



MAIL CALL



December 2025

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Mid Winter Conference

January 22-25, 2026
Hotel Bentley Alexandria

State Commanders Testimonial

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

State Convention
June 18-21, 2026
Hotel Bentley Alexandria

REMINDERS:

July to Sept Trustee Report of
Audit is due by OCTOBER 31st!

"One Team, One Fight"

DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

Jan 29, 2026 **Post 3750**
 Registration 5:30 pm
 Joint Meeting 6:00 pm
 Dinner (\$7) 6:00 pm
Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

Apr 23, 2025 **Post 3750**
 Registration 5:30 pm
 Joint Meeting 6:00 pm
 Dinner (\$7) 6:00 pm
Rep: Adj Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

Jan 10, 2026 **Post 3665**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00 noon
Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

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

DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

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

DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

Mar 14, 2026 **Post 3106**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00 noon
Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque

May 2, 2026 **Post 3802**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12:00 noon
Rep: PSC Debbie McElhannon

DISTRICT 7 MEETINGS:

May 9, 2026 **Post 2483**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon
Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque

DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

January 17, 2026 **Post 3693**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$7) 12 noon
Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

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

DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

January 17, 2026 **Post 8290**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch 12 noon
Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque

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

DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

Feb 21, 2026 **Post 3139**
 Registration 10:00 am
 Meeting 10:30 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon
Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

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

DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

Jan 17, 2026 **Post 3615**
 Registration 9:30 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon
Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends

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

DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

Jan 10, 2026 **Post 4588**
 Registration 9:00 am
 Meeting 10:00 am
 Lunch (\$10) 12:00 noon
Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends

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

MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE WINNER:

The top recruiter for the month of **December** is **Bobby Lovernge** from **Post 3750!** Congratulations **Bobby**

CHALLENGE COIN

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

Cost \$10.00 each + shipping

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

Click the link below to order yours today!

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

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

[https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?](https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjlwMzIxMzgzNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA)

[fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjlwMzIxMzgzNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA](https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjlwMzIxMzgzNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA)

IMPORTANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

At the Post Level you must enter your VOD, PP and Teachers submissions on the National Web Page: VFW.ORG.

- Login in
- Click on Online Membership System
- Click on All American Dashboard
- Click on Entries (upper rt corner)
- Click on **+Create Entry**
- Entry Type is PROGRAM
- Program—select VOD / PP / Teacher
- Make sure District and Post are correct.
- Fill out the information with regards to your select.
- Under notes put in that your winner has been forwarded to District
- Click Save and Approve

VFW FOUNDATION GRANTS

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

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

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

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

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



COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

CONGRATULATIONS ON A SUCCESSFUL FIRST QUARTER!



The first quarter of the 2025-2026 membership year has been a great success! We are ahead of where we were at this point last year, and we want to keep that momentum going into the second quarter!

The following Posts led their Divisions in the Q1 Commander's Challenge:

Division 1: Post 2224 (WA)
Division 2: Post 3219 (VA)
Division 3: Post 1210 (MN)
Division 4: Post 11038 (WI)
Division 5: Post 12202 (VA)
Division 6: Post 3174 (MO)

Division 7: Post 4713 (OH)
Division 8: Post 6908 (TN)
Division 9: Post 2602 (IL)
Division 10: Post 12231 (Pacific)
Division 11: Post 12235 (TX)

Every quarter, 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

For the second quarter challenge, the Post that leads each Division at the end of the quarter will receive a pair of 8" table drapes for use at recruiting events and Post functions



As we start this new year, let's get out there and show everyone how
NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.



Department of Louisiana



NOVEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE VETERANS MONTH EDITION

In honor of **Veterans Month**, I'm announcing a special **State Commander's Membership Challenge** for the month of **November**.

The **Post** that brings back the most expired or **reinstated annual members** during this month will receive **\$100** and a **Commander's Special Award** in recognition of their outstanding dedication to retaining and honoring our members.

Every member we bring back strengthens our organization and continues our mission to serve veterans, their families, and our communities. Let's make this Veterans Month a time of renewed commitment and growth!

One Team, One Fight – Lets Get It Done!

