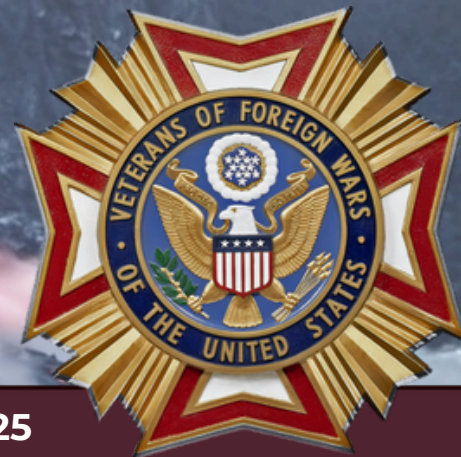




LAVA LEDGER



MARCH 2025

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Fa'afetai ma ia faatasi le Atua!
Ben Fuata Commander
VFW Department of Hawai'i

Message from the Department Commander

Welcome to the March edition of the Lava Ledger! They don't call it "March Madness" for nothing—this month was packed! We kicked things off at the VFW Legislative Conference in D.C., where we also celebrated our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen National awardees. A big shoutout to our legislative liaison, Comrade Jame Schaedel, for coordinating impactful meetings with our Congressional delegation. Thanks to his efforts, we gained critical support for VFW's top priorities—addressing toxic exposure and expanding PACT Act presumptive. In true March spirit, we also honored Women's History Month and International Women's Day by celebrating the service and sacrifices of our female warriors. Their legacy in defending our freedoms is undeniable—and deeply appreciated. This month, we also bid a heartfelt farewell to two giants in veteran care: Dr. Adam Robinson, Executive Director of Tripler/VAPIHCS, and paid tribute to the advocacy of Mr. Ron Han, whose legacy was honored at the Akaka State Veterans Home dedication. We are better because of their leadership and service. Mahalo nui loa!

March's Comrade of the Month is none other than Calvin Sagara of Post 10276—a humble powerhouse who quietly lifts others and strengthens our ohana. From presenting Commander's and membership pins to supporting events and recruiting, Calvin shows us what servant leadership really looks like. Mahalo and congratulations, Comrade Sagara—your example inspires us all. A huge thank you to the Posts that submitted updates this month. Your work highlights the spirit of service alive and well across our islands. Special recognition to:

*Post 10276, for honoring Vietnam Veterans at Punchbowl and participating in the Vietnam Refugee Appreciation Ceremony.

*Posts 12138 & 849 for your Day of Service and flag-folding ceremony at Pearl Harbor.

*Posts 110, 12138, and 10276, for supporting our future leaders through the JROTC programs on O'ahu.

Mahalo for keeping the VFW flame burning strong, grounded in service, tradition, and "Polynesian Pride ~ Where Veterans Matter Most."

NATIONAL WOMEN HISTORY MONTH

Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week. Around 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, each president has issued an annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."



The Origins of National Women's History Month



The iconic Rosie the Riveter is frequently used as a symbol throughout National Women's History Month.
Image: J. Howard Miller, "We Can Do It!," ca. 1942, War Production Coordinating Committee.

"Comrade of the Month"

Post 10276 Comrade Cal Sagara

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii is proud to recognize Comrade Calvin Sagara of VFW Post 10276 as the Comrade of the Month for March in honor of his exceptional leadership, humility, and unwavering commitment to veterans and their families. Throughout March, Comrade Sagara took meaningful initiative to personally engage with and uplift his fellow veterans. He led heartfelt outreach efforts, recognizing comrades for their service and community contributions by presenting membership and Commander's pins—simple yet powerful acts that reinforced our shared values of respect, unity, and appreciation. What truly distinguishes Comrade Sagara is his selfless dedication. He continues to give freely of his time, resources, and energy—not for recognition, but to ensure every veteran feels valued and included. Whether through recruitment, event support, or personal acts of kindness, he leads with integrity and a quiet strength that reflects the spirit of Aloha and Polynesian Pride. Comrade Sagara lives our motto—"Where Veterans Matter Most"—with purpose and passion. His actions throughout the month have strengthened not only Post 10276, but our entire Department. He reminds us all that being a comrade means serving others with heart, humility, and honor. For his outstanding service and steadfast dedication, it is both fitting and well-deserved that we name Comrade Calvin Sagara the VFW Department of Hawaii Comrade of the Month for March. Mahalo and congratulations, Comrade Sagara—your example continues to inspire.



Retirement of VA Director of the Pacific: Vice Admiral (Ret) Robinson

Retirement of Dr. Adam Robinson Director of VAPIHCS

Dr. Robinson was appointed Executive Medical Center Director at the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System August 2020 and on March 2025, Dr. Robinson said farewell to all the Civilians, Contractors, and Health Professionals that serve the Military Veterans for the Pacific Islands.

Dr. Adam M. Robinson, Jr. shared his love, experience, and knowledge with everyone he came in contact with. He served over 30 years as a senior leader in the United States Military Healthcare System, which led to his 2007 confirmation as the 36th Surgeon General of the United States Navy.

Thank you for a Job Well Done!



Honoring the Legacy of Retired Colonel Ronald P. Han Jr.

