

Mail Call

Department of Louisiana

March 2025 | Issue 9



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

State Commander's Testimonial

March 22, 2025
Post 9854

VFW Day of Service May 3, 2025

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

Council of Administration
August 22-24, 2025
The Hotel Bentley
Alexandria LA

"Generations Continuing to Serve"

DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

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

DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

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

DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

May 3, 2025 **Post 9822**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$8) 12:00noon
State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

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

DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

May 17, 2025 **Post 6720**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$10) 12:00noon
State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

April 26, 2025 **Post 3784**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon
State Rep, QM Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

April 26, 2025 **Post 3652**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 11:00 am
State Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

May 3, 2025 **Post 7643**
 Registration 10:00 am
 Meeting 10:30 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00noon
State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

May 10, 2025 **Post 1809**
 Registration 9:30 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon
St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon

DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

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

DISTRICT Elections

Article IV- Districts Section 416, District officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the District Adjutant. Additionally, District Commanders, District Senior Vice Commanders, and District Junior Vice Commanders shall submit proof of edibility to the Department Adjutant. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed.

VFW POST 3337 HOSTING VA BENEFIT WORKSHOP

The VA Benefit workshop has been moved to March 19 from 8-2. The VFW POST 3337 is only hosting and is not responsible for any claims or benefits!

State Commander's Testimonial

March 22, 2025

Post 9854

****The hotel has changed to Best Western Casino Inn
2466 Toomey Rd. Vinton, LA 70668
337-551-6350**

If you previously booked a room at the other hotel, you will need to contact Best Western to rebook your room.

95th Annual State Convention

June 26-29, 2025

Bentley Hotel & Randolph Convention
Center
Alexandria, LA

State Convention Delegate/ Alternate Registration:

Post may send in their Delegate/Alternate Registration form now, so that the Department can start typing name badges.

To Submit the Delegate/Alternate Form by mail: Post may find the Delegate/Alternate Form in this month's mail call.

To Submit the Delegate/Alternate Form online: Post may also submit their form & payment online by clicking the link below:
<https://form.jotform.com/242125563185051>

Banquet Tickets

Purchase your Banquet Ticket now! Tickets are \$40.00 per person! Click the link below to pay for your tickets online
<https://form.jotform.com/240304921208143>

Visit our website www.vfwdeptla.org under News—State Convention for more information!

ARREARAGES

Attention is directed to Section 213 of the National Constitution and By-Laws concerning arrearages of Post. Not submitting Membership reports, National, Department, or District Dues, National Convention Registration, Buddy Poppy Money, Supply Money, or any other financial obligations; failure to have the office of Quartermaster Bonded, or failure to submit quarterly Post Trustee Reports of Audit. Posts that are delinquent in any of the aforementioned shall be deprived of all representation in **District, Department and National Events**. Including Conferences and Conventions.

VFW Legislative Conference March 2-6, 2025

If you are attending the conference, help promote the VFW's veterans' advocacy efforts by sharing pictures and videos to social media from your visits with members of Congress using #VFWDC2025

If you are not able to attend the VFW Legislative Conference, you can still watch events from the conference live beginning with the Parade of Winners Monday, March 3, at 6:00 p.m. EST at www.vfw.org/VFWDC2025, and culminating with VFW National Commander Al Liphardt's testimony before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on Tuesday, March 4, at 10:00 a.m.

STATE COMMANDER'S MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE WINNER FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

The top recruiter for the month of **FEBRUARY** is **JON HUDSON** from **Post 3106 in Leesville**, with Three (3) new members.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF'S CHALLENGE

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

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

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

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

MARCH'S winners will receive an 8-foot VFW personalized table cover customized for the Post to be used for meetings, recruiting events, and other functions!

100 % POST

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

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

****SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS!**

ATTENTION ALL POSTS: CHECK YOUR STATUS FOR THE ALL-STATE TEAM!

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wDjAr-TdAoRiybKLGGrHa2oo_EpynZdH-XXOaiWlaviI/edit?usp=sharing

As we move into the final stretch of the year, it's important to ensure that your post is on track to earn the prestigious All-State recognition. The All-State Team is a reflection of the dedication and hard work put in by our posts to serve our veterans and community, and we want to make sure every post has the chance to meet the criteria.

