



# MAIL CALL



August 2025

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### **National Convention**

August 9-13, 2025  
Columbus, OH

### **Council of Administration School of Training**

August 22-24, 2025  
The Hotel Bentley  
Alexandria LA

### **2025 Southern Conference**

November 7-9, 2025  
Margaritaville Lake Conroe  
Resort  
Montgomery, Texas

### **State Commanders Testimonial**

March 21, 2026  
VFW Post 3665  
127 St. Phillip St.  
Raceland La 70394

*"One Team, One Fight"*

# DISTRICT MEETINGS

## DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

**July 24, 2025 Post 3750**

Registration 5:30 pm

Joint Meeting 6:00 pm

Dinner (\$7) 6:00 pm

**Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback**

**Jan 29, 2026 Post 3750**

Registration 5:30 pm

Joint Meeting 6:00 pm

Dinner (\$7) 6:00 pm

**Apr 23, 2025 Post 3750**

Registration 5:30 pm

Joint Meeting 6:00 pm

Dinner (\$7) 6:00 pm

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

## DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

**Sept 13, 2025 Post 3665**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

**Rep: Surgeon Joseph Dufrene**

**Jan 10, 2026 Post 3665**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

**Apr 25, 2026 Post 3665**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

**Sept 6, 2025 Post 9822**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$8) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque**

**Nov 15, 2025 Post 1982**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$8) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

**May 18, 2026 Post 9822**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$8) 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

**Sept 6, 2025 Post 3619**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

**Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback**

## DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

**Nov 15 2025 Post 2130**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

**Mar 14, 2026 Post 3106**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

**May 2, 2026 Post 3802**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

**Sept 6, 2025 Post 9903**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Oct 25, 2025 Post 2483**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

**May 9, 2026 Post 5153**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

**September 13, 2025 Post 4224**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$7) 12 noon

**Rep: Chief of Staff Jared Nolen**

**January 17, 2026 Post 3693**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$7) 12 noon

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

**April 25, 2026 Post 3785**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$7) 12 noon

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

**September 27, 2025 Post 3652**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12 noon

**Rep: Adj Carl Karnish**

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

**January 17, 2026 Post 8290**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12 noon

**April 25, 2026 Post 8720**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch 12 noon

## DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

**Sept 6, 2025 Post 1736**

Registration 10:00 am

Meeting 10:30 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends**

**Feb 21, 2026 Post 3139**

Registration 10:00 am

Meeting 10:30 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Apr 25, 2026 Post 8852**

Registration 10:00 am

Meeting 10:30 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

**Sept 13, 2025 Post 4317**

Registration 9:30 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback**

**Jan 17, 2026 Post 3615**

Registration 9:30 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**May 16, 2026 Post 1809**

Registration 9:30 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

## DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

**Sept 6, 2025 Post 5187**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**Rep: Judge Advocate Max Arends III**

**Jan 10, 2026 Post 4588**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

**May 9, 2026 Post 5951**

Registration 9:00 am

Meeting 10:00 am

Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon

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

The top recruiter for the month of **July** is **Stephen Guillote** from  
**Post 4158! Congratulations!**

## 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>**

### All American Post Criteria

- At Least 101% in Membership
- Submit Post Election Report
- Must be in Good Standing
- Program Participation Criteria:
  - VOD (1 entry submitted to District)
  - PP (1 entry submitted to District)
  - Donate \$125 to VMS
- Must Participate in the VFW Day of Service
  - Register at *todaysvfw.org/day-of-service*
  - Examples of Service Projects:
    - Gather Food or Supplies
    - Help an elderly or disabled
    - Park or Memorial clean up
    - Volunteer at a local School
- Post must submit a community service report **quarterly** to their Department via Department of Louisiana Web Page under Program Reporting
- Must Purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies

### Congratulations to this Years ALL AMERICAN Post: Those in **Bold** are in Top 15 in Division

District 3

Post 3665, Post 4752, Post 12182

District 4

Post 1982, Post 3793, Post 4158, **Post 9822**,  
Post 12065

District 5

Post 3106, Post 3619, Post 9854

District 7

Post 2483, Post 9903

District 8

**Post 3693**, Post 3785, **Post 4224**, **Post 7017**

District 9

Post 5735, Post 8290, Post 8720

District 10

Post 3139

District 11

**Post 1809**, Post 3615

District 12

Post 2885, Post 4588,, **Post 5187**, **Post 5951**

# Department of Louisiana

## Commanders 90 Day Challenge!

Win \$250 for Your Post and a  
Special Commanders award

Between July 1 and  
September 30, the Post with  
the **highest annual  
membership renewal  
percentage** and the Post  
with the **highest number of  
membership renewals** wins!  
In case of a tie, the winners  
will be determined by the  
most new members.



Get ready to compete!

**Renew now  
and win!**



Exciting prizes

Support your Post

Strengthen our  
community





# STATE COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT



## PROJECT 4 HOPE

Project 4 Hope is a Veterans tiny house community in  
Arcadia, LA.

