



MAIL CALL



February 2026

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

State Commanders Testimonial

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

If you plan to attend the State Commander's Testimonial, please RSVP clicking [here!](#)

State Convention

June 18-21, 2026
Hotel Bentley Alexandria

REMINDERS:

October to December
Trustee Report of Audit is due by January 31st!

"One Team, One Fight"

DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICT 2 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Adj Carl Karnish

DISTRICT 3 MEETINGS:

Apr 25, 2026 **Post 3665**
Registration 9:00 am
Meeting 10:00 am
Lunch 12:00 noon

Rep: Jr Vice James Bourque

DISTRICT 4 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Judge Advocate Max Arends

DISTRICT 5 MEETINGS:

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: PSC Fred Wesley

DISTRICT 8 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends

DISTRICT 9 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Judge Advocate Max Arends

DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Sr Vice Sharee Arends

DISTRICT 12 MEETINGS:

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

Rep: Cmdr James Prestenback

MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE WINNER:

The top recruiter for the month of **January** is **Jon Hudson** from **Post 3106** ! Congratulations

CHALLENGE COIN

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

Cost \$10.00 each + shipping

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

Click the link below to order yours today!

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

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

<https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?>

https://form.jotform.com/253275025727054?fbclid=IwY2xjawOakFRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzKxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeH4MvMRd92PraG2q3pe-vSpjRw73tRYv-lmC4I27DMUI_uQ0SPetQX3pd3A_aem_tKURUJ5BnPaowM0Z3doxAA

Congratulations VOD Winners

The following 10 Students represented their respective Districts in the Department VOD Competition:

- District 2 AVERY OERTLING, VFW POST 3750**
- District 3 NAOMI KENNEY, VFW POST 3665**
- District 4 MOLLIE C. MELANCON, VFW POST 9210**
- District 5 KENNEDY DANIEL, VFW POST 3619**
- District 7 ANNA BOURQUE, VFW POST 9903**
- District 8 JOHN RUSSELL JR, VFW POST 3693**
- District 9 STEVI C MAILLET, VFW POST 8720**
- District 10 JARREN REED, VFW POST 8852**
- District 11 TRISHA PANGILINAN, VFW POST 3615**
- District 12 JOSHUA HASTY, VFW POST 5951**

Trisha Pangilinan was selected as the Department of Louisiana winner and will represent our great state at the National Competition. Again Congratulations goes out to Trisha Pangilinan from District 11 VFW Post 3615

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, lets 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.



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:

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...

I want to extend my sincere thanks to our members and leadership for making the Department of Louisiana Mid-Winter Conference a great success. Even with schedule adjustments due to inclement weather, your flexibility, professionalism, and dedication ensured a productive and meaningful conference.

Because of your efforts, we were also proud to welcome our National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Corey Geisler, and share true Cajun hospitality. From the appearances by Captain Bayou, the Legacy Lady, and the Crawfish Man, we showed once again what makes Louisiana VFW special—our camaraderie, our culture, and our commitment to veterans.

The energy and participation we saw throughout the conference is a direct reflection of a strong and engaged Department. That same energy must continue as we focus on an important priority: membership. Membership is the lifeblood of our organization. It fuels our programs, strengthens our voice, and ensures we remain a powerful advocate for veterans, their families, and our communities. Every new member and every renewed member strengthens our mission and secures the future of the VFW.

I encourage every leader and every member to keep the momentum going—reach out, engage, and bring veterans into our ranks. Together, we can finish strong and continue building a Department that others look to as an example.

Thank you again for your hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment. I am proud of this Department and honored to serve alongside each of you.



**State Commander
James Prestenback**

Yours in Comradeship,
Jamie Prestenback
State Commander

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

Greetings Comrades,

First and foremost, I hope everyone fared well through the freeze that affected the northern half of the state. It served as a timely reminder to check on those members who may need a little extra help, as well as to reach out to those we haven't seen in a while. Our primary focus should always be ensuring our members know they are valued and cared for—not just counted. That commitment is the foundation of retention.

