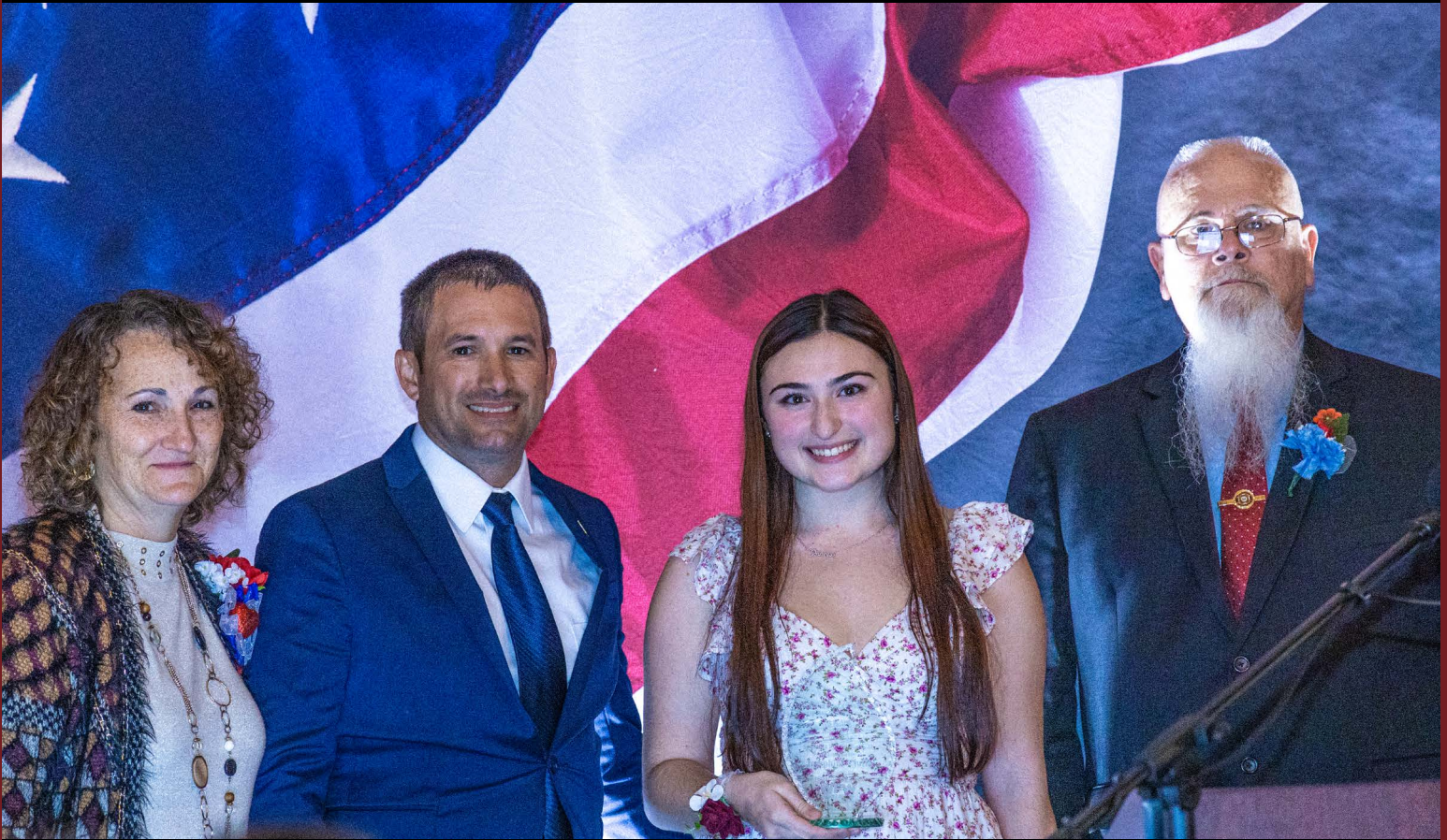


JANUARY 2024 MAIL CALL

23-24 GENERAL ORDER-08 PAGE 4



DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA VOICE OF DEMOCRACY 1ST PLACE WINNER

Post 5735 from District 9, sponsored this years Louisiana VOD Winner Miss **Josephine J. Ciuffi**. Her and her family were invited to attend the 2024 Mid-Winter Conference help at The Bentley Hotel Alexandria, in Alexandria, Louisiana. Josephine will travel to Washington, DC to compete against the other Department Winners in March, our VFW and VFWA Team will be along side her supporting her all the way.

[TEXT ONLY Printable version of Mail Call.](#)

23-24 STATE COMMANDER
RONALD K. "RON" DELANEY

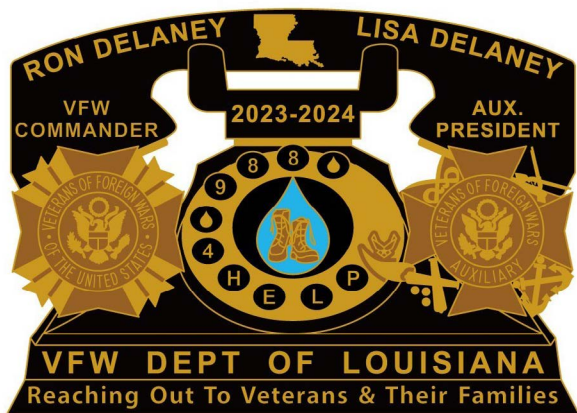


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STATE OFFICERS MESSAGES

Ronald K. "Ron" Delaney, State Commander	Post 4588
Debbie McElhannon, Senior Vice Commander	Post 9854
James M. Prestenback, Junior Vice Commander	Post 3665
Elvin "Ray" Bass, State Quartermaster	Post 3337
Mitchell R. "Mitch" Cota, State Adjutant	Post 3750
<i>Editor Mail Call/Louisiana Combat Veteran</i>	
<i>State Historian</i>	
Sharee M. Arends, State Surgeon	Post 5951
David Fields, State Chaplain	Post 5951

NATIONAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

DUANE T. SARMIENTO

MEET THE CHALLENGE



2023-2024



STATE CONVENTION 2024
JUNE 27 - 30, 2024

THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131



NATIONAL CONVENTION 2024
JULY 27 - AUGUST 1, 2024

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
 Housing opens 3/18/24
 Closes 6/10/24

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION 2024

AUGUST 9 - 11, 2024

THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE 2025

JANUARY 26 - 29, 2025

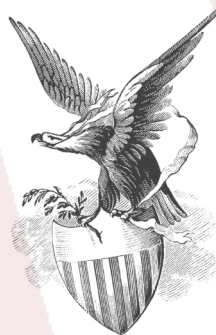
THE HOTEL BENTLEY
 200 Desoto Street
 Alexandria, LA 70131

STATE COMMANDER MESSAGE

What a great Mid-Winter Conference! It was good to see so many VFW members from across our state come together to accomplish business, have fun, while supporting our programs and fundraisers. It was the perfect setting to foster camaraderie amongst our members. I want to thank all the Chairman who submitted reports and especially the Chairman who did a fantastic job preparing for and presenting awards. The Etouffee cook-off was such a success, and it was remarkable way for the VFW Department to support the Auxiliary who supports us on a continuous basis. Overall, the Mid-Winter was an excellent display of outstanding TEAMWORK and many times this weekend I was very proud of our Department and all our dedicated members.

What an AWESOME job was done by James Bourque his wife Crystal, Carl Karnish & Paula Freeman completing our VOD, Patriots Pen and Americanism awards and presentations. It is always an honor to recognize our youth through these programs. The VOD District winners had a great time and formed an impressive bond during their time at our Mid-Winter. If you were able to attend the Banquet and witnessed the impromptu line dance some of these students I hope you found it as entertaining and heart-warming as I did. Several of the District winners held hands as the runners up and ultimately the winner was announced. It was evident that they were rooting for one another in addition to hoping to win for themselves. We should be pleased with the hospitality the Department as a whole showed them. Lisa and I look forward to escorting Josephine Ciuffi in the Parade of VOD winners in DC.

The Department of Louisiana has much work to do in membership. I encourage every Post to reach out to their expired or lapsed members to see how we can encourage them to renew their membership. We also need to hold membership drives and take advantage of opportunities to recruit new members. A strong membership base will keep both our Department and the National organization viable for many years to come. Having a large membership base or "footprint" in Washington, DC provides us with leverage to ensure Veterans Legislation is passed to help veterans across our nation. Our Veterans deserve benefits to provide them with the best possible quality of life and the VFW Priority



RON DELANEY
Air Force - Post 4588

Goals are designed to accomplish this. I commented on a FB post that if everyone of our 9060 members recruited or reinstated just 1 eligible veteran, we would be WAY on top with 18120 members and not last place in membership!!!

Now onto the not so good part. There are about 3 posts that are having problems. Remember, if your post does not have any of the top 4 officers, your post could be suspended up to 90 days. And if you elect an officer, please help them as much as you can for them to remain. There are posts that have members that are not eligible for membership, much less be an officer. Bottom line is that we as posts, districts and department need to be very diligent when new applicants want to be members. Another not so good area is those officers or post members who believe that the post belongs to them!!! Nothing could be further from the truth!! The Posts belong to the members. The members decide everything. If you are thinking of doing something, investigate the Bylaws/ Ritual book. If it is not in this book, do not do it!!! Ask for guidance. Get that 2nd or 3rd opinion. Read the book was the best information a PSC Commander gave me.

As we enter into the home stretch of this year, let's work on our membership, community service and the other critical programs that we need for everyone seeking All-State or All-American.

