bentley Hotel- 318-442-2226  
Holiday Inn- 318-541-8333

Banquet Ticket and Registration Form is available on the Department's Website.

**MW Registration Online**  
<https://form.jotform.com/242045300329041>

**MW Banquet Tickets**  
<https://form.jotform.com/82535660581157>

**\*\*We will have a group tour of The Bentley Hotel on the Friday of Mid Winter Conference for those that would like to attend**

## BEWARE OF CLAIM SHARKS!

Recently, a VFW Post was approached by a company offering to conduct a VA Claims Clinic at their location, including a proposal to pay for the hall rental. At first glance, this seemed like a beneficial opportunity for both veterans seeking assistance with their claims and the Post itself, which would gain rental income.

However, it was later discovered that this event was sponsored and coordinated by a known "Claim Shark." It is imperative that any company claiming to assist with VA claims be thoroughly vetted through your Department Service Officer (DSO) or their staff, or National Veterans Service (NVS). We cannot permit these companies to exploit our space to take advantage of veterans and their hard-earned benefits.

The VFW has taken significant measures to combat these predatory claims companies and their illegal practices. Many of you have joined in this fight at the state and federal level, and I thank you for your vigilance and your efforts.

We also understand that some within our ranks may disagree with this stance. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand and adhere to the organization's strategies and positions: These are illegal practices that prey on veterans and their families and must be stopped.

Allowing such companies to operate on our premises directly contradicts the resolutions of our organization, as approved through the National Convention by an overwhelming majority of convention delegates just two weeks ago. If you or your staff are approached with such an offer, please contact your Department Service Officer to verify that you are not inadvertently "feeding the sharks."

We all understand that these companies are trying to be clever in presenting their illicit services as a flashy and viable path for veterans. Make no mistake, they only see veterans as dollar signs, and it is our responsibility to stop them. We cannot under any circumstance let these companies normalize or legalize the financial exploitation of veterans, caregivers, and survivors.

Your Department Service Officer and their staff have access to resources to help veterans affected by these companies and their illegal practices. Please ensure any requests to assist with VA benefits at your post or events are properly vetted through your DSO or NVS staff.



## State Commander's Membership Challenge for SEPTEMBER

Whoever signs up the most new or reinstated members between 9/1/2024 and 9/30/2024 will win a Mahogany wood full size replica M16 with VFW

## State Commander's Membership Challenge Winner for the month of AUGUST

The winner of the genuine Louisville Slugger with the VFW 125th Logo!



## 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.

**September's winners will receive a 4'x6' VFW floor mat to welcome visitors and members into the Post.**

## 2024-25 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE!

The 2024-25 Membership Program has updates, the newest version dated Aug. 26, 2024, is available online at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2024-25 VFW National

## Membership Monday Webinar via Zoom

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Sept. 9, 2024, at 2:00 PM, CDT, VFW National Membership will cover how to understand the numbers when it comes to reading membership statistics and reports.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1156603678773954/?ref=newsfeed>

**THE DEPARTMENT IS NOW ON  
FACEBOOK, PLEASE GO LIKE OUR PAGE TO BE  
UPDATED WITH IMPORTANT INFORMATION!**

[www.facebook.com/vfwdeptla](http://www.facebook.com/vfwdeptla)



### **Future National Convention Dates:**

<b>August 9-14, 2025</b> Columbus, OH	<b>Aug 15-20, 2026</b> Salt Lake City, UT
<b>July 31-Aug 4, 2027</b> Milwaukee, WI	<b>Aug 5-10, 2028</b> 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

#### **State Adjutant**

Carl Karnish  
Email: adj@vfwdeptla.org

#### **State Administrative Assistant:**

Tori LeBlanc  
Email: lastatevfw@yahoo.com

#### **State Commander:**

Debbie McElhannon  
Email: debbiemc4vets@gmail.com

## **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)!**

## **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

# General Orders

## 2024-2025 Series No. 1

**Attention Post Commanders:** All general orders should be read at your meetings and filed in post files for future references. General Orders will also be on the Department website at [www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org).

1. Having been elected Commander, VFW Department of Louisiana and having been installed in office in accordance with the Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I hereby assume command.

