

Mail Call

Department of Louisiana

April 2025 | Issue 10



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- District Meetings– Page 2
- Memorial Day– Page 3
- 95th State Convention– Page 3
- 2024-2025 All State Entry Forms—Page 3
- 2025-26 Post Election Reports– Page 3
- Installing Officers– Page 3
- CIC & St Commanders Membership Challenge– Page 4
- All State Status Link—Page 4
- Prior Month’s Commander’s Challenge Winner– Page 4
- State Commander’s Monthly Challenge– Page 5
- 2025-2026 Candidates for State Office– Page 6
- Community Service Reporting– Page 7
- State Commander’s Special Project– Page 7
- Department Challenge Coin– Page 7
- Conference/Convention Dates– Page 7
- State Commander’s Article– Page 8
- Sr. & Jr Vice Cmdr’s Articles– Page 9
- State Adjutant & Quartermaster Articles– Page 10
- State Surgeon & Chaplain Articles– Page 11
- Legislative Report– Page 12-14
- Louisiana Council Member Article– Page 15
- State Convention Program Book Ads– Page 16
- VFW National Convention Banquet & National Home Tour– Page 17
- Post Events– Page 18-24

UPCOMING EVENTS:

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

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

“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.***

MEMORIAL DAY

ORDER YOUR BUDDY POPPIES TODAY!

Memorial Day is quickly approaching, and now is the time for all Posts to place their Buddy Poppy orders! State Chairman Cotton Olinde urges each Post to order a minimum of 100 poppies for just \$10.50 plus postage. Ordering is simple—visit our website www.vfwdeptla.org - Programs - Buddy Poppy or [click here](#) to place your order today!

Take advantage of the growing wave of patriotism and order now! Please do not delay, as delivery can take up to six weeks. If you don't order in April, your poppies may not arrive in time for Memorial Day.

Orders must be placed through the **Department of Louisiana!**

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!

2024-2025 All State Team:

All State Team Entry Forms are due to Department Headquarters by May 5, 2025.

The criteria for All State Team is listed on Pages 78-79 in the Leadership Book for this year. You can also find the Information and Entry form on the Department's website by visiting www.vfwdeptla.org Click on Programs - All State Team or [click here](#)

Reminder: One requirement to be eligible for the All State Team is to submit a Community Service Record Book (either an actual Record Book or a Digital Version such as a Powerpoint).

2025-26 Post Election Reports:

Reminder: Post Elections should be held this month! Also, Post should elect delegates to the State Convention at this time!

Post Election Reports must be submitted following Post election of officers in April and no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We highly encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports submitted through OMS will automatically be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

INSTALLING OFFICERS:

Installing officers will see that the provisions of Section 216 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure are properly carried out and that all officers are members in good standing and qualified to hold office prior to installing Post officers for the current year. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed.

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

The top recruiter for the month of **March** is **Robert Reisz** from **Post 4224!** Congratulations Robert!



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 APRIL!

****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-XXOaiWlavl/edit?usp=sharing

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Reminder: One requirement to be eligible for the All State Team is to submit a Community Service Record Book (either an actual Record Book or a Digital Version such as a Power point).