WINNER CONGRATULATIONS WINNER

VFW POST 3337

LaPLACE LA

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, DEPT OF LA
TENTATIVE MID WINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA
JAN 22 - 25, 2026
THE BENTLEY HOTEL
 200 Desoto St., Alexandria, LA.

VFW

Thursday – January 22, 2026

4:00pm – 5:30pm	Registration	TBD (2 nd Floor)
6:00 pm	Convention Committee MTG	Board Room

Friday – January 23, 2026

(Officers dress is Business Casual or Cmdr.'s Polo)

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
9:00am – 11:30am	Registration	Lobby
9:00am – 10:15am	Suicide Prevention	Ball Room
10:30am – 12:00pm	Round Table Trn. (A/QM/CDR)	Ballroom 1 st Floor
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch (National Home Fundraiser)	
	Presented by JVC James Bourque	
	Gumbo	Lobby
12:30pm – 4:00pm	Registration	Lobby
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Budget Meeting (if needed)	Ballroom 1 st Floor
1:00pm – 2:00pm	VA Benefits Seminar (Possible)	Bayou Robert
2:00pm - Until	Pastalaya Cook Off Begins	Outside
2:30pm - 4:00pm	Council of Administration	Ballroom 1 st Floor
4:15pm – 5:15pm	Auxiliary Bingo	Lobby 1 st Floor
5:00pm	Pastalaya Judging	TBD
5:00pm – 6:00pm	MOC & MOCA Meeting	Bayou Robert 2 nd Floor
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Dinner - Auxiliary Fundraiser	Lobby 1 st Floor
	Buddy Poppy Hat Contest	Lobby 1 st Floor
8:15pm	Music (DJ from Church Point)	Ballroom 1 st Floor

Saturday – January 24, 2026

(Officers dress is Blues & Grays and/or Suit for Joint Opening)

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
8:45	VFW & Aux Officers Line Up	Lobby 1 st Floor
9:00am – 11:30am	Registration	Lobby
9:00am – 11:30am	Joint Opening	Ballroom 1 st Floor
10:00am – 2:00pm	Blood Drive	Valet Area
11:30am – 1:00pm	Lunch Auxiliary SRVP Fundraiser	Lobby
12:00pm – 1:00pm	PSC Luncheon	Bayou Robert 2 nd Floor
	PSP Luncheon	
1:00pm – 3:30pm	VFW Business Session	Ballroom 1 st Floor
6:30pm	Banquet (Dress is Banquet Attire)	Ballroom 1 st Floor
	VFW NATIONAL REP: NATIONAL SR. VICE CIC COREY GEISLER	
8:15pm	Music (DJ from Church Point)	Ballroom 1 st Floor

Sunday – January 25, 2026

7:00am – 9:00am	Breakfast	Bayou Chicou
9:00am – 11:00pm	Final Business Session (if needed)	Ballroom 1 st Floor

HOSPITALITY ROOM – BEAUREGARD – 2ND FLOOR



STATE COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT



PROJECT 4 HOPE

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

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

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



EVENT FLYERS:

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

COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING:

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

Future National Convention Dates:

July 24-30, 2026

Reno, NV

July 31-Aug 4, 2027

Milwaukee, WI

Aug 5-10, 2028

San Antonio, TX

Department Conference/ Convention Dates:

Mid Winter

January 22-25, 2026

State Convention

June 18-21, 2026

2026-2027

CoA/Officer Training

August 28-30, 2026

Mid - Winter

January 28-31, 2027

State Convention

June 17-20, 2027

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: qtm@vfwla.net

State Adjutant

Carl Karnish

Email: adj@vfwla.net

State Administrative Assistant:

Tori LeBlanc

Email: admin@vfwla.net

State Commander:

James Prestenback

Email: jprestenback302@gmail.com

From the desk of the State Commander...

Comrades

As we enter the final month of the year, I want to thank each of you for your continued dedication to our mission and to one another. Membership remains a vital part of our success. Every new and returning member strengthens our voice, our programs, and our ability to support veterans across Louisiana. Let's finish the year strong and continue pushing toward our goals.

December also brings the Christmas season—a time of reflection, gratitude, and giving. I

encourage every Post to look for opportunities to help those in need within your communities. Whether it's adopting a family, supporting a veteran who has fallen on hard times, or partnering with local organizations, these acts of kindness truly embody what our organization stands for.