23-24 General Order-08

ONLY PAGE 4- IS TO BE READ AT MEETINGS THEN POSTED

Please share Mail Call with Post Members by EMAIL.

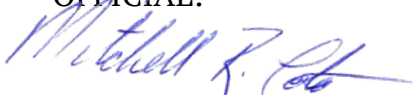
MANDATORY:

General Orders: All material in the State General Orders is directive in nature and will be read to the membership at the Post regular membership meetings each month. Some of these have remained the same and will remain for a while longer to instill their importance to our order. New Items will be added to the General Order and will have some highlighted in Red areas.

1. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee. Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that will be mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing going out later this month. Registration forms for the 124th National Convention may be mailed to: Convention Registration, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.
2. Attention is directed to Section 217 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure covering the nomination, election and installation of Post Officers. Post Election Report forms are being mailed to Post Quartermasters with instructions that they complete the form online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or they can complete the form and return directly to National Headquarters immediately following the election of Post Officers but not later than June 1.
3. Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure provides that delegates and alternates for the District Convention and meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Posts are entitled to one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post as of March 31.
4. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, each District shall hold an annual District Convention for the purpose of electing District officers, such convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National Bylaws – Regular Meeting, Districts shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year for purposes of transacting business and conducting schools of instruction. Pursuant to Section 417 of the National Manual of Procedure, District officers shall not assume the duties of their office until the Department Commander is installed. District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed in accordance with Section 416 of the Manual of Procedure.
5. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 (a)(11) of the National Manual of Procedure, wOfficers: Duties and Obligations. Trustees Report of Audit must be prepared in detail within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, one of which ends March 31.

BY COMMAND OF
RON DELANEY
STATE COMMANDER

OFFICIAL:



Mitchell R. Cota, PSC
State Adjutant

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE WINNERS

To start the new year, January's challenge was for our Posts to bring in New members and start off strong! The following Posts led their membership divisions and will receive \$500, and their Department will receive an additional \$500 award to acknowledge their motivation and leadership!



- Division 1: Post 9972 (AZ)
- Division 2: Post 3285 (MD)
- Division 3: Post 3103 (VA)
- Division 4: Post 7420 (CA)
- Division 5: Post 5405 (FL)
- Division 6: Post 3663 (WV)
- Division 7: Post 686 (NY)
- Division 8: Post 4037 (MI)
- Division 9 (tie): Post 6902 (NJ)
- Division 9 (tie): Post 3370 (NM)
- Division 10 (tie): Post 9952 (NH)
- Division 10 (tie): Post 8364 (WV)
- Division 10 (tie): Post 2523 (WV)
- Division 11: Post 12192 (MS)



With the recruiting efforts that these Posts have shown, we are going to hit that 102% membership goal, proving that

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 District 9 - Cota
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 District 4 - McElhannon
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 President's Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		
		Notes				

February 1 - Department Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award entries to National

February 1 - National Awards for Public Servants Department to National deadline

February 19 - Washington's Birthday (observed) (President's Day)

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District Meeting/Workshop	District Meeting/Workshop	District Convention
<p>District 2 August 26, 2023</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3267 1133 Hickory Ave., Harahan, LA 70123 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>	<p>District 2 January 13, 2024 REP - St Adj Cota</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3750--- 140 Angus Dr., Luling, LA 70070 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>	<p>District 2 May 4, 2024 REP - SJVC Prestenback</p> <p>District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3750 140 Angus Dr., Luling, LA 70070 Registration 9am Meetings 10am</p>
<p>District 3 August 26, 2023</p> <p>School of Instruction</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p>District 3 January 13, 2024 REP - SJVC Prestenback</p> <p>Business/Awards</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p>District 3 May 4, 2024 REP - St Adj Cota</p> <p>Business/Elections</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5097 1004 Tiger Dr., Thibodaux, LA 70302 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>
<p>District 4 August 19, 2023</p> <p>Workshop Following C of A</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 9822 120 VFW Road, Duson, LA 70529 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>	<p>District 4 November 18, 2023</p> <p>Programs</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 4158 102 Jimmy C Vorhoff Jr Dr. Abbeville LA 70510 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p> <p>District 4 February 10, 2024 REP - SSVC McElhannon</p> <p>Mid-Year Update/Awards</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 1982 1907 Jefferson Terrace Blvd., New Iberia, LA 70562 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>	<p>District 4 May 4th REP - PSC Wesley</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 4158 102 Jimmy C Vorhoff Jr Dr. Abbeville LA 70510 Registration - 9:00 a.m. Joint Opening - 10:00 a.m. Lunch - 12:00 p.m. VFW/Aux Business Session - 1 pm</p>

DISTRICT MEETINGS

<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 September 9, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3802 5416 Hwy 27 S., De Quincy, LA 70633 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 November 12, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 9854 2292 Highway 109 S, Vinton, LA 70668 Registration 1pm Sessions start at 2pm. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 5 April 20, 2024 <i>REP - St Cdr Delaney</i> District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 7321 2668 Hwy 171 North, Lake Charles, LA 70611 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$?)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 August 19, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8971 3809 Highway 190, Eunice, LA 70535 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 October 28, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 2484 123 N Liberty St., Opelousas, LA 70570 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 7 May 18, 2024 <i>To Be Announced</i> District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5153 1020 VFW Drive, Arnaudville, LA 70512 Registration 9am. Meeting start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$8)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 September 9, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3784 13214 S Choctaw Dr., Baton Rouge LA 70815 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 January 13, 2024 <i>REP - SSVC McElhannon</i> District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3693 42430 Church Point Rd., Gonzales, LA 70737 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 8 April 27, 2024 <i>REP - SSVC McElhannon</i> Nomination and Elections</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 4224 3215 Ben Williams Lane, Baker, LA 70714 Registration 9am-10am. Sessions start at 10am. Lunch 12pm. (\$7)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 September 16, 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8290 28000 Main St., Lacombe, LA 70445 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 February 3, 2024 <i>REP - St Adj Cota</i> District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3652 15800 Demarco Lane., Hammond, LA 70403 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am meeting dates changed due to weather</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">District 9 April 20, 2024 <i>REP - SJVC Prestenback</i> District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8720 21470 Mire Dr., Abita Springs, LA 70420 Registration 9am Sessions start at 10am Breakout 11am</p>

DISTRICT MEETINGS

<p>District 10 September 16, 2023</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3841 2471 Leglise St., Mansura, LA 71350 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>	<p>District 10 February 17, 2024 <i>REP - SSVC McElhannon</i></p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 8852 2419 3rd St., Alexandria, LA 71302 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>	<p>District 10 May 18, 2024 <i>To Be Announced</i></p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 3139 412 Elmo S., Marksville, LA 71351 Registration 10am Sessions start at 10:30am Lunch 12pm. (\$10 Donation)</p>
<p>District 11 August 26, 2023</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 5442 (Farmerville) 100 Hudson Rd., Farmerville LA 71241 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>	<p>District 11 January 13, 2024 <i>REP - St Cdr Delaney</i></p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 3615 (Ruston) 200 E. Mississippi Ave., Ruston LA 71270 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>	<p>District 11 May 4, 2024 <i>REP - PSC Lobrano</i></p> <p>District Convention</p> <p>Meeting place: Post 1809 (Monroe) 1499 Highway 594, Monroe LA 71203 Registration/meet & greet 10:30am Meeting 11am:</p>
<p>District 12 September 9, 2023</p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5187 860 Dahlia Vines St., Zwolle, LA 71486 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>	<p>District 12 January 20, 2024 <i>REP - St Cdr Delaney</i></p> <p>District Meeting</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 4588 1004 Jeter St., Bossier City, LA 71111 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>	<p>District 12 May 11, 2024 <i>REP - St Cdr Delaney</i></p> <p>District Convention</p> <p>Meetings place: Post 5951 1315 Northgate Road, Bossier City, LA 71112 Registration 9am Lunch (\$10)</p>

FUTURE NATIONAL DATES TO REMEMBER

July 27 - August 1, 2024 - National Convention, Louisville, KY

August 9 -14, 2025 - National Convention, Columbus, OH

August 15 - 20, 2026 - National Convention, Salt Lake City, UT

July 31 - August 54, 2027 - National Convention, Milwaukee, WI

August 5 - 10, 2028 - National Convention, San Antonio, TX

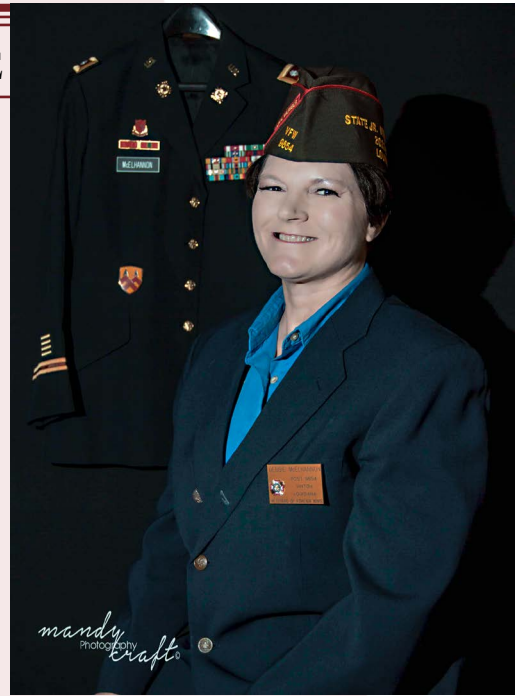
STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

I want to thank everyone that helped make our Dept of LA Mid-Winter Conference a success. We had a lot of fun and gave out some well deserved awards. Our Americanism, Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy winners did an outstanding job. The VOD winners had a great time.

