

# THE PACIFIC TIMES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC AREAS



No One Does More for Veterans

*Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More*

Volume XXIX, Number 4

January/February 2026

FREE

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026

Happy New Year, Comrades!

As we kick off the New Year, I just want to take a moment to say thank you for everything you do day in and day out for our veterans, their families, and our communities throughout the Pacific Areas.

This past year showed what we can accomplish when we pull together as a team. I'm proud of the work you've done and the dedication you continue to show at every level—post, district, and department. As we move into the New Year, let's keep that momentum going, support one another, and keep pushing forward.

Please remember to check in on your fellow comrades. A simple call, message, or visit can make a big difference, especially during this time of year. None of us does this alone, and looking out for each other is what the VFW is all about.

I wish you and your families a happy, healthy, and safe New Year. Let's make it a great one.

Yours in comradeship and service to veterans,

Jack Farrell  
Department Commander  
VFW Department of Pacific Areas

*"Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More."*

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# COMMANDER'S CALL

Comrades,

Happy New Year and my best wishes for a happy and prosperous year for you and your families.

If you missed the Mid-Winter Conference, you missed one of the good ones. Comrades from across the Pacific gathered in Phnom Penh, Cambodia that was expertly planned and executed by Commander Kidds Post, and Conference Chairman Baker, what an outstanding job!

I want to extend my appreciation for the leadership, commitment, and continuity each of you brings to the Department of Pacific Areas. This midpoint of the year provides us with the important opportunity to assess our progress, address areas in need of improvement, and commit ourselves to the goals that will sustain the future of our Department.

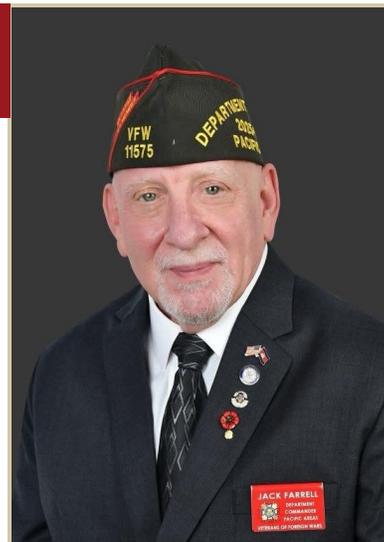
Membership continues to be one of our most urgent priorities. While many Posts and Districts have made commendable strides, we still have several that are falling noticeably behind. To those leaders, I say clearly: now is the moment to re-engage, re-energize, and take ownership of your recruiting efforts. Our ability to fulfill the VFW mission depends on maintaining a strong and growing membership base.

A critical part of this effort must include a deliberate and sustained commitment to bringing younger veterans and fresh, new blood into our organization. These individuals represent the future lifeblood of our Department. They bring new perspectives, new energy, and new ideas—qualities that will carry the Department of Pacific Areas forward for years to come. I urge Posts and Districts to reach out to recently separated service members, Guard and Reserve personnel, and younger veterans within your communities. Make personal contact, invite them to your Posts, and show them the value, relevance, and camaraderie that our organization offers. If we do not bring them in now, we risk losing an entire generation of potential leadership.

Camaraderie remains central to this effort. A strong, welcoming, and active environment is one of the most powerful magnets for younger veterans. When Posts cultivate connection—through activities, outreach, buddy checks, purposeful engagement, and a genuine sense of belonging—new members stay, contribute, and grow into future leaders. For those Posts and Districts still struggling in membership and community engagement, revitalizing camaraderie must become a top priority. Build the kind of environment that younger veterans want to be part of, and they will follow your lead.

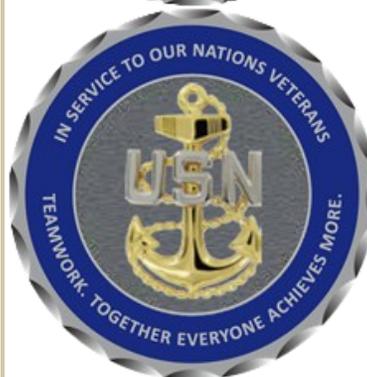
We must also speak frankly about training—an area where we continue to fall short as a Department. Time and again, the results of audits, required reports, and other documentary submissions show the same underlying issue: our members, especially those in key leadership and administrative roles, are not receiving the training they need to succeed. This is not an isolated problem. It is widespread, and it is impacting the efficiency, accuracy, and credibility of our Posts and Districts.

It is the responsibility of our current leaders—commanders, senior officers, and committee chairs—to ensure that personnel stepping into roles such as Quartermaster, Adjutant, Trustee, and Chair positions are properly trained, supervised, and mentored. Do not simply look at these roles as empty seats that need to be filled. Look at them as positions that require trained professionals who will help your Post or District operate effectively and remain compliant with Department and National



Commander

John "Jack" Farrell



# COMMANDER'S CALL

expectations.

If we want our organization to thrive, then we must invest in our people. Share the knowledge. Conduct hands-on training. Encourage your capable members to step forward, and prepare them to carry the mission forward with competence and confidence. Our future success depends on creating well-trained leaders today—not hoping they figure it out tomorrow.

I must also place firm emphasis on program payments and reporting, especially for the Posts and Districts that remain delinquent. These obligations are not simply administrative tasks—they reflect the very foundation of who we are. As a Veterans Service Organization, we have a responsibility to fulfill our program payment requirements. These payments directly support our active-duty military, our widows, our orphans, and our members. They fund the programs that provide assistance, relief, and advocacy. They allow us to uphold the promises we have made to those who served and to the families who continue to bear the weight of that service.

I ask every Post and District to keep this truth in mind: this is why we exist. When program payments fall behind, it is not just a financial failure—it is a failure to uphold our mission. Those Posts and Districts that remain delinquent must take immediate corrective action. If you require assistance, reach out now. The Department stands ready to help, but each post and district must take responsibility for its own compliance and integrity.

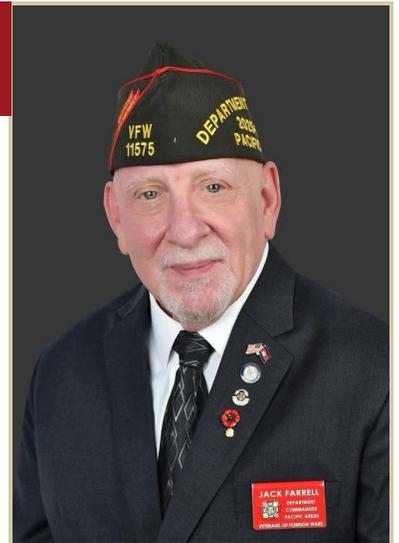
As we move through the remainder of this VFW year, I encourage every leader here to be candid, collaborative, and forward-thinking. Our Department is only as strong as the combined performance of our Posts and Districts. When one falls behind, we all feel the strain; when each excels, the entire Department rises.

Thank you for your dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to the comrades you lead, and to the veterans and families who rely on us across the Pacific Areas. By strengthening membership, revitalizing camaraderie, improving training, and fulfilling our responsibilities with discipline and pride, we ensure a strong, vibrant, and enduring future for our Department.

Respectfully,

Jack Farrell  
Commander  
Department of Pacific Areas

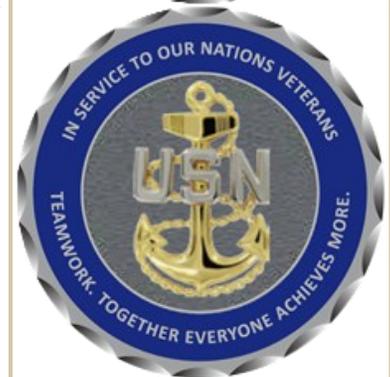
***“Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More.”***



Department of Pacific Areas

Commander

John “Jack” Farrell



## TEAMWORK



# DPA BRANDING KIT



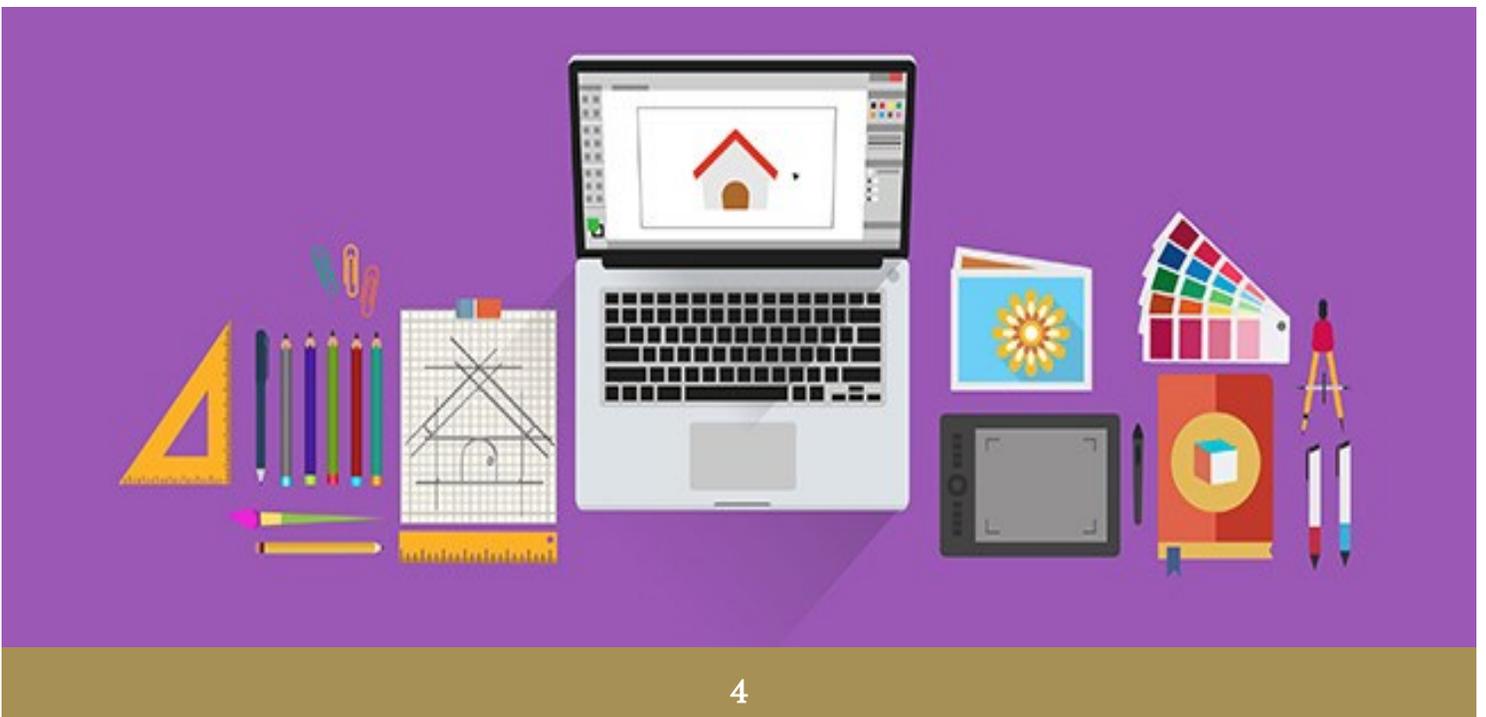
We have created a portal for users to access official artwork, logo's and design guidance. Please click [HERE](#) to access the webpage. You will find links to the following:

[VFW Style Guide](#)

[VFW Pacific Google Drive Folder](#)

[Emblem Guidance DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC AREAS](#)

In the future we hope to add all DPA, District and Post's logo's and artwork for users to access when they are creating artwork for flyers, announcements, official items such as convention shirts, etc. Please send all of your inputs to the DPA Webmaster at [AugieSr@gmail.com](mailto:AugieSr@gmail.com).



# SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

Comrades, it was an honor to recognize the Department Posts and Districts who achieved the status of All-American for 2024-2025 at the Mid-Winter Convention in Phnom Penh.

From District 2: Posts 1054, 9555, 9612 and the District  
From District 3: Posts 8180, 9985, 10033, 10223 and the District  
From District 4: Posts 9723, 9957, 10249, 11575, 12146 and the District  
From District 5: Posts 9876, 9951, 10217, 12074, 12163 and the District  
From District 6: Post 2917 and the District  
From District 7: Posts 124, 2485, 9892, 11447, 1224, 12231 and the District

24 out of 27 Posts and all the Districts achieved All-American last year. That is truly an outstanding accomplishment. Congratulations to all the Posts and Districts.