Most importantly, let's take the time to check on our members. A phone call, a visit, or a simple message can mean the world to a comrade who may be struggling during the holidays. No one should feel alone this time of year, especially our veterans.

Thank you for your service, your leadership, and your commitment to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I wish all of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a safe and joyful holiday season.

Yours in Comradeship,

VFW State Commander

Jamie Prestenback



**State Commander
James Prestenback**

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

Comrades,

Happy Holidays! I pray everyone enjoyed a blessed Thanksgiving.

Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Americanism, and Teacher of the Year entries have completed Post-level judging and are now at the District level. Please remember that all District submissions must be turned in to the Department by December 16th. Thank you for your dedication to recognizing excellence and supporting these important programs your efforts truly make a difference!

Remember, our organization is built by its members. Actively recruiting new members and staying connected with current ones is essential to keeping the VFW strong in its mission to advocate for Veterans. Encourage members to invite friends, share our activities on social media, and participate in community events. Together, we expand our reach and amplify our impact.

Have you planned your holiday gathering yet? Consider an Ugly Sweater Party, Holiday Pajama Party, or even a Fancy Holiday Celebration. The more we open our doors, the more we grow. When people see who we are and what we do, they are inspired to join us and support our work on behalf of Veterans. Let's make this season meaningful—for our members and our communities.

I look forward to seeing more friendly faces as I travel around the state for District meetings. It is always an honor to stand alongside Veterans who are Still Serving.



**Sr. Vice Commander
Sharee Arends**

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

Comrades,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Veterans Day and a Happy Thanksgiving. It was great seeing Veterans Day programs and events being shared on social media. The Department did a great job getting out in the community and representing the VFW with pride and distinction.

By now your districts should be receiving the Patriot's Pen and VOD essays. District chairman if you have not done so, now is the time to nail down judges. District judging should be completed by Dec. 14, and the district winner forwarded to state by Dec. 16. Please be prompt with the District judging. Everyone did outstanding last year with getting the winners turned in on time with most entries being submitted a few days prior to the due date. Should anyone have any issues with submitting entries or assigning judges I urge you to take a look at the tutorials on Scholar's App. They are informative and helpful as I've used them last year to figure a few things out myself. If you need more assistance contact Carl or myself and we will see if we can get you pointed in the right direction.

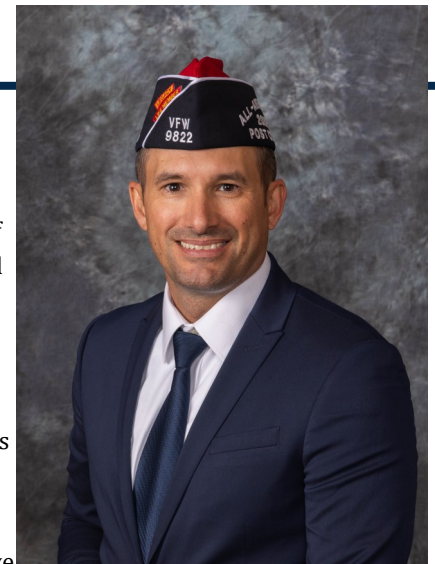
With Christmas right around the corner it's a good time to check on those who you may not have seen in a while and maybe invite a fellow veteran to your Christmas event. Taking care of each other is what we do best.

I would like to wish each of you and your families a Merry Christmas. May your heart be filled with the holiday spirit, and you enjoy the company of family and friends.

Merry Christmas,

James Bourque

State Junior Vice Commander



**Jr. Vice Commander
James Bourque**

A message from our State Adjutant....

Comrades,

As the holiday season approaches, I wanted to send you warm wishes and a message of hope. Christmas is a wonderful time to pause, reflect on the past year, and look forward to the future with renewed optimism.

May the spirit of the season fill your heart and home with joy, peace, and inspiration. Remember to cherish the connections you have, celebrate the small victories, and embrace the promise of new beginnings.

Wishing you and your loved ones a truly meaningful and blessed Christmas.



**State Adjutant
Carl Karnish**

A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades,

I hope you all enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday with your families.

