



October—December 2025

1822 W 162nd Street, Gardena, CA 90247
Phone: (310) 324-6161 www.vfw3261.org

It's not the dues you paid to be a member, it's the price you paid to be eligible.

GENERAL WILLIAM STARK ROSECRANS | VFW POST 3261

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Jimmy "C" Carradine, Post Commander



Our quarterly newsletter format does not allow us to recognize all the holidays as they arise, so we hope everyone enjoyed a happy Thanksgiving with family and friends.

One of the highlights of this year was our collaboration with the City of Gardena to honor our Veterans at the **City of Gardena 55th Annual Veterans Day Service** and our **VFW Post 3261 Community Cookout**. Pictures from the events are on page 2 of this newsletter.

Special thanks to City of Gardena Mayor Tasha Cerda and Recreation, Human Services Director Stephany Santin and staff for their ongoing and generous support of VFW Post 3261. Not only do they support the Veterans Day activities but they also support many other successful events throughout the year. I'd also like to thank Guadalupe "Lupe" Zendejas who purchased the food and drinks for the Cookout on behalf of the city.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank our Post volunteer Brandon "Buck" Grayson and his beautiful family for cooking the delicious food. This is Buck's second year serving as the volunteer cook for the Cookout, and he does a wonderful job. There are too many names to mention but I want to thank our Post members and volunteers for their support of the Cookout. From set-up to tear-down and clean-up everyone pitched in.

As 2025 ends we would like to thank our guests who support the Canteen. Let's not forget our faithful Wednesday night bingo players for their support and "Claire" who make sure everything runs smoothly on Wednesdays. We've added karaoke to Taco Tuesday, so stop in for delicious tacos and enjoy singing your favorite tunes.

As we look forward to next year we wish our members and their families, our volunteers and friends a HAPPY NEW YEAR in 2026!



CANTEEN
Open Monday—Sunday
2—10 PM

**TACO TUESDAY And
KARAOKE 4—9 PM**

BINGO WEDNESDAY
Open @ 4:30 PM
Starts @ 6:30 PM

HALL RENTAL
Capacity: 250 Per-
sons Friday & Saturday
\$2,200
(Bar closes at midnight)



City of Gardena and VFW Post 3261 Honored Veterans at November 11, 2025 Veterans Day Service



VFW Post 3261 Veterans Day Cookout November 11, 2025



VFW Calls on VA to Honor Supreme Court Ruling on GI Bill Benefits

VA guidance continues to deny or limit access to earned benefits

October 02, 2025

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — With the fall semester underway, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW) is once again leading the charge to ensure all veterans receive the full educational benefits they have earned — especially in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision in *Rudisill v. McDonough*.

Last year, the Supreme Court sided with veterans, ruling that those eligible under both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill are entitled to the full measure of benefits under both programs, up to the 48-month cap. The decision rejected a long-standing Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) policy that forced veterans to forfeit one set of benefits if their service was continuous, rather than interrupted by a break.

Despite the Court’s clear decision, VA issued guidance late last year through its “2024 Education Directives,” that continues to deny or limit access to earned benefits. The new rules wrongly impose a “break in service” requirement, block the transfer of benefits to dependents in certain cases, refuse to extend deadlines for dependent usage, and offer no retroactive relief to veterans and families harmed by prior unlawful policies.

“These new rules directly contradict the Supreme Court’s decision on what veterans have earned through honorable service,” said VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore. “We will not stand by while bureaucrats strip away what the Court — and Congress — have already promised. Veterans and their families have planned their futures around these benefits, which is why VA must honor this contract.”

To challenge these unlawful directives, the VFW has joined a new lawsuit before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, alongside the Commonwealth of Virginia, and individual veterans, including the original petitioner, James Rudisill. The lawsuit seeks to strike down VA’s directives by reinforcing the Supreme Court’s decision, ensuring veterans and their dependents receive access to all education benefits they are rightfully owed.

In its initial response to the lawsuit, VA sought to remove VFW as a petitioner, suggesting that the VFW did not have veterans affected by the decision. Though the VFW has already secured affidavits from affected members to refute this motion, the organization is asking all VFW members affected by VA’s erroneous interpretation of the Rudisill decision to come forward and submit their stories to legal@vfw.org.

