



# MAIL CALL



April 2026

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### State Convention

June 18-21, 2026

Hotel Bentley Alexandria

### REMINDERS:

**January—March Trustee  
Report of Audit is due by April  
30th**

*“One Team, One Fight”*

# DISTRICT MEETINGS

## DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

**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:

**Apr 25, 2026**                      **Post 3665**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch                                12:00 noon  
**Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque**

## DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

**April 18, 2026**                      **Post 9822**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch (\$8)                      12:00 noon  
**Rep: Judge Advocate Max Arends**

## DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

**April 30, 2026**                      **Post 3802**  
Registration                      6:30 pm  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch                                12:00 noon  
**Rep: PSC Debbie McElhannon**

## DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

**May 9, 2026**                        **Post 2483**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch (\$10)                      12:00 noon  
**Rep: PSC Fred Wesley**

## DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

**April 25, 2026**                      **Post 3785**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch (\$7)                      12 noon  
**Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends**

## DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

**April 25, 2026**                      **Post 8720**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch                                12 noon  
**Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback**

## DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

**Apr 25, 2026**                        **Post 8852**  
Registration                      10:00 am  
Meeting                              10:30 am  
Lunch (\$10)                      12:00 noon  
**Rep: Judge Advocate Max Arends**

## DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

**May 16, 2026**                        **Post 1809**  
Registration                      9:30 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch (\$10)                      12:00 noon  
**Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends**

## DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

**May 9, 2026**                        **Post 5951**  
Registration                      9:00 am  
Meeting                              10:00 am  
Lunch (\$10)                      12:00 noon  
**Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback**

## MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE WINNER:

The top recruiter for the month of **March** is **Michael Peats** from  
**Post 8720!** 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>

## LINK FOR POST TO REPORT THEIR RECRUITING EVENT FOR ALL STATE INCLUSION

[https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?](https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcf9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA)

[fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcf9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI\\_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A\\_aem\\_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA](https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcf9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA)

### Ramifications of a Post being "not in good standing" within the VFW.

Based on national and departmental bylaws, maintaining good standing is critical for the continued operation and representation of your Post.

When a Post is **not in good standing**, the primary consequences include the loss of voting rights at District, Department, and National Conventions, effectively silencing your voice in organizational decisions.

Additionally, the Post may be barred from participating in VFW programs, receiving certain grants, or being eligible for community service awards.

Further administrative actions may include the suspension of the Post charter, the removal of elected officers, or the appointment of a trustee to oversee operations. In severe cases, a Post may face permanent charter revocation and the loss of tax exemption.

It is essential that you address any outstanding audits, reports, or per capita requirements immediately to restore your status and ensure you continue serving our veterans effectively.

### VFW FOUNDATION GRANTS

The VFW Foundation offers three grant opportunities annually. Applications are generally accepted from September through June 1 of the following year, or until grant funding is exhausted. Please reference each grant below for current information on application availability.

Grant eligibility is exclusive to VFW entities such as Posts, Districts, and Auxiliaries. Nonprofits outside of the VFW cannot apply. All grants are reimbursement-based, meaning applicants must complete their projects and then apply with proof of expenses.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM VFW POSTS MUST BE COMPLETED VIA THE DASHBOARD at VFW.ORG. CONVERSELY, VFW AUXILIARIES WILL APPLY FOR GRANTS THROUGH PDF APPLICATIONS WHICH AT THE MOMENT ARE UNAVAILABLE (Expected availability is likely after September 19).

We highly encourage applicants to contact the VFW Foundation before starting a project to ensure it qualifies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact VFW Program Coordinator, Mary Spencer: (816) 756-3390 EXT: 6287, [m Spencer@vfw.org](mailto:m Spencer@vfw.org)

# LOUISIANA

## VFW MARCH

### Membership Challenge



**\$200.00** to the Post with the most new members, reinstated members and/or annual renewals

**\$100.00** to the District with the most new members, reinstated members and/or annual renewals

**\$50.00** lifetime membership to the National Home for the top recruiter.

## WINNERS WINNERS CHICKEN DINNERS



**\$200**

**Post 9822**

**30 Members**



**\$100**

**District 12**

**35 Members**



**Michael Peats'**

**Post — 9822**

**2 new members**



# 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)**

## Future National Convention Dates:

**July 24-30, 2026**

Reno, NV

**July 31-Aug 4, 2027**

Milwaukee, WI

**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)

## 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:

### 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...

I want to begin by offering my sincere thanks to everyone who attended my Commander's Testimonial. Your presence, support, and fellowship meant more than words can express. It was truly a humbling experience, and I am grateful to serve alongside each of you.