I encourage all Post Quartermasters to take a few minutes this month to ensure your records are organized, reconciled, and prepared for a strong start to the remainder of our 2025–2026 Leadership Year. Staying consistent now will make your year-end reporting much easier.

I also want to remind all Posts that they should be on a fiscal year filing period (July 1–June 30) with the IRS, which means all 990s should have been filed by the 15th of last month. Please be sure that your 990 was properly submitted. If your Post is not on a fiscal-year filing period, please contact us at Department Headquarters so we can get it corrected.

Our Mid-Winter Conference is a little over a month away. Posts can register members who plan to attend by visiting the Department's website at www.vfwdeptla.org under News → Mid-Winter Conference. I encourage all who plan to attend the Banquet to purchase their tickets in advance. Tickets can also be purchased on the Department's website.

Department Headquarters will be closed Tuesday, December 23rd through Friday, January 2nd for the Christmas and New Year holidays. We will resume normal operations on Monday, January 5, 2026.



**State Quartermaster
Elvin Ray Bass**

I hope that you all have a blessed Holiday Season. 11

A message from our State Surgeon....

Comrades,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I hope everyone has joyous holiday. Let us not forget those serving that are away from family and friends. Reach out to fellow members that may be feeling lonely at this time of year.

Joseph Dufrene

State Surgeon



**State Surgeon
Joseph Dufrene**

A message from our State Chaplain....

As we enter the holiday season, we're reminded that this time of year is more than lights, gifts, and busy schedules; it's an invitation to slow down and care for what matters most: our health and our families. For many veterans and their loved ones, the holidays can bring joy, but also stress, grief, or emotional strain. That's why it's so important to be intentional about taking care of ourselves and one another. These are the hard lessons that I have learned these last few months, with the death of my Mom to immediately being diagnosed with brain cancer two days after burying her.

Scripture reminds us of the value of nurturing both body and spirit. "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). Taking time to rest, reconnect, and laugh with those we love isn't just seasonal tradition, it's part of God's design for our well-being. In the same way, 3 John 1:2 offers this prayerful wish: "I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you." As we celebrate, let's remember that caring for our health is not selfish; it equips us to serve others more fully.

I encourage each of you to reach out to a comrade, check on a neighbor, share a meal, or offer a prayer. Strengthening our families, both our home families and our VFW family, is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

May this holiday season bring you peace, renewal, and the warmth of connection. Take care of yourselves, cherish your loved ones, and know that you are valued more than you realize.

Blessings to you and yours.

Paul Stone

Dept. Chaplain



**State Chaplain
Paul Stone**

A message from our State Judge Advocate

First off I hope that all had a great Thanksgiving with friends and families. Christmas is around the corner so be safe during the holidays and let's celebrate the birth of Jesus. Bobby has a fundraiser to help defray the cost of his Homecoming when he becomes Commander In Chief. Cost of a ticket is \$50. I know it's high but the return of prizes makes it worth the purchase. Payouts are first with an early birth of \$1000 on April first 2026. On July 28 at the National convention there will be 20 drawings with the first one being for \$200. The grand prize is \$5000. Your district commander has tickets. Call me if you are interested in helping with the sale of tickets. Hope to see all at the January conference in Alexandria. Max



State Judge Advocate
Max Arends

November 3rd:

VFW Testifies at Senate Committee Hearing: VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs during an oversight hearing on the VA disability system prompted by recent news reports alleging fraudulent practices within the compensation claims process. Gallucci emphasized the VFW's challenge to "Honor the Contract" between service members and the government. He asserted, "Our veterans didn't ask what was in the air they breathed or the water they drank. And unlike many other public servants, they couldn't just walk away if they didn't want to do it anymore. They served in accordance with the contract they signed. Many now live with illnesses that steal their sleep, their breath and their ability to work. Suggesting that they embellish their suffering for money is insulting." Accordingly, the federal government must fulfill its responsibility to care for those injured or sickened in service. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#) which begins at the 15:43 mark.

