

Mail Call

Department of Louisiana



October 2024 | Issue 4

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Southern Conference
November 7-9, 2024
Nashville, TN

Veteran’s Day
November 11, 2024

Mid-Winter Conference
January 23-26, 2025
The Bentley Alexandria

**State Commander’s
Testimonial**
March 22, 2025
Post 9854

****More information to come!**

VFW Day of Service
May 3, 2025

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

“Generations Continuing to Serve”

DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

Feb 22, 2025 **Post 3750**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00noon

State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends

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

State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

Jan 11, 2025 **Post 4222**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Joint Meeting 10:00 am
 Meeting 10:30 am
 Lunch(\$8) 12:00noon

State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends

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

St. Rep, SVC. James Prestenback

DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

Feb 15, 2025 **Post 1982**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$8) 12:00noon

State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

May 3, 2025 **Post 9822**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$8) 12:00noon

State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

Nov 2, 2024 **Post 3106**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

State Rep, COS, Max Arends

April 12, 2025 **Post 3619**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon

DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

Nov 9, 2024 **Post 2483**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$10) 12:00noon

State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

May 17, 2025 **Post 6720**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch(\$10) 12:00noon

State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

Jan 18, 2025 **Post 3785**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

State Rep, QM, Elvin "Ray" Bass

April 26, 2025 **Post 3784**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

Oct 26, 2024 **Post 8720**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 11:00 am

St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon

Feb 15, 2025 **Post 5735**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 11:00 am

St. Rep, SVC. James Prestenback

DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

April 26, 2025 **Post 3652**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 11:00 am

State Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

Feb 15, 2025 **Post 3139**
 Registration 10:00 am
 Meeting 10:30 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00noon

State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends

May 3, 2025 **Post 7643**
 Registration 10:00 am
 Meeting 10:30 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00noon

State. Rep, ADJ, Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

Jan 18, 2025 **Post 3615**
 Registration 9:30 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends

May 10, 2025 **Post 1809**
 Registration 9:30 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00noon

St. Rep, Cmd Debbie McElhannon

DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

Jan 11, 2025 **Post 4588**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00noon

State Rep, JPC, Ron Delaney

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

State Rep, JVC, Sharee Arends



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

****The Department has encouraged each District to order coins for Post to purchase from them to save on the cost of 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>

This Holiday Season...

Now is the time for all Post to start preparing food baskets for the needy for Thanksgiving and Christmas. This is a great example of Community Service!

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

REGISTRATION:

Submit your Registration and Payment online by visiting www.vfwdeptla.org under Events - Mid Winter Conference

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

BANQUET TICKETS:

Purchase your Banquet Ticket now! See form in this Mail Call or visit our website to purchase online. (www.vfwdeptla.org under Events - Mid Winter Conference)

Tickets are \$30.00 per person!

POST ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION YEARLY FILING WITH SEC. OF STATE:

You must renew the articles every year or the Secretary of State will file the articles as "not in good standing."

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR POST'S ARTICLES, CONTACT DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO FURTHER ASSIST YOU!

ALL AMERICAN DASHBOARD UPDATES:

- **VFW Day of Service** requirement has been added to the Post dashboard. This will be updated by VFW National HQs beginning shortly as we get the sign-ups from Posts. The All American Post requirement is for posts to sign up for the VFW Day of Service. Once the VFW Day of Service is complete, Post must submit an Community Service Entry on the Department's website. Post can sign up using the link below:

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

DISASTER RELIEF

National is now accepting donations for Disaster Relief Assistance to the States that have been affected by Hurricane Helene.

You can visit <https://www.vfw.org/disasterreliefsupport> for more information on how to donate!

State Commander's Membership Challenge for OCTOBER

****See Page 5**

State Commander's Membership Challenge Winner for the month of SEPTEMBER

The winner of the Mahogany M16 is Robert Reisz from Post 4224 in Baker, LA! Robert has recruited 41 new/reinstated members so far this year!



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.