As we move into April, this is an important time for our organization. I encourage all Posts and Districts to begin preparing for nominations and elections. Strong leadership ensures the continued success of our mission and the future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I also want to commend each of you for the outstanding job you are doing on membership. Your dedication and hard work are making a difference, and I have no doubt we will finish strong.

Finally, on behalf of my family and the Department, I wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Easter. May this season bring renewal, hope, and continued strength to serve our veterans, their families, and our communities.

Thank you for all you do, and God bless the VFW.



**State Commander  
James Prestenback**

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

Comrades,

April brings nominations for Post and District officers, and it is critical that we approach this process with intention. These are not just titles—they are roles that directly impact the strength and success of our organization.

Nominate individuals who will work for the members and ensure your Post or District is in capable hands. Look beyond familiarity or past titles and focus on those who demonstrate a strong work ethic—those who show up, follow through, and take initiative. Our leaders must also be committed to strengthening membership through recruiting, retaining, and reinstating.

Leadership requires action. Strong candidates mentor others, communicate professionally, and remain accountable. They must be reliable, responsive, and able to meet expectations. It is equally important to consider whether nominees have the time and availability to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

Mentoring and training remain a priority. Even experienced officers benefit from refresher training. Before placing a name in nomination, ensure the individual understands the expectations and is willing to commit.

Please use this month to finalize any remaining All-State and All-American requirements. Next month is the time to complete your Day of Service—be sure it is registered with National for proper credit.

I look forward to seeing you as I travel the state for District meetings. 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....



**Jr. Vice Commander  
James Bourque**

Comrades,

With March behind us and April upon us it's election time. Once your elections are completed at your April meeting please be prompt in completing your election report for the 2026-2027 year. Completing this in a timely manner not only keeps your post in good standing it also gets the next year started on the right note.

It was an honor and a privilege to be part of the Louisiana delegation at this year's Washington Conference. Thank you to PSC Matt West for organizing the meetings and keeping us on track. We were able to witness CIC Whitmore's powerful testimony in front of the joint Veteran Affairs Committee, and communicate to our Louisiana representatives and senators the VFW priority goals for the year. This advocacy is a vital part of the VFW mission and one of the many reasons it is important to keep our membership numbers growing. We have power in numbers and when the VFW talks congress listens. Let's keep membership growing and our members engaged in the mission.

As April is upon us I'd like to remind everyone that the JVC/JVP visit to the National Home is about a month away. During this time it is customary for the JVC and JVP present a donation from each Department to the National Home. I want to thank everyone who has donated to the Department's National Home fund and remind everyone it's not too late to donate. You can mail your checks to the Department Quartermaster ear marked for the National Home and he will add it to the fund.

In closing, I want to wish everyone a Happy Easter. Take this time to spend with family and loved ones. Be safe and enjoy those Good Friday crawfish!! Keep up the egg-cellent work!

James Bourque

# **Proposed Bylaws Amendment 26.001**

Proposed Bylaws Amendment 26.001

Submitted by Ray Bass, current Department of Louisiana Quartermaster

Description from Submitter: Currently, the Department of Louisiana does not have a clause for “Control of Units.” I am proposing to add CONTROL OF UNITS by adding Article X Miscellaneous, Sec 4. Control of Units.

Proposed Amended Bylaws Content:

Article X, Miscellaneous, Sec 4. Control of Units

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a federally chartered membership corporation created by an Act of Congress. In accordance with that legislation, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has issued charters to the Auxiliary, Departments, and other units, including Posts. Pursuant to their charters, those units are bound to pursue the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter and abide by the Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and the laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. However, each organization is a separate unincorporated association or corporation under the laws of the jurisdiction in which each is located.

The Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not own an interest in any clubroom, canteen, facility or any fundraising activity operated by any such chartered unit, nor are clubrooms, canteens, facilities or other fundraising activities operated for or on behalf of the Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not derive any profit from such facilities or activities. Clubrooms, canteens, facilities, and other fundraising activities of chartered units are executed by such units in furtherance of the fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational purposes set forth by Congress.

The Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not lend money or extend credit to any chartered unit. It is in no manner responsible for the debts or any other liability incurred by any chartered unit or any clubroom, canteen, facility, or other fundraising activity operated by it. As unincorporated associations or corporations, they are responsible for their own debts and liabilities. To the extent that The Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is threatened with or sustains damage arising from a debt or liability incurred by a chartered unit, the Department of Louisiana of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may seek to recover such damages and any costs and expenses incurred from such chartered unit or persons responsible for such debt or liability.