We can now turn our focus on the Legislative Conference. Ron and Lisa will escort our VOD winner in the VOD Parade or winners while we are there. If anyone gets a chance to go to the Legislative Conference, I encourage you to go. It is a wonderful feeling to sit in the same room as our LA representatives and know you can make a difference because they are listening to what we have to say and taking notes.

Look forward to the remainder of the year. Until next time we meet, stay safe and continue what you do to help veterans.

Debbie McElhannon
State Senior Vice Commander



DEBBIE MCELHANNON
Army - Post 9854



FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

June 27 - 30, 2024 - State Convention
Alexandria, LA

August 9 - 11, 2024 - C of A
Alexandria, LA

STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Comrades,

I would like to thank all those who attended the Mid-Winter Conference in Alexandria, LA. A special thanks to all those who worked behind the scenes to make the Mid-Winter Conference a Great Success! Our Department fundraiser for the VFW National Home's Special Project was also a great success. Due to the generosity of our VFW & Auxiliary members, we raised \$1,000.00 on the alcohol basket raffle. Commander Ron Delaney raised an additional \$112.00 during Karaoke and donated it to our Special Project for the VFW National Home. I think they were throwing money at him so he would stop singing! Great times! Post Commander Randy Campbell (AKA Larry) of 4588 won the alcohol basket and donated it back to the Department with the exception of the VFW signature bottle of bourbon. Any post or auxiliary who donates to this VFW National Home Special Project will have a chance to win the alcohol basket. It does not matter the amount of the donation, you will be placed in a drawing and the winner will be pulled at the State Convention. If you choose to donate, please make the checks payable to the VFW Department of Louisiana and put "25/26 Retail Store" in the memo section. I will be visiting the National Home from May 16 through the 18th 2024 and will be presenting the donation check at that time.

Congratulations to all our Voice of Democracy District Winners! Good luck to our 1st place winner Josephine Ciuffi sponsored by Post 5735 Slidell, LA who advanced to the National Level of competition. Also, congratulations to our Patriot Pen and Americanism winners! Thank you to all Posts who participated in our VFW Programs.

Thanks for being a member of this great organization and I look forward to attending upcoming District & Post meetings!



JAMES M. PRESTENBACK
Army - Post 3665



STATE ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

I personally would like to thank **Tori Leblanc** and **Eugene L. Perrino Sr.**, Adj/Quartermaster from FL, for all their assistance in helping me in recreating the podium scripts for use in Alexandria. It was greatly appreciated and monumental in the success we had over the weekend at our 2024 Mid-Winter Conference.

It was suggested during the conference that information in the Mail Call was being duplicating from different sources. Although I agree some of the information is the same as other publications, not everyone in the Department subscribes to the same sources, and therefore may not be getting the same info multiple times. Another suggestion was that Mail Call should be shorten for printing purposes. The entire Mail Call was not intended to be printed, only the portions concerning the General Orders need to be printed.

Neither the Commander nor I, intend going back to a limited publication just for the sake of a few that want fewer pages. As I serve at the pleasure of the commander and his wishes. I am obligated to follow his direction not my own in what is published. However, seeing we have the same point of view on this subject, and I am in agreement with him. Any newsletter should be informative to the readers, taking suggestions from readers to improve the content they would like to see, not the deletion of content for printing purposes.

That being said, out of the 35 or 40 in person reviews about Mail Call's new look and the positive comments in the new direction it has taken since I became its Editor, there was only one concern about its length conveyed to me stating that it was too long to print and reading the entire issue at a meeting. As I state earlier, the only portions intended to be printed and read at a meeting are the General Orders page(s). I did inform them that I would make a printable version with just the pages to be read at a Post meeting.

So, for the next four issues, as with this one, there will be one full version for viewing on a device and a printable version with the content meant for sharing during meetings.

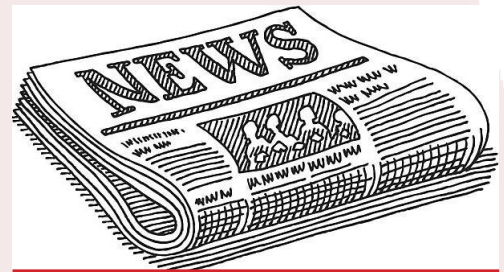


MITCHELL R. "MITCH" COTA, PSC
Air Force - Post 3750

Seeking Higher Office:

If you are planning to seek a Higher Office at State level, I urge you to send in your announcements to Mail Call. I will place it in March's issue of **Mail Call**.

PSC Mitchell R. Cota
State Adjutant
Department of Louisiana



State Historian

Please send pictures your Post or Auxiliary take of our Commander and President's visit to your Post or District meetings.

Things needed

Pictures of the State Commander and/or State President with Post or District Officers, everyone's names in the picture, the date of the event, and a paragraph or two of awards or ceremony that took place that day.

COMMITTEEMEN CORNER

Greetings All,

Greetings Comrades, great seeing a lot of you at the Departments Mid-Winter Conference the last weekend in January. First I want to apologize for losing my cool when the discussion for the funds to be given to District 2 to help the Posts that had to either get loans or use the funds they had to repair their Post homes. When you have a PDC and another past elected officer sitting in the back of the room spreading false information as to what the funds were going to be used for it is obvious that these individuals have forgotten about this line from our Congressional Charter ***“Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations. Let us uphold always the obligations of unselfish comradeship and loyalty to our organization.”*** Seems these individuals are more worried about their own intentions and not what this organization is for and that is Helping Veterans. If we want to keep Posts in this Department then we as a Department need to help those we still have around.

This month as you make those buddy checks please talk to your Annual Pay members about taking that step and becoming Life Members. Folks it not only helps your Post but also the Department. Membership is always at the forefront of any conversation had as we all know the goal of 102%, we as a Department need to do our part to reach that.

Next month from 2 -7 March we will be on Capital Hill for the National Council Meeting as well as our CIC Duane Sarmiento briefing Congress on the VFW's Priority Goals. If you have anything you would like brought up to the National Council please let me know before February 15th so I can get it on the Council Workshop agenda.

Remember for all those affected by the Camp Lejuene Toxic Water, the VFW has vetted with 2 law firms to assist you in filing a claim. These firms have both agreed to not charge more than 25% to represent you compared to the TV lawyers that are charging as high as 50%. The deadline for registering for benefits to be paid out is August this

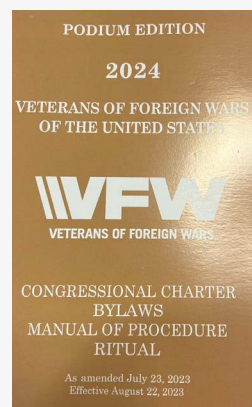


ROBERT “BOBBY” LOVERGNE, PSC
National Committee Member
Air Force - Post 3750

year, don't wait until it is too late to file a claim. Be careful on who you get to represent you.

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.

Robert “Bobby” Lovergne
National Council of Administration Member
Southern Conference Chairman
Past Department of Louisiana Commander
Department Budget Committee
West St Charles VFW Post 3750
(504) 251-5628



[Download the Podium pdf](#)

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEEMAN

Legislative Report January 2024

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

January 8th:

VFW 2024 Priority Goals: The 118th Congress is now in its second session, and there is still work to be done. The VFW 2024 Priority Goals include many issues concerning benefits and services for veterans, service members, and their families. 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.

FY 2024 NDAA Signed into Law: On Dec. 22, 2023, President Biden signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024 into law. This legislation focuses on DOD priorities and expenditures. It also authorizes appropriations but does not provide budget authority, which is provided by appropriations legislation. Read more.

Camp Lejeune Justice Act Informational Update: Veterans and family members seeking to file lawsuits because of water contamination at Camp Lejeune have only months left to do so. The VFW has partnered with trusted law firms to help those seeking to file suit against the government. BMBF Law and Bergman & Moore are here to help affected individuals. Section 804 of the PACT Act (P.L. 117-168), the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022, allows that individuals may qualify if they resided, worked, or were otherwise exposed (including in utero) to the ground water at Camp Lejeune for not less than 30 days during the period from Aug. 1, 1953, to Dec. 31, 1987; and have been diagnosed with a cancer, serious illness, or numerous other health conditions including neurological, kidney and liver diseases, miscarriages, infertility, and birth defects/cognitive disabilities in children. Your condition does not have to be on the VA presumptive list or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Agency for Tox-



MATTHEW J. WEST, PSC
Army - Post 3619

ic Substances and Disease Registry to file a claim. Surviving family members may pursue claims on behalf of deceased loved ones.

January 15th:

VFW Attends SVA NatCon 2024: VFW members were recognized for their outstanding commitment to the student veteran community during Student Veterans of America's (SVA) 16th Annual National Conference (NatCon), held this year in Nashville, Tennessee. Denny Cosmo of Bristol Community College received the SVA Chapter Advisor of the Year Award. Eric D'Arce, of Suffolk County Community College, was named as a Student Veteran of the Year finalist. D'Arce also serves as VFW Post 291 3's Jr. Vice Commander and District 11 Legislative Chairman. Additionally, VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow Jamie Springston was selected as a finalist for Student Veteran of the Year. During the conference, VFW-accredited service officers assisted hundreds of student veterans at a claims clinic on site. VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci addressed the conference's general session stating, "Service organizations like SVA and VFW are vital to veterans to thrive through transition and beyond."

VFW National Home: The National Home was founded in 1925 as a place where the families left behind by war could remain together. Today's families face different challenges, and the National Home has evolved over decades to meet those needs. The community is open to the families of active-duty military personnel, veterans, and relatives of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. Families may consist of one or both parents with one or more children. If your family needs help, please contact the helpline by calling 800.313.4200.