OCTOBER'S winners will receive a VFW Buddy Poppy table cover to use for your Post's upcoming Buddy Poppy drives.

CONGRATULATIONS to Post 5187 on winning in Division 8 for the September CIC's Challenge!

100 % POST

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

1982	2885	3665
5187	9608	12065
12203	3793	

Membership Monday Webinar via Zoom

Membership Monday training webinar will be on **OCTOBER 7, 2024 @ 2:00 P.M.** VFW National Membership will cover how to understand the numbers when it comes to reading membership statistics and reports.

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

OCTOBER AWARD TOP RECRUITER

10/1/24 - 10/31/24

**NEW AND
REINSTATED**

**16" Tall
17.5" Wide
7" Deep
Weighs 4 lbs**



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

www.facebook.com/vfwdeptla



Future National Convention Dates:

August 9-14, 2025 Columbus, OH	Aug 15-20, 2026 Salt Lake City, UT
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

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

State Quartermaster

Elvin R. Bass
Email: lavfwqm@yahoo.com

State Adjutant

Carl Karnish
Email: adj@vfwdeptla.org

State Administrative Assistant:

Tori LeBlanc
Email: lastatevfw@yahoo.com

State Commander:

Debbie McElhannon
Email: debbiemc4vets@gmail.com

EVENT FLYERS:

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

COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING:

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

Department Conference/ Convention Dates:

2024-2025

Mid Winter

January 23-26, 2025

State Convention

June 26-29, 2025

2025-2026

CofA/Officer Training

August 22-24, 2025

Mid Winter

January 22-25, 2026

State Convention

June 18-21, 2026

CoA/Officer Training

August 28-30, 2026

From the desk of the State Commander...

I hope that each of you are doing well. I want to thank everyone for the hard work and dedication that you have shown so far this year. Things in the Department of LA are going great; keep up the momentum. I would like to congratulate a few people: Robert Reisz for earning the September membership award, the Mahogany M16, Chris LeGuin for earning the August membership award, the Louisville Slugger and VFW 5187, Zwolle for being first in their Division Nationally for membership growth. The following posts reached 100% or more VFW Posts 9608, Chauvin, 1982, New Iberia, 3793, Kaplan, 12203, Kinder, 4224, Baker, 2885, Minden, 5187, Zwolle, and 12065, New Iberia. Thank you for what you are doing.

Our VFW school programs, Americanism, Patriot Pen (PP) and Voice of Democracy (VOD), as well as teacher of the year are well under way and are due to the post this month, 31 October. Any district that hasn't signed up for Scholars App, you need to do so ASAP because you must upload PP and VOD. Any post that would like to put entries on Scholars App, contact Carl Karnish at adj@vfwdeptla.org. The good thing about the Scholars App is that students can find many scholarships available to them.

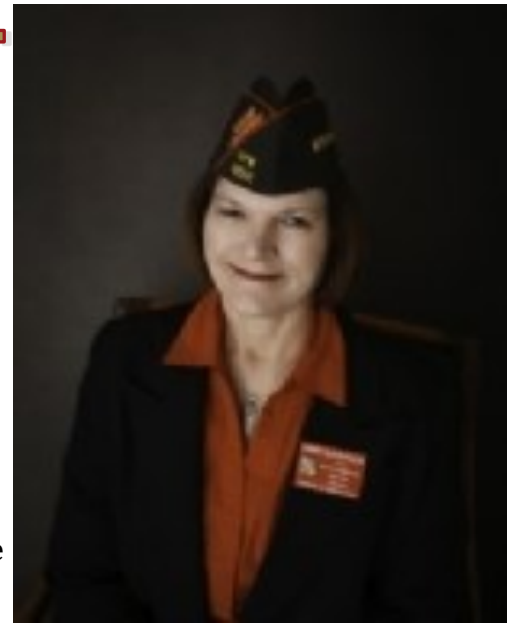
We are still planning on having a membership booth at The State Fair of Louisiana in Shreveport, LA from 30 October to 17 November. If you are available to help any of those days, please let us know. This will take many people to accomplish.