Congratulations to all the contestants in our Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Americanism programs, and best of luck as you move on to the next level.

Let's not take our foot off the gas. Continue recruiting, retaining, and reinstating members. Each of us is a building block for every bill that moves up the ladder. Our voices must be heard and accounted for. Stay engaged with your senators and representatives, and hold them honest and accountable as we continue advocating for all veterans.

Thank you for your dedication to the Department of Louisiana VFW. 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.

Yours in comradeship,
Sharee' Arends
VFW, Department of Louisiana
Sr. Vice Commander



**Sr. Vice Commander
Sharee' Arends**

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

Comrades,

It was great to see everyone at Mid-Winter. Even though we had an abbreviated convention due to weather we still found time to take care of business and have a little fun. Congratulations to those who received awards for meeting the membership goal by December 31. Let's keep the momentum going for the second half of the year.

Congratulations also goes out to all the winners of the Americanism, Patriot's Pen, and Voice of Democracy programs! It was great to honor the Patriot's Pen winner and hear her speech Friday morning even though it was a school day. Although our VOD experience was cut short due to weather, the district winners showed up Friday evening full of excitement. We had 8 of 10 winners show up. It's always a pleasure honoring our young people for a job well done.

Thank you goes out to all the members who participated in the gumbo lunch the Friday of Mid- Winter. I was pleasantly surprised we surpassed my goal of \$1,000.00 even with a lighter than normal crowd. Thanks to your generosity we raised \$1,210.00! A special thank you goes out to all the VFW and Auxiliary members who helped cook and serve the gumbo. It just goes to show you even when the convention doesn't go quite as planned, the Department of Louisiana shows up and makes it happen!

James Bourque

A.K.A Crawfish Man

State Junior Vice Commander



**Jr. Vice Commander
James Bourque**

A message from our State Adjutant....

Are you to busy and seem that you can not get anything completed?

1. Prioritize with a daily “Top 3”

- Pick the three most important tasks for the day — not the longest, but the ones that matter most.
- This keeps you focused and prevents busywork from taking over.

2. Time-block your day

- Assign specific windows for tasks: email, planning, deep work, errands.
- Even loose time-blocking reduces decision fatigue and keeps you from drifting.

3. Remove one distraction at a time

- Instead of trying to “be more disciplined,” eliminate a single distraction: silence notifications, close extra tabs, or put your phone in another room.
- Small changes compound quickly.

4. Use a simple capture system

- Keep one place — a notebook, app, or planner — where every idea, task, or reminder goes.
- This frees your mind from holding everything and reduces forgotten commitments.

5. Review and reset weekly

- Spend 10–15 minutes each week looking at what worked, what didn’t, and what needs adjusting.
- This keeps your system flexible instead of rigid.



**State Adjutant
Carl Karnish**

A message from our State Quartermaster....

Comrades, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of you who attended the Mid-Winter Conference, despite the challenging weather conditions. Your dedication and commitment to our organization were evident, and your support helped make our conference a success.

Thanks to the generosity and support of our members and guests, a total of \$6,176 was received during the Mid-Winter Conference. These funds included contributions to the following:

National Home- \$1,200.00

Desert Storm Memorial- \$1,004

VMS- \$390

Commander's Special Project (Project 4 Hope)- \$2700

Department Fundraiser (Fishing Trip)- \$500

Department's 50/50 drawing- \$382.00

Thank you again for your participation, generosity, and commitment to our Department.



**State Quartermaster
Elvin Ray Bass**

A message from our State Surgeon....

Comrades,

Despite the weather it was great seeing everyone at Mid-Winter. Hopefully everyone made back home with no issues. Considering the weather, we had a decent turnout for the blood drive at Mid-Winter and thanks to all who donated.

Have a safe and Happy Mardi Gras.

Joseph Dufrene

State Surgeon



**State Surgeon
Joseph Dufrene**

A message from our State Chaplain....

February can feel like the longest month of the year. The holidays are behind us, winter is still hanging on, and many of us are tired of cold mornings and gray skies. But even now, signs of new life are beginning to appear. Days are getting longer, and beneath the cold, growth is already preparing to rise again.