To assist with this, we've made the All-State requirements easily accessible via a spreadsheet. The link to the spreadsheet has been provided below, and we highly encourage every post to review it and verify that they are meeting the necessary standards. This includes meeting membership goals, completing required activities, and more.

RECRUITING AWARD MARCH



M16A1

MINIATURE 1:3 Scale

This was the predominant rifle used during the Vietnam war, entering the market in 1964



CANIDATE FOR JR. VICE COMMANDER 2025-2026:

Vote

James Bourque

for

DEPT OF LOUISIANA
JR VICE COMMANDER
2025-2026

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Gold Legacy Life Member

VFW 9822
ALL-NEW 2025
POST

EVENT FLYERS:

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

Future National Convention Dates:

August 9-14, 2025

Columbus, OH

July 31-Aug 4, 2027

Milwaukee, WI

Aug 15-20, 2026

Salt Lake City, UT

Aug 5-10, 2028

San Antonio, TX

COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING:

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

VFW Department of Louisiana Headquarters CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office- 225-928-5025 | www.vfwdeptla.org

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

State Quartermaster

Elvin R. Bass

Email: lavfwqm@yahoo.com

State Adjutant

Carl Karnish

Email: adj@vfwdeptla.org

State Administrative Assistant:

Tori LeBlanc

Email: lastatevfw@yahoo.com

State Commander:

Debbie McElhannon

Email: debbiemc4vets@gmail.com

Department Conference/ Convention Dates:

2024-2025

State Convention

June 26-29, 2025

2025-2026

CofA/Officer Training

August 22-24, 2025

Mid Winter

January 22-25, 2026

State Convention

June 18-21, 2026

CoA/Officer Training

August 28-30, 2026

State Commander's Special Project Brothers and Sisters in Arms

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



CHALLENGE COIN

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

Cost \$10.00 each + shipping

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

Click the link below to order yours today!

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



From the desk of the State Commander...

March is here; what a wonderful month. March is probably one of my favorite months because it's the first day of Spring and I like warm weather. It also happens to be my birthday month, and we go to Washington D.C. to speak with our representatives about important concerns for our veterans. We will be traveling the first weekend to get to D.C. The VOD winners will be announced during this trip.

As a reminder, my testimonial will be 22 March. There has been a change in hotels. If you had a reservation at Cobblestone, they cancelled all reservations. Please call the Best Western at 337-551-6350 and let them know that you are with the VFW. I was asked what to wear to the testimonial; wear your best spring outfit or Sunday best, a nice outfit. Call the phone numbers in the flyer or me and reserve your tickets by March 15 so you only pay \$20.00 per ticket. The price is \$30.00 at the door. Come out to the big town of Vinton and enjoy some comradery, good food, door prizes, auction and music. Here's a brief tentative timeline.

4-6 - Meet & Greet_view auction items_50/50_finger foods served_DJ_Lounge open

6 - Program begins_Introduce guests_Dinner served after program

7 - live auction and pull bucket auction tickets

Gifts after live auction

730 - Silent auction ends

DJ until 9 and there will be a dance floor

I will be calling all district and post commanders about Sunday 2 March to ask two questions. First question, how many people from your post will be attending the testimonial on 22 March so I can get a count. Second question, how many people plan to go to National and would like to attend a special black-tie banquet on Monday of National. The banquet is when they will hand out most awards instead of during the business meeting. We need to reserve tables.

If you haven't read your bylaws, please get a copy of the bylaws and read them. You can download a copy at vfw.org.

Districts need to send your inspection reports to the department. All post inspections should be complete. If they are not complete, I need to know when you plan to complete the inspection. We still plan to have the state inspect the districts.

Louisiana is now over 96% membership. Thank you for everyone who has recruited members. You are doing a great job. I still ask that each person recruit 1 member between now and April. We need to reach all eligible veterans and ask them to join. The more people we have active, the more that we can accomplish for veterans.

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

Thank you for you for what you do. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to serving and helping veterans. Hope to see you at my testimonial, 22 March.



**State Commander
Debbie McElhannon**

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

Greetings,

Our Leadership will be attending the Washington Conference in Washington D.C. this month to address Veteran Legislation Priorities with our representatives. We will be addressing priorities such as Unaddressed Toxic Exposures, TAP Promotion Act, Exploring Alternative PTSD Treatments, Predatory Claims Concerns, GI Bill Priority Act and the Major Richard Star Act. Our Commander in Chief Al Lipphardt will also give testimony on our priorities.