VFW Engages in Dialogue on Veteran Education Benefits: VFW National Legislative Associate Director Joe Grassi participated in a panel discussion hosted by the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) on the current state of VA education benefits and challenges. Focus was on the impact of the government shutdown on benefit access and delivery, legislative priorities and collaboration among advocacy groups. Grassi highlighted the need for GI Bill fairness for National Guard and Reserve members, proper adjustment of school supply stipends, improved staffing for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program, and reduced administrative burdens on schools. [Learn more.](#)

TRICARE Open Season Begins Soon: TRICARE Open Season runs Nov. 10 through Dec. 9, giving eligible beneficiaries the chance to enroll in or change health plans for 2026. Active duty members and those with TRICARE For Life are not affected. Beneficiaries can make changes online through milConnect, by phone, or by mail, and should verify their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System information. Changes made during this period will take effect on Jan. 1. [Read more.](#)

November 10th:

VFW Salutes the Marine Corps on 250 Years: On Nov. 10, the VFW proudly joins in with a grateful nation to honor the United States Marine Corps and celebrate its 250th birthday, honoring two and a half centuries of distinguished service, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to the nation it serves. [Read the full statement.](#)

VFW Joins House Committee Roundtable on State of VA Benefits: VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci participated in a roundtable led by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Mark Takano and attended by House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. The roundtable focused on the current and future state of veterans' benefits. Gallucci stressed the VFW's message to "Honor the Contract" between service members and the federal government. Veterans were willing to risk their lives in defense of our nation, and in return the government must uphold its promise to care for those injured or made ill by that service. Amid growing scrutiny of VA's disability compensation system, he emphasized that protecting its integrity starts with honoring the fundamental contract. [Watch the full roundtable.](#)

VFW Helps Kick-off Warrior YOMP: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci joined members of the VFW National Veterans Service staff to represent the organization at the [Allied Forces Foundation](#)'s Warrior YOMP Expo, held at the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Va. The event served as the kickoff for the foundation's 50-mile endurance foot march, which unites veterans and volunteers from the United States and allied nations. The YOMP, which stands for Your Own March Pace, raises awareness and support for wounded, ill, and injured veterans, highlighting the shared sacrifices and resilience of those who have served.

VFW Podcast Addresses Latest Washington Post's Reporting: On the latest episode of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast, host Rob Couture is joined by Executive Director Ryan Gallucci, National Legislative Service Director Kristina Keenan, and National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli from the VFW Washington Office to discuss the Washington Post's latest coverage of veterans' benefits and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The team addresses a recent series of articles that, they argue, mischaracterize how veterans access the benefits they've earned — including claims that veterans are “flooding the system” or abusing disability compensation. Tune in to episode 53, “Absurdly Generous AND Dubious,” on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's [YouTube](#) channel.

November 17th:

VFW Meets with VA Secretary: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci met with VA Secretary Doug Collins during a visit to VA headquarters in Washington, D.C. Many topics were discussed during the meeting, including the government shutdown's impact on VA services, the progress on the VA claims backlog and the recent reporting by The Washington Post on VA benefits. Secretary Collins reassured the VFW that VA will always place veterans first.

VFW Participates in Veterans Day Events: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore, VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callahan and VFW Washington Office staff took part in Veterans Day ceremonies in and around the Washington, D.C., area at Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Memorial. As part of the ceremonies, delegations presented wreaths honoring veterans past and present.

VFW National Commander Visits Pax River Test Center: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci visited the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division at Patuxent River, Maryland, to learn more about ongoing Navy flight test operations. During the visit, Whitmore toured the Atlantic Test Range Headquarters and experienced an MV-22B Osprey aircraft in the center's advanced flight simulator, gaining insight into the training and evaluation processes that support naval aviation readiness.

Government Shutdown Ends: After a record 43-day federal shutdown, the government has reopened and restored funding to critical programs supporting service members, veterans and their families. Military pay and benefits will continue uninterrupted, with separation and permanent changes of station delays now being resolved as personnel offices reopen. VA health care, disability compensation and GI Bill benefits, which were largely protected during the shutdown, are now fully funded for the year, ensuring stability for millions of veterans. Federal civilian spouses of service members will receive back pay as agencies restart operations. Programs vital to military families, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Small Business Administration veteran business loans, are quickly resuming. The coming days will focus on restoring services, clearing backlogs and returning federal support networks to full strength.