“If you or your family were counting on these education benefits this fall and suddenly found yourself left out, we want to hear from you,” said Whitmore. “Your story is important, and it could help make sure no veteran is left behind.”

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/10/vfw-calls-on-va-to-honor-supreme-court-ruling-on-gi-bill-benefits>

VFW Salutes US Navy on Its 250th Birthday

**Their selflessness in defending our nation's interests
ensures the safety of our country.**

October 10, 2025

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) proudly joins the nation in celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States Navy, which has been our unwavering maritime shield, defending the seas to ensure America's security and economic prosperity.

On Oct. 13, 1775, a resolution of the Continental Congress established what is now the United States Navy with "a swift sailing vessel, to carry ten carriage guns, and a proportionable number of swivels, with 80 men, be fitted, with all possible dispatch, for a cruise of three months ..." While disbanded for a short while after the end of the Revolutionary War, it was permanently estab-



lished by the passage of the Naval Act, signed into law by President George Washington in 1794.

For two and a half centuries, the Navy has demonstrated an unmatched capability to project power and protect American interests across the globe. With carrier strike groups, submarines, and expeditionary forces, the Navy remains the world's most dominant sea-fighting force,

ensuring that America's reach extends wherever the waves crash.

As we celebrate this historic milestone on Oct. 13, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting all sailors and their families. Their selflessness in defending our nation's interests, often in the most challenging and distant theaters, ensures the safety of our country and its allies.

Please join the more than 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary in saluting America's sailors, past and present, and thanking them for 250 years of extraordinary service and sacrifice.

Take part in celebrating the Navy's 250th anniversary, learn more at

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/10/vfw-salutes-us-navy-on-its-250th-birthday>

When You Think, You Can!

How one woman veteran found her "Miracle" through a VFW scholarship.

October 22, 2025



Veteran Missy Melvin lives in Ocala, Florida, with her husband, Jaime Morales, and their three children: Jamyss, Tatianna and Ja'mani. Melvin served in the Army for 12 ½ years, becoming the only female in her convoy, a 1st scout and one of two females out of the battalion to drive an armored security vehicle (ASV) in Iraq.

Melvin always knew she wanted to serve her country. "I was a soldier before I was a soldier. My heart is full

of service," she said. Melvin found the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" through an online search for educational opportunities. She applied for six scholarships a week hoping for an acceptance. Melvin thanks the scholarship providers for helping her move forward in her career. "If you believe in miracles, I think this is my miracle," she said.

Melvin is pursuing her degree in health administration and management at Keiser University. She became interested in nursing through the U.S. Army Combat Lifesaver course. Melvin also managed 120 trucks during an explosion, helping lead her to her current position as a travel CNA in trauma and behavioral health.

Melvin completes lots of hands-on work, but she is eager to expand her methods of serving others. "I have my associate [degree], but I'm ready for more. With this degree, I'm learning so much and I'm already making a bigger difference," she said. After graduation, Melvin hopes to work in a health management position to advocate for others. She is passionate about helping the elderly community.

"I would like to eventually open a group home," Melvin said. "I ask myself how a space can be more elderly friendly, like the physical environment or something as small as teaching them more about their smartphone."

For veterans pursuing an education, Melvin encourages them to stay motivated and put themselves out there. Organizing big tasks into smaller ones and searching for services helped achieve her goals. "Don't be afraid," she said. "It was so hard to leave my babies, but I kept going. There are people who want to help you." Melvin said there are no words that amount to her gratitude. She is extremely thankful for the assistance in her time of need.

"In my darkest moment of trying to figure out how to finish school, I got the scholarship," Melvin said. "I'm ready to give back and see what I can do. When you think, you can!"

[Learn more](#) about the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship."

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/10/when-you-think-you-can>

VFW Honors National Native American Heritage Month

The VFW recognizes generations of American indigenous people and their military service.