## **Proposed Bylaws Amendment 26.002**

Submitted by Ray Bass, current Department of Louisiana Quartermaster

Description from Submitter: The current By-Laws state:

Sec. 1. Amended Bylaws:

These Bylaws shall be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates at the Annual Department Convention if the amendment is submitted by a Post, District Convention, Department Chair Officer or Past Department Commander, and copies of the proposed amendment was submitted to the Department Adjutant not less than forty-five days prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

Proposed Amended Bylaws Content:

These Bylaws shall be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates at the Annual Department Convention if the amendment is submitted by a Post, District Convention, Department Chair Officer or Past Department Commander, and copies of the proposed amendment must be submitted to the Department Adjutant no later than April 15 of the current year prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

# Veterans of Foreign Wars

## Department of Louisiana

### Legislative Report March 2026

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.

#### March 2<sup>nd</sup>:

**VFW Applauds VA for Rescinding Disability Ratings Rule:** The VFW commends VA for rescinding its interim final rule that would have changed how disability ratings are evaluated, a move the VFW warned could unfairly reduce benefits for disabled veterans. More than 20,000 public comments were submitted urging the policy's withdrawal after widespread concern from veterans and service organizations. VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore thanked VA Secretary Doug Collins for listening to veterans and reversing what she called an abrupt change with potentially unintended consequences. While praising the decision as a significant step forward, the VFW pledged to continue working with Congress and VA to ensure future policy changes prioritize transparency, meaningful veteran input and the protection of earned benefits.

**VFW Washington Conference:** The VFW's annual Washington Conference is underway in Washington, D.C., and runs through March 5. Hundreds of VFW leaders and advocates have mobilized to take our message directly to Capitol Hill. National Legislative Committee members, the 2025–2026 VFW-SVA Fellows, comrades and Auxiliary members from around the globe are meeting with lawmakers to ensure our legislative priorities are heard directly from their veteran constituents. The highlight of the week will be VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore's testimony before a joint hearing of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Tuesday, March 3, at 10 a.m. EST.

**Washington Conference App Now Available:** If you are attending the 2026 Washington Conference, be sure to download the VFW Events 2026 app to stay in the know throughout conference. Within, you can find the agenda, fellow attendees and more. Download it from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store today, or visit the VFW Events App Quick Start Guide.

**Roundtable Explores Appeals Reform:** VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Nancy Springer joined staff members from the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, veterans organizations and academic experts for a roundtable on appeals legislation. Participants explored how the Board of Veterans' Appeals could aggregate similar appeals, and the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims could certify class actions that could help reduce the nearly 200,000-case backlog and shorten a process that often takes years. The group also discussed critical safeguards. Participants emphasized protecting veterans' due process rights, recognizing the unique facts underlying individual appeals while resolving shared legal questions and ensuring that aggregation does not delay timely adjudication decisions.

**VFW Podcast Zooms in on VA Rule Change and Washington Conference:** In this episode of Still Serving, host Rob Couture is joined by VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci and National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli to unpack a turbulent week in veterans policy. The trio breaks down the VA's interim rule change to 38 CFR 4.10, the public backlash that generated more than 20,000 comments in the Federal Register, and what it means for disability ratings moving forward. They also tackle the ongoing fight against predatory "claims sharks," including state-level battles and a recent federal court ruling. The episode also gives a preview of the VFW's Washington Conference, where grassroots advocates will press Congress on priorities like the Major Richard Star Act and protecting earned veterans' benefits. Listen to episode 59, "Three's a Quorum," on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's YouTube channel.

#### March 9<sup>th</sup>:

**First VFW Woman National Commander Testifies Before Congress:** VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore delivered the VFW's legislative priorities to Congress in a joint hearing of the Senate and House Committees on Veter-

ans' Affairs. She began her statement by stating, "Our message is simple and resolute: Honor the Contract. When Americans raise their right hand and volunteer to serve, this nation makes a solemn promise. If they are wounded, become ill, or die in service, America will care for them and their families. That promise is not charity ... This is the cost of war." Whitmore also urged Congress to aggressively address unrecognized toxic exposures, ensure that VA direct care and community care function as one system, and pass the Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2025. She highlighted systemic shortcomings in the Foreign Medical Program; called for modernization of CHAMPVA; recommended written, informed consent for VA-prescribed psychiatric medications; and urged passage of several bills including the TAP Promotion Act and Major Richard Star Act. She also pressed the need to fully fund the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Whitmore said, "Service members are taught to leave no one behind. That commitment never ends." Watch the hearing, which begins at the 9:25 mark, or read the testimony.