2. The following officers have been duly elected and installed by the 93rd Department Convention and will be accorded the recognition due them:

Senior Vice Commander	James Prestenback, Post 3665, Raceland, LA
Junior Vice Commander	Sharee Arends, Post 5951, Bossier City, LA
Quartermaster	Ray Bass, Post 3337, LaPlace, LA
Chaplain	David Fields, Post 5951, Bossier City, LA
Judge Advocate General	Aaron Lawrence, Post 3615, Ruston, LA
Surgeon	Larry Koons, Post 3619, Deridder, LA
Jr Past State Commander	Ron Delaney, Post 4588, Bossier City, LA

3. All previous appointments having expired are declared null and void.

4. The following appointments are hereby announced:

Adjutant	Carl Karnish, Post 7017, Denham Springs, LA
Chief of Staff	Max Arends III, Post 5951, Bossier City, LA
Inspector	Phillip Gallet, Post 9210, Youngsville, LA
Sergeant-at-Arms	Randy Campbell, Post 4588, Bossier City, LA

5. **Proof of Eligibility:** Failure or refusal to submit proof of eligibility within 60 days of election or appointment shall result in the office being declared vacant. Post officers are reminded to check files on proof. ***Proof of Eligibility will be checked by the end of Nov!***

6. **Taxes:** An annual income tax return (Form 990 or 990-T) is required for each Post exempt from tax under Section 501 (c) of the code. If \$25,000 or less the Internal Revenue Service requests only the heading on page 1 be completed, being sure to check Box B, and send it to the IRS center in your area. This must be filed on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the fifth month after the end of the Dept's Fiscal Yr.

7. **Articles Of Incorporation:** Posts must have Articles on file with the Secretary of State are reminded that they have must file the annual report each year. If a Post **fails** to file, the Annual Report and pay the \$10.00 fee -- the Post Article of Incorporation become INACTIVE and Post must **reactivate** the Article of Incorporation at a fee of around \$75.00.

**8. Resolutions:** Are proposed and approved by a Post then by District before being forwarded to the Department thirty days prior to State Convention for delegate action.

**9. All American Dashboard Now Known As The “Program Dashboard”:** Post Adjutants should have access to the National Program Dashboard by logging in at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Post Adjutants should receive all Program Information from Chairman within the Post and enter the information in the National Program Dashboard. Once the Post Adjutant enters this information, it must be approved by the District Adjutant.

**BY COMMAND OF:**

Debbie McElhannon  
State Commander

**OFFICIAL:**

  
Carl Karnish  
State Adjutant

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

August has ended and it was an honor representing the VFW Department of LA in Louisville, KY for National Convention and the National CIC, Al Lipphardt's homecoming in Savannah, GA. Savannah was beautiful and so worth visiting if you ever get the chance. We also had our Department School of Instruction (SOI) in conjunction with the Council of Administration and now districts are holding their SOI. I hope everyone learned something during our SOI. We plan on improving the instruction each year and either having or posting online training to help our posts and districts succeed. Let us know if you would like assistance with training or would like to hold any training events.

It's Fall y'all; that means cooler weather and school programs. Hopefully, posts have shared the VFW school programs, Americanism, Patriot Pen (PP) and Voice of Democracy (VOD) with the schools and home schools in your area. As a reminder, all districts must submit PP and VOD entries via Scholars App this year. Any post that would like to put entries on Scholars App, contact Carl Karnish at [adj@vfwdeptla.org](mailto:adj@vfwdeptla.org). The good thing about the Scholars App is that students can find many scholarships available to them.



**State Commander  
Debbie McElhannon**

Fall also brings annual festivals and fairs. What a great opportunity to set up a booth and recruit. Many events will allow you to set up a booth free of charge. The State Fair of Louisiana in Shreveport, LA is 30 October to 17 November. I asked Don Reber, our membership chairman, to work on setting up a booth. If you are available to help any of those days, please let us know. This will take many people to accomplish. Why is membership important? We have strength in numbers; we have a voice in Washington D.C. because of the number of comrades and Auxiliary that we have in this organization. To continue having that voice, to fight for the rights of veterans, we must keep our numbers high. You can find this month's recruiting incentive award further in this Mail Call. This month's Top Recruiter and winner of the 125th Anniversary Louisville Slugger will be announced when OMS comes back online.

September brings many Remembrance days. Patriot Day on Sept 11 to remember 911. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is commemorated on the 3rd Friday of September which is 20 Sept this year. The Last Sunday in September is Gold Star Mother's Day, and we recognize the families of our fallen.