January 22nd:

House Investigation on VA Revolving Funds: The House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on VA's handling of revolving funds. A revolving fund is a business run by a federal agency, under authority granted by Congress, comprised of enterprises that provide services and collect fees. VA publishes the Franchise Fund's annual report, but the Supply Fund's financial statements are not public. It was discovered that the Supply Fund ran a \$37 million loss last year, but the financial statements characterized it as a profit. "I hope you can see why I am concerned," said Chairwoman Jen Kiggans. "This is not transparency." Watch the hearing, which begins at the 32:23 mark.

Mental Health Care Services During Transition: The Military Health System's inTransition program aids service members, veterans, and retirees — regardless of component, time served, or discharge category — to establish or transfer mental health care during times of transition. This program is a free service that is not time limited. It is staffed with qualified coaches familiar with military culture who stand ready to assist individuals to connect with the care they need. Read more.

January 29th:

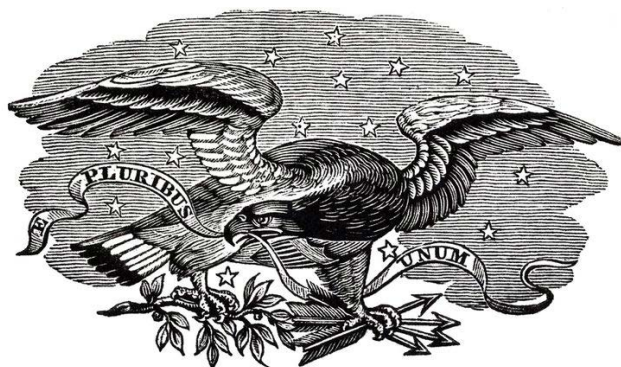
Volunteer to Vet the Vote: Tuesday, Jan. 30, is Help America Vote Day. This event provides an opportunity for veterans and military family members to volunteer as poll workers for Election Day 2024. In addition to recruiting poll workers, the nonpartisan Vet the Vote team will be at the Super Bowl next month educating the public on

the voting process and directing voters to their polling stations around the country. Continue your service by becoming a poll worker in 2024 to help support democracy in your community. Sign up now.

Setback for Toxic Exposures Fund: The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General investigated VA's initial spending plan for toxic exposures and found that a number of expenditures did not align with regulations. Among those were costs belonging to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The removal of \$1.1 million to update the Memorial Benefits Management System for the NCA will no doubt create a setback in the progress VA anticipated relating to the allocation of funds. The VFW's 2024 Priority Goals include an increase in burial allowances to account for inflation. Proper funding to facilitate benefits management for eligible veterans is a crucial step in meeting this key objective. Read more.

VFW 2024 Priority Goals: The 118th Congress is now in its second session, and there is still work to be done. The VFW 2024 Priority Goals include many issues concerning benefits and services for veterans, service members, and their families. 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.

Matthew J. West
Matthew J. West
VFW, Department of Louisiana
National Legislative Committee Member 2020-2026



SURGEON'S MESSAGE

Greeting Comrades,

It was a pleasure, as always, to see everyone this past weekend at the Mid-Winter Conference. We had a successful blood drive this weekend, getting fourteen (14) out of the goal of fifteen (15) units. Thank you!

As your surgeon, it is my responsibility to remind you to take care of yourselves. And to provide you with information on how to do that as efficiently as possible.

Unfortunately, we had a couple of slips, trips, and falls this weekend. The weather was not any help with the rain and the humidity on those old marble floors. Here are ways to help avoid slips, trips, and falls:

- Use handrails when walking on stairs.
- Use well-lit pathways or carry a flashlight for use in dark places.
- Wear comfortable, slip-resistant shoes.
- Use a cart and take the elevator when carrying bulky items.
- Stay focused and alert.
- Put your cell phone away when you are on the move.
- Use walkways and pedestrian paths.
- Wipe your feet on a mat when entering a building during wet weather.
- Know your ability, be willing to ask for assistance if in doubt.

This time around it was cooler weather, but warmer weather is coming. At our next gathering in June, the sun will be shining, and it will be hot. Please remember to maintain hydration and understand the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Final note, please make sure you are staying up to date on all your medications and vaccinations. When traveling, ensure you are not only bringing your medication, but packing enough for the



SHAREE' ARENDS
Air Force - Post 5951

time you will be away from home.

Again, it was an absolute pleasure to see everyone, and I am looking forward to seeing everyone in June.

V/R

Sharee' Arends
VFW, Department of Louisiana
Surgeon



Taking the steps to keep everyone on their feet!



SLIPS • TRIPS • FALLS

6 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK



Slow down & pay attention

Watch where you're going and stepping



Keep walkways clear

Remove all clutter and obstructions



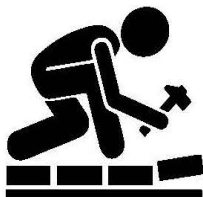
Step carefully when changing surfaces

Adjust your footing first for the surface, then proceed



Keep your field of vision clear

Don't let items you're carrying block your view



Ensure flooring is in good condition

Report immediately when repairs are needed



Use proper lighting

Make sure you can see where you're going and what you're doing

Preventing Heat Illness

Avoid the heat

When indoors...

- ▶ Use electric fans or air conditioners to adjust the temperature
- ▶ Use shading curtains, bamboo screens, and sprinkle water
- ▶ Check your room temperature regularly
- ▶ Refer to the WBGT value*

When outdoors...

- ▶ Use a parasol and wear a hat
- ▶ Stay in the shade and take a break regularly
- ▶ On sunny days, try to avoid going outdoors in daytime

To prevent your body from accumulating heat

- ▶ Wear clothes that breathe well, absorb moisture, and dry quickly
- ▶ Use ice packs, ice, cold towels, etc. to cool your body

*WBGT value: An index calculated based on the temperature, humidity, and radiant heat. Reference values are provided according to the level of exercise or work. Observed values and predicted values are indicated on the Ministry of the Environment's website (Heat Illness Prevention Information website).

Stay hydrated

When indoors or outdoors, regularly intake water and salt or drink an oral rehydration solution* even when you do not feel thirsty

*Water with salt and glucose dissolved into it

"Heat illness" refers to a state where the balance of water and salt in a person's body is gradually broken, thermoregulation fails to function properly, and heat is accumulated in the body, due to being in a high-temperature and high-humidity environment for a long time. It can occur not only when you are outdoors, but also when staying indoors not doing any exercise or work. Heat illness victims may be taken to hospital by ambulance and in some cases die from it.

In order to prevent health problems caused by heat illness, each individual should have a correct understanding of heat illnesses, be aware of changes in their physical condition, and look out for those around them.



Heat illness symptoms

- Dizziness, giddiness, numbness in limbs, muscle cramp, feeling unwell
- Headache, nausea, vomiting, dullness, despondency, different from usual

In serious cases:

- Response is not normal, unconsciousness, convulsion, body is hot

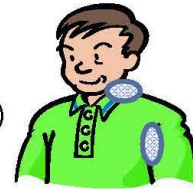
If you come across people suspected of heat illness

Take them to a cool place

Take them to a cool place such as an air-conditioned room or shady spot with good ventilation

Cool their body

Loosen their clothes and cool their body
(Especially around the neck, under the armpits, groins, etc.)



Hydration

Give them water, salt, oral rehydration solution*, etc.

*Water with salt and glucose dissolved into it

**If they are unable to drink themselves or unconscious,
call an ambulance right away!**

<Reminders>

People feel heat in different ways

The way people feel heat depends on their physical condition on that day, whether they are used to heat, and other factors. Be mindful of changes in your physical condition.

Elderly people, children, and those with disabilities need to be especially kept an eye on

- Half of heat illness patients are elderly people aged 65 or above. Caution is necessary since elderly people are less able to
- Children need to be kept an eye on since their body temperature adjustment functions are not fully developed yet.
- Hydrate yourself regularly even if you do not feel thirsty. Even if you do not feel hot, measure the room temperature and ambient temperature and try to adjust the temperature using electric fans and air conditioners.

Do not forget to take preventive measures against heat illness by being too conscious of saving power

On days when the temperature and humidity are high, do not try too hard to save power but use electric fans and air conditioners in moderation.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
2023-2024 PROGRAM WINNERS
BUDDY POPPY HAT CONTEST WINNERS**

Category 1 Prettiest: District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place District 2, 6640
2nd Place District 3, 12182
3rd Place District 12, 4588

Category 2 Most Original: District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place District 8, 3693
2nd Place District 3, 3665
3rd Place District 3, 4222

Category 3 Favorite Hobby/Pastime: District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place District 9, 8290
2nd Place District 11, 3615
3rd Place District 4, 9822

Americanism

Category 1 (Coloring the American Flag): District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place – Justin Wilcox,	District 9,	Post 3652
2nd Place – Davis Simms,	District 11,	Post 3375
3rd Place – Isaia Duet,	District 3,	Post 3665

Category 2 (Drawing the American Flag): District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place – Harper Hesson,	District 7,	Post 8720
2nd Place – Maggie Jo Darby,	District 5,	Post 9854
3rd Place – Landry Varnado,	District 8,	Post 7017

Category 3 (Drawing a Historical Event): District Post & Auxiliary

1st Place – Ella Barousse,	District 3,	Post 12182
2nd Place – Samantha Abbshire,	District 9,	Post 3652
3rd Place – Lia Parker,	District 5,	Post 3106