Akaka State Veterans Home Dedication Ceremony



A special ceremony was held to honor the late Col. Ron Han — a tireless advocate for Hawai'i's Veterans. The Bistro Room was officially named the Ron Han Room, a lasting tribute to his vision, service, and unwavering dedication. This memorialization reflects his deep involvement in the creation of the Veterans Home, often referred to by loved ones as his "baby."

Governor Josh Green proclaimed it Col. Ronald P. Han Jr. Day, and shared heartfelt remarks alongside Major General Stephen F. Logan. Family, friends, and community members gathered to celebrate his life, and share personal stories. A bronze plaque was unveiled by his wife Terry, son Ron III, and daughter Shondie — a permanent reminder of the legacy he leaves behind.

"Aloha in Action"

VFW Department of Hawai'i Post Highlights

Honoring Vietnam Veterans Punchbowl Cemetery



Left to Right: Comrade Ted Hashimoto, Past Post CDR Calvin Sagara, Past State CDR Stan Fernandez and AFJTOTC Cadet from Kaiser High School. VFW Members appeared on both KHNL and KGMB. In addition, Past State CDR Fernandez was interviewed on KGMB about his review about the day's ceremony at Punchbowl.



Post 10276 members presented a wreath honoring Vietnam Veterans at the Ceremony conducted at Punchbowl National Cemetery.



Jessie A. Mahaffey, shown in an undated photo, survived the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and died March 1, 2025, in Louisiana at age 102. (Pacific Historic Parks) Jessie A. Mahaffey, one of the last remaining survivors of the sinking of the USS Oklahoma during the 1941 Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, died March 1 in Alexandria, La. He was 102.

Vietnam Refugee Appreciation ceremony Hawaii State Capital



There was a Vietnam Refugee Appreciation ceremony at the Hawaii State Capitol. In attendance were Governor Green, Mayor Blangiardi, Sergeant Major Kellogg (Medal of Honor recipient) and many other State officials. Bishop Larry Silver offered the opening and closing prayers for the ceremony. Music was provided by The Royal Hawaiian band and refreshments were provided at the conclusion of the ceremony. Warren from VFW Post 2875 and Stan Fernandez from VFW Post 10276 were in attendance to celebrate the special occasion.

VFW Post 12138 and Post 849

"Day of Service"

Flag Folding

Honoring Service, Strengthening Community

Post 849 and Post 12138 and their Chartered Scout Pack, along with parents, participated in a Day of Service at Pearl Harbor National Park. We folded 500 commemorative U.S. flags. Each flag was flown over the USS Arizona in the month of December. Each folded flag was placed in a bag with the date it was flown. The flags will be sold at the Pearl Harbor gift shop, with proceeds supporting the memorial's maintenance, preservation, and educational programs, ensuring the history of Pearl Harbor is preserved for future generations. The National Historic Parks provided snacks, drinks, and lunch for all the participants. Educational, fun, with family and food. Mahalo Nui to the Pacific Historic Park for Hosting our Day of Service and for All you do to preserve our History!!!



Honoring our Future Leaders

Aiea High School



Post 10276 presented Awards on behalf of the VFW to the Aiea High School AFJROTC cadets. The awards were presented by Post Commander Howard Sugai and Youth Coordinator Stan Fernandez honoring four cadets for their Outstanding achievements throughout their 4 years of high school. Congratulations Aiea HS Cadets!!!

Kapolei High School



Post 110 and Post 12138 Commanders were on hand at Kapolei High School to present awards to the Marine Corps JROTC cadets for Outstanding achievements throughout the year. Congratulations to all the Cadets!!!!



LAVA LEDGER ANNOUNCEMENTS

VFW Action Corps:
Sign up now!



The VFW Action Corps is a national grassroots advocacy network of over 300,000 VFW members and supporters dedicated to veterans' issues. They stay informed on challenges facing veterans, the military, and their families, and are ready to take action by contacting lawmakers. Open to all patriotic Americans, the Action Corps is free to join and helps amplify the voices of vet advocates across the country.

Members receive:

- The VFW Action Corps Weekly newsletter, covering advocacy efforts.
- Access to contact information for elected officials nationwide.
- Regular "Action Alerts" to engage when veterans' issues require attention.
- The VFW Action Corps strengthens the VFW's mission to support veterans, working closely with the National Legislative Council in Washington, D.C., to drive change.

Recent legislative victories include:

- The PACT Act, expanding VA healthcare for veterans exposed to toxic substances.
- The SERVICE Act, improving VA mammogram eligibility.
- Reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice on sexual assault and harassment.
- VA's maternity care coordination program for women veterans.
- The PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, providing service dogs for veterans with PTSD.
- Inclusion of bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism as presumptive conditions for herbicide exposure.
- The Deborah Sampson Act, addressing healthcare barriers for women veterans.
- Removal of the 12-year limit on using Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) benefits.

Join the VFW Action Corps today, or encourage others to do so, and be part of the movement making a difference for veterans.

To sign up, visit: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/register>



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ANNOUNCEMENTS IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS:

87th Annual VFW & 66th Auxiliary State Convention

Date: June 12th-15th

Location: Kilauea Military Camp,
Volcano National Park, Big Island For more information
visit: www.vfwhi.org



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Share your upcoming Post events, fundraisers, service projects, and community activities with us to be featured in an upcoming edition of the Lava Ledger. We also welcome summaries of events and photos for publication, so don't hesitate to send them our way!

Email your information to: vfwhawaiiitech66@gmail.com