VFW will also have our Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners ceremony. Good luck to Department of Louisiana winner Ashlyn Rogers from Post 3750 Luling, LA.

Great job on our recruiting efforts! Let's continue to recruit, educate and mentor our new members. Let's build relationships and maintain our new members. Communication is key.

Sincerely,



**Sr. Vice Commander
James Prestenback**

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

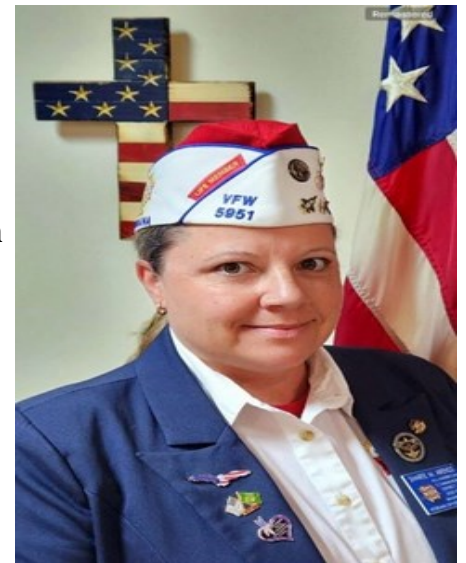
Greetings Comrades,

The month of February has flown by, I cannot believe March is already here! This month we head to Washington DC for the Washington (Legislative) Conference. This will be my first of many times to attend and I am looking forward to learning so much and of course, always seeing familiar faces and meeting new people.

We also have the Commanders Testimonial coming up on March 22nd. I hope to see many people in attendance.

Remember, do not stop recruiting, reinstating, or retaining members! If you have not already, make sure you apply for the National Day of Service. Remember, any event in the month of MAY qualifies if you apply on the National Website. Spring and summer are just around the corner, and it is a perfect time to start planning more events that involve the community. Adopt a unit, hold a family day, hold a health fair, there are so many things you can start planning now. The sooner you plan, the better the outcome! Get your post/district out there to the community and grow!

I look forward to seeing each of you during my travels to the District meetings and at the Washington Conference!



**Jr. Vice Commander
Sharee Arends**

A message from our State Adjutant....

Have you thought about running for an elected position within your Post? Do you really understand what it takes? Why would I run for an office? Section 217 o Podium Addition covers the how to elect.

Sec. 217 - **Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**

Order of nominations and elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, and Trustee(s).

Nomination. Prior to the opening of nominations, the Post shall decide which form of election shall be used, unless the Post Bylaws specify the manner of election.

Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which they have been nominated before nominations are closed. A member making the nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the opening of nominations. **Nominations of Post Officers shall open in March** and remain open until the Post is ready to vote, provided, however, that when a poll system is used, as hereinafter described, nominations must be closed at the meeting prior to the election to allow the Adjutant to prepare a printed ballot. Election. **Post officers shall be elected in April.** Balloting for Post officers may be conducted by open vote or written secret ballot (handwritten or printed) at a regular Post meeting, or, if required by Post Bylaws or authorized by Post vote prior to the opening of nominations, by a poll system. Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited



**State Adjutant
Carl Karnish**

A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

I want to remind all Posts to check their financial balances because if your financial balances exceed the amount for which you are bonded, you must increase your bond accordingly. This is important to protect your Post's funds from potential loss. After reviewing the last quarterly reports received at Headquarters, I noticed that the financial balance of several Posts have exceeded their Bond coverage. If your balances have grown beyond your current bond coverage, you must submit a bond increase form. Send me an email at lavfwqm@yahoo.com requesting a Bond Increase and I will send you the correct form to be completed.

Another important matter is membership renewal and recruitment. We are all aware of the importance of recruiting new members and retaining the members we currently have. Staying on top of membership renewals ensures that our voice remains strong. Post Quartermasters should ensure that dues are processed correctly and on time. Any delays or mistakes in processing dues could result in lapses in membership.. Please review the membership processing guidelines and double-check that all information is accurate.

If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your diligence and commitment to our Department!



**State Quartermaster
Elvin Ray Bass**

A message from our State Surgeon....



**State Surgeon
Lawrence Koons**

Comrades, your friendly Surgeon here. As we move into warmer weather, please ease into those spring chores. None of us is as young as we used to be... Also, don't forget to get an annual check up with your primary care provider. I know that some of us are concerned with the recent VA situation. But, they are still there to provide for all of us. If you are having any issues with your VA, please let me know and we'll see what we can do.