Most importantly, check on your post member, do buddy checks. We lose too many veterans to suicide, and we must continue to work to stop veteran suicide. September is suicide awareness prevention month. I challenge each District and post to host an event or post awareness about suicide prevention. Learn the 5 signs. The VFW Riders host Operation Daily Battle each September to provide members the skills to recognize a person in distress and get them help. This year ODB is 13-15 Sept. in Lawton, OK.

If you need help with anything, call or email. Remember to send an invite if you would like me to attend any of your events. Thank you for what you do for veterans. Keep up the good work and I look forward to seeing you soon. Have a great month!



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

Comrades,

I would like to thank all those who made our Counsel of Administration/ School of Instruction a great success. It takes a total team effort to plan and execute any state function. All Post and District Commanders were given a packet at the CoA with the Leaders Book and training information. Please utilize the training you received at the CoA at your upcoming District School of Instruction. I want your Posts and Districts to succeed, so please feel free to reach out by phone, text or email if you have any questions or need any help.

I challenge all Posts and Districts to strive for All American and All State. It shows that your Posts and/or Districts are meeting all National and Department guidelines in membership and implementation of VFW programs. It also gives your Posts and/or District a sense of pride. Recruit, Educate and Mentor!

I am looking forward to attending District meetings and assisting in any way possible. Thank you for being a part of this Great Organization. Let's have a great year Louisiana!



**Sr. Vice Commander  
James Prestenback**

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

Greetings Comrades,

We are still doing outstanding in Membership, keep up the splendid work! It was a pleasure to see everyone at the C of A, it was a great turnout and excellent training!

District meetings have started and are in full swing! Make sure you are doing what is directed in the bylaws. Make sure you also have checked and verified that your officers are in good standing and are validated members of the VFW.

I hope everyone has had the chance to get their programs out into the schools so that we may have an opportunity to present the kids with prizes and hopefully send them to National for scholarships!

Always remember to uphold professionalism within your Post, District, and the Department. As stated at the beginning of every meeting, "Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations."

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....

## Do you have a Vision for your Post and/or District

Last month I talked about Growing Your Post. As members of a post every one of us is responsible for growing our Post. Sharing what VFW has to offer new members and being proactive by sharing the success of your post is essential to growing the Post.

As a commander and member of a post you need to ask yourself what is the vision of our Post? What are we planning on doing to help veterans and the community we live in? What can I do to get the VFW message out to the world? All these questions require you to visualize what are your capabilities, who in your Post has the unique talents to get a function done, what resources are required and how do we achieve the result?

Having a vision for your Post and setting up a plan will help create your destiny and ensure a future for your Post. Developing a 1yr, 3yr and 5yr plan starts your success. This plan means that you looked into the future, developed a plan and then enacted on that plan. Begin today, to see your Post being All State and All American. Look at the requirements and put a plan in place to achieve both. By achieving All State and All American means that you have met the minimum standards of helping other veterans and growing your Post.



**State Adjutant  
Carl Karnish**

# A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

It's time to ensure your Post's 990 Taxes are being prepared for filing in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The filing deadline is November 15, 2024. If your Post's annual gross receipts normally exceed \$50,000, you must file Form 990 or 990-EZ. If your annual gross receipts are \$50,000 or less, you are required to submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard. Maintaining your Post's active tax-exempt status is crucial for establishing credibility and commitment within our organization.

Additionally, Post should verify that the annual filing with the Secretary of State has been completed, and update the listed officers and registered agent if needed. It's important not to let your Articles of Incorporation filed with the Secretary of State become inactive.

We will host a Post Quartermaster Zoom Conference on Saturday, September 7th at 4:00 p.m. All Post Quartermasters will receive an email inviting them to attend. It will be an informal meeting, so if you have any questions please join us.



**State Quartermaster  
Elvin Ray Bass**

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



**State Surgeon  
Lawrence Koons**

Comrades, September is National Recovery Month. This could be for mental health or anything else that you or a Brother or Sister are recovering from. Please keep watching out for each other during the end of summer and the beginning of colder weather (hopefully). If you would like to have a Blood Drive at your Post, our partner organization is Life Share. They are easy to find and contact, and they will work with you to set this up almost anywhere you would like. Don't think you have to limit this to your post, you can combine it with a recruiting event or even a Buddy Poppy Drive. Talk about knocking out multiple All-State, All-American events at once! We can expect to have a Blood Drive during our next Conference. I'll be asking for all your support during that as our last drive set a very high benchmark. As always, if you need anything from me, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Although mental health is very important to me, that is not the only thing I'm watching out for. We need to remember to take care of our physical wellness as well. If it has been a while since you have had a check-up, please set up an appointment with your Primary Care Provider. It can give you the peace of mind that you are doing what you need to do to be the best version you can.