We have become aware of a VFW Post that was started in a prison in Colorado. National became aware that some of the members were not worthy to be a member of the VFW, meaning they had major offenses that were against morales of humanity. National admitted the error and has revoked these memberships. With that being said, we are Equipe de Louisiana, Team Louisiana. We must work together to accomplish our mission of helping veterans. We ensure that what we do the right thing in LA. You shouldn't let what someone in another state did, esp. beings it was corrected, deter you from the mission of helping veterans. In this situation, I remember the saying, Fate whispered to the Warrior, "You can't withstand the storm" The warrior whispered back, "I am the storm." Withstand the trials that come your way & continue to fight for veterans.

A suggestion for your meetings, if you aren't already doing this. Many posts that I visit discuss important dates. Try to have those dates in writing to hand out, either in the form of a calendar or an agenda. This will help your members remember the dates and help your meeting run smoother. Also, I am asking if you can save the date of my testimonial, 22 March. More information below.

Most importantly, check on your post members, do buddy checks. We lose too many veterans to suicide, and we must continue to work to stop veteran suicide. Learn the 5 signs. We are working to schedule suicide awareness training on Friday of MWC.

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



**State Commander
Debbie McElhannon**

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

Comrades,

It was great seeing Posts & Districts honor our brothers & sisters on POW/MIA and Patriot's Day in the month of September! Never Forget! Hurricane Francine also impacted Southeast Louisiana during September causing minor damages, some flooding and power outages. Power was restored in a short period of time and our communities quickly rebounded. Our Disaster Relief Fund is available for those who are need of financial assistance due to the Hurricane Francine. Please keep our comrades in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina & Tennessee in your thoughts & prayers who were affected by Hurricane Helene!

Reminder: Americanism, Patriot's Pin, Voice of Democracy & Teacher entries are due to Posts by October 31st. Now is the time to remind our local schools of our programs and deadline.

Great job on recruiting in the 1st quarter! Let's continue to recruit, educate and mentor! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our mission.



**Sr. Vice Commander
James Prestenback**

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

Greetings Comrades,

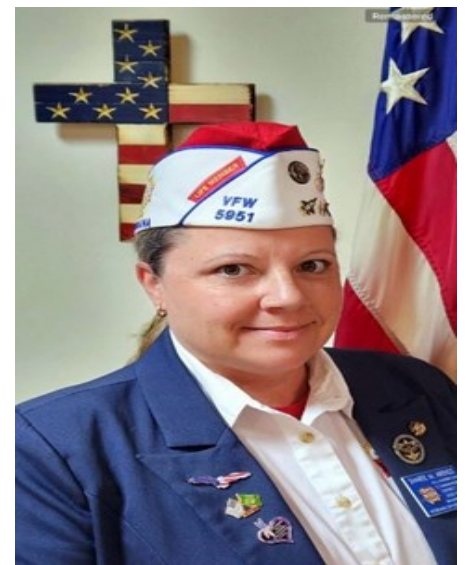
September was a packed month of traveling and visiting other Districts in the Department. I enjoyed every minute of it, talking to those I have not seen in a while and getting to know those I've never met!

I attended DeRidder's, Cole-Miers Post 3619, POW/MIA 24-hour vigil and was blessed with reading one of the Bios of one of Louisiana's 24 MIA. If you have never been to this ceremony/vigil, I highly recommend going. It is a very humbling experience, and Sonja has poured her heart and soul into it. It is amazing to see how much it has grown in the 5 years they have been doing it, and I look forward to seeing it continue to grow! I plan to return every year!

We only have a MONTH remaining to get those VOD, Patriot's Pen and Americanism entries submitted! Make sure you are visiting the schools to get the entries and get them judged! Good luck to all the students that participate!

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

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



**Jr. Vice Commander
Sharee Arends**

A message from our State Adjutant....

How Do We Stay Ahead of the Game?

Have you ever been tired and exhausted of trying to stay ahead of the game? Do you find yourself and post members not being disciplined enough to manage all the things you have going on? I know I did when I was a Commander. So what do you need to do.....