VFW Speaks Out on Hemp Ban: In an open letter to the leaders of the House and Senate, VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and Adjutant General Dan West urged bipartisan support for responsible, scientifically grounded research into hemp cannabinoid-based alternative treatments for veterans suffering from conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and chronic pain. The VFW has a resolution supporting research into alternative medical treatments for veterans whose symptoms have gone unresolved by traditional medications, which have left some veterans physically, mentally and emotionally worse off. [Read the letter.](#)

TRICARE Enrollment Now Open: TRICARE Open Season began Nov. 10 and will run through Dec. 9, giving eligible beneficiaries the chance to enroll in or change health plans for 2026. Active duty members and those with TRICARE For Life are not affected. Beneficiaries can make changes online through milConnect, by phone or by mail, and should verify their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System information. Changes made during this period will take effect on Jan. 1. [Read more.](#)

November 24th:

VFW Submits Testimony for House Subcommittee Hearing: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli submitted a statement for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs for an oversight hearing on VA's Medical Disability Examination Office. He explained that although the VFW has repeatedly identified and offered solutions for persistent shortcomings in VA's examination and contracting processes, the system remains overly complex, burdensome and difficult for many veterans to navigate, especially those without accredited representation. Figlioli urged Congress and VA to modernize and stabilize the examination infrastructure and outlined recommendations for improvement in five key areas. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#).

VFW Podcast Discusses Call of Duty to Advocate for Veterans: Co-hosts Rob Couture and Brittany Dymond Murray welcomed a dynamic group on the latest episode of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast. Participants explored building bridges and camaraderie among generations of veterans through the VFW's Combat Tested Gaming platform as well as the VFW's ongoing fight to ensure elected and appointed officials "Honor the Contract" the government made with every veteran who served honorably. Catch episode 54, "Gaming the System," on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's [YouTube](#) channel.

Holiday Overseas Mail Deadlines Approaching: The U.S. Postal Service is preparing for the holiday season as many families spend holidays apart due to military service. To ensure overseas packages are delivered before Dec. 25, it has provided the following deadlines: Dec. 9 for all Air/Army Post Office (APO), Fleet Post Office (FPO) and Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) addresses with AE zip codes using Priority Mail and First-Class Mail; and Dec. 16 for APO/FPO/DPO addresses using USPS Priority Mail Express Military Service. Actual delivery dates may vary. [Read more.](#)

Christmas Joy Through Toys for Tots: Since 1947, Marine Toys for Tots has been bringing the joy of Christmas to America's less-fortunate children and fostering community engagement. Every holiday season, new unwrapped toys are distributed to children in need. Donated items may be dropped off at designated locations, or you may make a virtual donation. [Learn more.](#)

Defeating the Holiday Blues: For many veterans, the holiday season intensifies feelings of stress, depression, anxiety and loneliness. Creating a community and building connections are ways to combat the holiday blues and provide a sense of purpose. For those unable to meet in person with family and friends, you can schedule video calls, online game nights, or virtual dinners, workouts and watch parties. You can also volunteer with local VFW Posts and veteran support organizations in your area. [Read more.](#)

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

LOUISIANA COUNCIL MEMBER

December is here and so are the deadlines for the Scholarship Programs, Teacher of the Year and Americanism Programs for District judging, also you should be working on those Safety Award packages to get them turned in in January. Remember that the paperwork has to be completed to receive credit for these programs; don't let that slip through the cracks.

This last month a group of your fellow comrades and Auxiliary members had the pleasure of attending the Southern Conference, what a great time and fellowship with our friends from around the Southern Conference. A new slate of leaders were elected for the next 2 year term and my time on the Leadership Council came to an end, hard to believe that 4 short years ago I was elected as Chairman and the rest is history. Next year's Southern Conference will be held in Mobile, Alabama just a short drive for us to attend, hope to see an even bigger presence of Louisiana members there.

Beginning on December 9th I will be attending the 2026-2027 Planning Meeting at the National Headquarters in Kansas City, I look forward to working with incoming Commander in Chief Cory Geisler as he lays the ground work for his year. We will have the pleasure of having Cory as the National Representative for the Department's Mid-Winter Conference; spend a second talking to him and getting to know him while he is in Alexandria.

January will be a busy travel month for me as well as attending our Mid-Winter Convention, our CIC Carl Whitmore has assigned me to the Alaska and Oregon Mid-Winters as well, say a prayer that this Louisiana Cajun doesn't freeze to death in those far North locations.