RECRUITING

award APRIL

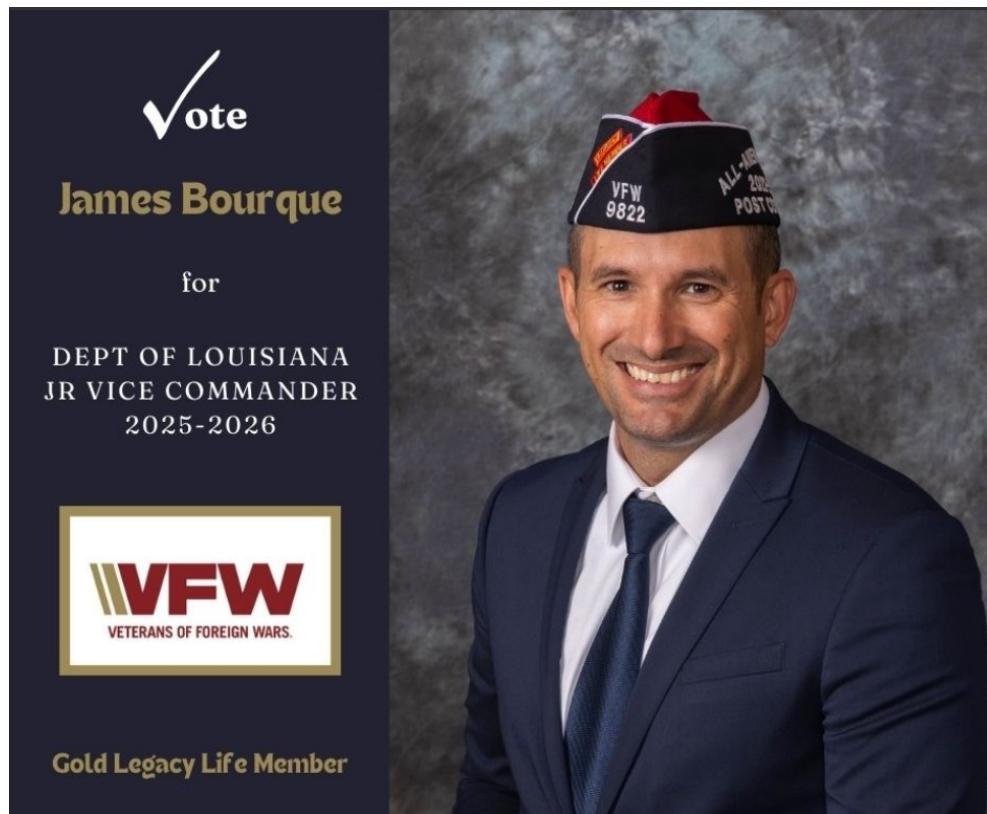
M1 Garand

1:3 Scale World War 2 Model

**General Patton named the M1
Garand the 'Greatest battle
implement ever devised'.**



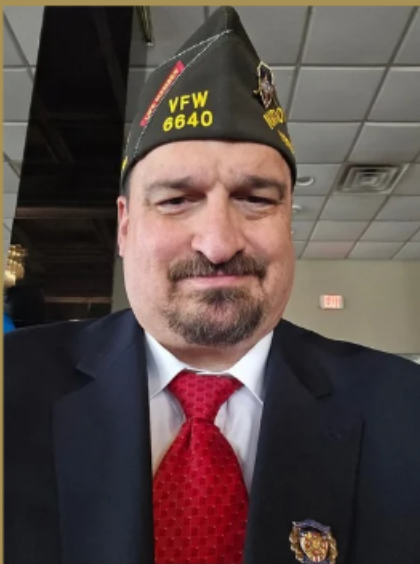
CANIDATE FOR JR. VICE COMMANDER 2025-2026:



A campaign graphic for James Bourque. On the left, a dark blue vertical banner contains the text: a white checkmark above the word "Vote", "James Bourque" in gold, "for" in white, "DEPT OF LOUISIANA JR VICE COMMANDER 2025-2026" in white, the VFW logo (VFW VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS) in a gold-bordered box, and "Gold Legacy Life Member" in gold at the bottom. On the right is a portrait of James Bourque, a man in a dark blue suit and tie, wearing a black VFW garrison cap with "VFW 9822" and "ALL-AMERICAN POST" visible.

CANIDATE FOR SURGEON 2025-2026:

Canidate for State Surgeon 2025-2026



Joe Dufrene
Member of VFW Post 6640
Currently District Two Sr. Vice Commander
Past District Two Commander
Navy Corpsman (1986–1996)
Medical Laboratory Technician for Over 32 Years

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	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

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)

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

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

2026-2027

CoA/Officer Training
August 28-30, 2026

Mid - Winter

January

State Convention

June



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...

In a blink of an eye, March is now over, and we are going into April. It's time for some April Fools. April is here and so is the warm temperatures. The temperature is already getting in the 80s. Stay hydrated and don't get overheated.

Our Washington Conference was a great success. Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Louisiana spoke with someone from every office of our Louisiana representatives. The Commander in Chief (CIC) Al Lipphardt's speech was powerful. One of the senators asked about toxic exposure. To demonstrate how serious and widespread the issue of toxic exposure is, CIC said would anyone in the room who has been exposed to toxic materials while deployed, stand up. About 98% of the room stood up. The representative in attendance were in awe. Thank you to Matt West our Legislative Chairman for setting everything up to include a tour of the Capitol. We really enjoyed ourselves.