God reminds us of this promise: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" — Isaiah 43:19

As veterans, we understand hard seasons. We know what it means to push forward when conditions aren't easy and to trust that better days are coming. Just as winter does not last forever, neither do the difficult chapters of our lives. Renewal is part of God's design — not only in nature, but in us.

February also reminds us of the importance of renewed love. Not just romantic love, but the kind shown through loyalty, friendship, sacrifice, and service. Scripture tells us, "Let all that you do be done in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14 Sometimes love looks like checking on a buddy, visiting a veteran in the hospital, or simply listening when someone needs to talk.

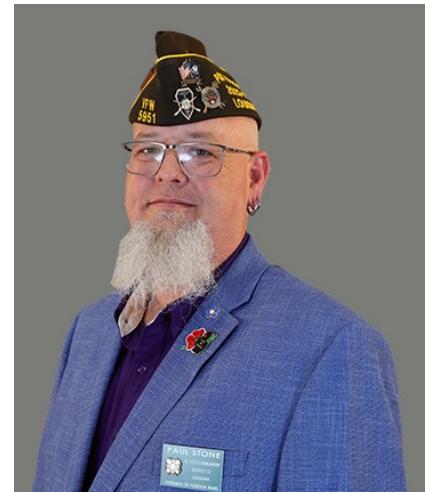
This month, I encourage you to do three things:

- Check on a fellow veteran who may be struggling or feeling isolated.
- Recommit to your purpose and to being active in this organization.
- Let love guide your actions with family, friends, and those who need support.

Galatians reminds us,: "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Brighter days are ahead, and we can help bring that light to others.

As always, if you or your family need prayer or support, please reach out. You are not walking this road alone. God bless you, and God bless our veterans.

Paul Stone
Department Chaplain, VFW Louisiana



**State Chaplain
Paul Stone**

ALL STATE & ALL AMERICAN DOES MY POST QUALIFY?

To be eligible for All State and All American we always hear that my post must be in good standing. What does this really mean?

To maintain good standing as a VFW Post, it must adhere to the following requirements:

- Post must have a Charter (Sec 201 Bylaws)
- Formation. A Post may be formed by completing a charter application consisting of twenty-five (25) eligible veterans, of which at least ten (10) must be new members, submitted through proper channels to the Commander-in-Chief.
- **Remedy:**
- **Ensure you have a copy of the Post Charter. If you do not request a copy from National for \$25**
- Post shall adopt Bylaws (Sec 202 Manual of Procedure)
- Copies of Bylaws, including amendments adopted by a Post shall, within thirty (30) days, be forwarded to the Department Commander for review and forwarding to the Commander in-Chief. Bylaws or amendments adopted by a Post shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief, provided such By laws do not conflict with the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and us ages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- **Remedy:**
- **Go to vfwdeptla.org**
- **Click on RESOURCES**
- **From drop down menu click on forms**
- **Click on PostBylawsTemplate 2024.pdf**
- **Fill in blank areas**
- **Follow Sec 202 ByLaws to establish a vote by the Post**
- Copies of Bylaws, including amendments adopted by a Post shall, within thirty (30) days, be forwarded to the Department Commander for review and forwarding to the Commander in-Chief. Bylaws or amendments adopted by a Post shall become effective upon review by the Commander-in-Chief, provided such By laws do not conflict with the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and us ages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- Regular Meetings. (Sec 203 Bylaws)
- Post shall hold at least one regular meeting each month.