**GOAL: RAISE \$10,000 TO BUILD A TINY  
HOME FOR VETERANS NAMED AFTER  
VFW DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA**

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE USING THE QR CODE OR  
BY MAILING A CHECK TO VFW DEPT OF LOUISIANA  
HEADQUARTERS: 10185 MAMMOTH AVE., BATON  
ROUGE, LA 70814



### **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@vfwla.net](mailto:adj@vfwla.net)**

### **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!

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

**August 9-14, 2025**

Columbus, OH

**July 31-Aug 4, 2027**

Milwaukee, WI

**July 24-30, 2026**

Reno, NV

**Aug 5-10, 2028**

San Antonio, TX

### **VFW Department of Louisiana Headquarters CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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

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

#### **State Quartermaster**

Elvin R. Bass

Email: [qtm@vfwla.net](mailto:qtm@vfwla.net)

#### **State Adjutant**

Carl Karnish

Email: [adj@vfwla.net](mailto:adj@vfwla.net)

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

Tori LeBlanc

Email: [admin@vfwla.net](mailto:admin@vfwla.net)

#### **State Commander:**

James Prestenback

Email: [jprestenback302@gmail.com](mailto:jprestenback302@gmail.com)

### **Department Conference/ Convention Dates:**

**2025-2026**

**CofA/Officer Training**

August 22-24, 2025

**Mid Winter**

January 22-25, 2026

**State Convention**

June 18-21, 2026

**2026-2027**

**CoA/Officer Training**

August 28-30, 2026

**Mid - Winter**

January 28-31, 2027

**State Convention**

June 17-20, 2027

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

Comrades,

As we prepare for the upcoming VFW National Convention in Columbus, Ohio, I want to thank and recognize all of our Louisiana delegates who will be attending. Your presence and participation represent not only your Posts, but the entire Department of Louisiana with pride and distinction. Travel safely, and let your voices be heard as we continue the important work of this great organization.



**State Commander  
James Prestenback**

I also want to extend my best wishes to Bobby Lovergne as he seeks the position of National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief designee at our Southern Conference Caucus. Bobby has been a dedicated and proven leader for Louisiana and the VFW, and I have no doubt he will represent us well on the national stage.

Looking ahead, please be sure to mark your calendars for our upcoming School of Instruction and Council of Administration meeting. This is an important opportunity to ensure all officers are well-prepared, aligned with our goals, and equipped with the tools they need to lead successfully at every level.

Lastly, I want to commend you all for the outstanding work being done on membership. Your efforts to recruit, retain, and engage our members are paying off. Let's continue pushing forward and finish this membership year strong.

Keep serving with passion and purpose.

Yours in Comradeship,



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

Comrades,

It is hard to believe that we are already into August! National Convention and CofA are knocking on the door.

We have started the year strong in membership—excellent job! But do not let that momentum slip away. Many of us are waiting for Life Memberships to hit the system, and when they do, where will your Post, your District, and our Department stand?

With the school year fast approaching, the back-to-school sales are your cue; now is the time to get our programs (both VFW and Auxiliary) into the schools. Reach out to teachers and principals so they can incorporate Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Patriotic Art Contest, and Illustrating America Art Contest into their curriculum early on.

Do not let the rest of summer pass by! Take advantage of the pleasant weather and get out into your community. Host Buddy Poppy events and membership drives—and be sure to include your new members in the events. It is a wonderful way to keep them engaged and build lasting connections.

Now is also the time to begin planning for the holidays. Form a committee and start organizing a holiday event that includes your community. The more we open our doors, the more we grow. When people see who we are and what we do, they will want to be part of it.

I unfortunately will not be able to make it to the National Convention. I do hope to see you all at the Council of Administration, August 21-24 in Alexandria. It is always an honor to stand alongside Veterans who are Still Serving.



**Sr. Vice Commander  
Sharee Arends**

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

Comrades,

I hope everyone had a Happy 4th of July. The new VFW year is in full swing and many of you have wasted no time getting out in the community and do what we do best. That is help veterans and serve others. I want to congratulate District 8 on another successful Tunnel to Towers fundraiser. Great job!

With August upon us it is time to get geared up for National Convention and C of A. If you're headed to the National Convention I'll see you there.

Just a reminder to all Post Commanders the Post Commander training will be held at 5:00 p.m (17:00) on Friday, August 22. Please bring either your phone or laptop and have your vfw.org login activated as we will be having a practical application portion of the training. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at C of A and look forward to some good training and great comradery.



**Jr. Vice Commander  
James Bourque**

James Bourque  
State Junior Vice Commander



# A message from our State Adjutant....

Do you want your Post to break through and Build Forward?

