



Veterans of Foreign Wars
Ruskin Memorial Post #6287
5120 N U.S Hwy 41
Apollo Beach, FL 33572
Phone (813)645-2935
Fax (813) 645-2933
Website: www.vfw6287.org



January 2026

<u>VFW Officers</u>	<u>VFW Auxiliary</u>	<u>House Committee</u>
COMMANDER Paul Maynard	PRESIDENT Lori Maynard	CHAIRMAN Jason Elliott
SR. VICE COMMANDER Alex Kuen	SR. VICE Ned Letts III	COMMANDER Paul Maynard
JR. VICE COMMANDER Bianca Vera	JR. VICE Eileen Burke	QUARTERMASTER Heather Frank
QUARTERMASTER Heather Frank	TREASURER Aliya Fauset	Joseph LaBranche
JUDGE ADVOCATE Reilly Secrist	SECRETARY Clara Robine	Michael McFerron
ADJUTANT Eric Nefflen	CHAPLAIN Lesa Campbell	Ashley Mohr
CHAPLAIN Kyle Moore	CONDUCTOR David Storck	Dave Wilcox
SURGEON Brian Frank	GUARD	
SERVICE OFFICER Alvino Porter	TRUSTEE#1 Cheryl Nelson	
TRUSTEE #1 JJ Mraz	TRUSTEE#2 Randal Harrell	
TRUSTEE #2 Ron Baker	TRUSTEE#3	
TRUSTEE #3 Al Clay	PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR Joyce Graham	
OFFICER OF THE DAY Ralph Sylvester	HISTORIAN Denise Demaria	



January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Jan 21—Militia Act 1903 (Created modern Nat'l Guard)	Jan 1, 1962 Creation of Navy SEALs Teams 1 & 2			1 Happy New Year! Kielbasa & Sauerkraut (all day) No Bingo	2 Fish Fry 5-7:00pm Out of the Blues 6-10pm	3 Riders Mtg 9am Diamond Jim 6-10pm
4 Breakfast 9-12pm	5 Wing Night 4:30-6:30pm Queen Of Hearts 7pm	6 Bar Poker 12:30pm Kitchen 12-6pm Taco Tuesday	7	8 Bingo Menu 12-6:00pm Bar Bingo 6pm	9 Fish Fry 5-7:00pm Clifford T 6-10pm	10 Young Marines 8-12 Eddie Stone & Co. 6-10pm
11 Breakfast 9am-12pm Ship/Captain/Crew 6 pm	12 Planning Mtg 6pm House Cmte Mtg 6:30pm Wing Night 4:30-6:00pm Queen of Hearts 7pm	13 Bar Poker 12:30pm Kitchen 12-6pm Chicken Alfredo	14 Joint Members Mtg 6:45pm VFW & Auxiliary Mtg 7pm	15 Bingo Menu 12-6:00pm Bar Bingo 6pm	16 Fish Fry 5-7:00pm Harley Gay 6-10pm	17 Op Desert Storm start (1991) Chili Cookoff 4-6pm Mike Worley 6-10pm
18 Breakfast 9am-12pm	19 MLK Day	20 Bar Poker 12:30pm Kitchen 12-6pm Pot Roast	21	22 Bingo Menu 12-6:00pm Bar Bingo 6pm	23 Fish Fry 5-7:00pm Sam Williams 6-10pm	24 Young Marines 8-12 Dave Traini 6-10pm
25 Breakfast 9am-12pm Ship, Captain, Crew 6 pm	26 Wing Night 4:30-6:30pm Queen Of Hearts 7pm	27 Bar Poker 12:30pm Kitchen 12-6 Menu Meatloaf	28 USCG Created (1915)	29 Bingo Menu 12-6:00pm Bar Bingo 6pm	30 Fish Fry 5-7:00pm Geo the Music Man 6-10pm	31 Steak Night 5-6:30pm EQ-Little Big Band 6-10pm

Commander's Corner

Comrades and friends,

As we begin a new year, it is important to pause and reflect on where we have been, honor those we have lost, and look ahead with purpose and optimism. December was a meaningful and eventful month for Post 6287—one that reminded us of the strength of our Post family and the impact we continue to make in our community.