During the Southern Conference, we kicked off a fundraiser to start raising funds as we prepare to host my Homecoming. Max Arends has already started working on finding dates and hotels, this is not an overnight planned event and we will need startup funds. We are going to be doing a Cash Giveaway, beginning with a \$1000.00 Early Bird drawing on April 1, 2026, the remainder of the drawings happening on July 28th at National Convention. A total of \$13,500.00 will be given away, tickets are \$50.00 each and all District Commanders have them and we will have some available at Mid-Winter.

The challenge to each Post to donate a minimum of \$75.00 to the NDSWM fundraiser continues. The Department is nearing the \$5000.00 goal we set and challenged other Departments to match, if your Post has not made your contribution please send the \$75.00 to our Department Quartermaster Ray Bass.

As we approach the Holiday Season let's take the opportunity to reach out to your Post members you haven't seen or heard from to make sure they are doing ok, this is the time of the year that Buddy Checks can save a person who may be dipping into that dark place. Reach out and help if you can.

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

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Department of Louisiana VFW Desert Storm War Memorial Fundraiser 2025

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

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

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



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Louisiana

FISHING TRIP FUNDRAISER

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

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

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

**TICKETS
ONLY \$5.00
EACH**

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

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

VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT

FUNDRAISER



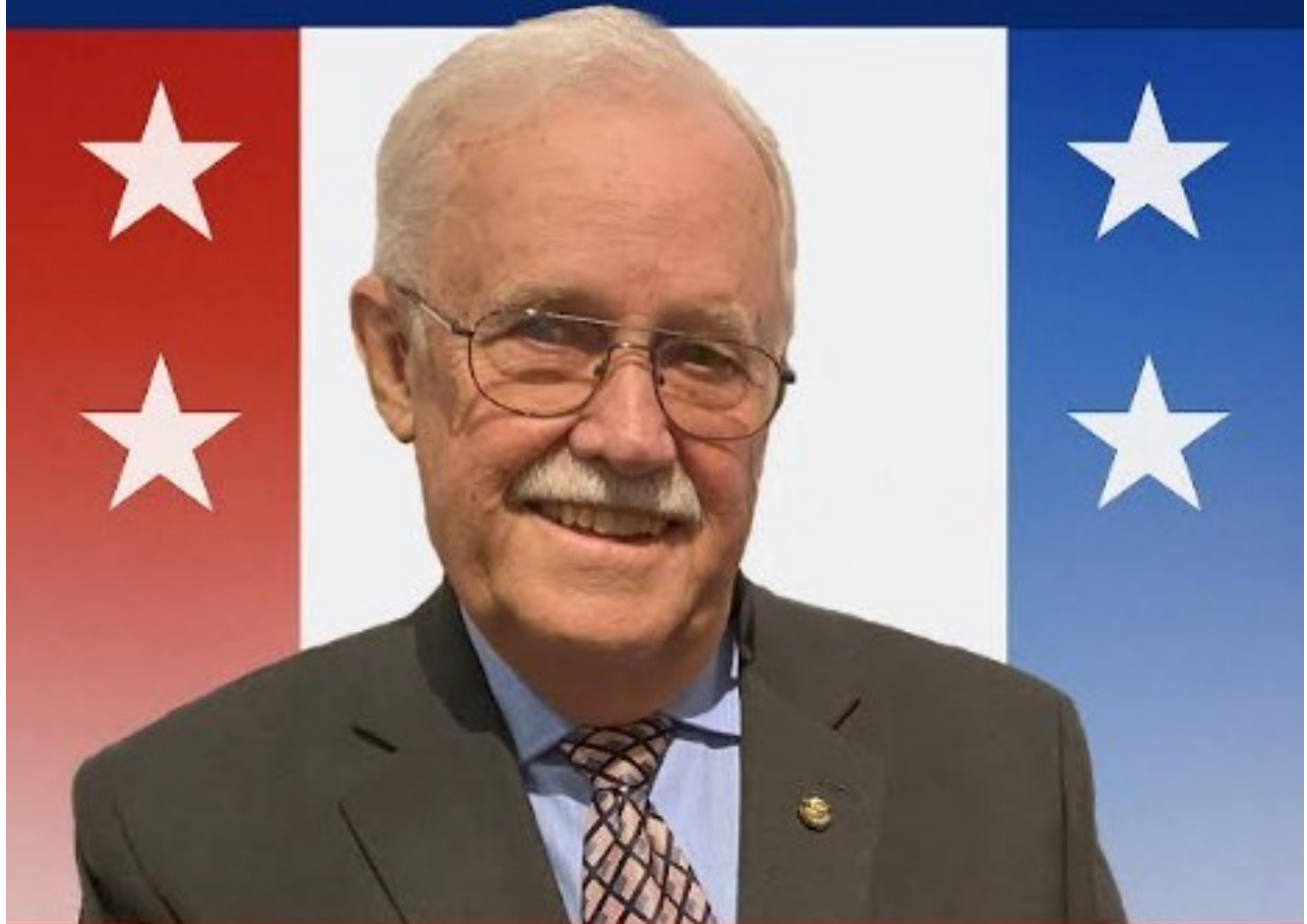
NO ONE D... VETERANS.