- The Post Bylaws may specify the minimum number of members required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or special meeting, provided that in no case shall the quorum be less than five (5) members.
 - Remedy:
 - Hold your meetings as outlined in Commanders Book
 - IF you do not have a quorum, do not give up reach out to members via the phone. They can attend telephonically.
- Arrearages, Deficiencies and Omissions. (Sec 213 Bylaws)
- Any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money,
- Failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703,
- Bonds (Sec 703 Bylaws) Each officer accountable for funds or property pursuant to any provision of these Bylaws shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, they may be accountable. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department, District, County Council or Post to which each officer is accountable. The bonds of such accountable officers, in amount and as to surety, shall be approved by their respective units and held by their respective Commanders. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable officers in their unit.
 - Remedy:
 - Go to vfwdeptla.org
 - Click on RESOURCES
 - From drop down menu click on Post Bond Information
 - Click on Officers Bond Application
 - Fill in blank areas
- failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with (Sec 709 By laws)
- Any Post, County Council, District or Department owning and/or operating, directly or by reason of a holding company or other entity

substantially controlled by the Post, County Council, District or Department or its members, a canteen, clubroom or other facility available to members or guests must maintain general liability insurance, including, if necessary or appropriate, liquor liability insurance. Such insurance must be of a type and amount sufficient to protect the Post, County Council, District or Department and must name, as additional insureds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which such Post, County Council, District or Department is located.

- **Remedy:**
- **There are many companies that will provide insurance to post. Shop around, talk with other posts, know your Posts needs.**
- failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit (Sec 218.11 Manual of Procedures)
- Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees. Among the duties of Post trustees, they shall:
 - a. At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.
 - b. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and Record of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
 - c. The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.
- **Remedy:**
- **Go to vfwdeptla.org**
- **Click on LOGIN then MEMBERS ONLY**
- **Member ID is your membership number**
- **Password is your last name no caps**
- **Click on Login**
- **Click on Post Trustee Resources**

- Click on Trustees-Report-of-Audit-form2025.pdf
- Fill in blank areas based on provided documentation.
- Print form out for Review and THREE SIGNATURES
- Send completed form (Hardcopy, Picture or Scanned) to Department within 30 days of the quarter closing.

- Post Election Report for the Ensuing Year, (Sec 218a,1,i Manual of Procedures)
 - i. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all Business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the Ensuing Year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.
 - Remedy:
 - After Post and District elections QM should complete the election report completely. You will find the Election Report on the VFW home page. VFW.ORG
 - VERIFY all information is correct. Verify spelling of names, phone numbers, email address and physical address.
 - If you have a change of officers you can resubmit the election report to insure that HQ has the current information.
 - or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

- Posts will submit other obligations, specifically the IRS Form 990 annually. (Sec 218.a.5. j Manual of Procedures)
 - j. File appropriate forms as required by Federal, State and Local Statutes or regulations.
 - Important Reminders:
 - All Post should be filing on a Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30th)

- Due Date: The 990 filing (any version) is due on the **15th day of the 5th month after the end of the fiscal year, so for VFW Post the due date is November 15th.**
- **Failure to file for 3 consecutive years results in automatic revocation of tax-exempt status**
 - Remedy:
 - Go to vfwdeptla.org
 - Click on LOGIN then MEMBERS ONLY
 - Member ID is your membership number
 - Password is your last name no caps
 - Click on Login
 - Click on Post Quartermasters Resources
 - Scroll down to TAX INFORMATION
 - Decide which 990 form you are required to file.
 - File the appropriate tax form.
 - Need Help – Call the Department Quartermaster!!

To keep your Post non-profit status a 990 must be filed before **November 15** of each year.

Which 990 Form should a Post file?

The 990 form a Post must file depends on its financial activity, as indicated below:

Form Type Eligibility Details

990-N Gross receipts normally \$50,000 or less per year Filed electronically only. Very short form.

990-EZ Gross receipts more than \$50,000 but less than shorter version of full 990 \$200,000, and assets under \$500,000

990 Gross receipts \$200,000 or more, or assets Full Form (Detailed) \$500,000 or more

990-T If the Post has unrelated business income (UBI) In addition to 990 filing over \$1000

990-N Filing Guide: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5248.pdf>

Click here to file a 990 N: <http://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard>