Category 4 (“How I Honor Veterans” Essay): District Post & Auxiliary

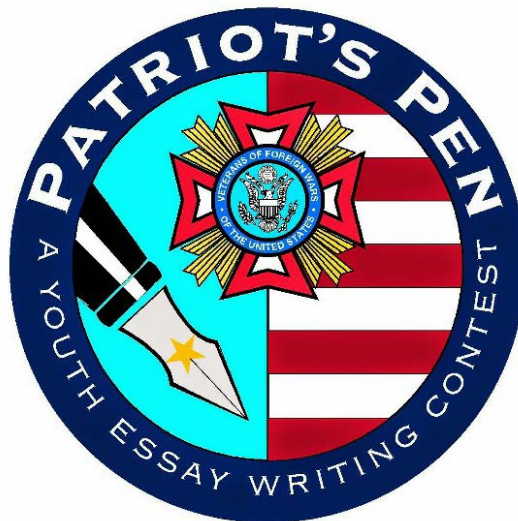
1st Place – Camille Eisworth,	District 8,	Post 4224
2nd Place – Somya Singh,	District 11,	Post 1809
3rd Place – Slade Stark,	District 5,	Post 3619

**MOST PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS: DISTRICT 11 POST 1809 – 39 SCHOOLS
MOST PARTICIPATING STUDENTS: DISTRICT 5 POST 3616 – 2655 STUDENTS**



**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY (“WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ATTRIBUTES OF OUR DEMOCRACY?”)
DISTRICT POST & AUXILIARY**

1st Place – Josephine J. Ciuffi,	District 9,	Post 5735
2nd Place – Anna Claire Bourque,	District 7,	Post 9903
3rd Place – Matthew P. Gomez,	District 4,	Post 9210
4th Place – Ryan J. Lemoine,	District 10,	Post 3139
5th Place – JeKneisha Peterson,	District 8,	Post 4224
6th Place – Bella S. Giordano,	District 3,	Post 3665



**PATRIOT'S PEN (“HOW ARE YOU INSPIRED BY AMERICA?”)
DISTRICT POST & AUXILIARY**

1st Place – Dejon Sylvester,	District 8,	Post 7017
2nd Place – Caleb Barron,	District 7,	Post 5153
3rd Place – Leah Lemoine,	District 10,	Post 3189

NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY

Message from Department Auxiliary President.

FIRST & FOREMOST...I want to thank all the VFW Districts that participated in the Etouffee Cook Off. The food was not only DELICIOUS, it also provided a wonderful meal for the Friday Night Auxiliary Fundraiser. The Auxiliary motto is "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes". This was an example of our Heroes providing unwavering support to the Department of Louisiana Auxiliary and it was EXTREMELY APPRECIATED! Thank you. I have a set of metal hooks that I am sure belong to one of the cook off teams. Let me know if you are missing them and I will arrange to get them back to their rightful owner.

Ron and I are looking forward to 2 significant events happening in Bossier City over the next few months. First, the National Auxiliary President is visiting on February 18 & 19. Attached is a flyer and below are additional details. Carla Martinez is a dual member and belongs to the VFW as well as the Auxiliary and it would be great to see VFW members join us in welcoming her to Louisiana and show her some "southern hospitality"! Please Join us if you can.

Secondly we will hold our combined Commander's & President's Testimonial on March 16th at our home VFW Post in Bossier. VFW Post 4588 Gandy-Brown is where we started and maintain our membership and we are pleased to be able to celebrate with everyone in Bossier City. Flyer is also included. All are welcome and tickets are available at the door.

I want to thank all the VFW members for their service to our country and continued service through the VFW. Your contributions are priceless.