We were saddened by the passing of two Post members in December, Lyken Johnson and Michael Baskett. The Post conducted a memorial service for Michael, and we draped our charter in honor of both comrades as a sign of respect and remembrance. In this month's newsletter, we also pay tribute to all Post members who passed away in 2025. We will always remember their service, sacrifice, and dedication to this Post.

December also brought many moments of pride and fellowship. Our Children's Christmas Party was a tremendous success, with over 60 children in attendance—the largest turnout we've ever had. The joy and excitement on display were a powerful reminder of the family atmosphere we continue to build at the Post. Our Christmas Dinner was equally memorable, with more than 100 people coming together to share a holiday meal. Thank you to all the volunteers who donated food, time, and effort—especially Auxiliary member David Storck—for making the afternoon such a success. We've also received many compliments on how great the Post looked during the holidays, including the decorations and the Christmas tree outside.

We also had a successful Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy, and Teacher of the Year Banquet, where we recognized this year's outstanding winners. Our membership numbers continue to trend in a positive direction, reaching 100.56% by the end of December. With the VFW National goal set at 101%, we are only about three new members away from reaching that mark.

Another encouraging sign for Post 6287 is the steady growth of our membership across generations. While our long-time members remain the backbone of this Post, we have also welcomed newer members, resulting in our average membership age shifting from the low 70s when I took command to 66 years old today. This balance of experience and fresh perspective strengthens our Post and ensures continuity of service. Speaking of that next generation, January 17, 1991, marks the beginning of Operation DESERT STORM—a conflict that many of our members proudly served in.

We gathered as a Post family for several meaningful events, including the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony, and I want to extend a sincere thank you to Jen Watson for once again lending her property so we could properly honor that historic day.

As we look inward as a Post, the message shared in our Chaplain's Corner this month speaks directly to who we are as veterans. Humility, restraint, and sacrifice are not abstract concepts to us—they are lived experiences. Veterans understand that service often means putting the mission, the team, and the greater good ahead of personal recognition or convenience. Those same principles apply here at the Post. Volunteering your time, stepping up when help is needed, communicating with professionalism, and exercising restraint during disagreements are all forms of continued service. These quiet acts—often unseen and unrecognized—are what keeps this Post strong and moving forward.

Looking ahead to 2026, the future is bright for Post 6287. We have new entertainment, tournaments, and exciting activities planned. Two major fundraisers are right around the corner: our Texas Hold'em Tournament on February 7th and our Annual Pig Roast on March 28th. I am proud of the direction we're heading and grateful to serve alongside each of you.

One team, one theme... strength through service.

Yours in comradeship,
Paul Maynard
Commander, VFW Post 6287



This Month in History



- **January 1: New Year's Day** – A federal holiday observed by all military branches.
- **January 1 (1962): Navy SEALs Established** – Teams 1 and 2 were officially activated by the U.S. Navy.
- **January 3 (1777): Battle of Princeton** – A pivotal Revolutionary War victory for General George Washington.
- **January 8 (1815): Battle of New Orleans** – The final major battle of the War of 1812.
- **January 17 (1781): Battle of Cowpens** – A turning point for the Continental Army in the Southern campaign of the Revolution.
- **January 17 (1991): Operation Desert Storm Begins** – The launch of the air campaign to liberate Kuwait.
- **January 19 (1945): Battle of the Bulge Ends** – The conclusion of the largest battle fought by the U.S. Army in WWII.
- **January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day** – A federal holiday and national day of service.
- **January 20: Inauguration Day 2025** – Occurring every four years, this event features heavy military ceremonial and security support.
- **January 21 (1903): The Militia Act of 1903** – Legislation that officially created the modern National Guard
- **January 25 (1787): Shays' Rebellion** – An insurrection that highlighted the need for a stronger federal military presence under the Constitution.
- **January 28 (1915): U.S. Coast Guard Created** – Formed by merging the Revenue Cutter Service and the Life-Saving Service.