**State Commander
Debbie McElhannon**

I want to thank everyone who came to my testimonial. I appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule and driving to the little town of Vinton. I'm glad none of you blinked. We had good food, door prizes, music and comradery.

The District Conventions are coming up which means it is time for nominations and elections. Officers need to be installed before the new State Commander gets installed. A list of what state representative is supporting your District Conference can be found in the Mail Call. Ensure you are voting on people who want to help veterans. Once the officers are elected, help support them. No one can run posts, districts or state on his/her own. Help the Commander and officers be successful. You can also help by knowing your bylaws which you can download a copy at vfw.org.

We are currently working on the agenda for State Convention 27-29 June. If you have any suggestions or want to help, give me a call. I am still hoping to have a health conference on Friday morning, 27 June. Hopefully, the travel restrictions for the VA will be lifted so we can have this event.

Louisiana is now almost at 99% membership. Thank you for everyone who has recruited members. You are doing a great job. I still ask that each person recruit 1 member. 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.

If you are planning on going to National in Columbus Ohio and would like to attend a special black-tie banquet on Monday of National, let us know. The banquet is when they will hand out most awards instead of during the business meeting. The Department will reserve tables.

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. The hard work is done in the posts; without the posts hard work, the district and state could not be successful. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to serving and helping veterans; Generations continuing to serve.

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

Greetings,

April is an important time for all Posts and some Districts. It's time when we elect Officers to lead and represent our members. These elections are governed by the VFW's National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, ensuring a standardized and democratic process across all levels. I look forward to working with all newly elected Leadership for the 2025-2026 term. After Elections, it's imperative that you submit your election reports to National Headquarters. OMS would be the preferred method. Good luck!

I will be attending Senior Vice Commander training in Kansas City, MO from April 10, 2025 through April 13, 2025. Our 2025-2026 Membership Program is complete and will be submitted at this time for review. I hope to absorb as much information as possible to successfully lead our organization in the future.

Great job in our recruiting efforts! I also look forward to attending upcoming District meeting.

Thanks for all you do!



**Sr. Vice Commander
James Prestenback**

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

Greetings Comrades,

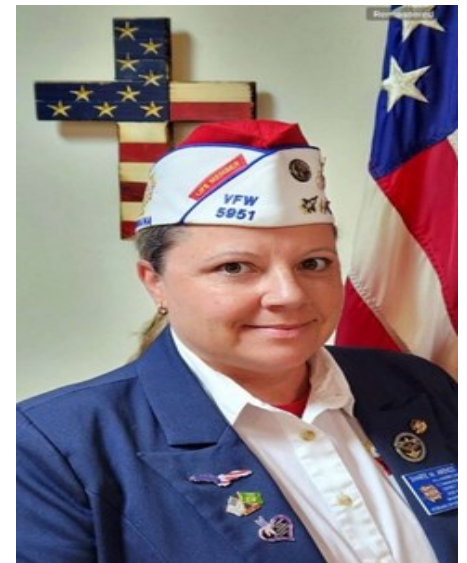
How is it March has come and gone so quickly? It was great seeing everyone at the Commanders Testimonial!

Posts should be in the process of nominations for the next year of line officers. Districts are just around the corner! Please do your best to verify those that are nominated and eventually elected are qualified to be in those positions. Check those DD214s and membership status! Do not let an Unpaid member become an officer.

During nominations, remember to also concentrate on mentorship. Those of you who have held a position are in a great space to assist and teach those that are taking that position. Don't let them fail!

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....

ELECTIONS ARE UPON US

Seems like only a year ago we elected new officers at the State Level, maybe you elected new officers at the District or Post Level. It is that time again. Have you considered running for an office? You may ask yourself “why would I run for office?” The simple answer is that you fought for that right and now is the time to embrace that right.

For the VFW Post to stay a viable entity within a city it must be an active, informative part of the community. New leadership within a Post most often will cause some change and, in most instances, will bring new membership into the post.