## 1. Prioritize the rules—not just opinions.

Many Post have survived tough times because a few members held things together based on what seemed best. But growth demands clarity. That means revisiting:

- Post By Laws
- Review and clarify job descriptions
- Podium Edition

When change is guided by truth—not just tradition—conflict goes down and capacity goes up. Opinions aren't bad but they're no substitute for the real rules.

## 2. Build a Leadership Pipeline

New leaders don't just appear—they are invited, trained and trusted.

- Start mentoring early. You can mentor more than 1
- Share responsibility
- Let others lead, fail and grow

Veterans thrive on mission—give them one inside your post!



**State Adjutant  
Carl Karnish**

THE VFW HAS ALWAYS CHANGED. WHEN IT DOES—INTENTIONALLY, REPECTFULLY AND COURAGEOUSLY - IT THRIVES

# A message from our State Quartermaster....

I want to thank all of the Post Quartermasters that took the time to attend the virtual meeting we held last month. Your dedication and diligence in managing the financial responsibilities of your Posts is greatly appreciated. Remember, the health of our organization depends on transparency, accuracy, and teamwork!

Please remember that Section 703 of the VFW national bylaws requires that every post quartermaster must be bonded. **Bond Renewals are due by August 31st.** If you haven't already submitted yours, now is the time to take care of it. You can submit the form and payment online by visiting our website [www.vfwdeptla.org](http://www.vfwdeptla.org) under Resources - Post Bond Information.

Additionally, I want to remind everyone that Post Trustees should be completing Quarterly Audit Reports. This seems to be a common misconception. Post quartermasters should be completing monthly financial reports. These monthly financial reports should be made available to the post trustees for them to complete the required quarterly audits.

Last month the department headquarters sent the new post quartermaster and post trustees guide to each email address we had on file for these positions. If you did not receive a copy, be sure your email address is correct in OMS. I encourage all Post Quartermasters and other officers to take advantage of the upcoming training opportunities during our CoA this month. Staying current ensures smoother operations and accountability across all levels of our organization.

Thank you again for your service and commitment! <sup>9</sup>



**State Quartermaster  
Elvin Ray Bass**

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

Comrades,

As I was sitting in the donor chair thinking about what topic I should cover for Mail Call and it came to me, donating blood. You do not need to wait for Mid-Winter or State Convention to donate blood. If you're eligible, give the gift of life. You donate every 8 weeks and one donation can save three lives. You can contact your local donor center (The Blood Center, Ochsner, Life Share, etc) to schedule. Setting up a blood drive at your post is a great way to get members to donate and involved in the community.

Joseph Dufrene

State Surgeon



**State Surgeon  
Joseph Dufrene**

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

As summer winds down, many of us find ourselves on the road—whether its family vacations, visiting loved ones, or traveling to VFW conventions and events. These journeys are meaningful, offering time to reconnect, reflect, and represent our Posts with pride. But with increased traffic and the return of school routines, they also come with responsibility.

Before you turn the key and head out, I encourage you to pause and say a prayer. A simple moment of prayer can center our hearts, calm our minds, and invite God's protection over our travels. Whether its a long haul to a convention or a short drive across town, never underestimate the power of that small act of faith.

As schools reopen, let us also remain vigilant in school zones. Obey posted speed limits, stop for school buses, and watch out for young pedestrians. Our communities trust us as veterans and leaders to be examples of safety and care.

Remember, safe travels begin with preparation—both physical and spiritual. Check your vehicle, plan your route, and ask for God's guidance and protection. May every mile bring you closer to fellowship, purpose, and peace. Travel safe. Pray often. Lead always.

Heavenly Father,

As we set out on this journey, we ask for your hand of protection. Guide us safely to our destination, keep us alert and at peace, and shield us from harm or danger. May your presence go before us and your angels surround us. Thank you for watching over us.

Amen



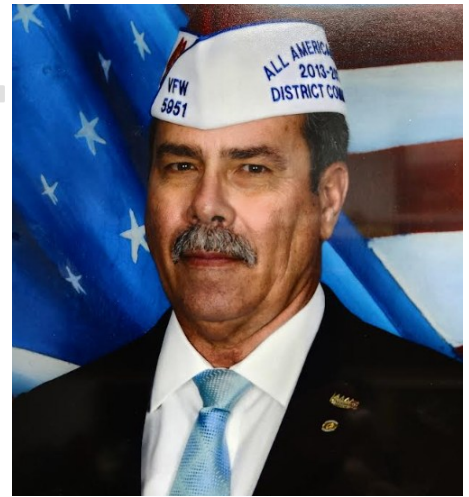
**State Chaplain  
Paul Stone**

## A message from our Judge Advocate.....

Commander Jamie has made a schedule concerning upcoming district meetings. I will be attending a couple of them and look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones. If there is anything I can do to help with membership or any other issues, don't hesitate to let me know.

Now let me put on my other hat which is the Housing committee chairman. Come C of A in August we will have an opening on the Housing Committee. It's a 4-year term and if interested let me know.