Make the choice to manage your time. Time is something that we think we have plenty of but find out how quickly it goes by. If you manage your time, you will set your post up for success.

The first step to managing your time is list the important task and execute on them. While preparing for your meetings you should have a list of tasks and rank them from important (must get done) to least important. Do not waste time on non-important, non-urgent task. Prioritize, Prioritize and then Prioritize again.

Each Post has three types of members. The first type are those “who make things happen”, the second type are those members “who watch things happen”, and the third type are the members “who wonder what just happened”. A Post can only be successful if there are more doers that those who wonder what just happened. Get everyone involved. We all have a God given talent, so lets no waste them.

The Post Leadership should learn to say no to those things that are less important. Saying no is OK. Ask how this activity improves the Post, help a veteran or help a family in need. A Post can stretch its resources to thin. Learn to say no with a bigger yes in mind.

What type of Member are You?



**State Adjutant
Carl Karnish**

A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

In September, our state was hit by Hurricane Francine. Members in good standing can visit the Department's website, go to the Resources section, and submit a Disaster Relief application. State Commander McElhannon, and I will evaluate each application. Once approved, a check will be mailed to the address provided.

I also want to remind Post Quartermasters of their duties as Chief Financial Officer. They must prepare a monthly report of the Post's receipts and expenditures for the monthly meeting. Quartermasters should also provide this financial report to the Post Trustees, so they can complete the quarterly audit report for Department Headquarters. If any Quartermasters have questions or need help fulfilling their responsibilities, please reach out to me.

Congratulations to all the Posts that have achieved their 100% membership goal this year. Our top recruiters also deserve recognition for their excellent work. To reach our Department and Commander McElhannon's membership goal, we must continue working together as a team.



**State Quartermaster
Elvin Ray Bass**

A message from our State Surgeon....

Comrades, September is Suicide Prevention Month. As many of you may know, this was my battle cry running for this position. I am also the Suicide Awareness & Prevention Chairman. I have just posted some upcoming FREE Training Opportunities for those interested. One is in Leesville and another is going to be a Cole-Miers VFW Post 3619, DeRidder LA. These are two day courses that are open to the public and may help you save a life. These courses are offered free of charge through SaveCenla. I have flyers available for both events. If you are interested, please email me and I will forward them to you.

We all also need to remember to do Buddy Checks with our older members. Stopping by and checking on them will ensure that they know we are looking out for them and that they are not forgotten. We all can also do this with retirement homes and rehabilitation centers for the elderly. Not all of us are close to the military homes around the state, but I'm sure we all have one of these homes in our community. Simply showing up and talking with the veterans there will cheer them up more than you can imagine.

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



**State Surgeon
Lawrence Koons**

A message from our State Chaplain....

Growing up in life, I like many of you watched a lot of movies. Braveheart, ET, and the Star Wars trilogy a just a few I particularly liked. In each of these, like so many others, the main plot line involved two sides squaring off. One was good and one bad, however in real life this is rarely the case. Each side can often argue that they are good and the other is bad. In reality though often they both fill the middle ground.

Two often we find ourselves in what we consider, over our heads. Heck often when training my Soldiers we would put them in the deep ends to see if they improve. The VFW in many ways is no different. In both instances you are never alone and have a multitude of people to help you out. Just never be to big to ask for help. Commanders, Quartermaster, and even the state officers can't do everything by there self. We all have a part in the fight.



**State Chaplain
David Fields**

COMMITTEEMAN'S CORNER

Welcome to October and this month's updates. As a lot of you know this past month the National Organization has been dealing with the fallout of the Colorado Prison Post, this has been on the main burner for all Department Commander as well as Council Members taking calls concerning this Post and its members. Below is the official communication and letter from National concerning this issue.

Commanders and Comrades,

National Commander in Chief Al Lipphardt has issued a ruling that VFW eligible veterans currently incarcerated for Felony offenses have failed to meet the high standards of VFW membership as they have not completed the terms of their conviction for the crimes they were found guilty of.