Now let's take a look at this year's Departments Membership Programs:

The DPA is presently ranked third Nationally in membership, with 98.02 percent, and continues to be a leading department with aspirations for another All-American year. The Department needs 383 more members to achieve the National All-American goal 101 percent. We are halfway through the year, and we already have 15 Posts and 3 Districts who have already achieved All-American status: Posts 124, 2485, 9555, 9723, 9876, 9892, 9951, 9957, 10223, 11575, 12130, 12146, 12163, 12224, and 12231 and Districts 4, 5, and 7.

Also, in accordance with the Department's All-State Membership Requirement of 100 percent plus two, we have 14 Posts and 3 Districts that have already achieved the Department goal. These include Posts 124, 2485, 9555, 9723, 9876, 9892, 9951, 9957, 10223, 11575, 12130, 12146, 12163, and 12231 as well as Districts 4, 5, and 7; congratulations are extended to these Posts and Districts for reaching these milestones in such a short amount of time.

The Department Membership Recruiting Program is also off to a running start with considerable momentum.

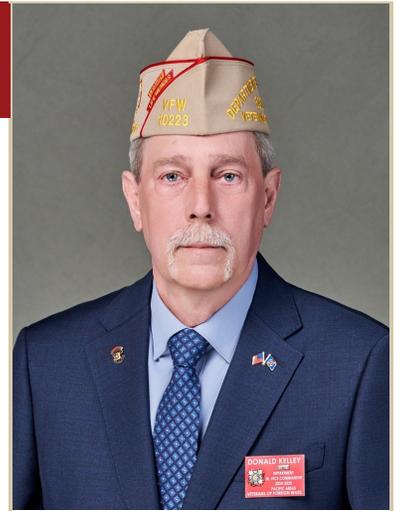
Ten Posts have utilized the Department's New/Reinstated Life Member Program, each receiving a \$400 stipend for each 5 or 10 New/Reinstated Life Members, for a total \$6,400 dollars.

The other Department Membership Recruiting Program is the Annual Member to Life Conversion, which provides a \$250 stipend for the Post's Membership Program. Thirteen Posts have so far received at total \$7,250 dollars.

Eleven Posts have fulfilled the Department's Early Bird Requirement and have each received a \$400 stipend toward their Membership Program. Congratulations are extended to the following Posts:

From District 2: Post 9555  
From District 3: Post 10223  
From District 4: Post 9723, 9957, 12146  
From District 5: Post 9876, 9951  
From District 7: Post 124, 2485, 12130, 12231

Through the Department's Membership Recruiting Programs, Posts have jointly accumulated \$18,050 in stipends so far this year. These accomplishments reflect noteworthy advancement and offer increased resources to support ongoing membership recruitment initiatives. All posts are strongly encouraged to engage in these programs to further strengthen and expand their membership base.



Senior Vice Commander

Don Kelley



Sr. Vice Commander

# SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

On another topic, I need assistance with several All-State requirements: Post/District Bylaws and the School of Instructions. Please share the dates of your current Bylaws to assist in reviewing their alignment with existing meeting practices. Additionally, each Post and District is required to conduct three Schools of Instruction during meetings, focusing on Post Leadership Duties and Responsibilities. To ensure proper credit is given, please submit either an email confirmation or meeting minutes as documentation of these sessions.

Who is staying connected with the Department and National?  
Who is accessing the DPA Facebook site?  
Who is accessing the DPA Web Page?  
All-State Program  
All-State Dashboard

Who is accessing the National Website?  
All-American Dashboard  
Training  
MemStats

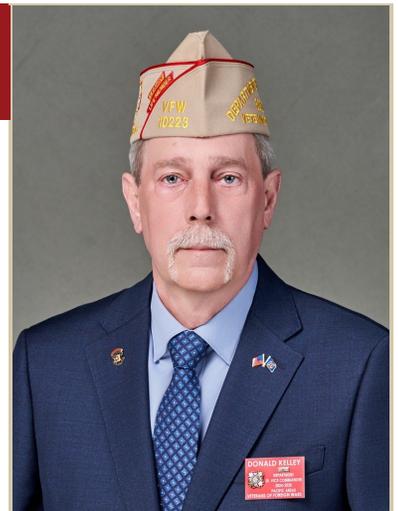
One last item, National Convention Registration. In order to be a delegate at the National Convention, your quartermaster must register you as a delegate. Self-registration will not give delegate status. It's very important that everyone that attends the National Convention is a delegate so that the Department vote counts.

In conclusion, let's keep the throttle up and have every Post and District achieve both All-State and All-American this year.

For veterans, by veterans with teamwork, together everyone achieves more.

Don Kelley  
SVC Commander  
Department of Pacific Areas

*"Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More."*



Senior Vice Commander

Don Kelley



Sr. Vice Commander

## YOU FOUGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY. NOW JOIN US IN THE FIGHT FOR VETERANS.

We understand the unique bond you share with other veterans of overseas conflicts because we, too, have been there. No matter which conflict called you to service, we invite you to join us as we continue to fight for all that's good FOR VETERANS.



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



[vfw.org/join](http://vfw.org/join)

# JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER

Comrades,

I hope this finds you well and best wishes for a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year. A well done goes out to the mid-winter conference team for an outstanding midterm in Cambodia. Now on to Pattaya, Thailand for our next convention.

Please keep an eye on your Dashboards; as of 21 Dec:

**All-American shows** - We have one post that has not met the requirement of one CSR a quarter, five posts that have not made the VMS donation of \$125, seven posts that have not updated or donated for Voice of Democracy, six posts that have not updated or donated for Patriots Pen, and seven posts that have not purchased the required 500 Buddy Poppies.

**All-State shows** – We have two posts that have not met the requirement of eight CSRs a quarter, nine posts that have not made the VMS donation of \$125, 10 that have not updated or donated for Voice of Democracy, nine that have not updated or donated for Patriots Pen, and seven posts that have not purchased the required 500 Buddy Poppies.

## PROGRAMS:

I want to wish our Department Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen winners congratulations and good luck at the National level. If you have any questions, please contact **VOD/PP Chairman Robert Madison** at [vodppdpa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:vodppdpa@vfwpacific.org). Please remember that Scholars App is the future and we need to embrace it.

- **Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen (All-State and All-American Requirement – 1 entry for each Post and District); Complete – Belldandy Lamb, District 3, Post 8180, VoD and Jayce Shaffer, District 7, Post 2485, PP**
- **Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award; Complete – No entrants**
- **Public Servant and Safety Awards; get these to DPA Chairman Justin Canizales at [Justin.m.canizales@gmail.com](mailto:Justin.m.canizales@gmail.com); Due by 1 Jan – [Instructions](#)**
- **Scouting (Due to me by 1 Apr), CAP, and ROTC Awards – [Youth Activities Guide](#)**

**Day of Service Event in May (All-American Requirement)** – Must **register prior to 15 May 2026** at [DoS Registration](#)

## COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTS:

A CSR is an act of serving the **common good for your community**. Our relevancy depends on how the community sees the VFW and will care about us if we show that we truly care about them. Please review [CSR Best Practices](#) for National's guidelines; also, look for emails from me when I see issues as I am reaching out to help you understand why a CSR is not legitimate and to provide guidance on how to write it properly so that there is no confusion.

- What is **NOT** a CSR - recruiting event, attending a Post meeting, "selling" Buddy Poppies, completing CSRs, etc.
- What **IS** a CSR - helping a fellow veteran/surviving family member in need, giving blood, picking up trash around the neighborhood, volunteering at a food drive, etc.



David B. Gley Jr.



Jr. Vice Commander

VFW GUIDE FOR  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
BEST PRACTICES



# JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER

After reading all of the CSRs coming in, I am amazed by how much we are doing in our communities. Please teach your members during a meeting and through information pushes on what is and is not a CSR; it will only benefit the Post. You all are doing great work out there promoting the VFW to the Pacific Areas. I have compiled the 1st All-State Quarter numbers below, which will show where you are at. I know that there are comrades doing good things within your Posts, please get those CSRs in so I can stay busy and approve them.

- **ALL-AMERICAN: minimum 1 CSR per quarter (1 Jul-30 Jun)**
- **ALL-STATE: minimum 8 CSRs per quarter (1 May-30 Apr)**

**Awards:** Let's not overlook the outstanding efforts of our own comrades. Recognizing excellence isn't just about ceremony—it's how we **retain and motivate members** by showing appreciation for their contributions. I feel that we do our members an injustice by not recognizing them.

- Each Post should appoint an **Awards Chairman** to track achievements throughout the year.
- **Post Award Submissions: Due to your District by 30 March**
- **District Award Submissions: One award from each of the categories are due to me by 15 April; the District judging panel WILL include ALL Post commanders from that District, as well as at least one member from Each Post in that District to ensure fair representation.**
- **All-State Requirement: At least one awardee nominated at both Post and District levels.– [DPA Awards Page](#).**

Let's make sure every deserving member gets the recognition they've earned.

Post and District commanders, please ensure that you have a plan in place to grade your programs and awards so that there is time to get them to me a little early to provide time to fix any potential issues.

**Buddy Poppy:** The **All-American requirement** is to order **500** Buddy Poppies. If you have any questions, please contact DPA QM George Beck at [qmd-pa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:qmd-pa@vfwpacific.org). [Buddy Poppy Guide](#)

Let's continue building a strong, sustainable Department by **mentoring future leaders** – have a backup for every position to ensure continuity and growth. As always, I am here to serve you; please do not hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

## RECRUIT – MENTOR – RETAIN

David B. Gley Jr.  
Junior Vice Commander  
[jvcdpa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:jvcdpa@vfwpacific.org)  
[dbgley@gmail.com](mailto:dbgley@gmail.com)

*“Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More.”*

**ENSURE THAT YOUR POST GROWS BY USING EVERY AVAILABLE  
METHOD AND PRODUCT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE VFW BECAUSE...**

**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®**



Department of Pacific Areas

Junior Vice Commander

David B. Gley Jr.



Jr. Vice Commander

**VFW GUIDE FOR  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
BEST PRACTICES**



# In the SPOTLIGHT

In the VFW, we know our veterans are #StillServing and rising to meet the challenges of this uncertain time. We want you to share your stories and maybe even inspire others across our Department to do the same. Click here to tell us your story. [pacifictimes@vfwpacific.org](mailto:pacifictimes@vfwpacific.org)



*Approximately 50 in attendance to include Veterans and Family members. Event sponsored by DECA and AAFES OKINAWA*





*PTI Cooties at Mid-Winter Scratch*



*VFW Post 9555 Commander, Adjutant, and Trustee. Having a great time at the Mid-Winter Conference*



*Post 9555 members receiving an Award from the DPA CDR.*

Your feedback is important to us. Please submit your Letters to the Editor or Suggestions by clicking [pacifictimes@vfwpacific.org](mailto:pacifictimes@vfwpacific.org)

# OUT AND ABOUT POST 9723 OKINAWA JAPAN

## A few of the Events Post 9723 recently performed:

- Post 9723 adopted an initiative in 2024 to honor each branch of military in Okinawa, Japan. The post celebrated the United States Army Birthday on June 14, 2025, the United States Air Force Birthday on September 22, 2025, the United States Navy Birthday on November 20, 2025, the United States Marine Corps Birthday on November 22, 2025, and the United States Space Force Birthday on December 24, 2025.
- Post 9723 adopted four military units (One for each branch of service) at their annual Holiday Party at the Rocker Enlisted Club in Okinawa, Japan on Monday, December 22, 2025. The post invited representatives from each unit to attend the event along with the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Air Wing, Major General Marcus Anniballe.
- Post 9723 uplifted the local community by providing meals during the Thanksgiving Holiday on Thursday, November 29, 2025.
- Post 9723 supported the local community by assisting with Kadena Airbase Annual Special Olympics Events on December 6, 2025, in Okinawa, Japan. Over 200 athletes from the Okinawa Community participated in this event.
- Post 9723 assisted the Kadena Post Office during the Christmas Holiday Season. The Kadena Airbase supports over 35,000 personnel aboard Kadena, Torri Station, and Camp Shields. Kadena has received over 50,000 pieces of mail throughout the month of December. Commander Cortez Pree and Junior Vice Commander David Bill assisted the Post Office on December 23, 2025, by sorting and distributing over 10,000 pieces of mail.
- Post 9723 received numerous requests for support from the community during the government shutdown. The post assisted a single mother, the Kadena 18th Wing Promotion committee with financial support to conduct their ceremonial event and to the Boy Scout Troop 20 to aid their program in completing mandated events.