**VFW Stands with Troops, Honors Fallen in Operation Epic Fury:** As combat operations began in the Middle East under Operation Epic Fury, the VFW reaffirmed its unwavering support for U.S. service members deployed in harm's way. In a statement, VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore urged Americans to keep troops and their families in their thoughts and prayers, emphasizing the sacrifices made by the all-volunteer force defending the nation and its allies. Days later, the VFW mourned the loss of three American service members killed and five wounded during the operation. Whitmore extended condolences to the Gold Star families and prayers for the wounded, pledging that the VFW will continue to honor the fallen and advocate for those who serve and sacrifice in defense of freedom. Since the second statement was released, an additional three U.S. service members have been killed by Iran's retaliatory strikes, bringing the total of those killed since Operation Epic Fury began to six.

**VA Secretary Speaks at VFW Washington Conference:** Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins joined conference attendees in an all-hands meeting to provide updates on VA policies and programs, including VA's recent rollback of a days-old regulation that would have significantly changed how VA disability ratings are determined. Reflecting on a promise he made in his early days as VA Secretary, Collins stated, "When the VA does something wrong, we'll fix it." Following swift criticism of the regulation from the veteran community, Collins said of his team, "The minute we saw it was a problem, I suspended it, and within four days, we took it off ... We put it to bed, it's over, it's done, it's not coming back." Secretary Collins covered additional areas including VA health care and Community Care Network reforms, improvements to women's health services and increases in disability claims processing speed.

**VFW Condemns Second Block of Major Richard Star Act:** The VFW voiced strong outrage after the U.S. Senate blocked passage of the Major Richard Star Act for a second time. VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore said she was "appalled" that the bill was again stopped through procedural opposition. The measure, introduced as S. 1032, was brought forward for unanimous consent by Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, but was blocked by Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson. The VFW emphasized the legislation would correct an injustice affecting more than 50,000 combat-injured veterans. Whitmore urged lawmakers to end the "procedural games," hold a full hearing and pass the bill to honor veterans' service and sacrifice. Read the statement.

**Rep. August Pfluger Receives VFW 2026 Congressional Award:** The VFW presented its 2026 Congressional Award to Rep. August Pfluger of Texas during the organization's annual Washington Conference, recognizing his leadership in the 119th Congress and long-standing advocacy for veterans and service members. A U.S. Air Force Academy graduate, combat fighter pilot, and current Air Force Reserve colonel, Pfluger has used his military experience to champion legislation that strengthens veterans' benefits and access to care. Among his efforts, he introduced the House version of the Aviation Cancer Examination Study (ACES) Act and supported several key VFW priorities, including the Major Richard Star Act and Guard and Reserve GI Bill parity legislation. VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore praised Pfluger as a determined advocate working to improve care and benefits for America's veterans. Read the press release.

**VFW Podcast Recaps 2026 Washington Conference:** A significant week in Washington, D.C., and around the world resulted in an insightful and at times somber, yet energy-filled podcast. Joined by VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore, Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci, National Legislative Service Director Kristina Keenan and National Veterans Service Mike Figlioli, host Rob Couture engages listeners with Commander Whitmore's historic testimony before Congress, VA Secretary Doug Collins' speech before VFW members and more. Listen to episode 60, "Hail to the Chief" on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's YouTube channel.

**March 16<sup>th</sup>:**

**VFW Speaks at Transition Rights Forum:** VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joy Craig participated in a forum hosted by United for Human Rights during the 2026 conference of the US Institute of Diplomacy and Human Rights in Washington, D.C. The event brought together more than 150 advocates and policy leaders at the U.S. Capitol to discuss human rights issues, including the well-being of veterans. Craig highlighted the connection between military-to-civilian transition and human dignity, noting that a successful transition is not simply an employment milestone but honors the nation's commitment to those who served. She also underscored VFW support for strengthening the Transition Assistance Program, improving Department of Defense oversight, and expanding access to accredited assistance for service members filing VA claims before separation. [Read more.](#)

**VFW Challenges VA Rules Denying Full GI Bill Benefits:** The VFW has filed a legal brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit challenging Department of Veterans Affairs rules that deny veterans the full education benefits they earned through service. The case centers on the 2024 Supreme Court decision in *Rudisill v. McDonough*, which affirmed that veterans eligible for both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill may receive up to 48 months of combined education benefits. The VFW argues that VA's current rules impose restrictions Congress never intended, including requiring a break in service before accessing the full benefit. By taking this fight to court, the VFW seeks to ensure the law and the Supreme Court's ruling are fully honored. **Read the brief.**