As such the members of Post 12226 that are inmates with felony convictions will have their membership in the VFW revoked and will not be eligible to transfer or appeal this decision. Once the terms of their conviction has been completed and they are released from prison they would be eligible at that time and subject to approval per our Bylaws.

The Chief has also been informed that several members of the Post — who are not inmates — will transfer to Member At Large which will cause Post 12226 to fall below the minimum members required to maintain a VFW Post Charter and therefore, the Chief is preparing to revoke the Charter of Post 12226 the first week of October.

The Department of Colorado in no way was using this Post as a way to boost or increase membership numbers as has been alleged. Quite simply they were trying to assist VFW eligible incarcerated veterans by giving them a unique program inside the prison walls in an effort to help the veterans confined there.

Furthermore the Chief has directed the National Bylaws review committee to strengthen Section 100, Membership Eligibility of the National Bylaws to clearly define his ruling for adoption or rejection by the Delegates at the next National Convention."

Please share this message.

Dan West

Adjutant General

Veterans of Foreign Wars

During the last Council of Administration Meeting held in September it was voted on to resend the authorization for the California MC to use the VFW Logo and name as they would not abide by the rules set forth for our VFW Riders. This has been a long running issue that has finally been set to rest. A certified letter from the Quartermaster General was sent to those in charge informing them of this vote. The weekly updates that I was sending to the District Commanders are now only generated from National on a monthly basis unless there is something that really needs to be put out, so check with your District Commanders to make sure you have the latest update.

This has been a busy month for the Council and I am grateful that the members of this Department have elected me to represent you on the Council.

Until next month keep doing those buddy checks and renewing, recruiting and reinstating members into our organization.

Robert "Bobby" Lovergne

National Council of Administration Member

Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Louisiana Legislative Report September 2024

These are the key Topics from this month. Please read through these and let me know your thoughts on how we can continue to show Louisiana, that our Elected Officials are committed to our Veterans.

September 2nd:

Applications Now Being Accepted for 2024-2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship: The application process for the 2024-2025 class of VFW-SVA legislative fellows is now open. VFW members who attend an accredited institute of higher learning will be chosen for the semester-long program that focuses on real policy issues faced by veterans, service members, and their families. The capstone of the program is participation in the 2025 VFW Washington Conference in Washington, D.C. Alumni of the program have become more active at all levels of the VFW and SVA, and have been instrumental in changing laws to improve care and benefits for veterans. Learn more and apply for the fellowship. Access Issues with 988 Veterans Crisis Line: Veterans calling the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) are experiencing issues with the “988 then press 1” audio prompt. VA is working with VCL to reroute calls and ensure dropped calls receive a callback. If you or someone you know have experienced these difficulties, please use the VCL Chat option or connect through text messaging by using number 838255 as alternate ways to receive support. These options are not impacted by the current phone line issues. Additionally, veterans can call 1.800.MYVA411 and then press 7 for further crisis assistance. The VFW will continue to monitor the situation.

Pre-Need Assistance for Final Arrangements: Proactive planning can assist veterans and reassure their survivors regarding final arrangements. Pre-need determination of eligibility for burial benefits enables family members to honor final wishes and settle personal affairs. Veterans can apply to find out if they are eligible for interment in a VA national cemetery. Though participation does not guarantee burial in a specific cemetery, it does inform VA of preferences and helps to fulfill requests. Read more about the program and learn how to report a veteran’s death to VA. Locate an accredited representative for assistance with survivor benefits claims.

September 9th:

Calling All Vietnam Veterans: The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is asking VFW members to participate in a short interview about open-air burning (e.g., burn barrels, burn-out latrines, and burn pits) if you are a veteran who was deployed on land or at sea to the Vietnam theater (Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos) between 1955 and 1975. GAO’s report will be publicly available on its website and sent to Congress, VA, and DOD. The plan is to complete the phone interviews by the end of Monday, Sept. 30. To participate, please email VietnamBurnPits@gao.gov or call 202.512.5624.