You will need to attend the C of A. There is 9 of us on the Housing committee and we look for other locations to have our conventions. If elected I would provide you with the guidelines. There will be a meeting after elections to go over some things.



**State Judge Advocate**  
**Max Arends III**



## The Historian

August 2025

Mitchell Cota, Department Historian

Comrades,

### Thursday Evening District Meeting

Changing the normal way of doing things is hard for some people to open up to, to embrace, or even accept. In truth, change can be hard to implement given the amount of resistance that one can face. Change is a dirty six letter word for some. But, District 2 has made it look effortlessly, done with a little hard work and a good team behind them, all setting their minds to do it and making it all come together. It gets done! It was as easy as setting up and doing it the regular way, on Saturday morning meeting during a weekend. This meeting, held on Thursday, July 24th, is probably a first for our Department -- holding a District meeting this way and worthy of a foot note in our history as well!



District 2 Commander Bobby Lovergne and District 2 Auxiliary President Asley

PSC and current District 2 Commander Bobby Lovergne, over his travels as our Department's nominee for Junior Vice CIC, has attended many VFW functions and events. Bobby has run across many meetings settings and agenda schedules across the 14 Departments and many Districts he has visited within the Southern Conference. However, one district has set itself apart from the rest. One district dared to be different in the way it conducts its operations. They had their meeting during the evening, on a weekday!

It was different, and unexpectedly, well attended. So was District 2's School of Instruction and meeting. In total, 70 comrades, sisters, and brothers filled Post 3750 for the evening's event. In some cases, more than a daytime meeting would attract. Both the 2025-2026 Department Commander James Prestenback and Auxiliary President Ann

Barnett were in attendance as State Representatives and also District 9 Commander Mitch Cota.



The joint meeting started off as any daytime meeting would, with the host Post Commander Monty Parr opening with introductions of the District Commander. The joint meeting opened in normal fashion, while training for both VFW and Auxiliary members was conducted and dinner enjoyed before the closing of the joint session. After a ten-minute recess, the School of Instruction and District meeting continued for the comrades. All in all, this was a very successful training and meeting session, one that is worth exploring to reach those members that find it hard to attend a Saturday meeting.





# MEMBERSHIP

## **The Importance of Renewing Your VFW Annual Membership Early**

Renewing your annual membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is more than a routine task, it's a proactive step that directly strengthens our collective voice and preserves the benefits earned by all who have served. Although some may be tempted to wait until the last possible moment, there are compelling reasons to renew now, rather than when your expiration date is just around the corner.

One crucial factor to consider is that your membership only counts for the current VFW year if your expiration date extends beyond July 1, 2026. By renewing early, you're ensuring your commitment is recognized during this vital period. This timely renewal ensures our records are up to date, which is especially important for organizational planning and for representing our strength in numbers to policy-makers.

Renewing now extends your expiration date for an additional twelve months, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to all member benefits. These include advocacy support, fellowship opportunities, access to VFW programs, and, most importantly, the assurance that you and your family can rely on VA benefits. Early renewal also prevents last-minute lapses in your membership, which could impact your eligibility or disrupt your connection to the VFW community.

Your early renewal is more than a transaction; it is a tangible demonstration of your dedication to serving all veterans. Each member who chooses to renew promptly sends a clear message of unity and resolve, reinforcing the VFW's mission to honor the sacrifice of those who have served and to support those who continue to serve. This commitment fuels our local, state, and national initiatives, making a real difference in the lives of veterans.

The strength of the VFW lies in its membership. Our ability to advocate for veterans' rights and benefits in Congress and at the state level is directly tied to the number of active, engaged members we have. When you renew your dues early, you are actively helping to amplify our collective voice, ensuring that the needs and concerns of veterans are heard loud and clear where it matters most.

Your membership is not just about personal gain—it's about safeguarding VA benefit availability for yourself, for those who came before you, and for those who will serve in the future. Renewing early helps maintain the continuity of our organization's advocacy efforts, ensuring that the hard-won rights and privileges of veterans are protected for generations to come.

We ask you to consider extending your dues for twelve more months today. Early renewal is a simple action that yields lasting impact, for yourself, for your fellow veterans, and for the broader VFW community. Can we count on you to take this important step? Your prompt action is a powerful statement of unity, service, and stewardship for all who have worn the uniform. You can renew or even upgrade to Life Membership by signing on to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) or see your Post Quartermaster.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and for helping us secure a strong future for every veteran.

Don Reber – State Membership Co-Chair

# AUGUST TOP RECRUITER

The FN SCAR, designed by FN Herstal, the SCAR-H offers versatility and adaptability, catering to various mission requirements. The SCAR is used by several military forces and special units worldwide, known for its reliability and accuracy. Its legacy includes its role in advancing modular rifle design for modern combat scenarios.

## "SCAR"

MINIATURE FN SCAR® MODEL

Sticker  
Included!