The Riders Group will be hosting the 2nd Annual VFW Riders Rally in Bossier City, LA 2-4 May 2025. Flyer still to follow as I have not made the time to ensure it is all correct. My apologize...I'll try to do better.

Operation Daily Battle (ODB) can hold QPR training upon request. If you are interested in our class, please reach out to either myself or to Ed Horton (Chairman ODB). We will be conducting classes during state convention if anyone is interested as well. Class size is limited to 35 members and we will have registration set up well in advance. This program is sponsored by the VFW Riders Group.

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

A message from our State Chaplain....



**State Chaplain
David Fields**

How many of you are afraid to ask for help? Regardless of how good, how strong, or how smart you are, or even think you are it is impossible to do everything perfectly or for that part, everything all the time. One of the main jobs I had as a Platoon Sergeant when I was in the Army was both handing my troopers problems, and to get them to understand it was okay to ask for help, and in large it was one of the biggest parts of everything training school or exercise; pushing people to the tipping point so they had to grow as a team.

This was also one of the largest tasks I had to go through during my accident recovery. After over a month laying in a coma and several more months at a multitude of hospitals I too, at some points had to learn the same points. In the end in both the military, my personal experience, and even in each of your individual VFW lives each time you ultimately emerged a much stronger person. Countless times during my recovery process I was thanked by the people who interacted with for me how much effort that I was exerting or for the impression I left on them. Ultimately thing I have never been is a quitter, both to my success and failures, however in all of my military times, VFW times, and even those personal ones I was unable to do it all by myself nor was I afraid to ask for help.

I, often times, found myself gaining hope and strength through my faith. I don't care if you practice the same religion as me or even if you believe in the same God as me. Regardless, I will continue to ask that you ask for both help of myself and of others. Sometimes you just have to ask for prayers.

Each of you both can help others, and receive it from them too. I pray that you emerge a stronger person and that each of you have more good times than the bad ones. Always remember that my phone, email, and text messages are here for your use.

God bless you all,

Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Louisiana Legislative Report February 2025

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.

February 3rd:

Hegseth Confirmed as Secretary of Defense: After a narrow confirmation vote in the Senate, Pete Hegseth, a former Army National Guard major, was sworn in as the 29th secretary of defense. Upon taking office, Hegseth outlined his vision for reforming the military, emphasizing accountability, high standards, and merit within the Department of Defense. He stressed the need to restore warfighting readiness, reduce bureaucracy, and reallocate resources to boost military effectiveness. [Read more.](#)

VA Helps Veterans Preserve Their Legacy: VA has expanded access to the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) to permit eligible veterans to record their own life stories. VLM is the country's largest digital platform dedicated to the memory of veterans and service members. The new "Your Story, Your Legacy" feature will allow secure submission of images, autobiographies, life and military milestones, and historical documents. Following the veteran's passing and approval of a request for burial or memorial benefit, VA will release the veteran's content to the individual's VLM page on the public-facing website. [Read more.](#)

VFW 2025 Priority Goals: The 119th Congress is now in session. Fortunately, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act was passed and signed into law in the final days of the previous Congress. This bipartisan, bicameral legislative package was a significant and long overdue victory for transitioning service members, veterans, caretakers, and survivors. However, there was much unfinished work on other important legislation. The [VFW 2025 Priority Goals](#) include many issues that still need to be addressed. We will continue to advocate diligently to ensure the newly seated Congress provides the resources and care our nation's veterans and their families have earned and deserve.

February 10th:

Collins Confirmed as Secretary of Veterans Affairs: Following a confirmation vote of 77–23 in the Senate, Douglas A. Collins has been sworn in as the 12th secretary of Veterans Affairs. He is the first post-9/11 veteran to serve in this Cabinet position. He served in the Navy, and is currently a colonel and chaplain in the Air Force Reserve. Collins is also a former U.S representative from Georgia. In a message to veterans and VA employees, he outlined his approach to include delivering timely access to care and benefits for every eligible individual, focusing on customer service and convenience, challenging the status quo, and celebrating great performance by VA employees but holding accountable those who fall short of the mission. [Read more.](#)

Helpful Veterans Benefits Resource: The *2025 VA Federal Benefits Guide for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers* is a comprehensive resource for programs and services. This extensive handbook includes a wide range of information on eligibility criteria, enrollment processes, compensation, and benefits. It also provides many helpful website links and phone numbers directing individuals to specific resources. [Download the guide](#), or visit va.gov for more information and updates.