VFW Remembers 9/11: This week is the 23rd anniversary of the terrorist attacks that changed America forever. The memories of that day are still vivid, but the heroism that emerged from the rubble of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in the air above a rural Pennsylvania field should inspire us for generations to come. As we remember 9/11 and the nearly 3,000 innocent lives lost that terrible day, the VFW hopes all Americans pause to reflect and also keep in mind those who continue to sacrifice in the defense of freedom.

. POW/MIA Recognition Day 2024: Today, nearly 82,000 service members and civilians remain unaccounted for from conflicts dating back to World War II. The role of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is to provide the fullest possible accounting of missing personnel to their families and the nation. Each year, DPAA creates a poster in advance of POW/MIA Recognition Day, which will be commemorated this year on Sept. 20. This year's poster bears the words "Honoring their sacrifice. Earnestly searching for those still missing."

September 16th:

VA Budget Shortfall Action Alert: Recently, VA announced a budget shortfall that may delay the timely delivery of benefits to people nationwide. Veterans, family members, and caregivers have earned VA benefits through service, and we are frustrated to hear certain ones may not be adequately funded through the end of the fiscal year. This is not a problem caused by Congress, but our elected officials in Washington, D.C., have the responsibility to ensure these benefits are paid on time to those who have earned them. Each year VA has been provided with the resources it requested for veterans' care and benefits, and our legislators must ensure that happens this time as well. Congress must pass a supplemental funding bill by Sept. 20 to make sure veterans, survivors, and caregivers receive next months' benefit payments without interruption. Congress must also hold VA accountable to prevent issues like this from happening in the future. However, this accountability can happen AFTER Congress provides supplemental funding, so veterans, survivors, and caregivers do not go without or face financial difficulties due to inadequate government funding.

Congress Congratulates VFW on 125th Anniversary: In a show of support for the 125th anniversary of the VFW, fellow VFW members Reps. Derrick Van Orden and Chris Deluzio, and Marine veteran and House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mike Bost have introduced a concurrent resolution recognizing Sept. 29, 2024, as "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Day." For more than a century, the VFW has advocated on behalf of veterans to ensure they have timely access to their earned benefits, and has served veteran communities here and around the world. Read the resolution and learn more about the legacy of the VFW.

VFW Fall Legislative Conference: The VFW National Legislative Committee members met with senators, representatives, and staffers in Washington, D.C., to discuss the VFW's legislative priorities. Specific focus was on providing health care and benefits for veterans, caregivers, and survivors; ensuring the continuous review of new presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures; exploring alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions; and continuing to promote legislation to penalize predatory claim companies known as Claim Sharks. The VFW will continue to advocate for these issues to assist service members, veterans, and their families.

September 23rd:

Congress Approves Emergency VA Funding: The Senate passed the House-introduced emergency appropriations bill to cover the VA's \$3 billion-dollar budgetary shortfall. If a spending bill had not passed by the end of the week, the results would have been financially devastating to millions of veterans. It's worth noting that this bill would not have passed with bipartisan support if not for veteran advocates within Congress and the veteran community. The nearly 7 million veterans who rely on VA benefits, to include disability compensation and even the GI Bill, can now have peace of mind that benefits will be delivered on time, October 1.

VFW Testifies at House Subcommittee Oversight Hearing: VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci testified at a House Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs oversight hearing on how the VA can improve the quality of contracted disability compensation examinations. In this fiscal year alone, VA reported that more than 217,000 exams were returned to VA as “no-shows.” Gallucci commented, “At a time when VA is processing more benefits than ever before, we have the responsibility to make this process as user-friendly as possible.” Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 17:12 mark.

VFW Addresses Food Insecurity: VFW Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel traveled to Capitol Hill to meet with the For Country Caucus (FCC) for a discussion on how food insecurity impacts service members and veterans. According to the FCC, their focus is to provide its military veteran members the opportunity to work together across party lines to pass comprehensive legislation regarding national security, veterans affairs, and national service. Noel's remarks emphasized the challenges involved during the periods of active duty, transition, and after separation from the Armed Forces.