**VFW Hosts Inaugural Bonus Army Memorial March:** Members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, VFW staff and supporters took part in the first Bonus Army Memorial March on the National Mall during the VFW's Washington Conference. The purpose of the march was to honor the World War I veterans who marched on Washington in 1932 seeking early payment of promised service bonuses. Participants of the memorial march walked a course around part of the National Mall, beginning at the Lincoln Memorial and stopping at each war memorial in remembrance of the service and sacrifices made on behalf of the nation. The march served as a powerful tribute to the legacy of the Bonus Army while reinforcing the organization's continued advocacy for veterans on Capitol Hill.

**House Oversight Hearing on Dole Act Implementation:** The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on the implementation of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (Public Law 118-210) in the first year since its enactment. Witnesses from the VA and the U.S. Government Accountability Office testified. To date, only one-third of the law's sections have been completed, leaving veterans and their families at a disadvantage in accessing services and benefits intended to improve their quality of life. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 53:17 mark.

**VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows Advocate on Capitol Hill:** The 2025-2026 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows traveled to Washington, D.C., for the VFW Washington Conference to engage directly in the legislative process. They joined delegations from California, Washington, Nebraska, Florida and Massachusetts for congressional meetings to advocate for H.R.1965, Veteran Education Assistance Adjustment Act, which would adjust the Post-9/11 GI Bill book and supplies stipend to account for inflation. The experience gave the fellows firsthand insight into how veterans' voices and student veteran leadership help shape policy, laws and advocacy on Capitol Hill. To urge Congress' support for this issue, respond to the VFW's Action Alert [here](#).

**Working Together to Save Lives:** Face the Fight's second annual coalition convened March 3-4 in Louisville, Kentucky, bringing together organizations and leaders from across the country to share ideas and strengthen mental health support for our military communities. The VFW was proud to join the conversation on suicide prevention and awareness alongside notable leaders in the military and veteran service space. Speakers included Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force (Ret.) JoAnne Bass, former U.S. Representative and 32nd Under Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy, and celebrity chef Robert Irvine who is helping to modernize Army dining facilities. Discussions focused on supporting high-risk and underserved populations, improving lethal means safety, addressing financial stress and its impact on mental health, and exploring how AI is enhancing real-world clinical support. Every day, VFW accredited representatives stand ready to help service members, veterans and their families navigate mental health challenges by providing expert claims guidance, assistance with VA benefits, and support accessing vital care and resources. [Learn more.](#)

### **March 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

**House Committee Pending Legislation Hearing:** VFW National Legislative Service Acting Director Nancy Springer submitted a statement for the record for a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing on pending legislation. The VFW stated support for proposals to reauthorize and strengthen key VA programs; to improve benefits related to toxic

exposure, health care and housing; and to enhance workforce recruiting and retention within the appellate system. This legislation reflects long-standing VFW priorities, including stronger safeguards against unaccredited claims representatives and the creation of a fourth VA administration. Watch the hearing, which begins at the 7:11 mark.

**Legal Experts Join VFW Podcast:** VFW General Counsel John Muckelbauer and VFW National Legislative Committee Chairman and lawyer Jason Johns made their debuts on the latest podcast to delve into top tier issues for the VFW including ongoing federal and state litigation efforts around veterans' concurrent eligibility for the Montgomery and Post-9/11 GI Bills and Claim Sharks, respectively. Joined by VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci, host Rob Couture and co-host Brittany Dymond Murray also wove in discussion of VA plans to screen claim files, legislation targeted at unaccredited claims consulting firms, and the VFW's recent Washington Conference. Listen to episode 61, "Shark of Record," on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's YouTube channel.

**Commission Seeking Input from Afghanistan War Veterans:** The Afghanistan War Commission is a bipartisan entity established by Congress in 2021 with the mandate to examine the strategic, diplomatic and operational decisions made during the war in Afghanistan. The commission is seeking input from veterans who served there between June 2001 and August 2021. The information and views you share will be considered in recommendations to Congress and policymakers for shaping future decisions regarding national security. Read more or submit your comments.