Celebrate Military 250: The nonpartisan, nonprofit organization We the Veterans and Military Families announced the launch of Military 250, which is a year-long program to honor the 250th anniversary of our military through continued service. But it is about more than honoring the past — it is a call to look ahead and recommit to the values of unity, resilience, and civic pride that strengthen our nation. This initiative will shine a spotlight on 250 acts of service, 250 veteran and military family organizations, and 250 individuals who exemplify service-driven citizenship, inviting everyone to honor the military through meaningful action in their communities. [Learn how](#) you can participate.

VA Extends Deadline for Sign-In Changes: The deadline to use your My HealtheVet username and password has been extended to March 4, 2025. VA Medical Centers are offering in-person assistance to veterans and their families who are experiencing issues switching from their My HealtheVet or DS Logon. [Read more.](#)

February 17th:

Independent Budget Released: Leading veterans service organizations — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released *The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2026-2027*. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. "While the Independent Budget is now complete, it is imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority," said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. "We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served." [Read the report.](#)

VFW Presents Education Legislative Priorities: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan spoke on a legislative panel at the midwinter meeting of the National Association of State Approving Agencies. These agencies have responsibility to review, approve, and monitor all programs and schools for quality education for students using VA benefits. Keenan presented the VFW's legislative priorities regarding education opportunity, including National Guard and Reserve GI Bill parity to ensure that each day in uniform for which reserve component service members receive pay counts toward earning their GI Bill benefits. This is currently limited to specific active duty statuses, creating disparities among the armed forces. She also stressed the need for student veterans who take some or all college courses online to receive a more realistic monthly housing allowance, currently set at half the national average. The VFW supports increasing this amount to ensure that veterans do not experience housing insecurity while pursuing an education.

House Passes Veteran Homelessness Bill: The House passed VFW-supported H.R. 965, *Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act*. This bill would exclude VA disability compensation from income calculations for housing programs supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Veterans with injuries or illnesses resulting from military service may have significant barriers to employment and be at a higher risk for homelessness. The risks may also increase for those with higher disability ratings. Excluding this earned compensation would facilitate greater veteran eligibility for supported housing programs. The VFW thanks Rep. Sherman (CA-32) for introducing this important legislation, and urges the Senate to swiftly pass it as well. [Read the bill.](#)

Bill to Safeguard VA Benefit and Second Amendment Rights: Chairmen Moran and Bost of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Sen. Kennedy of Louisiana, have introduced a bill to preserve the Second Amendment rights of veterans with VA-assigned fiduciaries. Under current law, VA must submit the names of veterans with fiduciaries to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), prohibiting them from purchasing or possessing firearms. The proposed legislation would not allow a name referral to NICS without a judicial finding that a veteran is a danger to self or others. "Veterans should never be forced to choose between receiving assistance from VA to manage their benefits and their fundamental Second Amendment rights," said Chairman Moran. [Read more.](#)

February 24th:

VFW Reminds Members to Stay Focused Amid Confusion in the Capital: VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt sent a message to VFW members and supporters in response to recent changes made by the new Administration. The VFW has received a multitude of calls and emails from veterans worried about reductions in federal benefit programs and the federal workforce, including 1,000 VA probationary employees who were let go. Lipphardt stated, "Make no mistake, the staff at the VFW Washington Office is working hard behind the scenes to protect you and ensure you receive the care and benefits you have earned." [Read more.](#)

DOD Decommissioning TRICARE Online Patient Portal: The TRICARE Online Patient Portal will be decommissioned on April 1, 2025. It has been replaced by DOD's new electronic health record, MHS GENESIS. Your medical provider will continue to have access to your complete health record, but if you would like a copy for your own files you must download it before April 1. [Read more.](#)

Become a Sponsor to Support Transitioning Service Members: The Veteran Sponsorship Initiative (VSI) is a public-private partnership of the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor, along with national nonprofit and community-based organizations. This program aims to support transitioning service members by matching them with sponsors who can assist with housing, employment, education, and mental health resources. Sponsors receive training from VA and are backed by a network of specialized service providers to help ease the challenges and offer guidance and encouragement for veterans reintegrating into civilian life. [Learn more](#) about how you can play an essential role in VSI.