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....



**State Chaplain  
David Fields**

Sometimes in life we encounter difficult times, it may be in your direct life, someone in your posts, or A loved ones or friends. Sometimes we try everything we can to get others to realize that there issues in the larger scheme are really that much. Regardless of the situation always remember that your, or there, never alone Members of the military always have an easy time grasping that concept. Heck even the NCO creed states that never will I ask someone else to do anything I wouldn't.

This year the Military order of the Cooties has made suicide awareness one of there important tasks for this year. If you were one of the people that I was able to give one of my dog tags with the VA 811 number on it share it with others. Every time I had to address my platoon or unit after I lost a soldier to suicide I always stressed to never be afraid to reach out to others or ask for help. For so long we taught children the number 911 and what it was used for, here's hoping that eventually they will hold 811 on the same level. 22 a day in to many, 1 even is. Call on me if you need an ear to talk to.

# COMMITTEEMAN'S CORNER

Greetings from your National Council Member, as we enter into September I will be attending the National Council of Administration meeting in Kansas City from September 5-7. This is the meeting where the 2024-2025 Budget will be discussed and approved, ways to streamline operations in the KC Office will be discussed along with reports from all Departments in KC and DC about their programs and plans for this coming year. I have added a few items to the agenda to be discussed about our National Convention and also some issues within the Membership Department that need attention. As you can see it will be a work filled weekend to make sure that our organization is moving forward and not backwards.

Department Commander Debbie McElhannon and myself attended CIC Lipphardt's Homecoming in Savannah, Ga. Had the opportunity to meet with other Councilmembers and Commanders from around the VFW in a laid back weekend, more gets done and many discussions about the way we would like our organization to go during these events. It is always good to discuss ideas and improvements with members from around this nation and overseas.

Keep in mind CIC Lipphardt's goal of 102% for this year, continue to renew, reinstate and recruit new members. When recruiting or reinstating remember to follow the procedures in the Podium Edition and do things the correct way and don't take short cuts, it takes a vote by the Post membership to approve an individual for membership into your Post.

## **Sec. 103 - Election.**

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

An applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the Post Reviewing Committee. With respect to a Department Member-at-Large, the National Organization and/or the Department Headquarters will be responsible for eligibility determination. The original application of every member will be retained on file with the Adjutant.

## **Balloting on Applications.**

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

Until next month keep doing those buddy checks and renewing, recruiting and reinstating members into our organization. Check with your District Commanders for the weekly updates that I send them concerning operations at the KC and DC offices.

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

**August 5th:**

**Highly Decorated Vietnam Veteran Elected to Lead VFW:** Alfred J. “Al” Lipphardt was elected as the new national commander of the VFW at the 125th VFW National Convention held this year in Louisville, Kentucky. “I am deeply humbled to stand before you today having been elected and installed to the highest office of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, commander-in-chief,” said Lipphardt. He earned his VFW eligibility by serving in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, and from 1970 to 1971. In recognition of his heroic service in combat, he received the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Bronze Star with “V” device, Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service, Purple Heart Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Silver Star and two Bronze Stars, among many others. He joined the VFW in 2002 at Post 12002 in North Fulton, Georgia. Read more.

**Elizabeth Dole Act Action Alert:** The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act is a comprehensive package that would provide health care and benefits for veterans, caregivers, and survivors. This package has the support of both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, but Democrats in the House have yet to signal support for this legislation that could provide life-altering and life-saving benefits. This bill is the result of a months-long compromise between various stakeholders and is an example of how Washington, D.C., negotiations should work. Dozens of organizations that advocate on behalf of veterans, caregivers, and survivors support this important legislation, and it deserves bipartisan AND bicameral support. Take action and tell your congressional representative to support the Elizabeth Dole Act.