### **March 30<sup>th</sup>:**

**Senate Committee Advances Veterans Legislation:** The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup business meeting on pending legislation and has advanced 24 bills for consideration, many of which the VFW has supported in testimony. These proposals span a wide range of issues, including establishing parity in education benefits for National Guard and Reserve service members, improving VA's disability compensation claims and appeals processes, and studying the generational impacts of toxic exposures. If enacted, these bills would strengthen benefits and services for veterans, caregivers and survivors while advancing key VFW legislative priorities. Watch the meeting, which begins at the 23:19 mark.

**VFW Launches New Tool for Faster Claim Benefits Assistance:** The VFW has launched a new online tool to simplify and accelerate access to VA benefits assistance. It allows transitioning service members within 180 days of separation, veterans and survivors to complete a short form that creates a case record for a VFW Accredited Service Officer. Automating this intake process reduces paperwork, streamlines communication and more quickly connects users with free, accredited representation. Read more.

**VFW Leader Receives LeValley Award:** VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci has been honored with the prestigious LeValley Award from the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, a valued VFW partner. He received the award to recognize his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to the veteran community. Throughout his career, Gallucci has been a steadfast advocate for policies that expand access to earned benefits and strengthen support systems for veterans and their families. His collaborative approach and dedication to meaningful reform have made lasting impacts at both the national and local levels. Gallucci's receipt of the LeValley Award reflects not only his professional achievements but also his enduring commitment to ensuring all veterans receive the care, respect and opportunities they deserve.

**TRICARE Guidance for Displaced Families:** The Defense Health Agency is reminding service members and families displaced from overseas duty stations that they remain covered by TRICARE and should review updated guidance to maintain uninterrupted care. Displacement to the United States is treated as a Qualifying Life Event, providing a 90-day window to update enrollment or change regions, while those remaining overseas continue coverage through International SOS. A displaced beneficiary is defined as an active duty service member or family member forced to relocate from an overseas duty station or home abroad due to circumstances like natural disasters, political unrest, or mandatory evacuations. Those who permanently move should follow standard Qualifying Life Event rules. Beneficiaries should check their information in DEERS and review all care options. Read more.

Respectfully,



## VFW DAY OF SERVICE 2026

The fifth annual VFW Day of Service will kick off May 2, 2026.

This worldwide movement lasts for the entire month. Be sure to let your fellow veterans and Posts know and encourage them to [sign up](#).

Participating in Day of Service 2026 gets your Post one step closer to achieving All-American status. Plus, you'll be making a positive difference in your town — It's a win-win!

Did we mention Posts that confirm their events and participation early will be more likely to have support from our team to earn media coverage? The sooner you confirm participation, the more support we can provide.

- Confirm and update your event details
- Share stories and contact info to potentially get your Post media attention
- Find FREE helpful tools to come up with ideas, plan, and promote your event

P.S. Don't miss out on your chance to show America how you're Still Serving with your fellow veterans. **Start making plans now to participate in the 2026 VFW Day of Service!**



## 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.



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

Louisiana

# FISHING TRIP FUNDRAISER

**TO CONTINUE FUNDING VITAL PROGRAMS AND OFFSET DEPARTMENT EXPENSES, WE'RE HOSTING A FUNDRAISER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUTCAST FISHING CHARTERS**

**GRAND PRIZE: A FULL-DAY GUIDED FISHING TRIP FOR TWO PEOPLE**

- INCLUDES ALL NECESSARY FISHING EQUIPMENT
- LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS
- A MEMORABLE LOUISIANA FISHING EXPERIENCE WITH PROFESSIONAL CAPTAINS

**TICKETS  
ONLY \$5.00  
EACH**

**PURCHASE YOUR TICKET TODAY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A GUIDED FISHING TRIP AND SUPPORT OUR VETERANS!**

---

For tickets, contact a local VFW Post or Department Headquarters at 225-928-5025

✓  
**Vote**

**James Bourque**

for

DEPT OF LOUISIANA  
SR VICE COMMANDER  
2026-2027



**Gold Legacy Life Member**



VOTE



For

David B. Fields

# State Junior Vice Commander 2026-2027

- A proven Leader with over 26+ years of Military Service
- Two-time Cootie All-Star Grand Commander
- Six-term State Chaplain
- Two term District 12 Commander & All-State / All-American Post Commander
- Dedicates countless hours each month to his post, church, and his community
- Life member DAV and National Infantry Association
- Silver Legacy lifetime member VFW post 5951



### Lawrence “Larry” Koons Announces Candidacy for Department of Louisiana Junior Vice Commander (2026–2027)

Lawrence “Larry” Koons, a 24-year veteran of the United States Air Force and a committed leader within the Veterans of Foreign Wars, has announced his candidacy for Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Louisiana for the 2026–2027 term.