CONTACT THE EDITOR

Paul Maynard
p.maynard@rocketmail.com

Tell us what you like, what you want more of, and if you don't like something... well, the spam folder is always open.

SUNDAY \$10 BREAKFAST

ALL YOU CAN EAT
EGGS COOKED TO ORDER

9 - 12

PANCAKES
FRENCH TOAST
SAUSAGE
HAM
BACON
POTATOES
& MUCH MORE



LETTER FROM THE AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to each of you! As we welcome 2026 with hope and excitement, I want to extend my deepest gratitude for everything we accomplished together throughout 2025. Your dedication to our mission and your unwavering support of our veterans and their families continue to inspire me. I am truly thankful for each of you and for the heart you bring to serving those who have served our country.

December was a wonderfully busy month, filled with the joy and excitement of the holiday season. Our banquet room and Christmas trees were beautifully decorated by the children, and it was such a delight to see their enthusiasm and Christmas spirit. They did an amazing job! A special thank-you goes out to the Post members who helped decorate the lounge with festive lights and ornaments—it truly felt like Christmas throughout the building.

On December 6th, we held our Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year Awards Luncheon, which saw high attendance and enthusiastic involvement from the youth in our area schools. Congratulations to our First Place Post-level winners who will now be competing at the District 12 level:

- **Voice of Democracy:** Chlorie Leandre
- **Patriot's Pen:** Connor Clay
- **Teacher of the Year:** David Deitz

The following day, December 7th, we gathered at Jen's property for the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony. It was a touching tribute and an honor to remember the veterans and families connected to that historic day. Thank you, Jen, for another meaningful year of reflection, honor, and participation.

Our Children's Christmas Party on the 20th reached record-breaking attendance. Santa delivered over 60 gifts, and the children enjoyed ornament painting, Pinning the Heart on the Grinch, and balloon creations from Teri. A huge thank-you to our Post's Rider's Group, who generously stepped in without hesitation to provide additional funds for the extra gifts needed—your support truly makes all the difference. Later that evening, we celebrated with our Adult Ugly Sweater Christmas Party, another highlight of the season. The sweaters were a hit, and the night was filled with laughter, games, dancing, and holiday cheer.

On Christmas Day, we joined the Post in cooking and serving over 100 meals for their Christmas Dinner. It was a wonderful day to share food, visit with our veterans and their families, and celebrate together. Thank you to everyone who provided delicious sides and desserts—your contributions helped make the event a tremendous success.

Another proud achievement this year was reaching **100% +3 in membership before year-end**, a record-breaking milestone for our Auxiliary. This accomplishment reflects your commitment, your hard work, and the welcoming environment you help create. New membership applications have continued at a strong pace since July 2025, and I credit this to your fresh ideas, our smoke-free environment, and the warm reception people feel when they walk through our doors.

Looking ahead to January, we have several exciting events to kick off the new year. On New Year's Day, we'll be serving Kielbasa and Sauerkraut—many thanks to Auxiliary member Alan Huff for providing this delicious meal. On January 17th, we'll host our Chili Cook-Off, so bring your best recipe for a chance to win 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place—and earn bragging rights for the entire year. Then on January 31st, our Steak Dinner returns to the calendar.

As we step into 2026, I am excited for the rewarding year ahead for our Auxiliary. I am truly grateful for your contributions, your heartfelt words of encouragement, and the way you help create an environment where every member feels welcomed and appreciated. We are absolutely moving in the right direction—continuing our mission for veterans and their families while reaching new milestones along the way. Your spirit, kindness, and dedication are what make this organization shine.

With gratitude and warmest wishes for a joyful New Year,

Lori Maynard
President, VFW Auxiliary



Attention Veterans and Veteran Family Members

Not a Member?

Interested in joining our family?

Membership is open to those who have served in a foreign war zone. Veterans, just bring in your DD214 and sign up for as little as **\$40 per year**. Prefer not to renew annually? Choose a **Lifetime Membership** and enjoy peace of mind with convenient installment options.