October 31, 2025

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) proudly recognizes National Native American Heritage Month throughout November, honoring the service members and veterans of Indigenous heritage whose warrior spirit and unwavering commitment have enriched and defended our great nation for generations.

The first official month celebrating Native American heritage was in 1990 when President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November of that same year as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”



Since the American Revolution, Native Americans have fought and died in our nation’s wars. Their service is a testament to the profound patriotism and dedication to the land and the values our nation represents. We would not be able to enjoy the freedoms bestowed upon us today if it were not for their many sacrifices.

Native American service members have earned every major combat award, demonstrating incredible bravery and skill across all branches of the military. With a deep sense of duty and community, Indigenous service members have provided the military with adaptability, resilience and tactical expertise.

The VFW encourages all Americans to use National Native American Heritage Month as an opportunity to learn more about the rich history, culture and contributions of Native American veterans. On behalf of the more than 1.3 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, we proudly honor the heritage of our fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms from the Tribal Nations, salute their immeasurable contributions and sacrifices to our United States, and remain steadfast in ensuring their legacy of service is never forgotten.

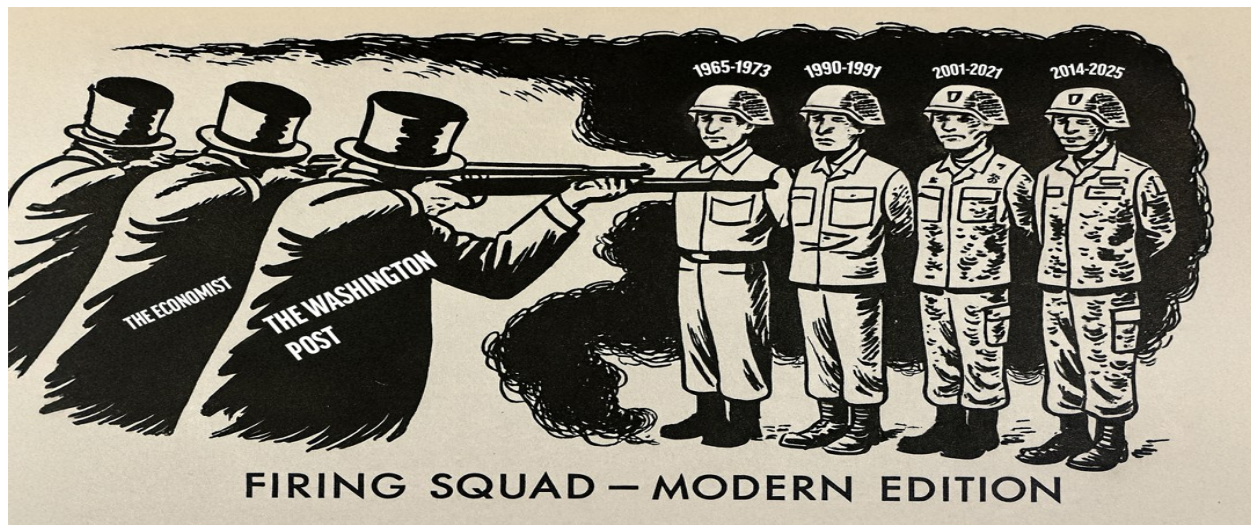
SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/10/vfw-honors-national-native-american-heritage-month>

VFW Will Not Stay Silent While America's Heroes are Dragged Through the Mud

The following statement is from the VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore

November 14, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Washington Post has decided that America's veterans, those who have fought, bled and sacrificed for this nation, are the new villains of these last couple of weeks. Their recent reporting, suggesting that veterans are filing "dubious" or "fraudulent" disability claims to milk the VA system, is nothing short of disgraceful. It's a smear campaign against the very people who have given this country everything it has asked for, and more.



Let's be clear: This isn't investigative journalism. It's character assassination. By cherry-picking anecdotes and twisting statistics, the Post is peddling a dangerous and insulting narrative, insinuating that America's veterans are cheats, hustling for benefits they don't deserve. That lie dishonors every man and woman who has ever raised their right hand and sworn an oath to defend this country "against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

Here's the truth the Post won't print: Veterans aren't gaming the system. They are the system's victims who are forced to navigate a bureaucratic labyrinth that too often grinds them down, delays their care and treats them with suspicion from day one. Many spend years fighting for recognition of their injuries, only to be met with accusations of deceit by those who have never spent a single day in uniform.