When considering running please do not see it as a chore but rather as a privilege. You are running for an office not against another person. Give the members of your post a choice. Here are some reasons that YOU should run for an office:

- The VFW needs more and better leaders.
- YOU have a unique story to tell.
- Your Post members will support YOU.
- YOUR voice is waiting to be heard.

Building a strong bench of leaders for the future is the responsibility of all members. Doing your share whether it is being the Commander or an active member of a Post is what YOU can do to help.



**State Adjutant
Carl Karnish**

A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

As we approach the end of the first quarter for 2025, I want to remind all Posts in Louisiana that the Quarterly Audit Report of Trustees for the period of January 1 – March 31 is due by April 30th. This is a critical responsibility that ensures the financial integrity of each Post and the Department as a whole. Please remember that the ***Post Trustees***—not the Quartermaster—are responsible for completing this report. Their duty is to independently review the financial records, ensuring accuracy and compliance with VFW bylaws. Trustees must complete, sign, and submit the audit report by the deadline. Failure to do so can put your Post in bad standing and disrupt essential operations. If assistance is needed, please reach out to me well in advance of the deadline.

Memorial Day is next month, and I encourage all Posts to purchase Buddy Poppies, which directly benefits veterans in need. ***Remember, the proceeds from these initiatives must be used exclusively for the assistance of needy veterans, as outlined in our bylaws.***

Let's continue working together to maintain the highest standards of financial accountability. Thank you for your diligence and commitment to the VFW mission!



**State Quartermaster
Elvin Ray Bass**

A message from our State Surgeon....

Comrades, your friendly Surgeon here. Did you know that if you pick up a hobby, it could lead to a healthier and happier you? We are all doing the things that we 'HAVE' to on a daily basis. Maybe, we need to make time to do something for ourselves from time to time. Hobbies can decrease stress, reduce depression and anxiety as well as giving us a higher life satisfaction. Give it a try and let me know how it works for you.

Keeping on the theme of helping ourselves, putting the right foods into our bodies ensures we're getting the nutrients we need, both physically and mentally. Veterans seeking guidance on their food and drink journey can find and advocate through their local VA Whole Health Team.

The Riders Group will be hosting the 2nd Annual VFW Riders Rally in Bossier City, LA 2-4 May 2025. Flyer will be in this issue of the Mail Call!

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.



**State Surgeon
Lawrence Koons**

A message from our State Chaplain....

With the month of April rapidly approaching, now more than ever is the important time to make sure your voice is heard. While we hope each of you are active throughout the year, unfortunately this is not always possible due to work, school, family, or many other things. Despite all that, much as it is with political elections the VFW is no different. New comrades seek new offices, others move up the lines, and some people sit back and let the masses make all the decisions.



Flyer for Ads.pdf

Regardless of which of those types of comrades you may fall into the largest differences you can make is to make your voice heard as your posts, districts, and our department holds elections and make various bylaw changes. Everyone of you ultimately hold the same weight in these elections unless you fail to vote. If everyone did that, we would never accomplish anything. The VFW will be around long after each of us are but the changes we can make can have lasting effects. Long after the forever GI bill was passed or the pact act veterans who come after us and we may never meet will benefit from our leaders telling our politicians that the things we find important they should as well as we use our power as voters. Politicians listen when the over one million VFW members united. Just imagine if we wield the same power in your posts or districts. You might not have a million voices but if you fail to make a noise you'll never get heard.



**State Chaplain
David Fields**

Therefore, stay active, involved, and a force for good. If I have always said as I went through post seats, district positions, Cooties offices, and even on the state seats that "I serve at the pleasure of the people." I challenge each of you to do the same. You might not be a post commander, District commander, or state officer but united we are

Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Louisiana Legislative Report March 2025

It was great seeing everyone the first week of March while we attended our Washington Conference. Hopefully we can get a better showing next year, with our elected officials.

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 3rd:

VFW Washington Conference: The VFW conference in Washington, D.C., is taking place this week through March 6. Hundreds of attendees will make sure veterans' voices are heard on Capitol Hill. Our National Legislative Committee members will lead their delegations, some including the 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Fellows, to present our legislative priorities to members of Congress and their staff. VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt will testify before a joint hearing of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Tuesday, March 4, at 10:00 a.m. EST.