- Post Annual Inspection completed (Sec 418,a,11 Manual of Procedures)
- The District Inspector shall ensure that each Post in the District is inspected in accordance with the Department Bylaws or as directed by the Department Commander. The requirements of such inspection are:
 1. That all books and records are inspected in accordance with a properly executed Inspection Form.
 2. The Inspector shall provide a copy of each inspection to the Post Commander, District and Department and set forth therein any constructive criticism and recommendations. The Inspector shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may be from time to time required by the laws and usages of the organization or on lawful orders of proper authority.
 - Remedy:
 - BE PREPARED
 - Go to vfwdeptla.org
 - Click on LOGIN then MEMBERS ONLY
 - Member ID is your membership number
 - Password is your last name no caps
 - Click on Login
 - Click on appropriate inspection form:
 - Districtinspectionformandinstructions.pdy
 - Postinspectionpackagefillanle.pdf

Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Louisiana
Legislative Report January 2026

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

Wishing each of you and yours a Happy New Year!

January 12 th :

VFW Commander Congratulates Operation Absolute Resolve Troops: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore released a statement commending the U.S. service members involved in Operation Absolute Resolve for their swift and precise mission achievement. "In complex and demanding conditions, these men and women upheld the highest traditions of the U.S. Armed Forces," said Whitmore. "Their discipline and commitment to mission execution reflected the values that generations of veterans have sworn to defend." Read the statement.

VFW 2026 Priority Goals: The 119th Congress is now in its second session, and there is still much work to be done. The VFW 2026 Priority Goals include many issues concerning benefits and services for veterans, service members and their families such as the Major Richard Star Act, VA community care reform, ending mental health overprescription harm and exploring alternative treatments for invisible wounds. The VFW will continue to advocate diligently to ensure members of Congress and the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense and Labor provide the resources and care our nation's veterans have earned and deserve.

VFW-Supported Tuition Fairness Bill Signed into Law: H.R.983, Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves Tuition Fairness Act of 2025, is now Public Law 119-55. Introduced by Rep. Van Orden (WI-3), this bill was approved by the House without objection and passed the Senate by unanimous consent. It requires VA to disapprove courses provided by educational institutions that charge higher than in-state tuition for individuals utilizing the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve benefits while living in the state where the education is located, regardless of the individual's state of residence. The VFW applauds the passage of this legislation.

VA Warns About New Benefits Scam Targeting Veterans: The VA announced that scammers are impersonating its representatives to deceive veterans, surviving spouses and family members into believing their VA benefits have been overpaid and must repay immediately. These fraudulent contacts may arrive via letters, emails, text messages or phone calls and include fake VA logos, letterheads and spoofed phone numbers to appear legitimate. Veterans can protect themselves by only using official VA channels to resolve any real overpayments, never sharing sensitive information like VA login information, and being cautious of urgent demands for quick payment. Veterans who believe they have been targeted should contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000 and can file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission or at VSAFE.gov. Read more.

January 19 th :

VFW Attends SVA NatCon 2026: VFW members were recognized for their outstanding commitment to the student veteran community during the Student Veterans of America (SVA) 18th Annual National Conference (NatCon), held this year in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Past VFW National Commander Brian Duffy addressed the conference's general session noting, "Education prepares you for tomorrow. Advocacy protects it." He concluded by stating, "Together, the SVA and VFW are still serving. We are still leading. And we can never stop thinking about tomorrow, because the next generation of warriors depends on us." VFW National Veterans Service Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel and VFW National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Rick Boring assisted student veterans at a claims clinic on site. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Gabby Kubinyi participated in the event's "Meet Your Veteran and Military Service Organizations" panel discussion.

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows for the 2025-2026 class are:

- Shadic Anderson, Marine Corps veteran, California State University
- Juanita Murillo Garcia, Army veteran, Northeastern University
- Giancarlo Gonzalez, Army veteran, St. Petersburg College
- Kimmie Kim, Navy veteran, Vanguard University of Southern California
- Austin Lawrence, Navy veteran, Harvard University
- Sarah Lively, Air Force veteran, Concordia University.