*Cdr Cortez Pree, Comrades Curt Kozlesky, Brent Stoddard celebrate the United States Army Birthday the 78th Signal Battalion*



*Holiday meal to the Foster Naval Hospital Staff*



*Cdr Pree and Comrade Smith assist with providing toys to the local group homes*



*Cdr Pree on behalf of Post 9723 provides support checks to Comrade Bao Hoang to support the Air Force Promotion Ceremony, Devin Dupree for family support and Comrade Germano to support the local scouts*



# DPA QUARTERMASTER

Comrades,

I hope that everyone enjoyed their holidays and is looking forward to a great year. I am sorry that I was not able to enjoy the comradery at the Mid-Winter Conference, but work requirements kept me in the ROK. I hope my performance of duty as your quartermaster has been satisfactory. The first few months was a real learning experience for me, but I survived. I foresee a couple more learning events before the year is complete, but will rise to all challenges I'm faced with.

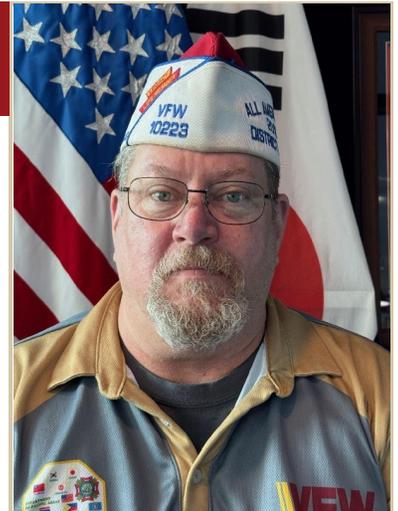
I am tracking membership and transferring earned stipends monthly to posts who have earned them IAW the Commanders All-State Program. If you feel your post has earned a stipend that wasn't received, contact me and we will figure it out

Congratulations to all the Posts and Districts that qualified for the Early Bird Award. You should have already received your rewards.

With half the VFW year gone and most of the programs are completed, now is the time to review the All-State and All-American criteria. There are still a few Posts that have not ordered Buddy Poppies. If you need to order them, or just make a donation in lieu of purchasing, there is an order form on the Department Website. Please fill it out and email it to me. Once the money is transferred to the Department account, I will process the order with National.

If you have any questions on any aspect of the quartermaster duties, please reach out to me. I am here to help.

George E. Beck Jr.  
DPA Quartermaster

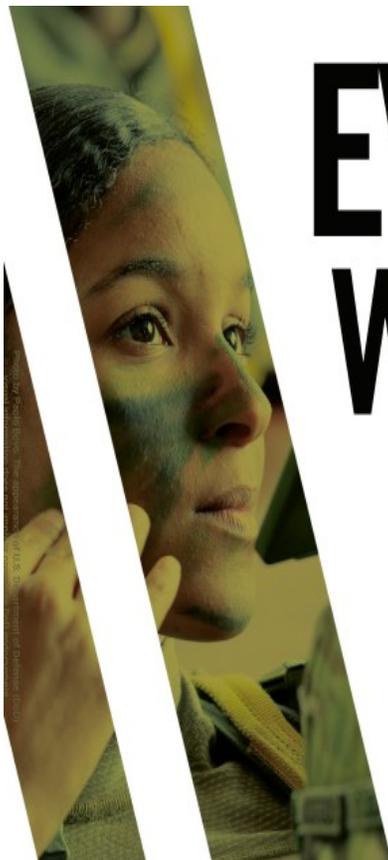


Quartermaster

**George E. Beck Jr.**



Quartermaster



# EVERYTHING WE DO, WE DO FOR VETERANS.®



Learn more or join at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org).

INTRODUCTION



# DPA ADJUTANT

Happy New Year Comrades,

I hope everyone, to include your families, were able to get out of the house, celebrate and party like it was 1999...HA!!!

Special thanks to Comrades Paul Baker, Gary Kidd, and the Comrades of Post 11575 for putting on another great "Mid-Winter" Conference last month. For those who never served on a Mid-Winter or Convention, it is a lot of work and I appreciate all who volunteer to do it past and present!!!

Just a reminder Post/District Commanders, please ensure your General Orders and Election Reports have current information. It happens more than it should, but over the one and half years I have been performing at the DPA Adjutant, I have seen a lot of addresses and information that does not match. Please, after your elections in April, ask your Comrades if their contact information is correct. It will save the DPA a lot of time. This includes phone numbers because there are times when the DPA needs to call someone and we would need an accurate phone number for that purpose.

In closing, let's have a great rest of the 2025-26 term. We are over 98% in membership and we have Posts who has 100% or more and plenty in striking distance.

As normal the DPA is doing well in most if not all Programs. The DPA should expect to have many Posts/Districts make All-State/American this term. Now, let's go get it!!!

Let's keep checking on our fellow Comrades who need it for morale purposes. Also, what we do in our communities, do not forget our families. All the best for a successful 2026!!!

Yours in Comradeship and Service,

Kevin E. Mitchell  
Adjutant  
Department of Pacific Areas

*"Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More."*



Adjutant

Kevin Mitchell



Adjutant

# NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

My Comrades,

I wish you all a healthy, prosperous, and happy 2026 and hope you had a great holiday season 2025.

Since my last report at our convention in June, the National Council has met at the National Convention in Columbus where we approved some appointments, salaries and performed other fiduciary responsibilities. We met again in September in Kansas City where we approved the Budget for the VFW term 2025-2026.

We continue to monitor FMP reimbursement and delays in processing authorized claims, we are also monitoring Medicare Part B and the fact TFL retirees must pay for Medicare Part B even though we can't use it outside of the U.S., we also continue to work on ensuring overseas service connected Disabled Veterans receive the same care as those in the U.S., including the caregiver program.

Through the efforts of Vern Lask, our Department Service Officer, we have become aware of the significant disparity between the Philippines and other countries in the region when it comes to TRICARE and VA Educational Benefits,

Working with DSO Vern and national legislative committee member Randell Himes we will present to the action officers in our DC office the challenges our comrades in the Philippines face on a daily basis when it comes to TRICARE and VA educational Benefits.

We have been communicating with Ryan Gallucci, the Director of our DC Office, regarding the issues I've just mentioned. We will initially address them electronically, then during the Washington Conference we will discuss it in person.

I will quickly discuss a couple of other items.

National Council members essentially wear two hats. They are one of the 63 voting members of the VFW Board of Directors which we call the National Council of Administration and are responsible for administering the affairs and transacting the business of the VFW in the intervals between conventions.

The 52 Council Members who are elected by and represent their Departments are responsible for advocating on behalf of their Departments with the National HQ and our Washington D.C. Office. So, I would suggest to DPA leadership that you have a resource who can go into any office in our organization and ask questions and get answers. Of course, go through the normal chain of command, but I can tell you when a Council Member emails or calls anyone in our organization they do get a quick reply. Just another tool in your toolbox to assist in doing the business of our organization.

So that is a brief overview of the issues we are working on and the responsibilities of the National Council and its members. I will continue to advocate for the great Department of Pacific Areas and assist our Commander and Department Council members as needed.

Yours always in comradeship and service to veterans,



Kenneth A. Stein  
National Council Member 2022-2028  
Department of Pacific Areas



National Council Member

Ken Stein



VA |  
Foreign Medical  
Program (FMP)

## MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

January 6, 1968, 31-year-old Major Patrick Henry Brady of the United States Army Medical Service Corps flew into the fog of war near Chu Lai, Vietnam. He served as the commander of the 54th Medical Detachment, flying unarmed UH-1H "Dustoff" helicopters to evacuate wounded soldiers.

Early that morning, a call came in for the evacuation of two severely wounded South Vietnamese soldiers located in enemy-held territory. The landing zone was blanketed in dense fog and heavy smoke, making visibility nearly zero. Two other helicopters had already attempted the rescue but were forced to turn back due to the blinding weather and the proximity of enemy forces. Major Brady volunteered to make the attempt.

He flew his helicopter into the soup, descending slowly while maneuvering backward and sideways to blow the fog away with his tail rotor. Through sheer skill, he located the landing zone, loaded the casualties, and flew them to the safety of a hospital.

He had barely returned when another desperate call came in for American casualties trapped in a valley surrounded by enemy forces. The valley was completely obscured by fog, and the enemy was directing heavy fire at the trapped unit. Major Brady returned to the air and hovered over the valley, using the wash from his main rotor blades to cut a hole through the fog. He spotted the trail flares on the ground and dropped into the fire-swept zone. Despite the enemy shooting at his aircraft, he landed, loaded the wounded, and successfully evacuated them.

Later that same day, he responded to a third request to rescue American troops engaged in close combat in another sector. As he approached the landing zone, his helicopter was raked by intense machine-gun fire. The enemy bullets damaged his flight controls and partially shot away his pedals. Fighting with the damaged controls, he managed to land the aircraft and extract the wounded men before limping back to base. He immediately procured a second helicopter to continue his mission, but it too was soon damaged by enemy fire. Undaunted, he secured a third helicopter and responded to a call for a platoon trapped in an active minefield. With no safe place to land, Major Brady navigated the aircraft directly into the minefield to reach the casualties. As he touched down, a land mine detonated near the helicopter, spraying the aircraft with shrapnel and wounding two of his crew members. Despite the explosion and the damage to his third aircraft of the day, he refused to leave. He waited until six wounded men were loaded aboard and then flew them out to safety.

By the time night fell, Major Brady had flown over 40 sorties in three different helicopters. He successfully evacuated 51 seriously wounded men in a single day, saving them from almost certain death.

On October 9, 1969, President Richard Nixon presented the Medal of Honor to Major Patrick Henry Brady during a ceremony at the White House. Patrick Henry Brady survived the war and retired from the Army as a Major General. He is currently 89 years old and living in retirement.

Read more [HERE](#).

Read full MoH citation [HERE](#).



# CHAPLAINS CORNER / TAPS REPORT

Happy New Year! I wish all the best to you, your family, and friends for 2026. Hopefully, everyone had a safe Holiday Season, and the New Year will bring much joy and happiness.

Commander, Distinguished Guest, Officers, Council members and Comrades, I pray you and yours are well, in good spirits, able to continue our most important advocacy work and mission. Congratulations to all who were able to attend the Mid-Winter Council of Administration (C of A), to achieve the Department goals, AS-AA, continue to take care of Veterans, their families, our Active-duty service members and the less fortunate in our communities. As I have continued to “Stress” that “Buddy Checks” are important and the Works of the “Almighty” and will bring blessing as we continue to look after our fellow Comrades.

This past conference, month of December we once again recognized and paid tribute to the fallen Comrades on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day as observed annually on December 7, to remember and honor the 2,403 Americans who were killed in the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, which led to the United States declaring war on Japan the next day and thus entering World War II.

As reported during the Mid-Winter Conference to the Commander, the spiritual wellness of the Department is in good health.

Chaplains continue to submit “TAPS” reports in a timely and appropriate manner.

Before closing, I would like to express and reiterate: “Comrades we need to support veterans and their families who are in distress. Whether it is a hospital or home bound we should reach out to them. Do they need assistance? Are they getting the care they need? Or they just need to know we care and haven’t forgotten them by performing visits.”

**Let us remember the following Comrades who have passed away since our last published issue:**

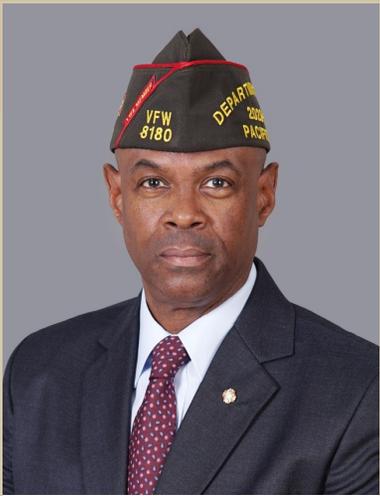
*(Entries listed by Post in sequence of notification receipt)*

Comrade	Post	Comrade	Post
Hollen, William R.	10223	Cook, Henry Leroy	2485
Washington, junior	2485	Traverse, Linus B.	2485
Power, Anthony C.	2485		

Yours in comradeship,

Robert S. Chatman  
DPA Chaplain

*Let us Pray,  
As comrade after comrade departs, we march on with our ranks growing thinner. Help us to be faithful to Thee and to one another. Look in mercy on the surviving spouses and children of our departed Comrades, we beseech Thee, and with Thine own tenderness console and comfort those who are bereaved.” Amen*



Department of Pacific Areas

Chaplain

Robert Chatman





## Resources for Chaplains

### **The Chaplain's Corner - by State of Missouri Chaplain and National Chaplain 2021 - 2023 Debb Halter**

Good introduction to chaplain's duties.