A VFW Life Member, Larry currently serves as District 5 Commander and has previously served as Post Commander and State Surgeon. His continued dedication to the organization is evident through his active involvement with the VFW Riders, where he has served as Post President and now serves as Department Chairman. He is also a member of the Military Order of the Cootie.

Larry brings a leadership approach grounded in service, accountability, and results. His vision focuses on strengthening the Department by ensuring that every veteran’s voice is heard, every Post is supported, and every member is valued.

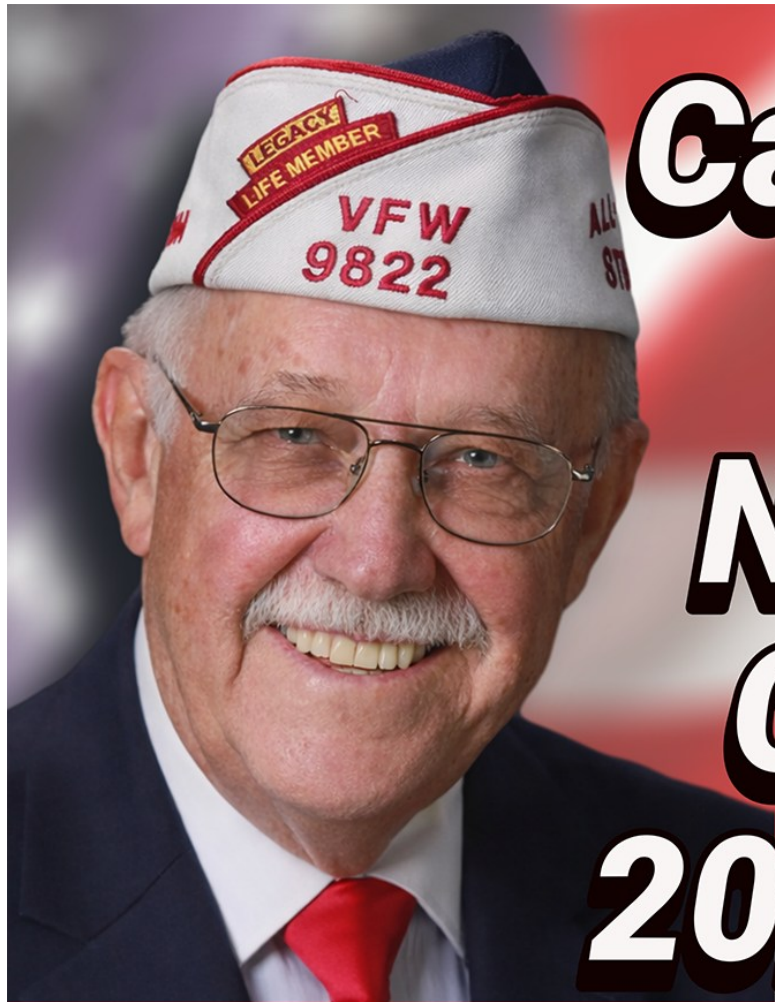
He is committed to continued advocacy at the Congressional level, working to ensure that all veterans receive the care and support they have earned—not just members of the VFW.

Understanding that the strength of the organization begins at the Post level, Larry emphasizes the importance of empowering Posts with the tools, leadership, and Department support necessary to meet and exceed expectations. He believes that when Posts succeed, the entire Department succeeds.

Larry also recognizes that membership is the lifeblood of the VFW. He is dedicated to fostering a culture of respect and accountability, where every member is treated with dignity and where standards are upheld in accordance with VFW bylaws.

“With your support, we will continue to build a stronger, more unified Department—one that honors our traditions while moving forward with purpose,” Larry said.

Larry respectfully asks for your consideration and your vote for Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Louisiana.



**Candidate  
for  
National  
Council  
2026-2030**

**DON REBER**

**Triple Crown Past State Commander**

**A proven leader with more than 40 years of executive experience, committed to service and results.**

**With a lifetime dedicated to leadership and advocacy, I stand ready to continue serving the veterans of Louisiana—with integrity, experience, and vision.**