Lisa Delaney
Department of Louisiana Auxiliary President

NATIONAL PRESIDENT CARLA J. MARTINEZ VISITS LOUISIANA

~~~~~ February 18, 2024 ~~~~~

**12:30 pm Aisle of Honor at Shreveport Airport**

***Dress in Official Auxiliary Look & bring a Flag to join us in welcoming Carla! We need to gather in the lobby of the airport at 12:30 p.m. in case her flight is early.***

Carla is scheduled to arrive on Delta Flight 5206 at Shreveport Regional Airport at 1:19 p.m. located at 5103 Hollywood Ave., Shreveport, LA 71109

**4:00 pm Wreath Laying at Eagle Park Turner's Pond**

***300 Lakeshore Dr., Minden, LA 71055 (30 min. from LeBossier Hotel)***

**5:00 pm Dinner at VFW Post 2885**

*232 Horseshoe Loop, Doyline, La*

**~~~~~ February 19, 2024 ~~~~~**

**8:00 – 9:00 am Breakfast at VFW Post 5951**

*1315 Northgate Road, Bossier City, La. 71112*

**10:00 am Warrior Horse (Interactive Equine Therapy)**

*524 Wallace Lake Rd, Frierson, LA 71027 (30 min. from Post 5951)*

**12:30 pm Lunch at Café' USA with 4588 OFDC Members**

*3380 Barksdale Blvd., Bossier City, LA 71112*

*Lunch is Dutch Treat*

**2:30 pm Visit to Northwest LA Veterans Home**

*3130 Arthur Teague Parkway, Bossier City, LA 7111*

**6:00 pm Banquet Celebration at VFW Post 4588**

*4001 Jeter Street, Bossier City, LA 71111*

**~~~~~ February 20, 2024 ~~~~~**

*No activities planned as Carla's flight leaves at 6:00 am*



LOUISIANA  
WELCOMES  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
CARLA MARTINEZ

Carla Martinez



Lisa Delaney



February 18, 2024

1:15pm

Shreveport Regional

4:00pm

Wreath Laying

Veterans Cemetery, Minden

5:00pm

Dinner

VFW Post 2885, Doyline

MARDI GRAS EVENING

ACCOMMODATIONS

LeBossier Hotel

4000 Industrial Dr.

Bossier City, LA

318-747-0711

\$79 plus tax

Block Code: VFW Auxiliary

February 19, 2024

8:00am

Breakfast, VFW Post 5951

Bossier City

9:30am

Warrior Horse

Frierson

12:30pm

Lunch, Cafe USA

Bossier City

3:00pm

NWLA Veterans Home

Bossier City

6:00pm

Dinner Banquet

VFW Post 4588

Bossier City

PLEASE RSVP Kolleen Herndon  
TEXT ONLY TO 504-452-2550





*Department Commander & President Testimonial*

*March 16, 2024 - 10:00 am - 2:00 pm*

*VFW POST 4588*

*1004 Jeter Street, Bossier City, 71111*

*\$20.00 per Person*

*Join us for a good time & great lunch!*

*Ticket includes admission to Dance Saturday Night at  
6:30 pm*



*Hotel Accommodations*

*LeBossier Hotel*

*4000 Industrial Dr.*

*Bossier City, LA*

*318-747-0711*

*\$79 plus tax*

*Block Code: VFW Commander*





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Robert L. Colter

Pvt 1st Class, U.S. Army Air Force  
(Florida)

PRESS RELEASE | Feb. 2, 2024

## Airman Accounted for from WWII (Colter, R.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Force Pvt. 1st Class Robert L. Colter, 23, of Lakeland, Florida, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 25, 2023.

In late 1942, Colter was a member of 91st Bombardment Squadron, 27th Bombardment Group, in the Philippines during World War II, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Colter was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war.

According to prison camp and other historical records, Colter died July 28, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 215.

Following the war, [American Graves Registration Service \(AGRS\)](#) personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Five sets of remains from Common Grave 215 were identified, but the rest were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns.

In early 2018, the remains associated with Common Grave 215 were disinterred and sent to the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify Colter's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Colter's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) (ABMC).

Colter will be buried in a place and time to be determined by the family.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Henry L. Stevens

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army Air Force  
(Louisiana)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 30, 2024

### Airman Accounted for from WWII (Stevens, H.)

WASHINGTON –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Henry L. Stevens, 23, of Monroe, Louisiana, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept 15, 2023.

In late 1944, Stevens was assigned to the 557th Bombardment Squadron, 387th Bombardment Group, Ninth U.S. Air Force, in the European Theater of Operations. On Dec. 23, Stevens was a crewmember aboard a B-26F "Marauder" aircraft, nicknamed *Shirley D*, which was shot by anti-aircraft fire over Bitburg, Germany, while returning from a bombing raid. Witness reported *Shirley D* took damage to the right engine, resulting in a massive fire which forced crewmen to bail out. Survivors watched *Shirley D* crash near Winville, Belgium, with several crewmembers, including Stevens, still onboard.

A few days after the crash, several Belgian residents recovered one set of remains from the crash site near Houmont and turned them over to American forces operating in the area. American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel initially identified the pilot, while the other set of remains remained Unknown. By Dec. 26, 1944, everyone from Stevens's aircraft had been identified and accounted for except for Stevens, and he was declared non-recoverable.

In 2013, DPAA personnel returned to the crash site near Winville, Belgium, where they recovered materials associated with the crashed B-26. Later in 2019, while working in conjunction with researchers from the University of Wisconsin, possible remains were located and sent to the DPAA laboratory for testing and possible identification.

To identify Stevens's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and autosomal DNA (auSTR) analysis.

Stevens's name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Ardennes American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Neupré, Belgium, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Stevens will be buried on March 8, 2024, in Bushnell, Florida.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

DPAA published a story in June 2021 about Stevens's recent recovery effort, which can be read here: <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Recent-News-Stories/Article/2648849/dpaa-completes-recovery-operations-in-belgium/>.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Earl E. R. Seibert

Pvt., U.S. Army  
(Pennsylvania)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 29, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Seibert, E.)

Washington –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Pvt. Earl E.R. Seibert, 23, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 10, 2023.

In late 1941, Seibert was a member of Headquarters Company, 803rd Engineer Battalion (Aviation), when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Seibert was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war.

According to prison camp and other historical records, Seibert died July 27, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 225.

Following the war, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Three of the sets of remains from Common Grave 225 were identified, but the rest were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns.

In 2018, the remains associated with Common Grave 225 were disinterred and sent to the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify Seibert's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), Y-chromosome DNA (Y-STR) and autosomal DNA (auSTR) analysis.

Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Seibert's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) (ABMC).

Seibert will be buried on a date and location to be determined by the family.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.



EARL SEIBERT



# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Thomas Crayton

Master Sergeant, U.S. Army  
(Texas)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 23, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Crayton, T.)

Washington D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Master Sgt. Thomas Crayton, 28, of Austin, Texas, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Sep. 26, 2023.

In Nov. 1950, Crayton was a member of Alpha Battery, 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth U.S. Army. He went missing in action and captured by enemy forces after his unit engaged combat actions in the vicinity of Somindong, North Korea, on Dec. 1, 1950. Shortly after he went missing, Chinese forces announced MSG Crayton had been captured as a Prisoner of War. In 1953, several POWs returned during Operation Big Switch reported Crayton had been a prisoner of war and died on Feb. 11, 1951, at Prisoner of War Camp #5. His remains were not immediately recovered or identified after the war.

In 1954, during Operation Glory, North Korea unilaterally turned over remains to the United States, including one set, designated Unknown X-14240. The remains were reportedly recovered from prisoner of war camps, United Nations cemeteries and isolated burial sites. None of the remains could be identified as Crayton and he was declared non-recoverable on Aug. 24, 1953. The remains were subsequently buried as an unknown in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

Chinese prison camp administrators moved many of their prisoners between POW Camps 1 and 5, and historical records and contemporary analysis have shown that the Chinese and North Korean recovery data has frequently proven inaccurate. In February 2020, scientists from the DPAA laboratory disinterred Unknown X-14240 from the NMCP for scientific analysis.

To identify Crayton's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as chest radiograph and other circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Crayton's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Crayton will be buried in Austin, Texas, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Leroy C. Cloud

Staff Sergeant, US Army  
(Texas)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 18, 2024

### Tanker Accounted for from WWII (Cloud, L.)

Washington D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Leroy C. Cloud, 24, of Thrall, Texas, killed during World War II, was accounted for Aug 29, 2023.

In July 1944, Cloud was assigned to Company A, 744th Tank Battalion, as a crew member of an M5A1 Stuart light tank. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces at Saint-Germain-d'Elle, France, on July 26 when his tank was struck by an enemy shoulder-fired rocket. Two crewmembers were able to escape the vehicle, but Cloud and another Soldier were never seen or heard from again. Due to strong enemy artillery fire and intense combat, surviving crewmembers were unable to recover Cloud's remains. He was declared missing in action, but the Germans never reported him as a prisoner of war. On Aug 16, with no evidence Cloud survived the fighting, the War Department issued a report of death.

Following the end of the war, the [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#) was tasked with investigating and recovering missing American personnel in Europe. On July 30, 1944, AGRC personnel recovered two sets of remains from an M5A1 destroyed in the vicinity of Saint-Lô. Ultimately, they could not identify the remains, designated X-141 and X-142 St. Laurent, and they were interred in the Normandy American Cemetery, France.

While studying unresolved American losses in the Saint-Germain-d'Elle area, a DPAA historian determined that the M5A1 Stuart tank recovered from the area belonged to Company A, where Cloud was assigned. This correlation led DPAA and [American Battle Monuments Commission \(ABMC\)](#) personnel to exhume the remains of X-141 and X-142 in April 2018 and sent to the DPAA laboratory for analysis and identification.

To identify Cloud's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used Y chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Cloud's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at Normandy American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, along with the others still missing from World War II. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Cloud will be buried in Taylor, Texas, on April 7, 2024.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Merle C. J. Hillman

Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class, U. S. Navy  
(Massachusetts)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 18, 2024

### Sailor Accounted for from USS California (Hillman, M.)

Washington D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class (PhM2c) Merle C. J. Hillman, 25, of Holyoke, Massachusetts, killed during World War II, was accounted for on October 20, 2023.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Hillman was assigned to the battleship USS *California*, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS *California* sustained multiple torpedo and bomb hits, which caused it catch fire and slowly flood. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 104 crewmen, including Hillman.

From December 1941 to April 1942, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uauu Cemeteries.

In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. In addition to the 42 casualties from the USS *California* initially identified after the attack, the laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 39 men from the USS *California* at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified the remains of the unresolved crew members, including Hillman, as non-recoverable.

In 2018, DPAA personnel exhumed the 25 USS *California* Unknowns from the Punchbowl for analysis.

To identify Hillman's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), and Y chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Hillman's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Hillman will be buried on Jan. 27, 2024, in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

For family and funeral information, contact the Navy Service Casualty office at (800) 443-9298.

DPAA is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Navy for their partnership in this mission.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Roy E. Barrow

Master Sergeant, U.S. Army  
(Georgia)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 17, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Barrow, R.)

Washington D.C. –

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Master Sgt. Roy E. Barrow, 39 of Valdosta, Georgia, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Sept. 22, 2023.

At the end of World War II, the U.S. military began a lengthy process of downsizing its forces. Many troops, especially commissioned officers, felt the call to continue service of their nation. As such, Lieutenants and Captains would be offered a reduction to Master Sergeant. This was the case with MSG Barrow, who had been reduced in rank when called to serve in the Korean War.