VFW Testimony for Subcommittee Oversight Hearing: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli submitted a statement for the record for a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing on efforts to modernize disability benefits. The hearing did not include any witnesses from organizations with VA accredited representatives, allowing misconceptions of the rating schedule to go unchallenged before the committee. In his statement, Figlioli commented on VA's ongoing modernization of the Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD), which is a critical component of VA's disability compensation system. His statement describes VA's plan, its progress to date, and obstacles impeding its completion. Since establishing this schedule in April 1945, VA has continually updated the VASRD to ensure fair and accurate compensation based on current medical science and labor market conditions. Rather than acting as a safety net, the current structure offers a more objective evaluation based on the veteran's "average impairment of earnings capacity," compared with that of similarly situated civilian workers. Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 22:27 mark.

VFW-Supported Tuition Fairness Bill Signed into Law: H.R.983, Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves Tuition Fairness Act of 2025, is now Public Law 119-55. Introduced by Rep. Van Orden (WI-3), this bill was approved by the House without objection and passed the Senate by unanimous consent. It requires VA to disapprove courses provided by educational institutions that charge higher than in-state tuition for individuals utilizing the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve benefits while living in the

state where the education is located, regardless of the individual's state of residence. The VFW applauds the passage of this legislation.

Women Veteran Committee Hill Day: The VFW and 12 other veteran organizations spent a day of advocacy on Capitol Hill aimed at garnering support and co-sponsorship for five specific pieces of legislation. These proposals would evaluate existing research on menopause, focusing on care quality and access. They would also improve outreach for women veterans, integrate gender-specific risk factors into mental health services, mandate annual sensitivity training for all VA employees and contractors handling claims related to military sexual trauma (MST), and extend MST-related mental health counseling to former National Guard and Reserve members. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Meggan Coleman commented, "These pieces of legislation are important because they offer an opportunity for equal benefits for all who have selflessly sacrificed to defend our country."

VA Class on Airborne Hazards & Burn Pit Exposure: On January 22, 2026, the Department of Veterans Affairs will be offering a session for veterans titled "Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits: What You Need to Know", register here. VA offers education classes for veterans via telehealth to provide veterans with the most current information and education on deployment related health concerns. VA offers a variety of classes throughout the year to keep veterans informed about research, access to integrative health services, and more to optimize their wellbeing. Learn more.

VFW Podcast discusses Major Richard Star Act, Updates for New Year: On the latest episode of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast, guests VFW Assistant Adjutants General Brian Walker and Ryan Gallucci and VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joy Craig team up with host Rob Couture for the first show of 2026. Join them as go in depth on the Major Richard Star Act, the latest National Defense Authorization Act, potential threats to VA disability compensation, VFW resolutions, the U.S. military operation in Venezuela and more. Listen to episode 57, "Absolute Resolutions," on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's YouTube channel.

January 26 th :

House Committee Roundtable on Scams Targeting Veterans: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli participated in a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs roundtable on preventing scams against service members, veterans and their families. The discussion highlighted how fraudsters deliberately target veterans of all ages, often exploiting the perceived reliability of VA disability compensation and the trust inherent in military culture. Panelists shared firsthand accounts of fraudulent schemes and emphasized the need for a coordinated prevention approach to include strengthening education and outreach, rigorously enforcing existing laws, and advancing legislation to hold bad actors accountable. Watch the roundtable, which starts at the 15:38 mark.

House Subcommittee Pending Legislation Hearing: VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joe Grassi provided a statement for the record on pending legislation to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The VFW expressed support for several proposals that would strengthen education, military-to-civilian transition and employment outcomes for veterans. Regarding H.R. 982, Warriors to Workforce Act, that would increase the housing allowance for apprenticeships, Grassi wrote, "In terms of this housing allowance, an increase from 80 percent to 100 percent would realistically help veterans complete these important education programs that provide direct

job training while ensuring their basic housing needs are covered.” Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 26:33 mark.