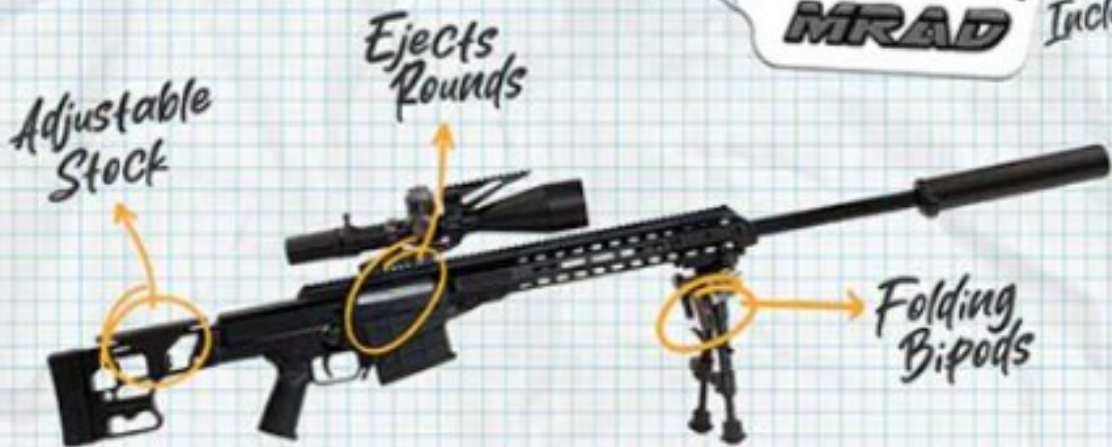
**Vote June 21, 2026**

**Louisiana State Convention**

# APRIL TOP RECRUITER

## "MRAD"

MINIATURE MK22 MODEL



14" / 35cm



11 OZ. WEIGHT



1:4 SCALE



MEDIUM ASSEMBLY



**YOU'RE INVITED TO THE FOURTH ANNUAL**  
**BOOGIE DOWN THE BAYOU**



**SUNDAY, MAY 17 2026**

**11:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

DOORS OPEN AT 10 AM

**GONZALES MEMORIAL VFW POST 3693**  
**42430 CHURCHPOINT RD, GONZALES, LA 70737**

*Live Music Featuring*

**The Mojos**  
and

**Mike Broussard & Night Train**

**TICKETS: \$30 IN ADVANCE OR \$35 AT THE DOOR**

Delicious Food  
50/50 Raffle  
Live & Silent Auctions  
Dancing  
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**SPECIAL  
APPEARANCE BY:  
WILL CLARK**



**PROUD  
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OF THE**

**Tunnel to Towers Foundation**

**T2T.ORG**

All Proceeds Go to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation



All Tickets Are Non-Refundable  
No Outside Food or Drink Allowed

**Sponsored by: Bayou Hope Foundation**

BAKER - ZACHARY VFW POST 4224

# SECOND ANNUAL GOLF SCRAMBLE



OR CODE TO WEBSITE



**APRIL 24 FRIDAY 2026**

**COPPER MILL GOLF CLUB**

2100 COPPER MILL BOULEVARD, ZACHARY, LA 70791

## SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

### **DIAMOND-\$2,000**

FOUR POLO SHIRTS  
TWO HOLE SIGNS  
ONE LARGE BANNER  
50 DOOR PRIZE TICKETS  
LARGE LOGO ON T-SHIRT

### **PLATINUM-\$1,500**

FOUR POLO SHIRTS  
FOUR T-SHIRTS  
TWO HOLE SIGNS  
ONE LARGE BANNER  
ONE MID-SIZE BANNER  
50 DOOR PRIZE TICKETS  
SMALL LOGO ON T-SHIRT

### **GOLD-\$1,000**

FOUR POLO SHIRTS  
TWO HOLE SIGNS  
TWO MID-SIZE BANNERS  
SMALL LOGO ON T-SHIRT

### **SILVER-\$500**

FOUR T-SHIRTS  
ONE HOLE SIGN  
ONE MID-SIZE BANNER  
SMALL LOGO ON T-SHIRT

### **FALCON PACKAGE-\$500**

TENT SPONSORS 10 X 10 COMPANY TENT SET UP  
SMALL LOGO ON T-SHIRT

### **BRONZE-\$100**

ONE HOLE SIGN

**SHOTGUN START | SIGN-IN AT 7:15A | START TIME 8A**

**EMAIL: DARREN.SPEARS6@GMAIL.COM**

# VFW Auxiliary

Mess Hall

Mayhem

Wild Game Cook-Off & Fun

Day  
**May 2, 2026**

Cook-Off  
Form



Food, Music,  
Booths & Kids  
Zone

**10am-4pm**

Craft  
Booth Form



If you need more info on applying  
please email at

**[vfw3652aux@gmail.com](mailto:vfw3652aux@gmail.com)**

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