**August 12th:**

**Applications Now Being Accepted for 2024-2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship:** The application process for the 2024-2025 class of VFW-SVA legislative fellows is now open. VFW members who attend an accredited institute of higher learning will be chosen for the semester-long program that focuses on real policy issues faced by veterans, service members, and their families. The capstone of the program is participation in the 2025 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Alumni of the program have become more active at all levels of the VFW and SVA, and have been instrumental in changing laws to improve care and benefits for veterans. Learn more and apply for the fellowship.

**VA Redesigns Burn Pit Registry:** VA has released a Redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, called AHOBPR 2.0, to better identify and investigate adverse health conditions typically attributed to airborne hazards and burn pits exposure. New

pertaining to presumptive conditions, and deliver targeted proactive and preventive care. Read more about the registry and toxic exposures. Locate an accredited representative for help filing a related claim.

**Apply Now for New VA Graduate Medical Education Program:** VA has launched an online portal for applications to a new pilot program through which it will reimburse salaries and benefits for at least 100 physician residents who rotate to covered health care facilities. For nearly 80 years, VA has impacted the next generation of health professionals with almost 70% of U.S. physicians having trained at VA. “This program will place physician residents where they are needed most, in rural and underserved communities across America. For veterans, this program will make it easier to access the health care they need and deserve,” said VA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer Marjorie Bowman, M.D. Learn more about this new initiative and apply by Sept. 30, 2024.

**Participate in VA Million Veteran Program and Improve Care for All:** When veterans maintain positive relationships, stay physically active, and manage stress, it benefits their overall health. By joining VA’s Million Veteran Program, you can help researchers better understand veterans’ physical and mental health. Learn more about the research findings and join today.

### **August 19th:**

**Housing Program Expands to More Veterans:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has expanded the HUD-Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. When determining eligibility for supportive housing vouchers, VA disability benefits will no longer be considered income. This will enable more veterans to meet the income threshold required for the program. The VFW has been advocating for this change for years and commends HUD for making this adjustment to address veterans’ housing needs. Read more.

**Expanded Benefits Access for Karshi-Khanabad Veterans:** VA has announced that veterans who served after Sept. 11, 2001, at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) base in Uzbekistan should soon receive expanded access to benefits. Taking steps to acknowledge the presence of various contaminants at K2 will enable VA to ensure appropriate health care and compensation for these veterans and their survivors. In comments regarding this expansion, VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs explained, “At VA, our goal is to provide every veteran who served at K2 with the care and benefits that they deserve for their service to our nation — and that’s what this effort is all about.” Read more or find an accredited service officer to assist in filing a claim.

### **August 26th:**

**Grand Opening of VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Hawaii Office:** VFW National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli joined Chief of Force Development at the 647th Force Support Squadron Dr. William Kono, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Commander CAPT Samuel White, and VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Charles Tibbets for the grand opening of the VFW’s newest pre-discharge claims office near Honolulu. If you’re within 180 days of separating from the military, the VFW can help with your VA claim. Learn more.

**Scholarships this Academic Year:** The VFW awarded nearly \$750,000 in scholarship aid from the Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship to 162 student veterans for the upcoming fall semester.

“Veterans’ military experience provides employers with a unique skillset, and when armed with college degrees, veterans become especially invaluable employees,” said VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt. “Sport Clips and the VFW are proud to help ensure our nation’s warriors attain the education needed to further their success in the workforce.” The Help A Hero Scholarship is funded solely through donations from generous Sport Clips team members, clients, individual supporters, and corporate sponsors. Applications for the spring 2025 semester are currently being accepted. Read more and apply now.

**Apply Now for New VA Graduate Medical Education Program:** VA has launched an online portal for applications to a new pilot program through which it will reimburse salaries and benefits for at least 100 physician residents who rotate to covered health care facilities. For nearly 80 years, VA has impacted the next generation of health professionals with almost 70% of U.S. physicians having trained at VA. “This program will place physician residents where they are needed most, in rural and underserved communities across America. For veterans, this program will make it easier to access the health care they need and deserve,” said VA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer Marjorie Bowman, M.D. Learn more about this new initiative and apply by Sept. 30, 2024.