And let's talk about those injuries. They are not theoretical. They are not "questionable." They are the direct, documented consequences of military service and include blast concussions, toxic exposures, crushed joints, traumatic brain injuries and the invisible wounds of war that follow veterans long after they've come home. To suggest these men and women are exaggerating or fabricating their pain is not just offensive, it's immoral.

If the Post's reporters had done any honest research, they would understand that the rise in disability claims is not proof of fraud, it is proof that modern warfare has changed. Thanks to advances in battlefield medicine, more soldiers survive their wounds today than ever before. But survival is not the same as recovery. Today's veterans are surviving with prosthetic limbs, chronic pain, PTSD and lungs scarred by burn pits, and somehow, the Post thinks the problem is that too many of them are getting the help they need.

VFW Will Not Stay Silent While America's Heroes are Dragged Through the Mud

(Continued from page 7)

The following statement is from the VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore

November 14, 2025

Even more troubling is how this kind of reporting risks driving a wedge between veterans and the very public they swore to protect. By framing veterans as opportunists, it plants seeds of mistrust making ordinary Americans question the legitimacy of the men and women who fought for their freedoms. That is not just misguided; it is harmful. Veterans and the American people are on the same side. We share the same values, the same communities and the same belief in service and sacrifice. Intentional or not, attempts to pit one against the other only undermine the unity that defines this nation.

By reintroducing this harmful narrative, veterans who were already reluctant to file a claim for VA benefits will now be less likely to reach out to VA-accredited claims representatives for assistance. Representatives like Cindy Noel, VFW assistant director of field operations and a stalwart pre-discharge claims representative singled out by the Post, work tirelessly to connect transitioning service members around the world with the VA care and benefits they have earned. The Post's assertion of veterans' VA disability claims being "dubious" will cause a whole new generation of veterans to choose suffering in silence over risking being scrutinized, ridiculed and shamed for seeking the help they need and deserve.

Let me remind the editors of The Washington Post of something they seem to have forgotten: When Americans go to war, they sign a contract with their government. That contract says: You serve. You sacrifice. And when you come home broken — physically, mentally or spiritually — your nation will take care of you. That is not a suggestion. That is a sacred obligation. It is the cost of freedom. Maybe the Post should consider that before scheming to exploit the plight of service men and women to squeeze more paid subscriptions out of their readers.

To accuse veterans of "milking" the system is to accuse them of betraying that contract. But they are not the ones breaking faith. The Post is. The real betrayal lies in questioning the legitimacy of those who've already paid the highest price imaginable.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars will not stay silent while America's heroes are dragged through the mud by the suspicion and misinformation of armchair cynics and data manipulators. We will absolutely stand up to anyone who tries to discredit our VA-accredited claims representatives. If The Washington Post wants to expose fraud, it should start with the broken promises and bureaucratic neglect that plague the VA, not with the veterans who depend on it. The problem to fix is not the integrity of our veterans, it's the inefficiency and delay that too often define the system meant to serve them.

Our veterans do not owe America another thing. America owes them. It is time to stop the slander, stop the suspicion and start honoring the only contract that truly matters — the one written in sacrifice, sealed in blood and signed in service to the United States of America.

It's time to Honor the Contract.

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/11/vfw-will-not-stay-silent-while-americas-heroes-are-dragged-through-the-mud>

VA extends caregiver support program eligibility for “legacy” Veterans, caregivers.

November 20, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced a final rule, published Sept. 29, which extends Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers eligibility for certain Veterans and their family caregivers through Sept. 30, 2028.

The extension means legacy participants, legacy applicants, and their family caregivers will remain eligible for PCAFC and will not experience a reduction in their monthly stipend based on a reassessment for an additional three years, with limited exceptions.