VFW Washington Conference App Now Available: The Washington Conference is being held this week and the VFW has provided a mobile app to give event attendees the tools needed to make the most of their visit to our nation's capital. The app is available for download at both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

VFW Testifies Before House Committee: VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testifies at a pending legislation hearing before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bills address streamlining VA's firing authority, enhancements to community care, Second Amendment protection for veterans assigned fiduciaries, and education benefits restoration. Murray stated, "Members on this committee regularly say the VA needs to weed out the bad actors, but dismissal of thousands of employees was not done because it warranted; instead, it was done because it was easy." Commenting on the issue of Second Amendment protection, he noted, "Even though the issue of fiduciaries affects a small percentage of veterans, we argue that every veteran deserves protection of their constitutional rights."

Disaster Relief Resources: If you are a veteran, service member or military family in Kentucky or Tennessee who has been impacted by recent flooding, VA has recovery relief resources available to assist you. Individuals who wish to help may donate online to the VFW Disaster Relief Fund, or mail checks payable to the VFW and earmarked "Disaster Relief" to: Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation, Disaster Relief, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

March 10th:

VFW National Commander Testifies Before Congress: VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt testified before a joint hearing of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs. The VFW delivered its top legislative priorities of unaddressed toxic exposures, transition from service, alternative PTSD treatments, predatory claims companies, and GI Bill parity. Lipphardt explained that while the benefits afforded to our all-volunteer force may seem generous to those who never served, these benefits are simply the warranty of the service contract each veteran signs before putting on the uniform. "By contract, you must ensure the VA has the resources and staff to provide veterans their full earned benefits," Lipphardt said. "This is not an ask. Honor the contract!" Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 15:14 mark.

VFW Testifies on Claim Sharks Legislation: VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray testified at a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing on the disagreement about fees for services rendered in the preparation of initial and supplemental claims for veterans' benefits. "The VFW continues to lead the charge against unaccredited, unscrupulous actors we call Claim Sharks who charge service members, veterans, and survivors illegal fees," Murray stated. "Our resolutions urge Congress to pass legislation that protect VA beneficiaries from predatory companies and individuals attempting to bypass the VA accreditation system and monetize the disability or death benefits of veterans and surviving families." Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 8:34 mark.

VFW National Commander Meets with VA Secretary: VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci met with VA Secretary Doug Collins to share the VFW's concerns and priorities. Central to the discussion was understanding the Secretary's plan for reducing the VA workforce amid concerning reports from VFW members that key services were affected by recent layoffs. The discussion was constructive, and the VFW sees opportunities to work with Secretary Collins on issues like consistent care delivery by VA and community providers, as well as modernizing benefits delivery. Lipphardt emphasized that the VFW would hold him to his commitment not to reduce care or benefits for veterans with the new directives.

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows on Capitol Hill: Five 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows traveled to our nation's capital to participate in the VFW Washington Conference. Joining VFW delegations from their respective states, the fellows met with key staffers and congressional members, including some who serve on the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. The fellows focused their discussions on the VFW's support for the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2025 that seeks to make any day a National Guard or Reserve member is in uniform and receiving military pay count toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility requirements.

Representative Receives VFW Congressional Award: The VFW presented its 2025 Congressional Award to Rep. Derrick Van Orden (WI-3) for his outstanding service and years of unwavering support of veterans, service members, their families, and survivors. "In Representative Van Orden, we have found a devoted, passionate and determined advocate for our military and veteran communities," said VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt. "His resolve for accountability and action on some of our most pressing issues is clear, and we could not be more thrilled to have him in our corner not only as a member of Congress but also as a VFW Life member." Accepting his award, Van Orden said, "No one is going to take care of us but us. Notice, I didn't say Republican or Democrat. Sixty-nine percent of my legislation is bipartisan, because if it makes sense I do it, and if it doesn't I don't. And we need more of that here."

VFW Department of California Accepts Award: VFW Department of California is the recipient of the 2024-2025 National Legislative Service Award. The criteria for the award include quality reporting of legislative activity, advocacy actions taken, and resulting accomplishments. VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt presented the award to Department of California's National Legislative Committee members and leadership.