Realistic  
Details

Moving  
Parts

Loadable  
Magazine



10" / 26 cm



7 OZ. WEIGHT



1:3 SCALE



MEDIUM ASSEMBLY

# MONTHLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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.

July 14 th :

**VA on Track for Total Staff Reductions:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is on track to reduce its staff by nearly 30,000 by the end of the current fiscal year, Sept. 30, 2025. The reduction will be achieved through attrition, early retirements, deferred resignations, and the federal hiring freeze. These options have been effective leading to nearly 17,000 fewer staff so far this year, eliminating the need for a large-scale reduction in force. An additional 12,000 employees are expected to leave by the end of September. VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt responded to the announcement by saying he applauds VA Secretary Collins for taking a “scalpel approach” to these reductions.

**Urge Your Senators to Act Now to Keep Veterans in Their Homes:** VA ended its temporary Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase (VASP) program in May with no replacement in place, leaving thousands of veterans at greater risk of foreclosure. The House has passed H.R. 1815, VA Home Loan Program Reform Act, introduced by VFW member and House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman Derrick Van Orden, to allow VA to cover delinquent payments and work with lenders to prevent unnecessary foreclosures. The VFW is now calling on the Senate to immediately pass this legislation. Tell your senators to keep veterans in their homes! **VFW Meets with VA Deputy Secretary:** VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci and National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli met with VA Deputy Secretary Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D., at the VFW Memorial Building to discuss their shared priorities including the modernization of the Electronic Health Record system, the VA benefits process, and timely access to care for all veterans. This was the deputy secretary’s first visit to the VFW Washington Office since his confirmation in March. **Rhode Island Enacts Law to Shield Veterans from Predatory Claims Agents:** Before adjourning in June, the State of Rhode Island General Assembly became the latest state legislature to pass a law aimed at protecting veterans from predatory, unaccredited claims agents, often referred to as Claim Sharks. These entities charge steep fees to “coach” veterans through the VA disability compensation claims process, despite lacking VA accreditation, training, or oversight. Rhode Island’s new law prohibits anyone from advising or assisting a veteran with a VA disability claim, unless authorized under federal law, and empowers the state to enforce penalties under its deceptive trade practices statute. **Read the bill.** **DOD Assessing Budget Reduction for Discretionary Service Relocations:** The Department of Defense (DOD) services are currently reviewing their budgets for discretionary permanent change of station (PCS) moves with a 50% reduction goal by fiscal year 2030. A recent survey of military spouses cited PCS moves as the main reason for dissatisfaction with military life as these relocations can be extremely disruptive to family members’ employment and education. Only approximately 20% of PCS moves are considered mandatory. The services have been directed to look at limiting non-essential relocations and extending assignment tour lengths where appropriate. The intended result is to improve stability and quality of life for service members and their families, while maintaining mission readiness at all times. The services have a deadline of September 22 to submit their proposed plans.

July 21st :

**Congress Passes VA Home Loan Program Reform Act:** Both the House and Senate have passed H.R. 1815, VA Home Loan Program Reform Act, and the bill now heads to the president’s desk for signature. Introduced by VFW member and House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman Derrick Van Orden, this legislation would enable VA to cover delinquent payments and work with lenders to prevent unnecessary foreclosures. Thanks to everyone who responded to the VFW Action Alert to help in the passage of this bill to assist veterans in need.



VFW Presents Vietnam War Artifacts to Vietnamese Government in Washington: In a symbolic gesture of reconciliation and commitment to wartime accounting, VFW Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tim Peters presented Vietnam War artifacts to representatives of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at a ceremony held at the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Hosted by Ambassador Nguyen Quoc Dung, the artifacts—including a helmet, canteens, a journal, and ID cards—were accepted by Defense Attaché Senior Colonel Vu Quoc Ang. Donated by U.S. veterans and families, the items represent shared sacrifice and support ongoing efforts to account for those missing from the Vietnam War. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), led by Director Kelly McKeague, helped coordinate the event. The VFW continues to support U.S.-Vietnam cooperation on historical remembrance and accountability. Read full story. VFW Testifies at House Affairs Subcommittee on Health on VA's community care program. This program allows veterans enrolled in VA health care to receive medical services from community providers when VA facilities cannot provide the care needed or when it is in the best medical interest of the veteran. Keenan provided input from VFW members and her personal experience using VA-coordinated community care. She highlighted the current challenges, for community care bills, poor records sharing between community providers and VA, and other bureaucratic hurdles veterans face. She also stated the VFWs support for H.R. 740, Veterans; ACCESS Act of 2025, as it represents a step forward in addressing issues with the coordination of VA community care. Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 1:02:59 mark.

VFW Joins in Vietnam for 30-Year Commemoration: VFW Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam, to participate in events marking 30 years of U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic relations and 40 years since the first American MIA recovery mission. Rivers, a Vietnam War veteran and former VFW Washington Office Executive Director, was recognized for his early efforts in rebuilding veteran-to-veteran ties with Vietnam. The delegation attended ceremonies, returned wartime artifacts, and presented DNA equipment to aid Vietnam's efforts to identify its war missing. They also met with Vietnamese veterans and diplomatic organizations to strengthen ongoing cooperation.