Massage Therapy Fraud Warning: The VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) is asking veterans to assist in stopping billing fraud for massage therapy. Because VA provides coverage that many other insurers do not, massage therapy is an area that bad actors are exploiting. According to OIG, the most common type of fraud entails billing for services not rendered or upcharging for therapy received. Learn how you can help.

September 30th:

House Committee Oversight Hearing: The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing titled Everyday Heroes: Supporting the Veteran Caregiver Community. In a statement submitted for the record, VFW National Legislative Associate Director Meggan Coleman commented on the selflessness of family members and friends who become caregivers to give their veterans the best quality of life. Ensuring caregivers have essential training, resources, and mental health coverage would reduce the barriers of burnout and economic hardship. The VFW strongly urges Congress to pass H.R. 8371, Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, which would enhance and reform the delivery of services at VA by prioritizing veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors. Read the testimony.

VFW Participates in Alternative Therapies Roundtable: VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray took part in a roundtable regarding alternative therapies for various mental health conditions. The event was led by Reps. Derrick Van Orden and Marcus Luttrell, both of whom are VFW members. The discussion centered around different treatments such as cannabinoids, psychedelics, hyperbaric oxygen, and faith-based options. The VFW supports research for alternative therapies for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is grateful these members of Congress and fellow veterans are making it a priority. Watch the roundtable.

VFW Supports TAPS Gold Star Families Advocacy Week: The VFW Washington Office hosted the 2nd Annual Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Gold Star Families Advocacy Week Event. Together with partner veteran organizations, volunteers advocated for legislation to improve benefits and services for survivors. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan participated in meetings with members of Congress to show the VFW's strong support for S.414 / H.R.1083, Caring for Survivors Act of 2023, to extend CHAMPVA and TRICARE coverage for surviving children to age 26, and update the definition of surviving spouse. Read more.

Veterans Service Organizations Collaborate on Toxic Exposure Study: VFW Washington Office staff attended a joint Disabled American Veterans and Military Officers Association of America briefing about timeliness in identifying, cataloguing, and establishing presumptive conditions for adverse health cases attributed to environmental toxins. Their Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans report describes the years-long process to recognize toxic exposure related to an event. According to their research, veterans generally wait 34.1 years for the full suite of earned health care services and benefits to treat the effects of toxic exposures. The report also offers suggestions to overhaul the process and ensure prompt access to this lifesaving care. Read the report, learn more about toxic exposure benefits, or find an accredited representative to assist in filing a claim.

VA Expands Tele-Emergency Care Options: VA has announced tele-emergency care (tele-EC) is now available nationwide, which is a service that aims to improve access to virtual emergency care options. Veterans enrolled in VA health care can now contact tele-EC via VA Health Connect by phone or the VA Health Chat app. They can also find contact information for VA locations in their local areas. Learn more about eligibility or how to apply for health care benefits.

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

2024-2025 Commander Shirts



\$50.00 EACH

VFW Members– Cash, Check (Made payable to Debbie McElhannon), Venmo (@debbiemc01), or CashApp (\$Debbie McElhannon)

VFW Auxiliary Members– Cash, Check (Made payable to Ella Wilson), or Venmo (ejwilson_72)

Additional questions contact Debbie @ 337-526-3695

SAVE THE DATE

STATE COMMANDER DEBBIE MCELHANNON TESTIMONIAL

March 22, 2025

Harrington LeBouef VFW Post 9854

2292 Highway 109 S

Vinton, LA 70668

Ticket Presale \$20.00

At the Door \$30.00

Doors Open at 4:00 P.M.