<https://movfw.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=76106>

Or the easier to remember link: <https://movfw.org/chaplainscorner>

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### **CHAPLAIN'S GUIDE - by State of Pennsylvania Chaplain and Past National Chaplain Peter Hook**

Great resource guide for things you will need along the way.

<https://vfwpa.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=88797>

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### **CHAPLAIN'S RESOURCES - by Chaplain (Sky Pilot) Dale A. Iannello, the Military Order of the Cootie**

VFW Chaplain material has been consolidated in one location at the national level at: [https://lotcs.org/vfw\\_chaplain.html](https://lotcs.org/vfw_chaplain.html) There you will find a tabbed panel containing information on *Forms, Handbook, Duties, Ethics, Memorial, Prayer, Links and Training*.

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#### **Find a Mentor:**

Find a mentor who you are comfortable calling and working with to improve your skills and to learn from. In fact, have more than one of them. Everyone has something they are good at so you can learn something from everyone. **ASK QUESTIONS!**

---

I recommend you print the newest *Chaplain's handbook* and read it, highlight it, and share it with fellow Chaplains. The latest version can be found at: [https://lotcs.org/Forms/Chaplain/VFW\\_Chaplain/Manuals/VFW%20Chaplain%20Handbook%202023%20May%20VFW%20Standard.pdf](https://lotcs.org/Forms/Chaplain/VFW_Chaplain/Manuals/VFW%20Chaplain%20Handbook%202023%20May%20VFW%20Standard.pdf). Chaplain Peter Hook worked hard to expand it this year. It is a work that grows with us.

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For updates and information on Chaplain items and Zoom training links, email **Chaplain Peter Hook** at: [PeterHook@verizon.net](mailto:PeterHook@verizon.net) and ask him to put you on the newsletter email distribution list. Good information comes through this email.

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It is highly recommended that chaplains attend **ZOOM** training which is held online on the third **Wednesday** of each month at **7:30 p.m. CST** starting in **September 2023**. The Zoom link comes through the Chaplain's newsletter, so get signed up! Also Chaplains can obtain the link under the "Training" tab at: [https://lotcs.org/vfw\\_chaplain.html](https://lotcs.org/vfw_chaplain.html). This gives you an opportunity to get to know other Chaplains and discuss things that are important to our work. **Good ideas are shared!**

# DEPARTMENT SURGEON

## January 2026 Medical Issues and Observances

January is characterized by a focus on preventative health and specific chronic conditions.

**Respiratory Season Management:** The 2025-2026 respiratory disease season continues, with health officials emphasizing the importance of staying up-to-date with immunizations to manage illnesses like the flu, COVID-19, and RSV.

**Weight Management:** Amid New Year's resolutions, there is a projected surge in the use of weight-loss drugs (like GLP-1 agonists), leading to warnings about the risks of unregulated purchases and increased consumer interest in fiber to address associated digestive issues.

**Mental Wellness:** The month also highlights mental wellness, encouraging actions like prioritizing sleep, connection, and self-care.

### Main observances are:

- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- National Blood Donor Month
- National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- National Birth Defects Prevention Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month
- World Leprosy Day (January 25)

## February 2026 Medical Issues and Observances

February places a strong emphasis on heart health and cancer prevention, with several key awareness campaigns.

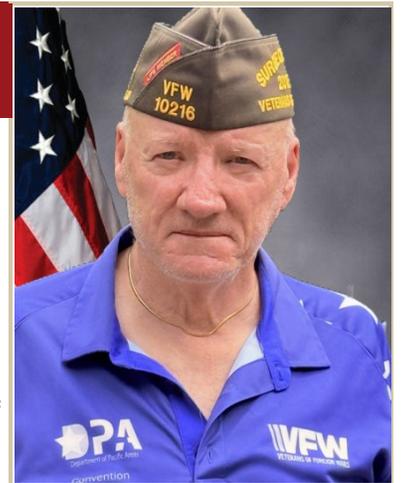
**Heart Health:** American Heart Month focuses on general heart health and raising awareness for specific conditions like congenital heart defects and heart valve disease.

**Cancer Prevention:** The month features efforts to encourage cancer prevention strategies and awareness for specific types, including gallbladder and bile duct cancers.

**Child Health:** National Children's Dental Health Month and International Childhood Cancer Day are key observances related to younger populations.

### Main observances are:

- American Heart Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- World Cancer Day (February 4)
- National Wear Red Day (February 6, for heart disease awareness)
- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (February 7)
- Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week (February 7–14)
- Rare Disease Day (February 28)



Department of Pacific Areas

Surgeon

Patrick "Doc" Higgins



Surgeon

## LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

Marshall was the most powerful military organizer in American history. Under his leadership, the U.S. Army expanded from fewer than 200,000 men to 8.3 million—a forty-fold increase in just three years. Winston Churchill called him "the organizer of victory." Despite his immense influence, Marshall had never led troops in combat; he worked behind the scenes, ensuring the machinery of war functioned smoothly without seeking glory.

When Roosevelt asked for his preference regarding the D-Day command, Marshall consistently refused to lobby for himself. "I wanted him to feel free to act in whatever way he felt was to the best interests of the country," he recalled. Roosevelt ultimately chose Eisenhower, who became the most famous general of World War II, while Marshall remained in Washington and contributed significantly to the war effort.

After the war, Marshall faced an even greater challenge: winning the peace. On June 5, 1947, as Secretary of State, he delivered a pivotal commencement speech at Harvard University. Though labeled a routine address, it turned out to be one of the most important speeches of the twentieth century.

Marshall proposed the European Recovery Program, known as the Marshall Plan, which aimed to inject \$13 billion into rebuilding Western Europe—approximately \$135-150 billion today. This aid would extend not only to allies but also to former enemies like Germany and Italy, nations that had once bombed London and conquered France. "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine," Marshall stated, "but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos."

Having witnessed the consequences of desperation after World War I, when punitive reparations led to the rise of the Third Reich, Marshall was determined to prevent history from repeating itself. Despite facing opposition, his integrity and reputation garnered the trust of senators. The Economic Cooperation Act passed with a significant majority: 69-17 in the Senate and 329-74 in the House.

Over the next four years, Western Europe underwent a remarkable transformation. Industrial production surged, cities rose from the rubble, and former enemies became trading partners and allies. Germany and Italy joined the democratic West, and the European Coal and Steel Community emerged, laying the groundwork for what would become the European Union. The Marshall Plan not only rebuilt economies but also redefined how victors treat the vanquished.

In October 1953, Marshall learned he had won the Nobel Peace Prize while bedridden with the flu. He humbly stated that the award was a tribute to the American people. He became the first—and remains the only—professional soldier to receive this honor. At the Oslo ceremony, despite protests from three men accusing him of war crimes, the audience, including King Haakon VII of Norway, gave Marshall a standing ovation.

In his acceptance speech, he addressed the controversy directly: "There has been considerable comment over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a soldier... The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me... I am deeply moved to find some means or method of avoiding another calamity of war."

Marshall retired to his home in Virginia, writing no memoirs or seeking further recognition. He passed away on October 16, 1959, after a series of strokes and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

His legacy includes the rebuilt cities of Europe, the alliance that maintained peace, and the demonstration that mercy can be more powerful than revenge. During Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953, the congregation at Westminster Abbey rose to their feet as he entered, acknowledging his significant contributions. Marshall never sought glory; he built the greatest army in American history and used America's resources to heal former enemies.

True power lies not in domination but in the courage to mend what hatred has destroyed.



# CHIEF OF STAFF

Comrades,

Congratulations to all on the success you have had in membership recruiting as we approach the mid-year mark. Our membership percentage is heading towards 98% and we are currently in 2nd place out of the 52 Departments in our organization. So well done to all, but let's remember Membership is a goal not the mission and believe me we certainly want to achieve the goal, BUT the MISSION of the VFW is to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military, and our communities and to advocate on behalf of all veterans. That is our mission. When you do those 4 things and add in being a friendly post you will meet all objectives and goals INCLUDING membership and the awards and citations will flow automatically. It doesn't work the other way around.

There is no question we will meet our membership goal of 101% as set by the Commander in Chief. So we ask each of you to recruit at least one new member and then MOST IMPORTANTLY mentor that member. Just signing up a new member is not enough. Mentor them, make them feel welcome, and get them involved. That is the hallmark of CDR Jack's membership program. In that regard We ask you to remember MEMBERSHIP ensures no veteran is left behind and to consider this: The greatest retention tool we have is when leadership directly engages with new and annual members and makes sure, they are involved in post activities.

Thank you all for supporting CDR Jack and his ***"Teamwork. Together Everyone Achieves More."***

Keep up the outstanding work.

Yours always in comradeship and service to veterans,



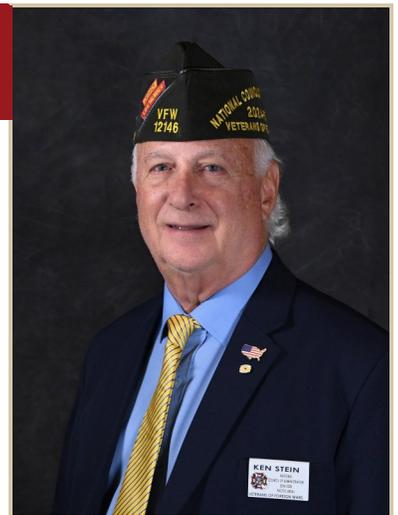
Kenneth A. Stein  
Chief of Staff 2025-2026 Term  
Department of Pacific Areas

**The VFW's mission** is to **"honor the dead by helping the living"**, achieved by fostering camaraderie among overseas combat veterans, serving veterans, the military, and communities, and advocating for all veterans' earned benefits and respect. They work to ensure veterans receive their entitlements, are recognized for sacrifices, and maintain strong national defense, embodying the idea that a nation's character is shown by how it treats its protectors.

## Key Components of the VFW Mission:

- **Camaraderie:** Building bonds among veterans who've served in overseas conflicts.
- **Service:** Assisting fellow veterans, the armed forces, and local communities.
- **Advocacy:** Fighting for veterans' rights, benefits, and care through legislation and support.
- **Patriotism:** Upholding allegiance to the U.S. and promoting American freedoms.
- **Legacy:** Honoring fallen service members and supporting their families.

In essence, the VFW strives to ensure that those who served are respected, receive what they've earned, and are never forgotten.



Chief of Staff

Ken Stein



Chief of Staff

# A LITTLE BIT OF VFW HISTORY & MORE

With approximately 1.4 million VFW and Auxiliary members in nearly 6,000 Posts around the world, the VFW provides vital assistance and support for America's service members, veterans and their families. Below you'll find resources and the history surrounding America's largest organization of combat veterans.

**VFW At a Glance:** If you're looking for high-level information about the powerhouse for veterans that's been around since 1899, we've got you covered.

**VFW Fact Sheet:** The VFW provides vast levels of assistance and support every year, and this is a quick snapshot of just how far that service has gone.

**National Officers:** Meet the leaders who work to guide the VFW into the future.

**VFW Community Achievements:** From youth scholarships to disaster assistance, get a glimpse of just how much the VFW gives back to local communities.

**VFW Legislative Victories:** We've been instrumental in virtually every significant piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th and 21st centuries.

**VFW Service to Veterans:** Whether we're lobbying Congress and being a VA watchdog, or assisting veterans and transitioning military through the claims process, we're a veterans' greatest advocate.

**VFW Programs & Projects:** The VFW's dedicated to supporting America's service men and women before, during and long after deployment with a wide array of assistance and support programs.

**VFW Diverse Endeavors:** We're not a multifaceted organization for nothing. Here are several initiatives and special support projects we've been involved with.

**VFW Annual Report:** Last year was a big year for the VFW. See what a difference our support and dedication made to America's service members, veterans and their families.

**Past Commanders-in-Chief:** The who's-who of past VFW National Commanders-in-Chief.

## Helpful Links



### PSAs and Videos

Using public service announcements and videos helps tell the story the more than 1.4 million-member VFW and its Auxiliary. Download and share the VFW with your network today!



### Promotional Materials

Gain access the tools and resources we've designed specifically to help you share the story and mission of the VFW - right at your fingertips.



### The VFW Podcast

#StillServing: The VFW Podcast® is our newest communication platform that will highlight critical issues, challenges and legislation affecting veterans, service members and military families worldwide.



### Media Contacts

From media requests to interviewing the leaders of America's largest and oldest combat veterans service organization, here's how qualified members of the media can reach us.



### Press Kit

An organization like ours doesn't develop a 125-year-old legacy without hard work. Gain access to resource materials that showcase more than a century of historic moments.



### Latest Releases

Read about the important military and veteran issues we've been advocating for, and the ways we're actively supporting our military and veteran family, and local communities every day.

# DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Hope you all had a wonderful Mid Winter Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

I'm honored and pleased to report the Department's progress. We have achieved a commendable completion rate.

The department's soft goal was to complete inspections by the Mid Winter Conference. To date, 5 of 6 Districts have successfully completed their annual inspections, achieving an 83% completion rate.

Regarding the Posts, 24 of the 27 Posts have completed their inspections, representing 89%. We are particularly proud of District 4, which led the way by completing all annual inspections at the Post and District level early on. Kudos to the District 4 leadership and team.

It is important that inspections be completed and submitted prior to February 28, 2026, to be eligible for the Allstate program. Otherwise, all inspections must be completed by April 30, 2026.

I extend my gratitude to all District commanders and inspectors for their dedication and hard work in ensuring the timely completion of their annual inspections.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Yours in Comradeship and Service,

Janet Alford  
DPA Inspector



Department Inspector

Janet Alford



To view the 2025-2026 Inspections Procedure, or to Download the current forms, click [HERE](#).



# JUDGE ADVOCATE



No one does more for Veterans

"Teamwork, Together Everyone Achieves More"

TO: DPA COMMANDER

FROM: DPA JAG WARREN MAXSON

SUBJECT: 2025 MID TERM JAG REPORT

Commander,

To date we have had a few issues that you have handled without any formal punishments. Of course I have written this prior to the Mid Term so that may have changed HA.

Here are a few subjects that have been brought up over the past 6 months.

1. AUDITS: Comrades please make everyone's life easier and get your Post and District audits into the Department by the required dates. Waiting until the last minute is not the way to do business.
2. CHAIN OF COMMAND: This has not been a major issue as in the past, but just want to remind everyone, unless you are the DPA CDR or received a message directly from National, you need to go up through the Commander. Do not send directly to National, I can assure you they DO NOT like that.
3. NEW VFW HAT: National has authorized a new baseball style cap that may be worn during meetings. DO NOT get made from your local dealer. Wink Wink. IF you are an Officer you are NOT allowed to wear during the meetings.
4. PROPOSALS: Please have any proposals your Post or District wishes reviewed and voted on at the DPA convention in June, sent to me NLT May 1st. I need to get them sent out to the Department 30 days prior to the convention. So again May 1st, 2026, anything after 2359hours JKT will not be looked at and will not make it to the floor. You have from today until then to get them ready, no reason to miss the cut off.

Comrades, please continue doing what you always do, we are half way through and you all have the ability to reach All State and All American.

YOURS IN COMRADESHIP  
WARREN "MAX" MAXSON  
2025 2026 DPA JAG



Judge Advocate

Warren "Max" Maxson



Official VFW Cover



New Ball Cap Style



# CHAIN OF COMMAND PROTOCOL

The Commander is the arbitrator of arguments and the judge in disputes. As a general rule, their decisions are considered correct until over-ruled by the Post meeting, the District, Department Commander or Commander-in-Chief. That being said, it is important to resolve issues at the lowest level possible. However, there are certain times when it is necessary to elevate your concerns to the next level.

- Local issues are not the responsibility of the District or Department Commander.
  - Try to resolve them in-house.
- Never bypass anyone in the chain of command.
- If the alleged allegations involve the Commander, immediately notify the Commander next in the chain.
- Should there be irregular identified during a routine audit, any noted discrepancies must be reported immediately to the Post/District membership.
- If you believe that the problem cannot be resolved at your level or may result in a more serious situation by all means elevate your concerns to the next appropriate level (District and/or Department) Commander so they are not blindsided.
- A written report shall be generated for every investigation.
  - The investigator or investigating committee will present their findings to the post membership, District Governing Body or Department Council as applicable.
- Record relevant issues in your minutes. Include the motion and the approval or disapproval as applicable.
- If the Post or District fails to act to correct noted deficiencies, immediately inform the Department Commander for further guidance.
- Issues brought before the Department Commander for action, shall be supported by all relevant documents. i.e., Investigation Report (with supporting documents), Copy of the Minutes showing approved action(s), and the Commanders recommendations.
- Educate yourself on the procedures for removing an elected officer of their duties.
  - Post Level, MOP - Article II, Sec. 220
  - District Level, MOP – Article IV, Sec. 420
- Educate yourself on the procedures for initiating disciplinary action and the members right to appeal. There is a fine line that separates the need for a simple corrective action and the need to initiate disciplinary action under Article IX. *As an example: Misappropriation of funds is one of the offenses punishable by Article IX, Discipline. Do you simply remove the accused from office or Initiate Disciplinary action under Article IX? If initiated, it is imperative that proper procedures be followed.*
  - MOP -Article IX, Sec. 902 Provides a list of offenses recognized by the VFW that may be subject to Disciplinary Action.
  - MOP – Article IX, Sec. 907 Provides a list of Penalties that may be imposed for those offenses.
  - No member shall be subject to the penalties authorized in Section 907 unless such member has been advised in writing of the Charges and Specifications.
- Ensure any action taken is properly documented and withing the timelines specified in the MOP. Maintain a file copy of all correspondence to include receipts for certified mail (if applicable).
- Control Posts to Social-Media. Once it's posted the whole world knows. **(Don't air your dirty laundry)**

All Commanders are welcome to seek advice and guidance from the Department. If additional information is required or clarification is required, Department will reach out to National for assistance. We too have a Chain of Command.

# DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER (DSO)

Greetings and Good Day to All,

The Department of Pacific Areas (DPA) currently has 11 Assistant Department Service Officers (ADSOs) who are fully qualified, in training, or in the certification process. Recruitment continues, with a focus on expanding coverage in Korea and Guam. To date, the DPA Service Program has assisted over 2,500 veterans and dependents, filing more than 1,000 claims. These efforts have resulted in over \$35 million in receivable benefits for veterans and their families.

In recent months, we conducted three major training events—in September, October, and November—successfully reaching all 27 Posts across the DPA. District and Post Commanders are encouraged to ensure their Post Benefits Advisors submit their monthly reports, as these reports document the impact of our work and highlight the needs of our communities.

DSO officers will also be traveling to Districts to assist with claims filing. District and Post Commanders who require face-to-face support may contact me at [dpa.dso72@gmail.com](mailto:dpa.dso72@gmail.com).

## Success Stories Across the DPA

### Post 9985 – Camp Casey, Korea - Post Benefits Advisor: Stephen Tharp

During November 2025, Stephen dedicated 26 volunteer hours and 8 hours of travel time at Camp Casey in his role as Retired Soldier Casualty Assistance Officer, as recorded in the Army Volunteer Management Information System. His primary focus was assisting surviving spouses with Social Security paperwork and navigating complex benefit processes.

Many cases involved Social Security claims, with a smaller number related to SBP. No VA-related cases were reported during this period. The recent U.S. government shutdown affected processing times, especially with DFAS. To maintain community awareness, Stephen distributes schedules of his support activities through the local Retirees Council and other official and unofficial channels.

### Post 12231 – Manila, Philippines - Post Benefits Advisor: Michael Castle

As the Benefits Advisor for VFW Manila Post 12231, Michael provided comprehensive support to both active-duty personnel and veterans. Highlights include:

- Assisting six active-duty members with their Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) process
- Guiding veterans through claims inquiries and submissions
- Conducting weekly visits to Cavite for ID.me verification and claims assistance
- Providing on-the-spot support during weekly Post gatherings
- In total, 22 individuals received services ranging from DIC assistance to burial and burial flag inquiries.

Thank You! Your dedication ensures that veterans and their families receive the benefits, support, and advocacy they deserve. Without your commitment, much of this vital work would go undone.

Vernon C. Lask  
Department Service Officer  
Department of Pacific Areas  
[dsodpa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:dsodpa@vfwpacific.org)

**Click the Post Benefits Advisor Guide to download the latest version.**



DSO Pacific Areas

Vernon Lask



Service Officer



2025

Post Benefits  
Advisor Guide

#STILL  
SERVING



# VOD/PP/TA CHAIRMAN

Comrades,

National remains fully committed to the ScholarsApp website for all contest submissions. While we continue to navigate technical glitches, the platform is improving and remains our path forward. Our goal is 100% digital participation; to achieve this, I ask for your assistance in communicating deadlines and requirements clearly at every level.

The platform offers downloadable flyers with QR codes for easy access, eliminating the need for paper or email submissions. Should you encounter issues, the technical team is highly responsive during U.S. business hours.

This year, 12 Posts submitted applications, resulting in 21 Patriot's Pen and 80 Voice of Democracy entries. It is my honor to announce our winners:

- **Patriot's Pen:** Jayce Shaffer, District 7, Post 2485 (Angeles City, Philippines)
- **Voice of Democracy:** Belldandy Lamb, District 3, Post 8180 (Songtan, Korea)

Please join me in wishing them success as they advance to the National level. If you require the names of winners at your Post or District level, I will be available to provide those details after the meeting.

Looking ahead, new topics will be released around April 2026. I encourage you to partner with local schools to integrate these programs into their curriculum. Finally, please ensure all submissions are strictly reviewed against the rules—preventing disqualifications at the Department level begins with diligence at the Post and District levels.

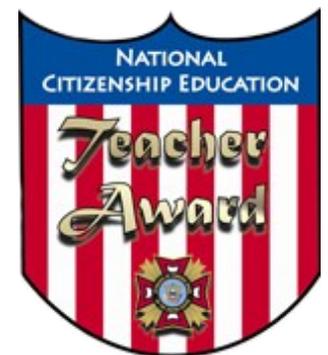
Yours in comradeship and service,

Robert Madison  
VoD/PP/TA Chairman  
Department of Pacific Areas  
[vodppdpa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:vodppdpa@vfwpacific.org)



VOD/PP/TA Chairman

Robert Madison



**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY** **VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

**Voice of Democracy 2026-2027 Theme  
Coming Soon**

**PATRIOT'S PEN** **VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

**Patriot's Pen 2026-2027 Theme  
Coming Soon**

# MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Comrades,

The strength of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) lies in our membership numbers, making the recruitment of Life Members essential to our mission. The Department of Pacific Areas (DPA) warmly invites everyone to seize the opportunity to become a Life Member. As of Friday, 2 January 2026, an impressive 95.9% of the DPA's membership consists of Life Members, totaling 12,071 individuals.

The Legacy Life Membership program empowers VFW Life Members to contribute to the long-term success of the VFW. This annual endowment supports both your post and the Department of Pacific Areas (DPA). Currently, the DPA is thriving, boasting 574 Legacy Life Members, which include 194 Bronze, 41 Silver, and 339 Gold members. All DPA members are encouraged to become Legacy Life Members and join a legacy that truly makes a difference!

Additionally, Legacy Life Members receive discounts on purchases at the VFW Store (<https://www.vfwstore.org>). Bronze Legacy Life Members enjoy a 5% discount, Silver Legacy Life Members receive a 10% discount, and Gold Legacy Life Members benefit from a 15% discount.

Yours in Comradeship,

James (Jim) Collins  
Legacy and Life Membership Chairman



Membership Chairman

James "Jim" Collins



## Member Incentives

	Bronze \$400	Silver \$800	Gold \$1200
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Plated Engraved Legacy Life Card*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legacy Life Lapel Pin*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legacy Life Hat Pin*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctive VFW Store items for Legacy Life Members*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legacy Life Membership Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member Recognition on Internet & Convention Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legacy Hat Patch*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personalized Brick at Centennial Plaza*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VFW Store Discounts (personal use only)*	5%	10%	15%
Annual Endowment to Post	\$6	\$12	\$18
Annual Endowment to Department	\$6	\$12	\$18

\* does not apply to Memorial Legacies

# TRANSFORMING THE TERRIBLE SECRET OF SUICIDE

I wrote this article some years ago and have rewritten it today in memory of my Brother, Friend, and fellow SOCOM Care Coalition co-worker, former U.S. Navy SEAL, Mike Day. Mike, severely wounded in 2007 during a raid, took his own life earlier this year. After recovering physically from his gunshot wounds he began working on the behavioral health side of the coin and became an amazing SOCOM Care Coalition case manager and advocate. In 2020, his book *Perfectly Wounded* was published and became an instant success. Somewhere along the way Mike's life again began to slip into the dark spiral of suicidal ideation and self-despair. His passing shocked our shared communities to their core. Mike's book, his story, is important and more relevant today in lieu of his passing. His death reminds us to be constantly vigilant regarding our own mental health and that of our Brothers and Sisters, our families, and our friends.



This paragraph from Mike's book reveals how his inner anguish and pain resurfaced three years later but this time fatally. "...I fully believed I was thinking rationally, I know now that I was not. My irrational thoughts had started repeating themselves: the world would be better off without me. I don't care anymore, I just want out of here. I'm a horrible person. My future will just be filled with more of the same stress."