In the winter of 1950, MSG Barrow was a member of King Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 12 after his unit was attacked by enemy forces as they attempted to withdraw near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea.

In 1954, during Operation Glory, North Korea unilaterally turned over remains to the United States, including one set, designated Unknown X-15869 Operation Glory. The remains were reportedly recovered from prisoner of war camps, United Nations cemeteries and isolated burial sites. None of the remains could be identified as Barrow and he was declared non-recoverable on Jan. 16, 1956. The remains were subsequently buried as an unknown in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

In 2013, DPAA disinterred X-15869, and after a decade of scientific advances and increased historical research, DPAA was able to positively associate X-15869 to Barrow.

To identify Barrow's remains, scientists from DPAA used chest radiograph comparison, dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

MSG Barrow's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

MSG Barrow will be buried in Valdosta, Georgia, on January 27, 2024.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

To see the most up-to-date statistics on DPAA recovery efforts for those unaccounted for from the Korean War, go to the Korean War fact sheet on the DPAA website at:

<https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/569610/progress-on->







# POW/MIA RECOVERED

**Robert L. Farris Jr.**

Staff Sergeant, US Army Air Force  
(New York)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 16, 2024

## Pilot Accounted for from WWII (Willhite, T.)

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Major Theodore Willhite, 26, of Muscatine, Iowa, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 19, 2023.

In March of 1944, Willhite was assigned to the 724th Bombardment Squadron, 451st Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force in the Mediterranean and European Theater of Operations. On Mar 11, Willhite was piloting a B-24 "Liberator," when it was struck by anti-aircraft fire after a bombing raid on a German position near Toulon, France. Eyewitnesses on another B-24 reported seeing Willhite's aircraft spinning out of control at approximately 3000 feet before breaking apart and crashing into the sea. All 11 crewmembers aboard the aircraft were lost in the incident and not identified following the war.

Beginning in 1945, the [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#), Army Quartermaster Corps, was the organization tasked with recovering missing American personnel in the European Theater. Following the war, the AGRC disinterred and identified seven sets of remains recovered from the Lagoubran Cemetery, at Toulon, France. At the time they were unable to identify Willhite and other crewmembers, and they were interred in the Rhône American Cemetery.

In 2019, DPAA investigators and [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) personnel exhumed the remains of X-84 Luynes, X-85 Luynes, X-86 Luynes, and X-92 Luynes and sent them to the DPAA laboratory for analysis and identification.

To identify Willhite's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Willhite's name is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at Rhône American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments Commission site in Draguignan, France, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Willhite will be buried at a place and time to be determined by the family.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.





# POW/MIA RECOVERED

## Herbert F. March

Technician 4th Grade, U. S. Army Air Force  
(Washington)

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 16, 2024

## Airman Accounted for from WWII (March, H.)

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Technician 4th Grade (TECH4) Herbert F. March, 24, of Cook, Washington, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 10, 2023.

In late 1941, March was a member of Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. March was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war.

According to prison camp and other historical records, March died July 26, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 225.

Following the war, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila. In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Three of the sets of remains from Common Grave 225 were identified, but the rest were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns.

In March 2018, the remains associated with Common Grave 225 were disinterred and sent to the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify March's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y-chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, March's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) (ABMC).

March will be buried in Woodland, Washington, on a date to be determined.

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.



# **VFW PROGRAMS DEADLINE DATES**

## **Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award**

- \*October 31, Entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging
- \*February 1, Department winners and reports due to National (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation)

## **Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen**

- \*October 31, Student entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging
- January 10, Completion of Department judging
- January 15, District participation reports due to Department Chairmen
- \*January 15, Department winners due to National
- \*January 31, Department reports due to National

## **Scout of the Year**

- \*March 1, Scout entries to the Post
- \*April 1, Post entries to Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs
- \*May 1, Department entry to National from Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs

## **Community Service**

- \*April 30, Post Special Project & Fred C. Hall Award Submission (Department to National)
- \*April 30, National Outstanding Community Service Post Submission(s) (Department to National)
- \*June 30, Community Service Reports Deadline

## **Public Servant National Award (Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Emergency Services)**

- January 1, Nominations due (from Post to Department)
- \*February 1, (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), Nominations due from Department to National

## **National Certificate of Recognition**

- April 1 (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), List due to National from Department

***\*Required deadline (by VFW National Headquarters.) All other deadlines are suggested, and can be internally set at the discretion of the VFW Department leadership. Post Chairmen, be sure to communicate with your District Chairmen to find out their official deadlines, and District Chairmen need to communicate with their Department Chairmen to find out their deadlines.***

Updated 8/1/2022

## Membership

### **COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE, DON'T LET THEM FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS!**

Every year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars loses a significant portion of our annual members whose dues lapse and they fall off our rosters. For the month of February 2024, our VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento is challenging YOU to turn it around and help keep our membership strong!

This month's challenge will count all renewals and reinstates processed during February. This means if a member whose dues have lapsed for any amount of time OR will lapse before the end of June 2024 pays their membership dues (Annual or Life) - the Post will get credit for this contest.

The Posts that lead their membership divisions in renewals and reinstates for the month of February will be given a new top-of-the-line laptop computer to better assist with their membership goals and processing! We want to put the tools in your hands to help our Posts succeed!

We know how important it is to recruit members into the organization. We also need to focus on keeping those members we have and staying strong! Retention is vital to membership success. By keeping our membership strong, we can be assured of continuing our mission to help our nation's veterans and to go out and **MEET THE CHALLENGE!**

### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE AWARD**

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 102 percent membership by April 1, 2024, will each be awarded:

- **A five-night hotel accommodation at the National Convention.**

### **DEPARTMENT 102% INCENTIVE**

Any Department that attains 102% in membership by close of business on June 30, 2024, will be entered into a random drawing. The Commander and the Quartermaster for the Department that is selected will each receive:

- **A \$2,500 voucher through Veterans Travel Service (VTS) applied towards airfare, accommodations, and transportation for a trip of their own choice.**

### **MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES**

As the membership year has begun, keep in mind our membership objectives, also written in the 2023-24 Membership Program.

- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- For Posts, Districts and Departments to reach 102% membership by June 30, 2024.

- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.
- Provide membership assistance, using teams from your conference to assist and mentor those who request assistance.

## **NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT AWARD**

If you have questions about Memstats, Post Query, or if you are trying to charter a Post and you have more than (15) members on a charter application, give me a call, Matt Nute at 816.968.1122. We have many resources available to help you.

**New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award:** For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:

- A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used toward necessary materials for the new Post.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org) or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

## **UPCOMING TRAINING**

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Feb. 5, 2024, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: **Recruiting Responsibilities**. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

## **CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!**

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook to view the latest membership news, Post Shout-Outs, and important resource information throughout the year - [facebook.com/VFWmembership/](https://facebook.com/VFWmembership/).

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!**

Top Three Recruiters (as of 1.29.24):

**Steven L. Woodward – 410**  
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

**Timothy M. Borland – 366**  
VFW Post 9972, Dept. of AZ

**Ed Stefanak, Jr. – 240**  
VFW Post 9539, Dept. of SC

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org), click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life members and is now available in memoriam for past Life members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

### Enrollment Cost:

### Annual Payouts:

| <u>Levels</u>    | <u>Posts</u> | <u>Departments</u> | <u>National</u> |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Gold- \$1,200.00 | \$18.00      | \$18.00            | \$18.00         |
| Silver- \$800.00 | \$12.00      | \$12.00            | \$12.00         |
| Bronze-\$400.00  | \$6.00       | \$6.00             | \$6.00          |

*What will your Legacy be?*

## VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation is actively pursuing sponsorships for the historic 125th VFW National Convention to be held July 27-Aug. 1, 2024, in Louisville, Kentucky, as we are reaching out to current and new prospective corporate partners.

On Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024, Sport Clips Haircuts presented a \$1.3 million check to the VFW Foundation in support of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." The celebration at VFW Post 7397 in Lenexa, Kansas was attended by VFW National Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento along with Sport Clips Founder, VFW Foundation board member, VFW Life member, Gordon Logan and Sport Clips CEO Edward Logan. Additionally, numerous local Kansas City area veterans received free haircuts.

Help A Hero has grown to be the largest scholarship program of its kind, offering service members and veterans support for education often needed in post-military careers. For the spring 2024 semester, 175 scholarships totaling nearly \$800,000 have been awarded!

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, [rfreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:rfreiburghouse@vfw.org).

## VFW National Convention

**VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING** – 125th National Convention housing will officially open March 18, 2024. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website accessed through the main VFW website at [vfw.org/convention](http://vfw.org/convention). The convention website will also have general convention information including the registration form and links to other convention related information for Louisville, Kentucky – July 27-Aug. 1, including a tentative agenda.

**CONVENTION REGISTRATION** – Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the VFW National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee provided the Post has paid the mandated \$25 advance registration fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to the VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. **ATTN:** Convention

Registration, Quartermasters are strongly encouraged to register delegates utilizing the on-line membership system (OMS).

## Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 17% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

**2024 VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Annual Campaign Update** – If you received our mailing in early January, you should have the 2024 Petition to Congress and an “American Hero” Memorial Day Ribbon Card. Your support is crucial as we collect petitions to convey our commitment to protecting veterans' benefits from potential fiscal changes to our congressional leaders. The signed cards will be distributed to hospitalized veterans and service members by Memorial Day. Additionally, some members have received the 2024 “Help Our Heroes” Member Survey, and we're actively collecting and tallying responses.

In late-January, a reminder letter was sent, including a Special Veterans' Petition addressed to the President and Congressional leaders. The VFW remains steadfast in urging our leaders to honor their promises to those who served. Please sign and return the petitions promptly and consider making a contribution to support the VFW National Veterans Service. Together, let's make our voices heard in Washington, D.C.