Auctions



Food



Music



Door Prizes and much more

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

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

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

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



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

Fournet-Manuel VFW Post 12203
INVITATIONAL PISTOL SHOOT OUT

Saturday, October 12, 2024

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



Registration 0800
Safety and Rule Briefing 0845
Competition 0900

Fund Raiser
for
VFW Post 12203
Kinder

1st Prize

DTS Tactical - Moss Bluff, LA (www.dtsfactical.com)
H&K PV9 * (pistol)

2nd Prize

Gun Cave - Lake Charles, LA (www.theguncave.com)
Anderson Manufacturing AR-15 * (rifle)

3rd Prize

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

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

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

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

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

For more information
Please contact James "Jimmy" Anderson
jland5266@outlook.com

**Pistol Shoot sponsored by Post
12203 in Kinder.**

October 12th



FUNDRAISING

»» *Support* ««

**VFW POST 7017
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14
4PM-10PM**

10%

DONATION NIGHT

for VFW POST 7017.

Present this flyer at the Denham Springs location and Texas Roadhouse will donate **10%** of your total food purchases to VFW POST 7017!



**225-503-3578
27214 CROSSING CIRCLE
DENHAM SPRINGS, LA**

**Dine to Donate for Post 7017
in Denham Springs.**

October 14th

**Must show Poster or mention
to waiter/waitress**



Learn the skills. Help save a life.

Suicide is preventable. Anyone can make a difference.

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

St. Michael's Catholic Church, Leesville

When: October 8-9, 2024

Day 1 - 8:00am-4:30pm

Day 2 - 8:00am-4:00pm

For Whom: Everyone 16+, All professions

Cost: Free (Must attend both days)

Register: SaveCenla.com

Inquire: 337-519-1888 or 337-288-0973

Worth: 12 CEUs for MHP \$78 thru Livingworks

ASIST works. Learn more and see the evidence at www.livingworks.net/asist





Convoy of Historic Military Vehicles will take a driving break here.

Members of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association-HA are convoying 2,500 miles on the Jefferson Highway, From Pines to Palms. Let's welcome them to our community.

Convoy of Historic Military Vehicles at Post 3337 in LaPlace.

October 28th

DATE:

Monday, October 28
Est Arrival 2:45 pm

LOCATION:

VFW
LaPlace, LA



Facebook Link
MCPA Historic
Convoys



Map Link
Find the Convoy
<http://www.aprs.fi/k3arl-11>



Poker Run sponsored by Post 1809 in Monroe

November 2nd



Pre-registration and waiver release

3rd Annual Poker Run Fundraiser

VFW Post 1809

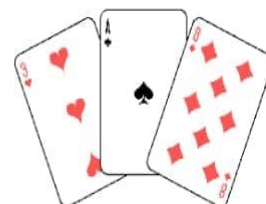
Warhawk Harley-Davidson

Monroe, LA

Saturday, November 2, 2024

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

Rain or shine



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

Location: Warhawk Harley-Davidson 6200 Frontage Rd, Monroe, LA 71202

Entertainment: Randy New and the Front Street Band

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

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

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

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

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

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

Must be present to win cash prizes! NO EXCEPTIONS

★★★★★
**VETERAN'S DAY
 PARADE**

REMEMBER & HONOR

Saturday, November 9, 10am

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



Registration by Monday, November 4th

No fee, American themed

Free Meal for Veterans, spouses, parade participants provided.

RSVP FOR MEAL.

Meal provided by Swamp Donkeys Cooking Team.

Live music provided by 5 String Along Boys

Walker Community Center

30225 Corbin Ave

Contact:

Sam Caruso 225.274.5800

SamCaruso488@gmail.com



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



LAPLACE VFW POST 3337

**VETERANS DAY
 GOLF TOURNAMENT**

BELLE TERRE COUNTRY CLUB
 MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024

111 Fairway Dr, LaPlace, LA 70068

7:00 AM REGISTRATION

8:00 AM SHOTGUN START

QUESTIONS OR SPONSOR DONATIONS CONTACT

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

YOUR SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

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

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



Learn the skills. Help save a life.

Suicide is preventable. Anyone can make a difference.

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

| Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training for Everyone 16+

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

When: December 5-6, 2024

Cost: FREE (Must attend both full days)

REGISTER and more information: SAVECENLA.COM
Inquire: 337-519-1888; 337-288-0973

ASIST works. Learn more and see the evidence at www.livingworks.net/asist