I have re-written and updated this article because Mike, this past March, was wrong. He was an amazing person; and we are not better off without him here. And his life and his story as recounted in *Perfectly Wounded* is now more than ever a "must read" for us all.

Because the darkness can resettle in.

Lest we forget — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX3F2hvFhIc>

By Greg Walker (ret)  
USA Special Forces

In 1962, my grandfather on my father's side took his own life. This after murdering his estranged wife. His murder-suicide shook our immediate and extended families to the core. I was just eight years old and loved both deeply.

The aftershocks and ripples of that singular act were catastrophic for many, many years. My father, his oldest son, changed entirely as he grew older. His anger, fear, remorse, and self-hatred that came from the event consumed him. He isolated

⇒ never explored counseling at any time although he could have afforded the best

⇒ and died without meaningful resolution.

Twelve years ago, given the incredible training and real-world experience I had working with the U.S. Special Operations Command's Care Coalition as a Warrior Care provider and in lieu of nearly ten years on the street as a police officer with experience investigating suicides and attempted suicides...I investigated my grandfather's most terrible act.

I discovered no one else in the family had — to include my dad and his two brothers. And I discovered what we all thought was an accurate account was not. We had all lived our lives believing bad information, trauma generated recollections, and the masking of the event even having occurred (The Terrible Secret).

I learned the facts from reading the reports and asking questions, lots of questions, of those of our families still alive and willing to talk. I then shared the true story with everyone to include my father in a three-page letter.

The healing process began...for those who wanted to heal.

I was blessed to spend ten years working with our most seriously wounded, injured, ill, and suicidal. I was well educated along the way —and well trained. I was privileged to participate with equally skilled (many much more

# TRANSFORMING THE TERRIBLE SECRET OF SUICIDE

so) advocates and clinicians, police officers and hospital staffs, and family members of great courage, to successfully intervene in active suicidal situations.

We continue to lose between 35-40 Active Duty/National Guard/Reservists and Veterans a day to suicide. That is a body count we should be ashamed of. Too many trans-generational war fighters over the past 20 years of ongoing armed conflict. Fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, husbands, wives, grandchildren, friends, family...deceased by their own hands.

There are no memorial walls for those who take their own lives. The stigma of suicide ensures silence, shame, and secrecy. However, this cultural branding is changing. We know more about what takes our loved ones to the precipice of death by their own hands. And we are learning more to care for those left behind and to break the chain that suicide in a family or in a military unit can create unless challenged.

To kill the Most Terrible Secret you must expose it to the light of Love, Truth, and Self-Care. You must band together with like-minded warriors and fight the good fight.

And if the suicide is successful you then turn to those left behind, as I have, and self-educate, self-care, and seek professional counseling. Breaking the chain is possible – and important – as is re-learning to love the ones we have lost.

Because suicide is not painless.

MSG (ret) Leroy Petry, Medal of Honor, on the challenges of adversity and embracing one's life because "we only get one go-around here on earth and if we don't take care of it...it's not going to last." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMXSr8S-nVQ>

Here are some of the exceptional resources in the war on military service-connected suicide that I have professionally worked for or with and with great success.

## “No Fallen Comrade Left Behind”

Lines for Life Military Helpline

<https://www.linesforlife.org/mhl/>

Military One Source Confidential Counseling

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help>

The Mighty Oaks Veterans Warriors Programs

<https://www.mightyoaksprograms.org/>

The Green Beret Foundation

<https://www.greenberetfoundation.org/>

The Cedar Hills Hospital Military Program

<https://cedarhillshospital.com/treatment-services/the-military-program/>

Wounded Warrior Project Veteran PTSD Treatment Support Resources

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/mental-wellness/veteran-ptsd-treatment-support-resources>

VA Military Crisis Line

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** — Greg Walker is an honorably retired “Green Beret” and wounded warrior. Today he lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, with his service pup Tommy.

Since 2001, the U.S. has lost more than

**120,000 veterans  
to suicide**



The suicide rate among **women veterans** is **92%** higher than that of non-veteran women.

For **male veterans**, the rate is almost **60%** higher.

# LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN

Comrades it was nice to see all of you that made it to the DPA Mid-Winter, in Cambodia.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars National Legislative Service (NLS) is asking for membership to sign up for the Weekly ACTION CORP newsletter. Please consider receiving the weekly information to your email box. Signing up for the ACTION CORP newsletter by Click this link: <https://voterveice.net/VFW/register>. Doing so will get you updates on the VFW Priority Bills. Some Bills the National Legislative Committee is currently pushing to get passed.

**H.R.740 / S.275, Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2025.** To ensure veterans receive clear information and timely health care by improving efficiency, oversight, and coordination of VA's community care program.

**H.R.467, Foreign Medical Program Modernization Act of 2025.** Access to health care for veterans living abroad by modernizing reimbursement systems and strengthening global care options. This would mostly improve services with the Veterans in the Philippines.

**H.R.4837, Written Informed Consent Act.** expand informed consent requirements to include five additional medication categories to ensure veterans are fully aware of the risks and benefits of these medications

**H.R.2623, Innovative Therapies Centers of Excellence Act of 2025.** Designate five VA medical centers as specialized hubs focusing on cutting-edge PTSD treatments for veterans.

**S.1032 / H.R.2102, Major Richard Star Act.** Currently being submitted as a standalone bill. This amendment was removed from this year's National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (proposed Senate Amendment 2968) to enable Chapter 61 retirees who sustained combat-related injuries to receive their vested DOD retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset. Pass legislation to eliminate any offset of DOD military retirement pay and VA disability compensation.

The **VFW Voices of Service – Stories in Action** is now online. Submit your stories here: [Story Bank Submission](#). This initiative provides a platform for veterans, service members, caregivers, survivors, and families to share their experiences dealing with the VA, and provides a direct input to VFW National. With permission, these stories will help educate Senators and Congress members about the quality of care the VA is providing. This initiative strengthens our advocacy efforts. There are no deadlines or quotas, making this an ongoing initiative. Personal stories are crucial for capturing lawmakers' attention, and this story bank ensures experiences are collected accurately and used professionally.

Randell E Himes  
DPA Legislative Chairman  
[legdpa@vfwpacific.org](mailto:legdpa@vfwpacific.org)  
National Legislative Committee  
[rehimes@gmail.com](mailto:rehimes@gmail.com) 1-815-408-2454



Legislative Chairman

Randell Himes



2025  
PRIORITY  
GOALS

VFW ACTION ALERT



If you are interested in keeping track of these bills. Signing up for the ACTION CORP newsletter. Click this link: <https://voterveice.net/VFW/register>.

## A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

In 1942, as Japanese soldiers patrolled the streets of Manila, thousands of Allied prisoners faced starvation in internment camps. Maria Orosa, a 49-year-old food scientist, was urged by her family and friends to evacuate to safety in Batangas, but she resolutely refused. "I'm a soldier," she declared. "I stay at my post." Her post was a chemistry laboratory that had become a vital battlefield in the Philippines, where she discovered how to keep people alive through science.

This year was significant globally, marked by the premiere of *Casablanca* and the initiation of the Manhattan Project. However, in the Philippines, the Japanese occupation led to systematic starvation among imprisoned Americans and Filipinos. The Santo Tomás Internment Camp housed over 4,000 civilians—teachers, businessmen, missionaries, and families—who were given only rice water and scraps. Children's ribs showed through their skin, and adults weighed less than 100 pounds, succumbing to malnutrition, beriberi, and starvation while Japanese guards watched.

Maria had spent decades preparing for this moment. Born in 1893 in Taal, Batangas, she earned degrees in pharmaceutical and food chemistry from the University of Washington at a time when Filipino women were discouraged from pursuing science. She returned to the Philippines in 1922 with a mission to make her country self-sufficient through food innovation. Unlike other scientists, Maria worked in villages, teaching rural women to preserve food, raise poultry, and plan nutritious meals. She invented the palayok oven—a clay cooking device for families without electricity—and by 1924, her "4H Clubs" had over 22,000 members.

Her most famous invention initially seemed trivial. Tomato ketchup, an American import, was popular in the Philippines but expensive and difficult to produce in tropical climates. In the 1930s, Maria thought, "Why tomatoes when we have bananas everywhere?" She created a ketchup from mashed bananas, vinegar, spices, and a dash of red food coloring. This sweet, tangy condiment became a national obsession and a symbol of independence for the Philippines.

When Japan invaded in 1941, Maria joined Marking's Guerrillas, a resistance movement, and was given the rank of captain. Unlike traditional soldiers, she carried a chemistry degree and 700 recipes in her head. Working with 400 students in her laboratory, she invented two life-saving products: Soyalac, a nutrient-dense powdered soybean drink known as "magic food," and Darak, rice bran cookies rich in vitamin B-1. These innovations turned local resources into concentrated nutrition that could sustain starving individuals.

Maria needed to smuggle this food into the camps. She devised a bold plan, hiring local carpenters to hollow out bamboo sticks, filling them with Soyalac and Darak powder, and delivering them disguised as construction materials. The guards never suspected. Bamboo by bamboo, Maria smuggled nutrition to dying prisoners—American soldiers, Filipino civilians, and children who had forgotten what it felt like to have energy.

By early 1945, as American forces fought to retake Manila, the city was devastated by constant shelling. Maria's family begged her to evacuate one last time, but she refused, insisting, "I'm a soldier. I stay at my post." On February 13, 1945, while working in her laboratory, shrapnel tore through her body. Despite her injuries, she was rushed to an overwhelmed hospital, but another shell hit, killing over 400 people, including Maria.

At just 51 years old, she had saved thousands from starvation, dying at her post as she had vowed. For decades, her story was nearly forgotten. Corporations commercialized her inventions without crediting her, and while banana ketchup became ubiquitous, few knew its creator. Recently, historians and activists have begun to resurrect her legacy, reminding us that heroes can wield test tubes and mixing bowls, fighting with creativity and unyielding determination. Maria Orosa was a scientist, a patriot, and a captain who saved lives through her ingenuity and courage. Read more [HERE](#) or on WIKIPEDIA [HERE](#)



# AMERICANISM & LOYALTY CHAIRMAN

## From Shield to Storm: The Strategic Shift

The transition from Operation Desert Shield to Operation Desert Storm remains one of the most significant pivots in modern military history. What began in August 1990 as a desperate defensive posture to protect Saudi Arabia evolved into a massive, multi-national offensive to liberate Kuwait.



While the conflict is often remembered for its grainy green night-vision footage and precision-guided bombs, its legacy is far deeper: it fundamentally reshaped American foreign policy and healed a fracture in the national psyche that had lingered since the Vietnam War.

### Phase I: Operation Desert Shield (The Defensive Wall)

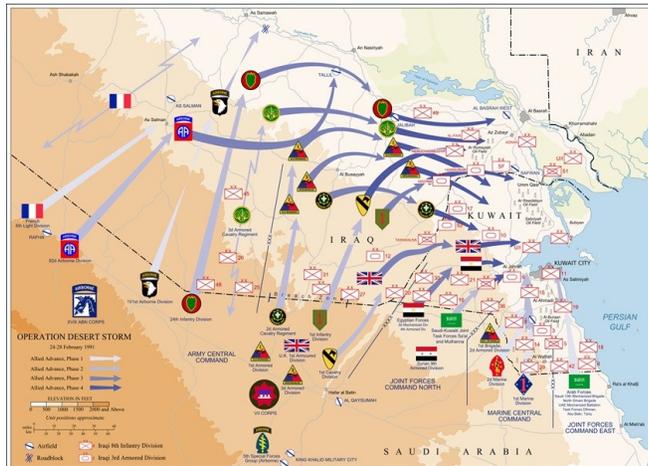
On August 2, 1990, Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, quickly seizing its oil fields

and massing troops on the Saudi Arabian border. The global response was swift, but the military challenge was immense.

\* **The Objectives:** President George H.W. Bush established four clear goals: the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, the security of the Persian Gulf, and the protection of American citizens abroad.

\* **The Build-up:** Over the next several months, the U.S. orchestrated a "line in the sand." This involved mobilizing a coalition of 35 nations—an unprecedented diplomatic feat—and deploying over 500,000 American troops alongside international allies.

\* **The Strategy:** Desert Shield was a race against time. The goal was to deter an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia while economic sanctions were given time to work.