VFW Launches New Targeted Action Alert on Major Richard Star Act: The VFW has launched a new action alert urging Congress to advance the Major Richard Star Act. This legislation would correct a long-standing injustice affecting combat-disabled veterans whose earned retirement pay is currently offset by VA disability compensation. Unlike traditional alerts, this one uses a dynamic, targeted approach, delivering a tailored message to each member of Congress based on their role and position in the legislative process. This “living” alert will evolve as the bill moves forward, ensuring lawmakers continue to hear directly from those who are affected. Veterans and supporters are encouraged to take action and make their voices heard at this critical moment.

VFW Meets With Troops on NATO’s Eastern Flank: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci recently traveled to Poland to meet with U.S. service members at Camp Kościuszko, home of U.S. Army V Corps Headquarters (Forward) and U.S. Army Garrison Poland, which oversees 12 installations and supports operations along NATO’s eastern flank. Discussions focused on VFW advocacy priorities, earned benefits, transition assistance and the unique challenges of serving overseas. The visit underscored the importance of honoring commitments to those stationed on NATO’s front line and reaffirmed the VFW’s dedication to supporting troops wherever they serve. A previous visit led the VFW to champion proper recognition for eastern flank service—a resolution the VFW continues to renew and advocate for today.

Respectfully,

Matthew J. West

VFW, Department of Louisiana

National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026

STATE COMMANDER'S TESTIMONIAL



HOSTED BY POST 3665

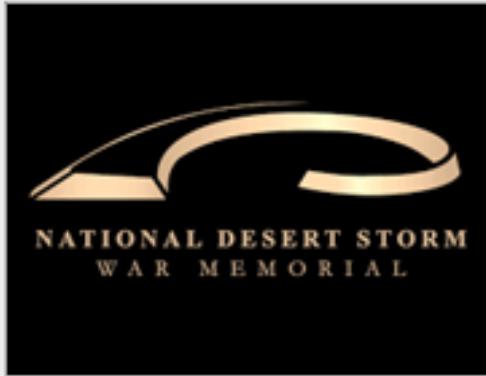
127 ST PHILLIP ST
RACELAND, LA 70394



MARCH 21, 2026 4:00PM - UNTIL

Cajun Theme. *Donations only*. Come experience some great cajun cuisine. Post will open at 11am for a social and the possibility of some boiled crawfish. Music starting at 6pm by Corey Perrilloux. Please RSVP. Casual dress. We have blocked rooms at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites located at 4716 Hwy 1 Raceland, LA 70394. Saturday night \$119.00. Group Name: "State Commander".

Booking Cut off is March 16, 2026



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



DON REBER

Triple Crown Past State Commander
A proven leader with more than 40 years of executive
experience, committed to service and results.
With a lifetime dedicated to leadership and advocacy,
I stand ready to continue serving the veterans of
Louisiana—with integrity, experience, and vision.

Vote June 21, 2026
Louisiana State Convention

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**

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!

FEBRUARY, 2026

TOP RECRUITER AWARD



A Coyote AR-15 Short Barrel typically refers to an AR-15-style rifle or carbine chambered for the .223 or 5.56x45mm cartridge, with a shorter-than-standard barrel length. This configuration is often chosen for its compactness and maneuverability, making it suitable for close-quarters shooting or tactical applications. The term "Coyote" may also refer to a camouflage or cerakote finish applied to the rifle for hunting purposes. Coyote AR-15 Short Barrels are popular among hunters and shooting enthusiasts for their versatility in various environments.



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!

COME PLAY GOLF

A VFW Post 9822 Fundraiser

Wetlands Golf Course

2129 N University Ave, Lafayette, LA



Format: 4 Person Scramble

ENTRY FEE: \$450 PER TEAM (Includes Green Fees, Cart Fees, 4 Mulligans, Longest Drive Contest, Closest to Hole, and Prizes).

Additional Mulligans can be purchased for \$5 each

Proceeds will go towards post operating expenses and helping needy veterans throughout the community.

Checks can be mailed to: VFW Post 9822, 120 VFW RD. Duson, LA 70529

You can also email to brandon.blood5@gmail.com or Jonathan.Young@lafayettesheriff.com and pay the day of the event!!!! If there are any questions, you can contact Brandon Blood @ 337.578.3279 or Jonathan Young @ 337.303.5751.