Louisiana

**TICKETS:
\$1.00 EACH
OR
\$5.00 FOR 6**

**WINNING TICKETS WILL BE
DRAWN DURING THE MID
WINTER SATURDAY NIGHT
BANQUET!**

**CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL
2026-2030**



DON REBER

**TRIPLE CROWN PAST STATE
COMMANDER 22-23**

**A PROVEN LEADER WITH OVER FORTY
YEARS OF EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE,
STANDING READY TO SERVE
OUR LOUISIANA VETERANS**

As a member of this great organization, I would like your support to become our next Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Louisiana 2026-27.

As a proud 24-year veteran of the United States Air Force and a dedicated member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, my vision as Junior Vice Commander of the Department of Louisiana is to strengthen our foundation of **Service, Unity, and Advocacy**. I will work tirelessly to ensure every veteran's voice is heard, every post is empowered, and every member feels valued. Together, we will preserve the traditions of the VFW while embracing innovative ways to grow, engage, and lead—ensuring our organization remains a powerful force for veterans and their families across Louisiana and beyond.

Lawrence (Larry) S. Koons

President, Cole-Miers VFW Riders

Commander, District 5 Louisiana VFW

VFW Riders Chairman,

Department of Louisiana VFW.

"No One Does More For Vets"

Mental health is one of our most crucial fights!

VOTE



For

David B. Fields

State Junior Vice Commander 2026-2027

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



COMBAT TESTED GAMING

By the **VFW**
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

THE VFW'S INAUGURAL GAMING LEAGUE EXCLUSIVELY FOR VETERANS.



Join the
community!



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

GAMES

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

IMPACT OVERVIEW

2,250+
Veteran
gamers.



**DEDICATED VFW
SERVICE
OFFICER**



answering VA benefits
questions daily.

**4 VFW
POSTS**



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

**5 VETERANS'
LIVES SAVED**



during crisis by
using connections
made through CTG.

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

December Award

Top Recruiter

The M16A1 is a variant of the original M16 rifle, which was designed in the 1960s. This GoatGun model is colored OD Green after it gained prominence as the standard-issue rifle for U.S. troops during the Vietnam War. It introduced improvements over the original M16, including a forward-assist feature and a more reliable direct-impingement gas system. The M16A1's legacy encompasses its service in various conflicts, its influence on modern military rifles, and its symbolic significance in the history of the U.S. military.



Painted OD Green on die cast metal. 'S17' rack number in authentic yellow. This model is 12.5" (32cm) when assembled. It weighs in at a hefty 15 ounces!



VFW DAY OF SERVICE 2026

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

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

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

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

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

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



Jr Vice Team is hosting a
Mid-Winter Friday Lunch
Fundraiser for the National Home



V F W
N A T I O N A L H O M E

Includes:

Gumbo, Potato Salad, dessert, drink

Purchase on-site for \$10 donation

Cash or Check

ALL Proceeds will go to the
VFW National Home

Served at The Bentley

(enter the Forum to the left of grand staircase)

Sponsored by

Humana

VFW Post 9822

March 28, 2026

FIRST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



SAVE THE DATE