Respectfully,

*Matthew J. West*

Matthew J. West  
VFW, Department of Louisiana  
National Legislative Committee Member  
2020-202

# 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

## STATE COMMANDER DEBBIE MCELHANNON TESTIMONIAL

**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 the District  
Commanders, at Mid-Winter Conference or by calling  
337-324-0670 or 337-515-0811**

# 2024-2025 VFW State Commander, Debbie McElhannon and VFW State Auxiliary President, Ella Barks Wilson's Joint Special Project

Brothers and Sisters in Arms is a non-profit organization that is focused on providing the highest quality trained service dogs to qualified active duty military members, military veterans and first responders at no cost to them. Service dogs make a significant difference in the lives of our veterans and first responders. We work with both group classes and individual training. Group classes help our handlers with integrating back into social environment, learning he or she is not alone, making new friends and working together again with others. Brothers and Sisters in Arms is currently located in Leesville, La. and Mansura, La.

- lower overall symptoms of posttraumatic stress
- lower levels of depression
- higher levels of life satisfaction
- higher overall psychological wellbeing
- lower levels of social isolation and greater ability to participate in social activities
- higher levels of resilience
- higher levels of companionship
- less absenteeism from work due to health among those who were employed



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



# DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



[DontFeedTheSharks.org](http://DontFeedTheSharks.org)

## What we think a "Claim Shark" is:

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

## Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

## Who we think the Claim Sharks are:

- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Trajector Medical      | ➤ Veteran Care Services    |
| ➤ Veteran Benefits Guide | ➤ REE Medical              |
| ➤ Veterans Guardian      | ➤ VA Claims Academy        |
| ➤ VA Claims Insider      | ➤ Vet Assist               |
| ➤ Telemedica             | ➤ Just4Veterans            |
| ➤ Patriot Angels         | ➤ Veterans Disability Help |

## Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

## Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp Lejeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees

**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

# POST EVENTS: GARAGE SALE

Garage Sale at Post 9854  
in Vinton  
September 6th

VFW POST 9854 – HIGHWAY 109 VINTON, LA  
**SNEAK PEAK: Friday, September 6 - Noon – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Saturday, September 7 - 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Furniture, Small appliances Musical/Sound Equipment, Bedding, pictures, Collectibles, Dishes, Flooring, Christmas Items, Clothes, Exercise Equipment (some brand new), Industrial Dehumidifier, port-a-kool, Pack a bag \$10.00 grocery bags (provided) men's shirts and

**Much more**

Several families involved  
SPONSORED BY VFW, VFW AUXILIARY AND  
WAY OF THE CROSS MINISTRIES -  
A CITY OF REFUGE

Food, snacks & drinks available for purchase

For More Information Call: 337-324-0670

Vietnam Wall sponsored by  
Post 7017 in Denham Springs.  
September 11th - 15th

## VIETNAM WALL & COST OF FREEDOM TRIBUTE

**11**  
SEPTEMBER **ESCORT & SET UP**  
Volunteers needed

**12**  
SEPTEMBER **DEDICATION & WREATH**  
Ceremony: 10am to 11:30am

**13**  
SEPTEMBER **QUILT OF VALORS**  
Ceremony: 10am to 11:30am

**14**  
SEPTEMBER **BENEFIT CONCERT**  
James Linden Hogg : 5:30pm, Community Center

**15**  
SEPTEMBER **CHURCH SERVICE**  
10am: In the Wind Ministries, non denomination

FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT:  
225-665-3755  
PARKSANDRECINFO@WALKER-LA.GOV

Sidney Hutchinson Park

**• US MILITARY VETS M/C •**

**POKER RUN FOR VETS**



**STARTS AT TRACKSIDE BAR / ENDING AT DA CRAB TRAP**

FREE BREAKFAST AT TRACKSIDE  
\$10 FOOD PLATES AT DA CRAB TRAP  
50/50 DRAWLING

SEPT 14TH 2024  
REGISTRATION 10AM  
KSU 11AM

PROCEEDS BENEFIT VFW POST 8290  
VETERAN RELIEF FUND

**\$20/30**  
PER RIDER / WITH PASSENGER

QUESTIONS CONTACT  
REAPER 225-614-5833

**Poker Run**  
**All proceeds benefit Post 8290 in**  
**Lacombe**  
**September 14th**

**Turkey Shoot sponsored by Post**  
**2483 in Opelousas.**  
**September 28th**

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2483 and American Legion Post 45

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
**TURKEY SHOOT**



September 28th, 2024  
 Registration 07:30 AM

Fuselier Range Complex  
 301 Ismael Rd.  
 Arnaudville, LA 70512




Four different categories of competition

- ❖ Ages 8-12 .....(Free admission)
- ❖ Ladies course of fire .....-\$25 per person
- ❖ VFW/Am Legion Amateur fire -\$25 per person (Do Not have to be a Vet to participate)
- ❖ Professional series fire .....-\$25 per person

Competition will require .22 caliber long rifles and 100 rounds of ammunition.