March 17th:

Washington Conference Hats in the Halls: VFW leaders from all 50 states and the Department of Pacific Areas traveled to our nation's capital to personally meet their respective members of Congress on behalf of all veterans, active duty service members, and military families. Leadership and their corresponding delegations focused their messages on the following six legislative priorities: unaddressed toxic exposures, transition from service, exploring alternative PTSD treatments, cracking down on predatory claims companies, GI Bill parity, and retirement and military personnel. Learn more.

VFW Testifies Before Senate Committee: VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testified at a hearing on pending legislation before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Among several important issues, the proposals included prohibiting predatory claims practices and the recent massive layoffs within VA. "Reduction in Force efforts should not be bluntly used to satisfy an arbitrary budget goal," Murray said. "VA should always be fully staffed with competent and capable employees to serve the men and women who have earned their health care and benefits." Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 17:47 mark.

VFW Testifies at House Subcommittee Hearing: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan testified at a hearing on pending legislation before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The proposals focused on education benefits, expansions for the VA Home Loan Guaranty program, and how to improve services for veterans facing foreclosure or homelessness. She emphasized one of the VFW's legislative priorities, the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2025, to allow any day in uniform for which military pay is received to count toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility. Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 12:01 mark.

New Hours for Caregiver Support Line: The VA National Caregiver Support Line has new operational hours of Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. EST. Caregivers, family members, friends, veterans, and community partners can call toll-free at 1.855.260.3274 to learn more about the services that are available, and for assistance connecting with the Caregiver Support Team at a local VA Medical Center. Read more.

March 24th:

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.

VFW Claims Assistance for K2 Troops: Veterans with prior service in Uzbekistan at the Karshi Khanabad Air Base, known as K2, who need assistance with their VA disability claims should contact a VFW Service Officer. The VFW is ready to assist K2 veterans who currently have health conditions they believe were caused by toxic exposures during their service. This includes veterans who have had VA claims denied, have claims in appeal, or who have never applied. Contact the VFW at vfw@vfw.org or find a VFW Service Officer in your area.

VA Grant Program Enhances Burial Needs: The Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to supplement the needs of VA cemeteries. Grants totaling \$992 million have been awarded for the expansion, improvement, operation, and maintenance of 122 veterans cemeteries in 49 states and territories. These cemeteries provided more than 43,000 interments in fiscal year 2024 alone. Read more.

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.

Respectfully,
Matthew J. West
Matthew J. West
VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

COMMITTEEMAN'S CORNER

Greetings Comrades, what a busy March for the VFW, the Washington Conference had over 1000 VFW and Auxiliary members in DC meeting with Senators and Congressman prior to our CIC's testimony to the Joint Committee on Veterans Affairs where he hit a homerun bringing the issues affecting veterans to them. The Louisiana delegation consisted of 14 members who were able to meet with representatives from all of our delegation but one office. Thanks to Congressman Scalise for setting up a private tour of the Capital for our members. The Washington Conference also gave way for the National Council to meet and discuss some important issues for the VFW. One major change voted on was the VOD Field Trip will now be held at Valley Forge, the winners will do a Virtual Parade of Winners prior to that trip. In addition, the announcement was made that Louisiana is a finalist to host the 2030 National Convention in New Orleans, the Time and Place Committee will be doing site visits to New Orleans and Baltimore, Md. Once these site visits are complete, they will make their recommendations to the Council at our first meeting on 9 August in Columbus, Oh.

April every year is when we elect new officers for our Post, when doing so look to the future and if you accept an office take time to learn your responsibilities with that office, don't do it just for the title or the hat, make a difference and strive to improve the operations of your Post. Also, if you are an Annual Pay Member when elected, take the time to pay your dues ASAP or become a Life Member, nothing worse than seeing an elected Officer removed for not paying dues.

Housing for the 2025 VFW National Convention opened on March 18th, log into vfw.org and make your housing arrangements. Don't wait too late to make your reservations and find yourself without a room.

At this year's Department Convention we will have the privilege of having PCIC Brian Duffy as our National Representative, Chief Duffy has always been a friend to our Department and let's show him some Louisiana Hospitality during his visit.