VFW Speaks at Roundtable with Defense Secretary: VFW Director of Public Affairs and Strategic Outreach Rob Couture participated in a veteran and military organization roundtable hosted by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. Secretary Hegseth emphasized his focus on warfighting, praised rising recruiting numbers and the recent pay raise for junior enlisted, and highlighted the strengthened collaboration between DOD and VA on military to civilian transition. Couture thanked the Secretary for his focus on transition efforts and committed to offering input during further DOD discussions on the topic. He also provided updates on the VFW Pre-Discharge program and reinforced the VFWs priority to pass the Major Richard Star Act. VFW Forms New Partnership to Expand Veteran Services Capabilities: The VFW signed a landmark memorandum of understanding with the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) to authorize cross-accreditation of representatives between the two organizations. This watershed agreement will add more than 2,200 VA-accredited representatives to the VFW's global network of service officers, significantly expanding access, improving responsiveness, and streamlining the claims process. This partnership underscores the shared commitment of the VFW and NACVSO to ensure that veterans, their families, and survivors can access their rightfully earned benefits, always free of charge.

July 28 th :

VFW Priority Included in NDAA: The VFW is pleased to report that one of our top legislative priorities, H.R. 1845, Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Promotion Act, has been included as Section 551 of the House draft version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026. This provision would strengthen TAP by ensuring all transitioning service members have access to VA-accredited representatives from counties, states, and Veterans Service Organizations like the VFW. The VFW urges Congress to retain this provision in the final NDAA. 2025 VA Healthcare Summit: VFW staff attended the VA 2025 Healthcare Summit held in Washington, D.C. The event highlighted advancements in health care with an emphasis on improving mental health services, expanding telehealth access, and



Discussions included efforts to reduce wait times, streamline the claims process, and integrate technologies like AI for more efficient, veteran-centered care. “We were thrilled to learn about innovative approaches to address the unique challenges VA faces in delivering timely, high-quality health care across the nation,” said VFW National Legislative Associate Director Meggan Coleman. Temporary Expanded Burial Benefit: In an attempt to implement provisions in the Dole Act, VA has announced a temporary burial benefit expansion for certain individuals. Veterans who are discharged from VA medical or nursing care to VA-provided home hospice care and who subsequently die between July 1, 2025, and Oct. 1, 2026, may qualify for a full burial allowance. Previously, many of these veterans were not eligible for this benefit, creating gaps in the support of their survivors. This law allows veterans to spend their last days at home with loved ones, assured they will not struggle with a financial burden while grieving their loss.

VA Extending Program Eligibility for Legacy Caregivers: VA has announced it will soon propose a rule extending eligibility for legacy veterans and caregivers in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) through Sept. 30, 2028. During this extension period, legacy participants can keep their current status and benefits unless they request a new assessment. Legacy participants are defined as veterans, service members, and caregivers who applied prior to Oct. 1, 2020, and were accepted into the program on or after Oct. 1, 2020.

VA Financial Resource Center for Veterans: VA’s new FINVET helps you take charge of your money. This one-stop shop has resources and tools on how to pay for basics like food and housing, how to manage debt, and protect your finances. You can also find information for free financial counseling and planning, and lots more.

Combat Patch Eligibility Expansion: The Army has updated its policy on the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia for Military Operations in Hostile Conditions, commonly known as the combat patch. Soldiers from the Army, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve who served for at least a day in one of 14 countries in the Middle East and Africa between Oct. 7, 2023, and June 24, 2025, are now eligible. This change ensures that more soldiers are appropriately recognized for their service in evolving combat environments. However, it does not authorize entitlement to hostile fire pay, imminent danger pay, or combat zone tax exclusion.

Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Pruitt, B.) WASHINGTON — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced today that U.S. Army Pvt. Blanchard E. Pruitt, 19, of Florien, Louisiana, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for March 17, 2025. Pruitt's family recently received their full briefing on his identification, therefore, additional details on his identification can be shared. In late 1942, Pruitt was a member of the Medical Detachment, 31st Infantry Regiment, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942. Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Pruitt was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war. According to prison camp and other historical records, Pruitt died on Jan. 1, 1943, and was buried in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Grave 822. Following the war, American Graves Registration Service personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1948, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. One set of remains was recovered from Grave 822 but could not be identified as Pruitt. He was declared non recoverable on Dec. 2, 1949. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial as an Unknown. In December 2020, as part of the Cabanatuan Project, DPAA exhumed the remains associated with Grave 822 and sent them to the DPAA laboratory for analysis. DPAA also uncovered evidence of discrepancies between Grave 822 and Grave 836 and ultimately determined that Pruitt was buried in Grave 836. To identify Pruitt’s remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA analysis and mitochondrial genome sequencing data.

Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Pruitt's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Today, Pruitt is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. Pruitt will be buried in Anacoco, Louisiana in September 2025. Airman Accounted For From World War II (Causey, T.)

WASHINGTON – The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Tech Sgt. Truman G. Causey, 33, of Port Vincent, Louisiana, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for April 4, 2025. Causey's family recently received their full briefing on his identification, therefore, additional details on his identification can be shared. In late 1941, Causey was a member of 17th Bombardment Squadron, 27th Bombardment Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942. Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Causey was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war. According to prison camp and other historical records, Causey died Nov. 15, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 721. Following the war, American Graves Registration Service personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Of the 15 sets recovered from Common Grave 721, five were identified. The remaining 10 were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns. In June 2018, as part of the Cabanatuan Project, the remains associated with Common Grave 721 were disinterred and sent to the DPAA laboratory for analysis. To identify Causey's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological and isotope analysis as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial, Y-chromosome, and autosomal DNA analysis as well as mitochondrial genome sequencing data. Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Causey's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Causey will be buried in Dubach, Louisiana in November 2025.

Respectfully,

**Matthew J. West**

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

## LOUISIANA COUNCIL MEMBER

Good-bye 2024-2025 and HELLO 2025-2026, we have celebrated the accomplishments of last year's achievements, now we need to refocus and get kick started making 2025-2026 a success. Do not wait until the Departments SOI to begin your year, if you do you are already behind the power curve. The New Year started July 1, 2025 so press on and get the ball rolling.

I want to remind everyone about the open challenge that each Post donate a minimum of \$75.00 to the NDSWM fundraiser. At the Department Convention, we collected right at \$2000.00 with the donations and the matching contribution of \$1000.00. Please see the flyer included in this edition of the Mail Call. As the Department's representative on the NDSWM, I look forward to the day we can visit this Memorial in Washington DC along with the many other memorials. We have also challenged all other Departments to match or exceed our donation. This would allow VFW National to reach the Million Dollar donor level and be recognized on the Memorial as such. Let's bust down the door, overshadow the \$5000.00 mark, and raise Louisiana's overall donation to over \$20,000.00.

The 127th National Convention originally scheduled for Salt Lake City, Utah has been moved to Reno, Nevada beginning July 24, 2026 to July 30, 2026. Make your plans to attend early so we can have a good presence in Reno.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in Columbus at the National Convention and seeing what our incoming Commander in Chief Carol Whitmore has in store for her year.

Until next month, let us keep pushing forward to improve our Department and raise the numbers back up by renewing, reinstating or recruiting new members.



## Department of Louisiana VFW Desert Storm War Memorial Fundraiser 2025

As the construction of this Memorial has begun with an anticipated completion date in 2026, let's step up once again and do our part to help honor those who served during this War.

The goal is to raise another \$5000.00 from the Department to bring our total to \$20,000.00. To accomplish this the Challenge is for each Post in the Department to donate a minimum of \$75.00 earmarked for this fundraiser, Auxiliaries are also welcome to donate as well. Send all donations to the Department Quartermaster earmarked for the Memorial.

We are also going to issue a challenge to all the other Departments to match or beat our donation to help the VFW be recognized as a Million Dollar donor on the memorial.



**Council of Administration / School of Instruction**  
**August 22-24, 2025**  
**The Hotel Bentley, Alexandria LA - 200 Desoto Street Alexandria LA 70131**

**All VFW State, District and Post Officers and members are urged and invited to attend the respective Officers' training and meetings listed.**

**VFW Tentative Schedule**

**Friday, August 22, 2025 – 4:30pm to 8:00pm**

**State Officers and District Commanders and other members who wish to attend.**

**Dress Code – Business Casual / Commanders Shirt**

4:30pm – 5:30pm	Sign In	Lobby Bentley Hotel
5pm – 7pm	Post Commanders Training (James Bourque)	Main Ball Room
	Post Quartermaster Training (Ray Bass)	Bayou Roberts Room
	District Commander Training (Sharee Arends)	Alexandria Room
7:30pm – 8pm	Budget Meeting if needed (Commander)	Main Ball Room
<b>5pm – 10pm Hospitality Room Beauregard 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor</b>		