Auxiliary Membership:

If you haven't served, you may qualify through a parent, grandparent, spouse, sibling, or child who has served in a foreign war zone. Auxiliary membership is just **\$40 per year**.

⇒ Ask your bartender today to get started!

Help Fill the Patch Wall!

Our Patch Board has officially outgrown itself and is becoming a Patch Wall — a growing display that tells the story of the many places our members have served.

We invite all members to help us fill the Patch Wall by donating a patch. Each patch represents a chapter of service and helps showcase the depth of experience within our Post.

If you'd like to contribute, please place your patch in an envelope labeled for Bianca Vera and leave it with the bartender, or bring it with you to the next Membership Meeting.



BINGO NIGHT!

Every Thursday –
Don't Miss the Fun!

First Game Kicks Off at
6:00 PM

Welcome Our New Members!

We're proud to introduce the newest members of our VFW family. Each has answered the call of service, and now joins us in camaraderie, tradition, and community support. Please extend a warm welcome when you see them at the post!

Jeffrey Barnes—Transfer
Rene Boutotte
Rodney Palmer—Life

Clifford Bean III
Michael Griffin—Life
David Valasquez

Thanks to the dedication and recruiting efforts of our members, we're at 100.56%, just three new members shy of reaching the National goal of 101%! Every new comrade strengthens our mission, our fellowship, and our ability to serve veterans and the community. Let's keep the momentum going—reach out, invite, and welcome those who've served to stand with us. Together, we honor the past and build the future of our Post.

We Want to Hear from You!



Your ideas matter! We're always looking for ways to make our Post better for everyone—whether it's events, activities, or ways to improve our facility. If you have a suggestion, please drop a note in the suggestion box located near the entrance or hand it directly to the Commander. Every comment helps us build a stronger, more connected Post. Let's keep the ideas coming!

In Memoriam — Honoring Our Comrades (2025)

Michael Baskett
Irvin E. Johnson
Richard R. Kaput
Johnson A. Lykens
David H. Markowitz
James H. Robers
Kenneth D. Roberts
Charles Trentacosta

We pause to honor and remember the members of Post 6287 who passed away in 2025. Each of these comrades answered the call to serve and later continued that service through their commitment to this Post, their fellow veterans, and our community. Though they are no longer with us, their legacy of service, sacrifice, and camaraderie lives on. We render them our deepest respect and extend heartfelt condolences to

HONORING OUR HEROES

If you know a veteran whose story should be honored in this section, please contact the Commander so we can recognize them in a future edition.

Steak Dinner

is back on

January 31st

At Ruskin Memorial Post 6287
in Apollo Beach

from 5:00 to 6:30

It includes
Steak, baked potato, vegetable
and roll with salad.



Thank you for supporting the Auxiliary

RIDE & RAISE

Saturday, February 7, 2026

All Cancer Sucks Poker Run

Proceeds benefit Moffit Cancer Center



Rider \$20 / Passenger \$10

Kickstands Up: 11 a.m.

Start: Sea Dog Brewing Co., Treasure Island

Stop #2: Tiki Docks Skyway, St. Pete

Stop #3: Peggy's Corral, Palmetto

Stop #4: Waypoint Bar & Grill, Palmetto

Final Stop: VFW Post 6287, Ruskin

Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament

Proceeds support VFW Post #6287

\$150 Donation

Advanced Registration Required
Sign Up at the Bar

Cash Prizes 1st - 2nd - 3rd

40 Players Max

Tournament Start: 5 p.m.



VFW Post #6287

Giving back to local Veterans, their Families, and
the community since 1976.



CHILI COOK-OFF CONTEST

17 JANUARY • 4 PM – 6 PM

SPICY TRADITIONAL
NON-TRADITIONAL

ENTRIES ARE FREE • PLEASE ARRIVE
BY 3:30 PM FOR REGISTRATION

BOWLS SOLD FOR \$5

COME OUT AND ENJOY!