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

Bobby Lovergne
Louisiana National Council Member



Louisiana

SUPPORT OUR VETETANS

**PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS OR SHOW YOUR
SUPPORT FOR LOUISIANA VETERANS!**

The VFW Department of Louisiana State Convention Program Book is the perfect opportunity to reach veterans and their families from all over the state.

Place an ad in our official convention program book to showcase your support, share your message, or pay tribute to someone who served.

AD PRICING:

- FULL PAGE AD: \$100
- HALF PAGE AD: \$50
- QUARTER PAGE AD: \$25

ALL ADS WILL BE PRINTED IN BLACK AND WHITE. CAMERA-READY ARTWORK PREFERRED.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
MAY 25TH



Scan the QR
Code to submit
your Ad

Make Checks Payable To:
VFW Department of Louisiana
Memo: Convention Program Ad

Mail Payment & Ad Copy To:
10185 Mammoth Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70814

Contact State Adjutant, Carl Karnish, if you have any questions 225-928-5025 or adj@vfwdeptla.org

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!

VFW & VFW Auxiliary Bus Trip to the VFW National Home

Join a special day trip to the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, MI on August 13, 2025. See firsthand the vital work being done to support Veterans and their families.

Trip Details:

- Date: August 13, 2025
- Departure: 7:00 a.m. EST from the Columbus Convention Center
- Return: 7:00 p.m. EST
- Cost: \$75.00 per person (includes transportation, meals, and snacks)

<https://vfnationalhome.org/news-and-events/events/anniversary-bus-tour/> to register 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>





DANCE FUNDRAISER

VFW POST 4588

1004 Jeter St., Bossier City

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025

6:30pm – 10:30pm

(Doors open at 4:30pm)

FOR THE BENEFIT OF PROJECT 4 HOPE

Project 4 Hope is a Tiny House Village Transition Program for Veterans.

Project 4 Hope offers Veterans life skills, job placement, counseling programs, housing assistance, and budget management.

DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF
RED CHUTE REVUE

\$10 PER PERSON

RED CHUTE REVUE
IS GRACIOUSLY DONATING THEIR
TIME SO **ALL**
PROCEEDS WILL GO TO
O.R.V.A. PROJECT 4 HOPE



**DOOR PRIZES, GREAT MUSIC, AND DANCING...
PLAN TO JOIN US AND SUPPORT PROJECT 4 HOPE**



2025 1st ANNUAL CHARITY

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

www.vfwpost4224.org/golf@vfwpost4224.org

BOOGIE DOWN THE BAYOU
July 13th
11 AM - 6 PM
TICKETS - \$30 IN ADVANCE / \$35 AT THE DOOR
NON-REFUNDABLE
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Let's party for a purpose!



Sponsored by
Louisiana VFW District 8

50/50 Raffle

Food

Live Auction

Dancing

Cash Bar

No outside food
or drink allowed



Live Music by:

**Mike Broussard
& Night Train**

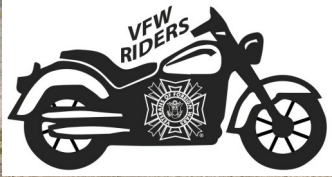
followed by

**The Mojos
& Guests**



**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



Sponsored by:

VFW POST 4588, 1004 JETER ST., BOSSIER CITY

MAY 17, 2025, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR VETERANS ISSUES INCLUDING VA CLAIMS, HEALTH & WELL BEING, FINANCIAL HEALTH, AND FINAL EXPENSES. REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE ON SITE FROM THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES & ORGANIZATIONS:

**OVERTON BROOKS VA MEDICAL
CENTER, SHREVEPORT LA**

LDVA SERVICE OFFICER

BOONE FUNERAL HOME

**TAPS (TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS)**

GUITAR 4 VETS

THE BOOT

LIFE SHARE BLOOD DRIVE

VETS 4 VETS (CORVETTES) CAR SHOW

BARKSDALE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

STAR PROGRAM

DOES YOUR COMPANY WANT TO
PARTICIPATE? CALL RANDY CAMPBELL
AT 318-272-7291 FOR DETAILS.

Fried Fish and Shrimp Plates \$10
Dinner includes French Fries, Cole Slaw,
Hush Puppies, and Tea or Coffee





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