VA Preserving the Environment While Serving Veterans: To develop an environmentally sustainable interment option, VA is piloting "green" burial sections at three national cemeteries: National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix; Pikes Peak National Cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida. Green interment requires the remains to be prepared without chemicals or embalming fluid and to be buried in a biodegradable casket, urn, or securely wrapped in a biodegradable shroud. The pilot program will inform VA regarding the implementation of green burial sections at additional cemeteries. [Read more](#) about the program, including frequently asked questions.

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

Matthew J. West
VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

COMMITTEEMAN'S CORNER

March is always a fun time for the VFW, we have the Washington Conference, a National Council of Administration Meeting, Sr Vice Commanders are getting ready to attend their training and the push for Membership is in full speed ahead, after burners have been triggered.

Sometime Sunday afternoon the decision concerning the future of the VOD Program continuing as it is now or will there be changes made to the way the students are awarded their scholarships will be determined. I am glad that our Department leadership along with the Past Department Commanders are standing together with me to support Option #3

Option #3 – Exchange the D.C. winners trip for the “Founding Forward trip, host the virtual Parade of Winners – cost \$107,000.00. Founding Forward would also assume all the risks associated with the students

From the talk among the National Council members I believe Option #3 will be voted on, but things could change.

Last month I briefed on the position of the Post Trustee and had a lot of feedback from members that they were unaware of some of the items I had referenced, comrades if you would take a little time and read the Podium Edition a lot of your questions would be answered. PDC Larry Raymond pulled me on the side when I was first elected as District 2 Commander and handed me a copy of the Podium Edition and said “read this and familiarize yourself with where things are in this book and you will always be able to answer peoples questions”. I have always kept those words of wisdom from him close to heart and each year I highlight any changes made to the By-Laws or Procedures after the national Convention.

Comrades next month is when nominations for Officers within your Post should begin to line up, I ask anyone looking to become a Post Officer if you are not a Life Member consider becoming one or pay your dues to your Quartermaster right after being elected for the year. Having to have Officers removed by National for not paying dues is not something that the Department, District or Post should have to worry about. Set the example to your membership by paying ahead or becoming a Life Member.

Do not just wait until it is time to collect dues to contact your members, do it on a regular basis. Until next month, let's continue to renew, reinstate and recruit members into the Department of Louisiana VFW.

The monthly Council Updates are sent to all of the District Commanders for distribution to the Posts, if you are not receiving them please contact your District Commander or send me an email and I will send them to you

SAVE THE DATE



TESTIMONIAL

STATE COMMANDER, DEBBIE MCELHANNON

March 22, 2025

Harrington LeBouef VFW Post 9854

2292 Highway 109 S

Vinton, LA 70668

Ticket Presale \$20.00

At the Door \$30.00

Doors Open at 4:00 P.M.

Auctions



Food



Music



Door Prizes and much more

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

Hotel reservations can be made at Best Western Casino Inn, by calling or 337-551-6350 and using the code "testimonial", a block of rooms has been reserved for those coming in for the event. We were blessed to get a great deal at \$85.00 per night, which includes a hot breakfast. Limited number of rooms downstairs for those who may need, please call ASAP.

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
- 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!



Don't Forget to register your Post for the Day of Service in May.

An All American Requirement

<https://todaysvfw.org/day-of-service>





Golf

VFW Post 4224 Tournament

2025 1st ANNUAL CHARITY

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

www.vfwpost4224.org/golf@vfwpost4224.org



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

EVENT SCHEDULE

Doors Open 6PM

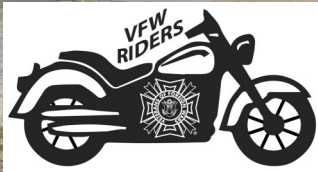
Food and Drinks 6-8PM

Drew Takes the Stage 8PM



**LOUISIANA VFW RIDERS GROUP
SECOND ANNUAL STATE RALLY
2-4 MAY 2025
BOSSIER CITY**

Registration Details to Come!!!



**Raffles and Silent Auction
Vendors**

Drinks and Comradery: At Post 5951 on the evening of 2 May
Poker run, Music, and Lunch at 3 State Harley Davidson during the day on 3 May
Dancing and fun at Post 4588 in the evening on 3 May
Breakfast and send off at Post 4588 on 4 May