Legacy participants are Veterans or service members whose family caregivers were approved and designated by VA as of Sept. 30, 2020. Legacy applicants are Veterans or service members who applied for PCAFC before Oct. 1, 2020, and were accepted into the program on or after Oct. 1, 2020. The primary family caregiver must remain the same individual named in the application submitted before Oct. 1, 2020.

Key details of the extension include:

- An extended transition period for the legacy cohort.
- Continued eligibility and no reduction in stipends with limited exceptions.

Members of the legacy cohort may still be discharged or revoked from PCAFC in certain circumstances, such as at the request of the Veteran or family caregiver, or for noncompliance with program requirements.

Suspension of certain reassessments remains in effect. Individuals may still request a reassessment, including if they believe they are eligible for increased support.

VA will continue to consider additional changes to PCAFC, as outlined in a proposed rule published [Dec. 6, 2024](#).

For more information about VA's Caregiver Program, visit www.caregiver.va.gov. Veterans and their family members and caregivers can also call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET or connect with their local Caregiver Support Program Team using the locator tool at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp.

SOURCE: <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-extends-caregiver-support-program-eligibility-for-legacy-veterans-caregivers/>

VFW Applauds Common Sense Improvement to Women Veterans' Health Care

The following is a message from VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore

December 11, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) applauds the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for taking decisive action to improve women veterans' access to essential health services. VA's new policy allowing women to schedule gynecology appointments directly, without first obtaining a referral, removes unnecessary primary care visits and extended wait times for women-specific medical needs. This bureaucratic hurdle has finally been eliminated through this common-sense decision. I extend my sincere gratitude to VA Secretary Doug Collins and his team for advancing this long-overdue change and for their commitment to strengthening care for the growing number of women who have served.

Recent VFW testimonies before Congress have highlighted persistent access challenges and the need for practical reforms just like this one. These testimonies reinforce the real-world experiences of women veterans across the country, experiences that make clear how important such streamlined processes can be.

As the first woman to lead the nation's largest organization of combat veterans, and as a former Army Nurse who relies on VA for my own health care, I know firsthand how vital it is for women veterans to feel welcomed, respected and understood when they enter a VA facility. For VA to remain a truly veteran-centered health system, removing barriers and eliminating inefficiencies must remain a priority.

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population. By enabling women veterans to directly access the specialized care they need, the VA is not only enabling improved health outcomes but also reaffirming its commitment to treating every veteran with dignity, respect and urgency. The VFW looks forward to continued collaboration with Secretary Collins to identify additional hurdles and work together to eliminate them, strengthening access, expanding trust and ensuring that all veterans receive the timely, high-quality care they have earned.

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/12/vfw-applauds-common-sense-improvement-to-women-veterans-health-care>

We honor our Iraq War veterans and remember those still deployed to the region

December 12, 2025

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – On Dec. 15, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) marks the 14th anniversary of the conclusion of the Iraq War. We pause in solemn reflection to honor the service of the more than 1.5 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen who deployed to Iraq from March 2003 to December 2011 and pay tribute to the nearly 4,500 courageous men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation and advance the cause of freedom.



As an organization comprised of combat veterans, VFW members recognize the tremendous burden carried by our Iraq War veterans and their families, many whom endured multiple, demanding deployments and who often carried the invisible wounds of war as they returned home.

While this major conflict officially ended, the threat remains. The VFW continues to honor the selfless service of our men and women currently deployed to the region to ensure stability, and to help keep us safe here at home.

Please join the more than 1.3 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary in honoring the veterans of the Iraq War and remembering our brave defenders who continue to carry the torch of freedom forward.

SOURCE: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/12/vfw-marks-the-14th-anniversary-of-the-end-of-the-iraq-war>

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



VFW POST 3261 Officers

Commander – James "Jimmy C" Carradine

Senior Vice Commander – Anthony Dixon

Junior Vice Commander - Daniel "Dan" Medina

Quartermaster – Norman "Norm" Chibana

Chaplain - Anthony Dixon

1st Year Trustee – Patrick Tubal

2nd Year Trustee – Fermyn J. Archer

3rd Year Trustee – Robert J. Galda

Service Officer – Larry "Skip" Anglin