**Saturday, August 23, 2025 – 7:00am to 5:00pm**

**All VFW Members, Post, District and State Officers. Business Casual Dress – State Commanders**

**Shirt or regular dress shirt and dress pants.**

**All Members are invited and urged to attend.**

7am – 8:30am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
8:am – 11:30am	Sign In	Lobby Bentley Hotel
8:30am – 9:am	Opening / Presentation of Awards	Main Ball Room
	Opening Commander	
	Intro Line Officers/District Commanders	
	Recognize PSC	
	Recognize 1 <sup>st</sup> Time Attendees	
	Presentation of Awards PSC Debbie McElhannon	
	All State	
9am – 9:30am	Membership (Commander / Membership Chairman)	
	All State / All American Programs	
9:30am- 10am	Community Service ( Chris LeGuin)	
10am – 10:15am	VOD/PP/Scholars App (James Borque/Carl Karnish)	
10:15am – 10:30am	Safety (Brian Bannono)	
10:30am – 10:45am	Break	
10:45am – 11am	Legislative (Matt West)	
11am – 12noon	Service Officer (Welma)	
12noon – 1pm	Lunch	
1pm – 1:15pm	Commanders Special Project (Chris LeGuin)	
1:15pm – 1:45pm	Inspections (Robert Bates)	
1:45pm – 2pm	Teachers (Rodney Barnett)	
2pm – 2:15pm	Americanism (Mitch Cota)	
2:15pm – 2:30pm	Adopt a Unit (Lee Wright)	
2:30pm – 3pm	Break	
3pm – 5pm	Council of Administration	
	Elect (2) 4yr Convention Chairs	
6:30pm – 8:30pm	Auxiliary fundraiser (End of Summer Beach Party)	
<b>5pm – 10pm Hospitality Room Bentley Beauregard 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor</b>		

**Sunday, August 24, 2025 – 7:00am to 11:00am**

**All VFW members, Post, District and State Officers. Business Casual Dress – State Commanders**

**Shirt or regular dress shirt and dress pants.**

**All Members are invited and urged to attend.**

7am – 8:30am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
8:30am – 11:00am	Continuation of C of A (if needed)	Main Ballroom

# End of the Summer

# Beach Party



August 23 at 6:30 p.m.,

In Bentley Ball Room

\$10.00 each or \$100 per table of 10

**Hula Hoop Contest**

**Horse Shoes**

**Limbo**

**Music**



## Tiki Torch Decoration Contest

(Torch to be decorated at home)

Prizes will be Awarded



**Aux Special Project Fund Raiser**

mail check made out to "VFW Auxiliary Dept of LA"

to: Debbie Holmes, Department Treasurer

110 Sellers Rd., Dubach, LA 71235



### **VFW National Convention Formal Banquet**

Join us for an elegant evening at the **National Convention Formal Banquet!** This exclusive event will celebrate our 125 years of history and to recognize some of our more prestigious awards from the VFW and the Auxiliary.

**Date:** August 11, 2025

**Time:** 5:30 PM - 9:00 PM

**Tickets:**

- The Department has purchased **30 tickets**
- \$125 per person
- Limited availability – first come, first served!

**How to Reserve Your Spot:**

- Email: [lastatevfw@yahoo.com](mailto:lastatevfw@yahoo.com)
- Submit payment promptly to secure your ticket

**Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow members and honor our organization in a formal setting. Reserve your ticket today!**





# COMBAT TESTED GAMING

By the **VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

## THE VFW'S INAUGURAL GAMING LEAGUE EXCLUSIVELY FOR VETERANS.



Join the  
community!



Combat Tested Gaming (CTG) has become the fastest-growing veterans gaming community in America. We are approaching 2,500 veteran gamers on our Discord server and streaming gameplay on our Combat Tested Gaming Twitch channel. Join our Discord community to connect with other veterans and active duty server members who play your game of choice! Subscribe to our Twitch and YouTube channels to watch our gameplay and experience the thrill and camaraderie of our gamers.

## GAMES

- Rocket League
- Call of Duty
- Call of Duty: Warzone
- World of Warcraft
- Valorant
- Madden
- MLB: The Show
- Rainbow Six Siege
- NBA 2K
- Helldivers 2
- Apex Legends
- Fortnite
- League of Legends
- The Finals
- EA Sports FC
- And more! We are adding games consistently.

## IMPACT OVERVIEW

**2,250+**  
Veteran  
gamers.



**DEDICATED VFW  
SERVICE  
OFFICER**



answering VA benefits  
questions daily.

**4 VFW  
POSTS**



have leveraged CTG to start  
gaming nights – one building  
a gaming room to support  
student veterans.

**5 VETERANS'  
LIVES SAVED**



during crisis by  
using connections  
made through CTG.

CTG has quickly succeeded in reaching its early objectives. Now, as we look to the future, we set our sights on becoming THE leader in the veteran gaming space by continuing to promote the program and through partnering with a veteran-owned company which specializes in building the gaming infrastructure needed to support our growth and long-term success.



DREW HERNANDEZ

COMEDY SHOW

A COMBAT  
VETERAN

AUG  
02

COLE-MIERS VFW POST 3619

1115 LA-27, DERIDDER, LOUISIANA

TICKETS ON  
SALE NOW!

VIP \$50 GA \$25



[WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/DREW-HERNANDEZ-COMEDY-NIGHT-TICKETS](http://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/DREW-HERNANDEZ-COMEDY-NIGHT-TICKETS)

## EVENT SCHEDULE

Doors Open 6PM

Food and Drinks 6-8PM

Drew Takes the Stage 8PM