- ❖ Loaner rifles will be available. Please check the box on the registration form if you need borrowing a loaner.
- ❖ Ammunition will be available for purchase.

Winner in each category will receive:  
 1<sup>st</sup> place...20lb Turkey  
 2<sup>nd</sup> place...15lb Turkey  
 3<sup>rd</sup> place... 10lb Turkey



All proceeds will go to:  
 VFW Post 2483 and American Legion Post 45 Questions Please contact 337-298-3747 or 337-945-8988.

# Fournet-Manuel VFW Post 12203 INVITATIONAL PISTOL SHOOT OUT

Saturday, October 12, 2024

Location: Lake Charles Gun Club, 6601 Ward Line Rd, Iowa, LA 70647



Registration 0800  
Safety and Rule Briefing 0845  
Competition 0900

**Fund Raiser**  
for  
VFW Post 12203  
Kinder

## 1st Prize

DTS Tactical - Moss Bluff, LA ([www.dtstactical.com](http://www.dtstactical.com))  
H&K PV9 \* (pistol)

## 2nd Prize

Gun Cave - Lake Charles, LA ([www.theguncave.com](http://www.theguncave.com))  
Anderson Manufacturing AR-15 \* (rifle)

## 3rd Prize

Lake Charles Gun Club - Lake Charles, LA ([www.lakecharlesgunclub.net](http://www.lakecharlesgunclub.net))  
1 Year Membership and Concealed Carry Class for Two  
\*\*\*\*Required Background Check to receive 1st and 2nd Prize\*\*\*\*

Competition: The Targets and Shooting Phase descriptions can be found online at:  
[www.3of7project.myshopify.com/collections/all-products](http://www.3of7project.myshopify.com/collections/all-products)

Video description of the Shooting Phases can be found online at:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBFaeEFgBEg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBFaeEFgBEg)

Targets will be provided for the event only.  
Additional activities will be announced the day of the event.

Shooter Groups: The competition is one event,  
open to all shooting groups and classes  
(Male/Female, 18 and above).

For more information  
Please contact James "Jimmy" Anderson  
[jland5266@outlook.com](mailto:jland5266@outlook.com)

## Pistol Shoot sponsored by Post 12203 in Kinder.

### October 12th

## Poker Run sponsored by Post 1809 in Monroe

### November 2nd

Contact Debra Larche  
(318-348-5939) or  
Stepheni LeGuin (318-  
680-5006) for the  
registration form and  
more information



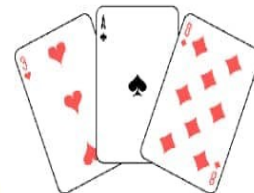
**Pre-registration and waiver release**  
3rd Annual Poker Run Fundraiser  
VFW Post 1809

Warhawk Harley-Davidson  
Monroe, LA

Saturday, November 2, 2024

**Kickstands up at 9:30am. Last bike out at 10:00am**

Rain or shine



Location: Warhawk Harley-Davidson 6200 Frontage Rd, Monroe, LA 71202  
Entertainment: Randy New and the Front Street Band

Join us for a day of fun on our motorcycle ride for the VFW Post 1809. Our mission is to help Veterans and our community. We appreciate everyone's help continuing to provide this service.

**DO NOT NEED A MOTORCYCLE TO PARTICIPATE TRUCKS, CARS, AND JEEPS WELCOME**

Registration is \$25.00 per bike - \$10.00 for the co-rider.

**1st 150 registrants get a free shirt, preregistrants guaranteed choice of size.**

If mailing registration, please pay by check. If paying in person you may use a check or cash. Extra T-shirts will be sold at \$25.00 each. There will be a 50/50 raffle, door prizes, and **everyone gets a free lunch. Lunch at 12:00 until food runs out. Deadline for poker hand turn-in is at 1:00pm. At 1:30 winners will be announcement.**

**1st place winner: \$225 2nd place winner: \$175 3rd place(worst hand): \$125**

**Must be present to win cash prizes! NO EXCEPTIONS**



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

**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)**