SUPER BOWL PARTY

February 8th



- Game Squares
- Raffles
- Food Specials

PLAN YOUR DAY AT THE
RUSKIN MEMORIAL

VFW POST

LOTS OF TVS TO VIEW THE GAME!



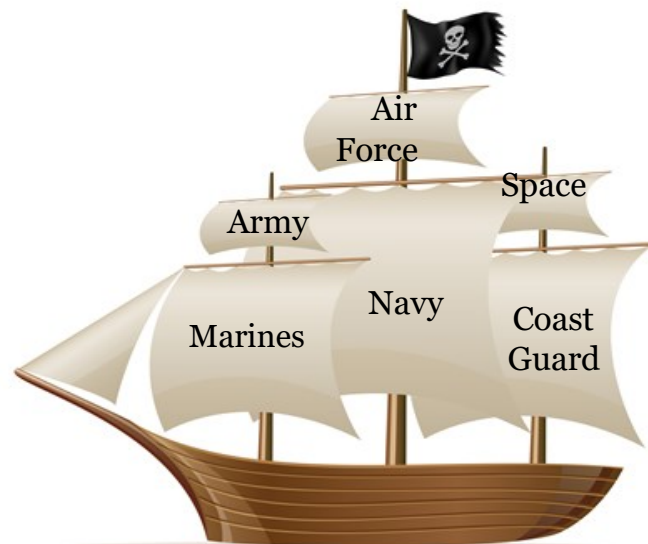
EVERY MONDAY @ 7PM
3 TICKETS FOR \$5.00
7 TICKETS FOR \$10.00
BUY YOUR TICKETS ANYTIME
ASK THE BARTENDER FOR
DETAILS



BAR POKER

EVERY TUESDAY STARTING AT 12:30PM

JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF CARDS, CAMARADERIE,
AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION! ALL SKILL LEVELS ARE WEL-
COME, SO GRAB A SEAT, TEST YOUR LUCK, AND ENJOY
GOOD COMPANY AT THE POST.



Ship, Captain & Crew
2nd, 4th and 5th (when applicable)
Sunday at 6:00 pm
\$1.00 per game
We'll play every Sunday — but only if enough of
you show up.

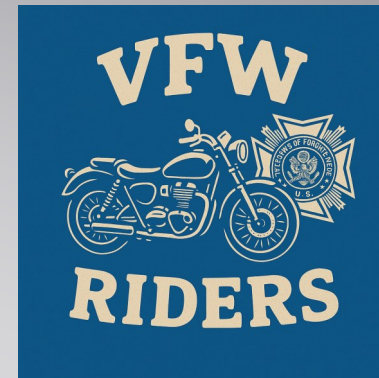
Otherwise the dice get sad... and nobody wants sad dice.



THE DAILY

LOOKING TO ADD A LITTLE EXCITEMENT TO YOUR DAY AT THE POST? TAKE
PART IN **THE DAILY**, OUR EASY AND FUN GAME OF CHANCE THAT SUPPORTS
THE POST WHILE GIVING YOU A SHOT AT A GROWING JACKPOT.

**TAKE A MOMENT, DROP IN, SIGN IN, AND MAYBE—JUST MAYBE—YOUR
NUMBER WILL COME UP NEXT!**



VFW Post 6287 Riders Group

VFW and Auxiliary Members are eligible!

Meetings are held the
first Saturday of the month at 9 am

We're always looking for new members.

Contact:
Michael McFerron
831-241-8667
michael.mcferron@gmail.com

Call for Service Photos!

**Help spruce up our newly renovated home with photos from
our very own membership!**

**If you have photos you are willing to donate, please bring
them to the Canteen in an envelope for JJ Mraz.**



If you recognize this warrior, contact the Commander.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Christmastide and a New Year

Humility, Restraint, And Sacrifice

Members of VFW Post 6287,

Peace be with you and Merry Christmas! That's right, the Christmas Season has only just begun! The Christmas season (Christmastide) extends for 40 days, from December 25 to February 2nd, ending with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas. So keep those Christmas Trees up!