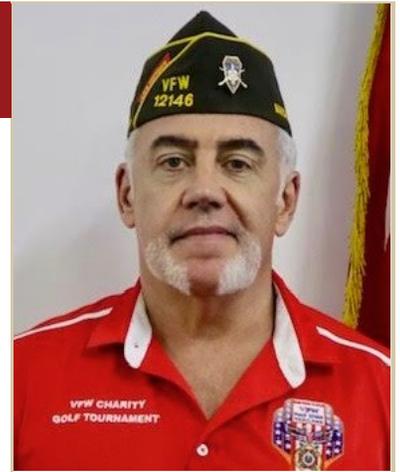


### Phase II: Operation Desert Storm (The Offensive Lightning)

By January 1991, diplomacy and sanctions had reached a stalemate. On January 17, the mission shifted from "Shield" to "Storm."

#### 1. The Air Campaign

For nearly six weeks, coalition forces conducted the most intensive air bombardment in history. Using "Stealth" technology and GPS (both novel at the time), the coalition dismantled Iraq's command-and-control infrastructure and crippled its air defenses.



Americanism/Loyalty Day Chair

James Snowden

# AMERICANISM & LOYALTY CHAIRMAN

## 2. The Ground War (The 100-Hour War)

On February 24, the ground offensive began. It was characterized by the "Left Hook"—a massive flanking maneuver through the open desert that bypassed the heavy Iraqi defenses along the Kuwaiti border.

\* The Result: Iraqi resistance crumbled. Within 100 hours, Kuwait City was liberated, and a ceasefire was declared.

### The Strategic and Psychological Legacy

The impact of the Gulf War extended far beyond the borders of Kuwait. It marked a turning point for the United States in three specific ways:

1) The "Vietnam Syndrome" Healed: For nearly two decades, the shadow of Vietnam had fueled American skepticism toward military intervention. The decisive

victory in the Gulf, celebrated with ticker-tape parades, restored public confidence in the military and the government's ability to use force effectively.

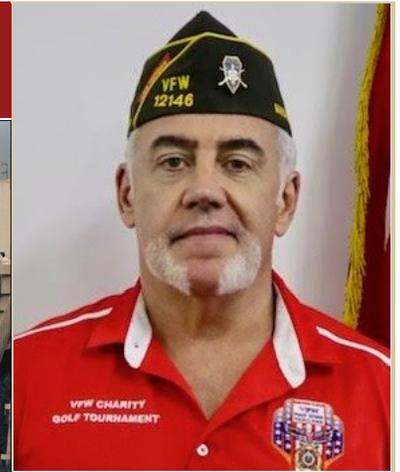
2) The New World Order: With the Soviet Union on the verge of collapse, the Gulf War demonstrated that

the U.S. could lead a "New World Order," acting as a global stabilizer through international consensus and the United Nations.

\* Revolution in Military Affairs: The war was the first major conflict to showcase "Smart" weapons, satellite integration, and real-time 24-hour news coverage (via CNN), changing how wars are fought and perceived by the public.

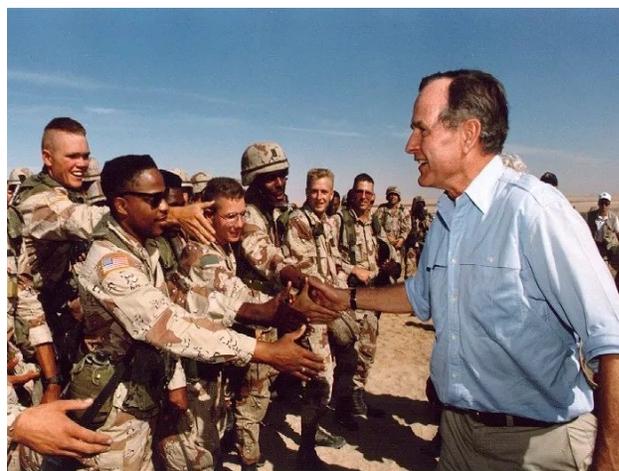
"This will not be another Vietnam... our troops will have the strategy and the support they need to win." — President George H.W. Bush

James Snowden  
Americanism/Loyalty Chairman  
Department of Pacific Areas



Americanism/Loyalty Day Chair

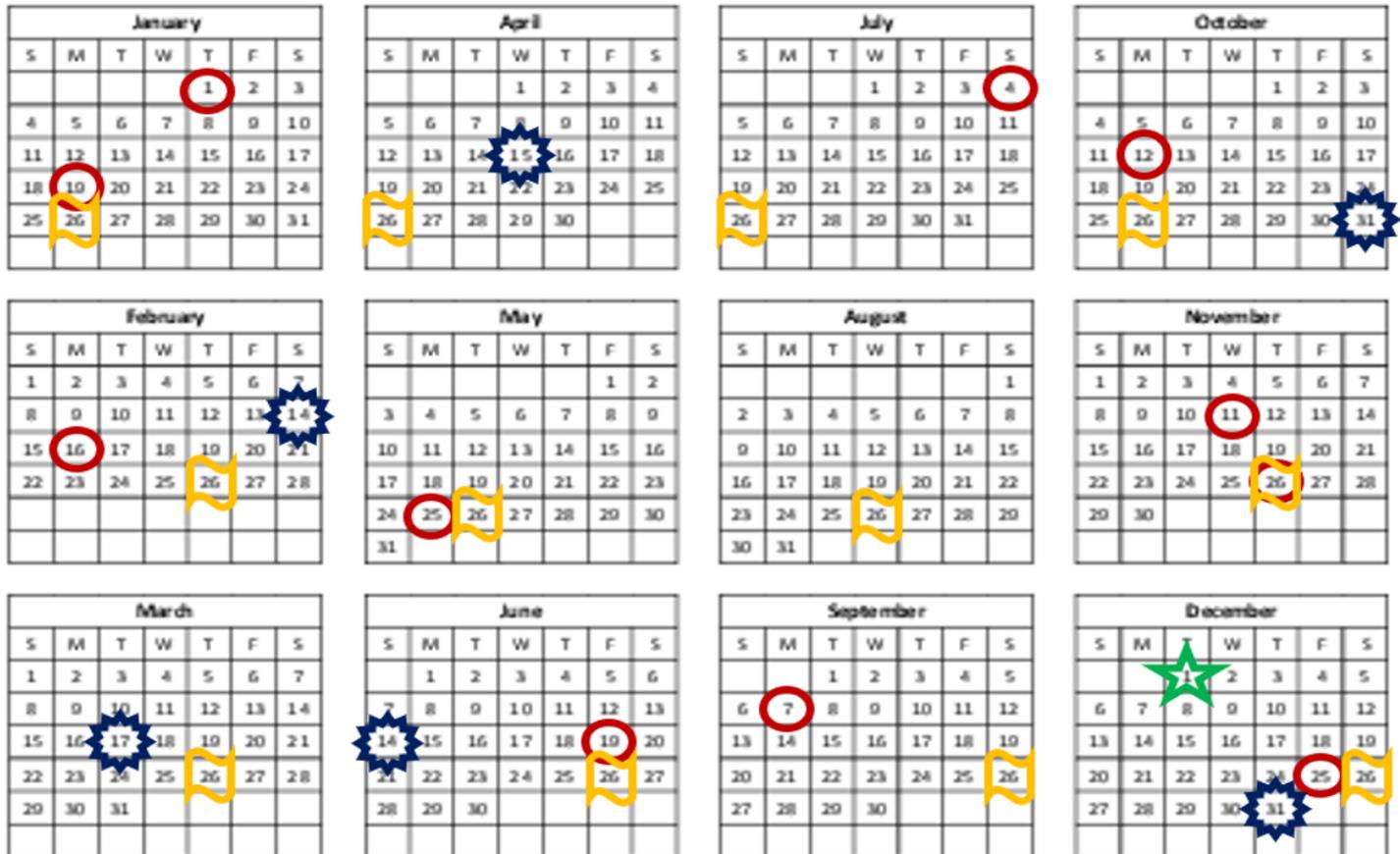
James Snowden



# SHAWN WATSON'S NATIONAL JVC FUND RAISER

## Shawn Watson's

### 2026 Cash Calendar National JVC Fund Raiser



#### PAYOUTS

51 Fridays \$50.00 = \$2,550.00, **(11)** \$300.00 = \$3,300.00,  
**[12]** \$26.00 = \$312.00, **[6]** \$500.00 = \$3,000.00, **[1]** \$1,000.00

Donations are \$10.00 each or 3 for \$20.00

Scan tickets to Larry at [PDCLyons935@gmail.com](mailto:PDCLyons935@gmail.com) and coordinate funds transfer with George at [gbeckjr@gmail.com](mailto:gbeckjr@gmail.com). Email all to both.

**Your tickets are good for all 81 drawings for a total of \$10,162.00!**

**Thank You for Shawn's Support**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Only need to scan bottom portion of this ticket and email to Larry as per above. One for each ticket desired.*

**Help Support Shawn on his bid for VFW National JVC 2028**

# GRAND SEAMY SQUEAKS



**Big Bug**

Patrick "Doc" Higgins



Click each Logo above  
for Websites

The Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) in 2026 focuses on expanding its "[No Veteran Dies Alone](#)" program, maintaining presence in VA facilities with their "[Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White](#)" motto, and increasing participation in events, with a significant 2026 event being the "[Cooties Across Borders](#)" gathering in June in Wisconsin, while also preparing for the re-located 2026 National VFW Convention in Reno in July. As the Honor Degree of the VFW, their 2025-2026 term sees on-going dedication to veteran support through hospital visits and community service, led by their [Grand Line Officers](#).

## Key Activities & Goals for 2026

**[Veteran Support](#):** Continuing to bring smiles and comfort to hospitalized veterans through their "[Keep 'em Smiling](#)" efforts.

• "**No Veteran Dies Alone**": Expanding this crucial program to ensure no veteran dies without companionship.

**Event Participation:** Encouraging members to join local (Pup Tent), state (Grand), and national (Supreme) Cootie events.

## Major 2026 Events

**[Cooties Across Borders](#):** June 26-28, 2026, in Marshfield/Neillsville, Wisconsin.

**[National VFW Convention](#):** Moved from August 14-19 (originally Salt Lake City) to **July 24-30, 2026, in Reno, Nevada.**

## Leadership for 2025-2026

• Grand Commander: Anthony Precie (as of 2025-2026).

Supreme Seam Squirrel (National): Robbie Normand.

## How to Get Involved

Visit the official MOC website: [lotcs.org](http://lotcs.org).

• Check state-specific VFW/MOC sites (like California or Florida) for local details and events.

• Look for updates on the MOC Facebook page.

## PAID ADVERTISEMENT



# DR. NITI NAVANIMITKUL

## MEN'S HEALTH THAILAND

Dr. Niti Navanimitkul stands as a leading authority in men's health in Thailand, combining advanced medical expertise with a patient-centered philosophy. His career reflects a commitment to innovation, education, and holistic care, positioning him as a trusted figure in urology and male wellness.

### Qualifications & Specialized Training

Dr. Niti's journey began at a top Thai university, where he earned his medical degree and discovered his passion for urology. He pursued advanced training in men's health, focusing on reproductive, urinary, and sexual health. His fellowships at renowned institutions equipped him with cutting-edge techniques, particularly in minimally invasive procedures.

### Professional Excellence

As a full-time physician at Bangkok Hospital Pattaya, Dr. Niti collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to address complex cases. His practice emphasizes:

- Penile Prosthesis Surgery: Thailand's foremost specialist, with over 70 successful cases and a 99.99% success rate.
- UroLift for BPH: Performed 50+ cases (Oct 2024–Jan 2025) with a 99.99% success rate, offering rapid recovery.
- ED Solutions: Stem cell therapy, shockwave treatment, and medication.
- Male Infertility: Diagnostic testing and advanced fertility procedures.
- Prostate Care: Screening, BPH management, and cancer prevention.

### Awards & Recognition

Dr. Niti's contributions have earned accolades for patient care, research, and medical education. He actively shares insights at international conferences, driving advancements in men's health across Southeast Asia.

### Holistic Patient Care

Beyond physical treatment, Dr. Niti prioritizes emotional well-being. His approach includes:

- Personalized consultations to address psychological impacts of conditions like ED or infertility.
- Empowering patients through education on preventive health and lifestyle changes.
- Collaborative care models at Bangkok Hospital Pattaya, ensuring comprehensive support.

### Community Advocacy

Dr. Niti champions men's health awareness through public seminars.

