



## LOCAL 873 VETERAN'S COMMITTEE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST 2025

### Veteran Committee Executive Member's

**Chairman**  
Patrick Julian

**Vice Chairman**  
Joel Bolen

**Secretary**  
David Sherron

**Treasurer**  
Brandon Fulk

### Chairman's Message

As we roll into August, I want to take a moment to reflect on the momentum we've built and where we're headed as a committee. The work we're doing is beginning to take root—not just within our union, but in the broader community. In July, we proudly extended our volunteer efforts at the Habitat for Humanity house, committing three additional days of service. That kind of follow-through speaks volumes about who we are and what we stand for. It's not just about tools and trade—it's about purpose and people. We also had the honor of connecting with IBEW Local 481's Veterans Committee out of Indianapolis. This relationship is already proving valuable as we begin collaborating on outreach, volunteerism, and ways to better serve our veteran brothers and sisters in the field and in transition. On the outreach front, hats are in—feel free to talk to myself or Joel Bolen to purchase one. Coins are still available thanks to Brother Bill Percy, and those funds are critical as we build toward a self-sustaining committee. Every purchase helps us grow. Brandon, Joel and I met with the **Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization**. They are excited to explore unique opportunities for our members—be it volunteer opportunities or, as a veteran you can be a member of the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization, free for the first year. Behind the scenes, I'm continuing work on our veteran trifold recruitment brochure. Our message is clear: IBEW is a place where veterans belong, thrive, and lead. Let's keep showing up, working hard, and looking out for one another. We're building something worth being proud of—and this is only the beginning.

### Committee Updates

Website development is ongoing; we are working to include more local VA contacts, VSO contacts and county-specific benefits information.

Design of flyers for Veteran Committee is ongoing. These will be placed at the local VSO office's and military bases transition assistance centers for veteran outreach and recruitment.

We have met with the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization to support their Annual Reunion (Sept. 14–21, 2025). We need volunteers to help lay new gravel in one of their barns. This will be before the reunion date. We are thinking about a day or two worth of work. I will coordinate the date, most likely on a weekend. If you are interested in supporting the Vietnam Organization and representing Local 873, reach out to me. As soon as I have the date secured, I will push it out to everyone interested in helping. Reminder for Apprentices, volunteer hours with the Vet Committee count towards your required apprenticeship volunteer hours.

*Hoc Nos Defendemus   Semper Fidelis   Non Sibi Sed Patriae  
Semper Paratus   Aim High...Fly-Fight-Win   Semper Supra*



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### **Merchandise**

Local 873 Veteran Hats and Shirts: Available now at the hall. These are sold at cost by the Hall.  
Veteran Committee Coins and Hats: A Bulk order for hats are here; If you would like a hat, reach out to Patrick Julian or Joel Bolen. Reach out to Joel Bolen or Bill Percy for Veteran Committee Coins. All proceeds go toward supporting committee activities and veteran outreach.

### **Washington Watch**

In an effort to keep our veterans informed, we will be highlighting key legislation and policy changes each month that impact veterans, their benefits, and their families.

**1. COLA Boost Arriving in August:** Veterans receiving disability compensation will see their monthly payments disbursed on August 29, reflecting the 2.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment. A veteran rated at 100% will receive a tax-free amount exceeding \$3,831 per month, or over \$44,000 annually—with added amounts for dependents or special circumstances.

**2. Claims Processing Hits Record Highs:** The VA is speeding up benefits delivery: in July alone, over 300,000 disability or pension ratings were completed—the highest in history. Fiscal Year 2025 processing is 17.8% faster, even as claim submissions have jumped 10% year-over-year.

**3. PRO Veterans Act Signed into Law:** The newly enacted PRO Veterans Act of 2025 enhances transparency and accountability across the VA by requiring regular budget briefings and formally establishing the Veterans Experience Office. The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) have praised this as a pivotal step in ensuring veterans' voices inform VA operations.

**4. VALife Program Reaches \$2 Billion Milestone:** Since its 2023 launch, the VA's VALife program has issued over \$2 billion in life insurance coverage to more than 60,000 service-connected veterans. This permanent, no-health-questions program offers up to \$40,000 in whole life insurance, available to veterans age 80 and under.

**5. Bufkin v. Collins – Supreme Court Ruling:** In a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that when evaluating the VA's "benefit-of-the-doubt" decisions, appeals courts must apply a **"clear error" standard**. This elevates veterans' quality of review and strengthens appeal outcomes.

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## **LOCAL 873 VETERAN'S COMMITTEE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST 2025**

### **Phone Numbers/Emails**

Chairman-Patrick Julian: (260)330-5554; [patrickjulianjr@gmail.com](mailto:patrickjulianjr@gmail.com)

Veteran Coins-Bill Percy: [billpercy873@gmail.com](mailto:billpercy873@gmail.com)

### **Websites**

IBEW 873: [www.ibew873.com](http://www.ibew873.com)

### **Social Media**

Facebook: IBEW 873 Veteran's Committee

Members Only Page

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