On the first day of the new year, the liturgical calendar places before us a mystery both humble and profound: the Circumcision of Our Lord. While the world celebrates new beginnings with noise and resolution, the Church invites us to contemplate a quiet act of obedience performed by the Infant King, an act that marks the first shedding of Christ's Precious Blood for our salvation. Eight days after His birth, Our Lord submits Himself to the Law of Moses. He does so not because He is bound by it, but because He wills to be obedient. The Lawgiver places Himself beneath the Law. The King of Heaven submits without protest, without resistance, and without necessity. In this single act, Christ sanctifies obedience itself.

For veterans, this mystery speaks directly to lived experience. Those who have served understand that obedience is not servility. It is discipline freely accepted for the sake of order, mission, and the common good. True obedience requires humility, restraint, and sacrifice, virtues often misunderstood by a culture that confuses freedom with the absence of authority. Christ's obedience on this day is costly. It involves pain. It involves blood. From the very beginning of His earthly life, Our Lord teaches us that redemption is not abstract. It is concrete, embodied, and sacrificial. Long before the Cross, He offers Himself. Long before Calvary, He sheds His Blood.

This is a truth veterans know well: sacrifice does not begin only at the moment of crisis. It begins with daily submission to duty, lawful authority, and discipline often unseen, often unrecognized. The Feast of the Circumcision reminds us that such obedience, when rightly ordered, participates in something holy. The Child also receives His Name on this day: Jesus, meaning "God saves." It is a Name given in the context of obedience and sacrifice, teaching us that salvation does not come through defiance, but through fidelity. Authority, when it is not the enemy of freedom, is its guardian.

As a new year begins, this feast calls us to pray especially for those who have served under authority for men and women who followed lawful orders, bore responsibility, and carried burdens few understand. It also calls us to pray for lawful order, justice, and peace in our nation and throughout the world. Without order, there can be no peace; without justice, no lasting order. In a time when authority is often questioned and obedience ridiculed, the Infant Christ silently instructs us otherwise. He teaches that strength lies in submitting to what is right, and that true leadership begins with obedience to God.

May the Precious Blood first shed on this day sanctify our service, heal our memories, and guide us in the year ahead. And may Christ, who humbled Himself under the Law, grant our nation leaders who govern with justice, and citizens who live in peace under God.

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year & God love you!!!

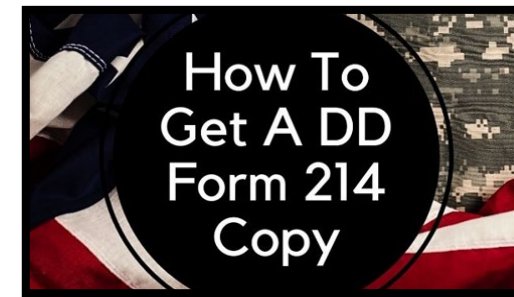
Yours in Christ,

Kyle F. Moore, Th.M

MSgt, USAF Ret.

Chaplain, VFW Post 6287

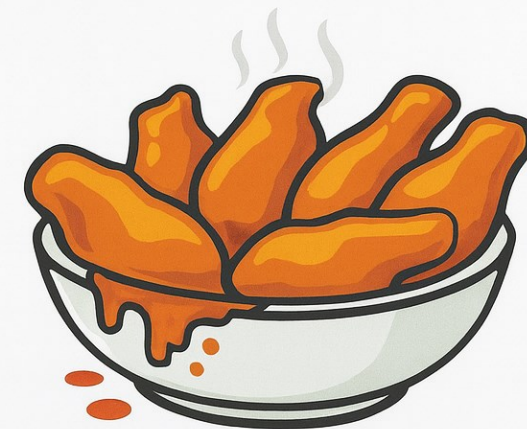
Deus Vult. Pro Deo et Patria



DD214 copies are now available to all members and potential members through online access. Please go to:

www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

WING NIGHT MONDAY NIGHT



\$5 FOR 7 WINGS
LOTS OF SAUCES TO
SATISFY YOUR TASTEBUDS

**4:30-6:30 (except nights
of House Committee
Meeting, ends at 6pm)**