**DR. NITI NAVANIMITKUL**  
MEN'S HEALTH THAILAND

*"If Men's Health is Life's Answer: Restoring masculine wellness with compassionate care, tailored to your needs by a team of US-Certified medical specialists with over a decade of experience."*

- Penile Prosthesis Surgeon
- Sexual Dysfunction Specialist
- Water Vapor Therapy (Rezum) Specialist
- Urologist
- UroLift Specialist

**Refer code "VFW"**  
for a one-time free consultation on your first visit.

Offer applies to the doctor's fee only at the first visit.  
Valid until: December 31, 2025.  
Booking at [niti.menshealth@gmail.com](mailto:niti.menshealth@gmail.com)

# LETTER'S OF INTENT 2026-2027 TERM



No one does more for Veterans

## Letter of Intent 2026/2027 for Department Surgeon

Greeting Comrades of the Pacific,

It is my pleasure to accept and run in the next election term for the Department of Pacific Areas, Surgeon. If elected, I look forward to working with the new administration of elected, appointed officers and Comrades.

I earned my eligibility to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars after joining the United States Army in 1977 where I had multiple assignments including a deployment to the Middle East during Desert Shield/Storm before retiring in 2003.

I joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars with Post 1193 in Lawton Oklahoma in 2007 and served as Post Adjutant and served as two time Commander, 2015 and reelected in 2016 for a second term.



I transferred my VFW Membership in 2017 to VFW Post 10216 in Songtan, South Korea. Since then the Post merged and is now Post 8180 and I have been an active member in the post, and the community.

I am currently the Department of Pacific Areas Chaplain 2023-2026. At the District III level, I was elected Chaplain in May 2019 and was reelected in 2020. I am currently District III Chaplain, and Commander of Post 8180. I served as District III Council Member 2023-2025. I have been able to help many Veterans and their families in their times of need and I am willing to expand that now at the Department level.

Besides the VFW I am also a Life Member in the Military Order of the Cootie. Currently I am the Grand of Pacific Areas (GPA) Hide Gimlet (Lil Bug), and Pup Tent & Blanket Bum. I also served as GPA Hospital Chairman, 2024-2025. I am also a Life Member of the VFW National Home along with the Patty Daddy Program that also supports the National Home.

I am fully retired now and willing and able to take on this role and would be honored to serve again, as your Department Surgeon. I thank you for your consideration.

Yours in Comradeship,  
Robert S. Chatman  
VFW Post 8180

# LETTER'S OF INTENT 2026-2027 TERM

Greeting Comrades of the Pacific,

I am announcing my candidacy for term Pacific Areas Department Chaplain.

It is my pleasure to accept and run for a first term as Department of Pacific Areas, Chaplain. If elected, I look forward to working with the new administration of elected officers.

I earned my eligibility to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars after joining the United States Military in 1984. I served in multiple components of the military during that time to include U.S. Naval Reserves, Washington State National Guard, U.S. Navy, U.S. Army Reserves, and the U.S. Army. Where I had multiple overseas assignments including a deployment to the Middle East during Desert Strike and participated with two different units in the Afghanistan Campaign (with 2 Campaign Stars), before retiring in 2020. I have also received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Ribbon (2nd Award), Armed Forces Service Ribbon, and other service/campaign ribbons.



I joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars with Post 1054 in Yokosuka, Japan in 2014. From that time until 2020, I was still on active duty and assigned to Army units in Korea, Arizona, and then I retired out of Kaiserslautern, Germany, at which time I returned home to Japan.

Since my return to Japan, I have served in Post 1054 in various capacities, most recent of which as the Post Commander (2025-26). As well, I have been vary active in District II, in various capicites, most recent of which has been as the District Commander (2024-26).

At the Distict II level I am currently the D2 Commander, and held the same position last year. I am currently the District II Councilman and Post 1054 Post Commander, elect (2025-2026). I am also currently serving as the DPA Scouting Chair. I have been able to help many Veterans and their family members in their times of need and I am willing to expand that now at the Department level.

Besides the VFW I am also a Life Member in the Military Order of the Cootie with Pup Tent 1, Grand of Pacific Areas Hospital Chairman, and a Life Member ith the Patty Daddy Program that also supports the National Home.

Currently, I am workign as a facilitator for the DOL TAP VET progam that facilitates servicements transitioning to civilian life. My company is fully supportive of my work with the VFW. As such, I will have no problems with ensuring I have the time and energy to serve as your Department Chaplain. I thank you for your consideration.

Yours in Comradeship,

Walter Joseph Fahnestock Jr.  
District 2, Commander

# LETTER'S OF INTENT 2026-2027 TERM

## LETTER OF INTENT TERM 2026-2027

**Department Junior Vice Commander**  
**Louis S. Holub EMC (SW) USN ret.**



I am honored to announce my candidacy for the position of Department of Pacific Areas  
**Junior Vice Commander term 2026-2027.**

A Charter Gold Legacy Life member of the All State-All American Banchang Utapao VFW Post 12146, Past All American Dist. V and Post Commander. I am currently District IV Okinawa, Taiwan, Cambodia and Thailand Commander certain to be AS and AA. I have served as DPA Audit Committee Chairman, Assistant QM, Chaplain and Surgeon. Also, the DPA Midwinter Meeting and Convention Chairman and current DPA Council member. Post 12146 Trustee 3year having held all Post and Dist. level Offices and Chairmanships including Honor Guard Member and the annual Golf Tourney Chair donations >10KUSD annually. I have been awarded by DPA and National for my recruitment efforts, National and Special Aid de Camp, awarded the Honor Degree Pup Tent One.

I bring a varied background to this most important JVC position by building on my Departmental experience. My goal while promoting the National and DPA Commanders programs is to continue to advance camaraderie and teamwork amongst DPA Officers, Districts and Posts, along with the Honored Degreed and Auxiliary. I have travelled extensively in and around the Pacific Areas having visited all 9 countries with the goal of understanding the Macro and Micro of the VFW, the Dist. and Post local needs such as medical and insurance needs, FMP, Service Officer Programs, Woman Warrior needs, Transition assistance for Active-Duty Military and continue to support our local DPAA POW-MIA missions.

My Military experience as a Chief Petty Officer USN, qualified Engineer Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> responder, Fire Marshal and my continuing civilian consultancy career a retired Senior Vice President, GM and Emergency Director of major energy companies has exposed me to many unique local, retiree, expatriate challenges which have prepared my competencies and compassion to fulfill the position as Pacific Areas JVC.

Please consider my previous VFW achievements:

VFW Department of New Jersey (at large) & PB 9876	(1996-2014)
Post 9876 Pattaya Beach, District 5 Trustee (appointed)	(2014-2015)
Post 12146 Charter member/QM, Dist. 5 Adjutant	(2015-2016)
AS/AA QM (National Aid de Camp)	
DPA Budget committee member & Dist. 5 QM	(2017-2018)
AS/AA Post Adjutant, National Aid de Camp	
DPA Assistant QM, Dist.5 QM, Post JVC	(2018-2019)
AS/AA Post JVC-Dist. 5 QM	
DPA Audit Chairman, Dist. 5 QM, Post SVC elect/Commander	(2019-2020)
AS/AA Post Commander, Dist. QM	
Dist. 5 Commander, Post JA, National Special Aid de Camp	(2020-2021)
AS/AA Dist. 5 Commander	
Post & Dist. 5 VOD/PP Teachers Chairman	(2017-2021)
Post VOD/PP Teachers & Annual golf tourney Chairman	(2021-2026)
DPA Chaplain, Post VOD/PP Teachers Chairmen	(2022-2023)
DPA Surgeon, Dist. IV Trustee Post VOD/PP Teach Chair	(2023-2025)
DPA Dist. IV Commander, DPA Convention Chairman	(2025-2026)

I ask that you place your confidence in me and I look forward to seeing each of you at the upcoming Department Convention in Pattaya Beach Thailand June 2026.

**Yours in Comradeship and Service to Veterans**  
**Louis Holub**  
**Commander, D4**  
**Convention Chairman 2026-27**

# LETTER'S OF INTENT 2026-2027 TERM

## Letter of Intent for DPA Junior Vice Commander



My name is James E. Collins. I am a member of VFW Robert W. Zaher Post 2485. I am submitting my Letter of Intent as a candidate for the position of Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Pacific Areas (DPA) for the 2026-2027 term.

I enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1974 and retired in October 2004 after 30 years of continuous military service, achieving the rank of Sergeant Major. I graduated from several prestigious schools throughout my career, including the U.S. Army Airborne School, Ranger School, the Special Forces Qualification Course, Pathfinder School, and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. I also earned numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the U.S. Army Meritorious Service Medal (fifth award).

While serving on active duty and fulfilling my military responsibilities, I earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of the State of New York in May 1990. Additionally, I obtained a Master of Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma in May 1998.

After retiring from the military service in 2004, I worked for 10 years as a U.S. military contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing atmospheric and media operations support for U.S. and NATO forces.

My commitment to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is unwavering. Being fully retired allows me to dedicate all my time and efforts to this organization. I have been a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars since 1991. After completely retiring in 2015, I became an active member of Post 2485. In May 2016, I became VFW Post 2485's 100th Legacy Life Gold Member. Since then, I have held several leadership roles and achieved various accomplishments, including:

### **VFW Robert W. Zaher Post 2485, Angeles City**

- Commander (2018-20 and 2022-24)
- 4-Time All-American Commander
- Early Bird Legislative Award (2022-2024)
- Consecutive National Community Service Awards (2022-2024)
- Life Member of the Military Order of the Cootie - Pup Tent 15 Hide Gimlet

### **District VII, Philippines**

- Commander (2022 - 2024)
- All American 2 years consecutively
- Early Bird Legislative Award (2022-2023)

### **Department of Pacific Areas**

- Clark Veterans Cemetery Chairman
- 2024 DPA Convention Chairmen
- POW/MIA Chairmen (2024 - 2025)
- Legacy and Life Membership Chairman (2025 - 2026)

If elected, I pledge to treat all members with respect, prioritize positive motivation over coercion, and honor the viewpoints of every DPA member. My guiding principle will be to make things better.

Yours in Comradeship

James E. (Jim) Collins

# UPCOMING COMMEMORATIVE DATES\*



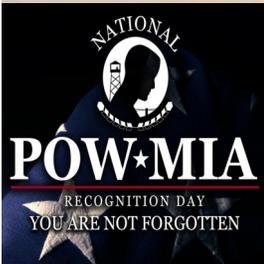
**March 24 - Start of Kosovo Campaign 1999\*** In 1999, once all diplomatic avenues had failed, NATO launched an air campaign to halt the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Kosovo. Operation Allied Force started on 24 March 1999 and was suspended on 10 June, lasting a total of 78 days. On 10 June 1999, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accepted the withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces and the deployment of an effective international civil and security presence.



**March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day\*** On March 29, 1973, combat and combat support units withdrew from South Vietnam. Generations later, Veterans of this time period are gaining the respect that was not so freely given upon their return. Involving five U.S. presidents, crossing nearly two decades and 500,000 U.S. Military personnel, it left an indelible mark on the American psyche. Returning veterans did not always receive respectful welcomes upon their arrival on American soil. Over 58,000 killed, never to return.



**March 31 - End of Operation Restore Hope—Somalia 1995\*** 25 March 1994 Most of the American troops were out of Somalia, ending Operation Continue Hope the follow-on mission to Restore Hope. Only a few hundred marines remained offshore to assist with any noncombatant evacuation mission that might occur in the event violence broke out that necessitated the removal of the over 1,000 U.S. civilians and military advisers remaining as part of the U.S. liaison mission. All UN and U.S. personnel were finally withdrawn almost a year later in March 1995.



**April 9 - National Former POW Recognition Day** It was officially designated by Congress in 1988 as a Presidentially-proclaimed observance. National Former POW Recognition Day commemorates the 9 April 1942 surrender of approximately 10,000 United States military personnel and 65,000 Filipino soldiers on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines by Major General Edward P. King to the invading Imperial Japanese Army headed by General Masaharu Homma. This is the largest surrender in US history. The surrender was followed immediately by the infamous Bataan Death March.



**11 April - Persian Gulf War Official Cease-Fire** On 11 April 1991, less than 90 days after the U.S.-led offensive against Iraq known as Operation Desert Storm began, the United Nations Security Council declared the conditions of Resolution 687 in effect, making the cease fire official and formally ending the Persian Gulf War. The definitive victory elevated the United States as the preeminent global super power and the number one partner of choice for its allies around the world.

## Other Important Dates

3rd Monday in January - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**January 27 - Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)\***

January 31 - Panama Campaign Ended (1990)

**February 15 - Sinking of U.S.S. Maine, 1898\***

**February 28 - Liberation of Kuwait—Operation Desert Storm 1991\***

3rd Monday of February - Presidents' Day

March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day

**\*Posts should arrange special ceremonies and all commanders shall alert comrades to their obligations for the appropriate commemoration date.**

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