Your support is still urgently needed for the 2024 VFW NVS Annual Campaign. Your donation right now ensures the VFW's national force of highly trained, professional service officers is at the ready to help America's veterans navigate the complicated VA system.

VFW Accredited Service Officers help veterans and their survivors cut through the red tape to receive VA compensation and pension benefits they have earned. The VFW recovered \$13 billion in compensation in pension on behalf of approximately 570,000 veterans and eligible family members in fiscal year 2023. VFW Accredited Service Officers are there for all veterans to help them apply for and receive their hard-earned VA benefits. This service is available to all veterans FREE OF CHARGE — and made possible through your donations. Please, watch your mail for this important campaign.

**Voice of Democracy State Winners Coming to the Web** – It's almost time! Keep an eye on the VFW's website in late Feb. to see the faces – and hear the performances – of the state winners of this year's Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition. Sign up at [vfw.org](https://vfw.org) to receive alerts in your inbox.

**Save Your Money Today, Make a Difference Anyway** – Did you know you can make a gift to the VFW without affecting your daily budget? You can include us as a beneficiary on your retirement account or insurance policy. This way, you support tomorrow's veterans without eating into your bottom line: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/save-money-make-difference>. The VFW Planned Giving Office is here to help if you have questions. Call us at 816.968.1119 or email us at [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org).

**Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism?** – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join with him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families and reduce the amount of mail you receive. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate fundraising mail. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join the VFW's Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the

Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of Jan. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at [partners@vfw.org](mailto:partners@vfw.org) with “Partners in Patriotism Application” in the subject line.

**VFW Friends of Freedom** – If you are not already a member of the VFW’s online community, please visit [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and look for the gold banner that says “**Find Out What’s Happening**” to sign up. As a member of the VFW’s Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation’s veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit [vfw.org/VFWatWork](http://vfw.org/VFWatWork) and click on “**Read VFW success stories**” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

**Department Resources** – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. By visiting [heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools](http://heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools), you will find the latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department. Download ad slicks, ready-to-use articles and other items for your Department publications and/or website. Recent mailings and mail schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the tools found on the VFW Department Resources Page to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

## Veterans & Military Support Programs

### 2024 VFW Day of Service

Make your state stand out! We're kicking off 2024 VFW Day of Service, a nationwide community service effort, and we are counting on you to help make this year bigger and better. Please visit [todaysvfw.org/Day-of-Service/](http://todaysvfw.org/Day-of-Service/) to learn more, check out helpful tools and resources—and most importantly — sign up!

We are counting on 100% participation and are looking to VFW leaders at every level to make it happen. Thanks for your support!

### VMS All-American Requirement

VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the VMS donation tab on the Dashboard to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters.

If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily.

Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

Your \$100 or more donation meets the eligibility criteria for All-American in this category.  
**Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your support!**



## Veterans & Military Support (VMS)

The Veterans & Military Support Program Chair Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is [vfw.org/community/troop-support/VMSP-Chair-Tools](http://vfw.org/community/troop-support/VMSP-Chair-Tools).

### VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The 2024 Fall Semester application is available now and can only be found online at [vfw.org/Scholarship](http://vfw.org/Scholarship) with a deadline date of April 30, 2024.

## VFW Programs

**DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS.** Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

**PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD)** Please encourage Posts to read the 2023-24 Membership program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

**SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM REMINDER.** Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level (if applicable) should be completed. After Department judging, each Department could have selected one candidate from each category and submitted their winners to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1. The Department Teacher winners that are received at National Headquarters will be entered in the National judging and receive a VFW National citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" with the entry documentation downloaded. A link has been forwarded to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster to submit it to National Headquarters by Feb. 1. You may locate additional information by logging in to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section. If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email [tbeauchamp@vfw.org](mailto:tbeauchamp@vfw.org) or call 816.756.3390 and ask for extension 6287.

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS.** Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards being raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot's Pen National Awards total is \$55,000.

**NEW UPDATES.** VFW National Programs has updated the Fred C. Hall and Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

### The new programs are as follows:

**FRED C. HALL MEMORIAL AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE.** Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all

volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Fred C. Hall Memorial Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

**OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR.** Each Department will have an OCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

**“UPDATED” POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS.** Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to [vfwstore.org/products/GP237](https://vfwstore.org/products/GP237).

**IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot’s Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

## VFW Member Benefits

Think about all your monthly expenses: rent or a home mortgage, utilities, car payments, groceries, loans, kids’ tuitions, Netflix, etc. It’s hard making ends meet as it is, and it feels like some of these expenses never end. However, have you ever asked yourself *“Would my family be able to cover these costs if something were to happen to me?”*

You can help protect your loved ones by looking into all the life plans available in the insurance market. Each product is meant to protect you and your spouse through all stages of your life. Whether you’re still employed or living in your retirement, you are guaranteed acceptance until age 75.

For additional information about your Life Insurance Plan options [click here](#) or call 1.877.850.0183.

## “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy

**“BUDDY”<sup>®</sup> POPPY CAMPAIGN.** Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades.

Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as “They Gave, Will You?” is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

**BUDDY POPPY UPDATE:** National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective Jan. 1, 2024:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 90 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy), or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

**VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES.** The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need.

Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of the Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 3.5 years of the Gold, 5 years of Diamond and 52 years of the Silver.

## National Veterans Service

### **ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER PROFICIENCY TRAINING, ANNAPOLIS, MD**

National Veterans Service will conduct a hybrid training conference for VFW accredited representatives April 21-24, 2024, at the DoubleTree Annapolis Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. This hybrid course will include in-person instruction that will be live-streamed simultaneously via electronic media to those who are unable to attend in person. Formal notification to students required to participate in these conferences has been sent out. Please address questions relating to accredited service officer training to Chris Macinkowicz, Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance, NVS, at [cmacinkowicz@vfw.org](mailto:cmacinkowicz@vfw.org).

### **NOMINATION PERIOD FOR JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR FOR 2023-24 IS COMING SOON!**

The importance of the work done by VFW accredited service representatives cannot be overstated as they are essential to the continued well-being of our nation's veterans and their families. Even as the VFW transitioned into a hybrid remote office environment, our accredited representatives continued to counsel veterans, complete paperwork, and submit VA claims for earned entitlements and benefits. Due to modern technology, the accredited representative's mission of providing services to veterans, their family members, or survivors can be conducted at any place, at any time!

Department Commanders will soon have the opportunity to recognize that ongoing commitment by nominating one (1) of their Department's accredited representatives for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-24.

Official notification that the nomination period is open will be sent out in February. We encourage every Department to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions your program makes in your community every day.

## National Legislative Service/Action Corps

### VFW 2024 Priority Goals

The 118th Congress is now in its second session, and there is still work to be done. The [VFW 2024 Priority Goals](#) include many issues concerning benefits and services for veterans, service members, and their families. 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 Store

**Presidents' Day is coming up.** Shop the VFW Store for items to celebrate:  
[vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/presidentsday?page=1&size=100](https://vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/presidentsday?page=1&size=100)

**Teacher awards** such as plaques and certificates are also available:  
[vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation](https://vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation)



## CAMP LEJEUNE LEGAL CLAIMS

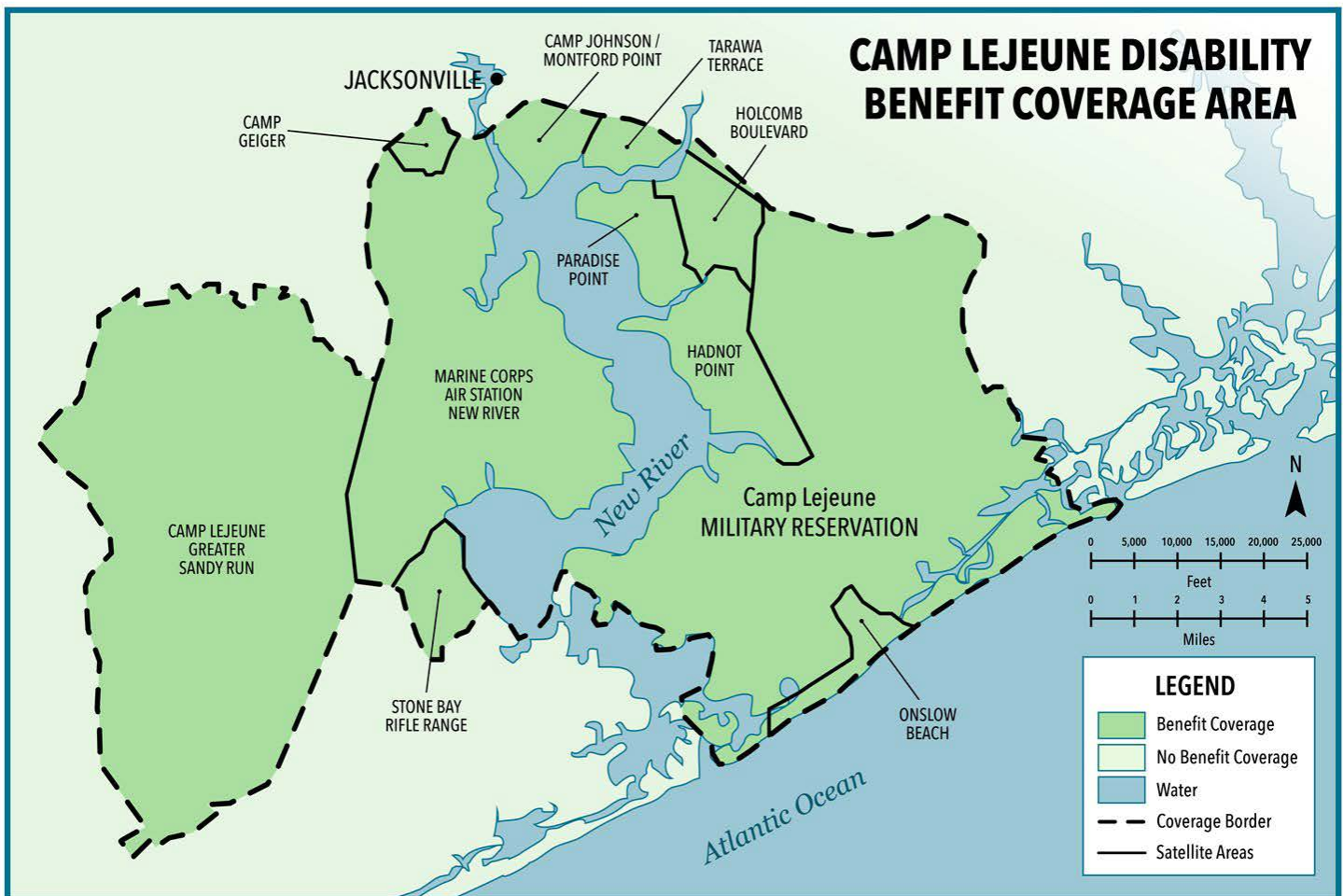
Sharing a [VIDEO](#) about my team and I's efforts to help as many veterans and their families as possible with Camp Lejeune legal claims. If you are willing to push it out to your COA and share with Auxiliary counterparts, and share however else you wish, that would be great as the deadline is rapidly approaching on **August 10th**. But we are urging folks to get a hold of us by the end of May to assure the time necessary to properly prepare their claim.

Jason E. Johns

National Legislative Committee  
Past State Commander-WI (2020-2021)  
WIA-Purple Heart-26 Oct 2003-Iraq

*Type in the link below to view the video.*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30\\_OlnnEfQQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30_OlnnEfQQ)





**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**

REVISED 10/01/2023

**PLEASE DISREGARD ANY OTHER BUDDY POPPY ORDER FORMS! THESE ARE THE PRICES YOU WILL BE CHARGED!!!!**

DISTRICT # \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

POST # \_\_\_\_\_

AUXILIARY # \_\_\_\_\_

**BUDDY POPPY ORDER FORM**

**MAIL TO: VFW DEPT. OF LOUISIANA  
10185 MAMMOTH AVE.  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70814**

**ALL CHECKS ARE TO BE MADE  
PAYABLE TO "VFW DEPT. OF LA"**

| <b>ORIGINAL BUDDY POPPY (500 Minimum)</b> |                                     |                 |               |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>QUANTITY:</b>                          | <b>ITEM:</b>                        | <b>PRICE:</b>   | <b>TOTAL:</b> |
|                                           | <b>ORIGINAL BUDDY POPPY PER 500</b> | <b>\$145.00</b> | <b>\$</b>     |
|                                           | <b>PER 1,000</b>                    | <b>\$290.00</b> | <b>\$</b>     |
| <b>TOTAL=</b>                             |                                     |                 |               |

| <b>METAL TAB BUDDY POPPY</b> |                                  |                 |               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>QUANTITY:</b>             | <b>ITEM:</b>                     | <b>PRICE:</b>   | <b>TOTAL:</b> |
|                              | <b>METAL BUDDY POPPY PER 500</b> | <b>\$80.00</b>  | <b>\$</b>     |
|                              | <b>PER 1,000</b>                 | <b>\$160.00</b> | <b>\$</b>     |
| <b>TOTAL=</b>                |                                  |                 |               |

**SHIP TO:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VFW MEMBERSHIP #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STREET ADDRESS: (NO PO BOXES!)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

|                                      |                |               |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY:</b>      |                |               |
| _____ QUANTITY ORDERED FROM NATIONAL | DATE: _____    |               |
| _____ QUANTITY SHIPPED FROM DEPT. HQ | DATE: _____    |               |
| DATE RECEIVED: _____                 | CHECK #: _____ | AMOUNT: _____ |