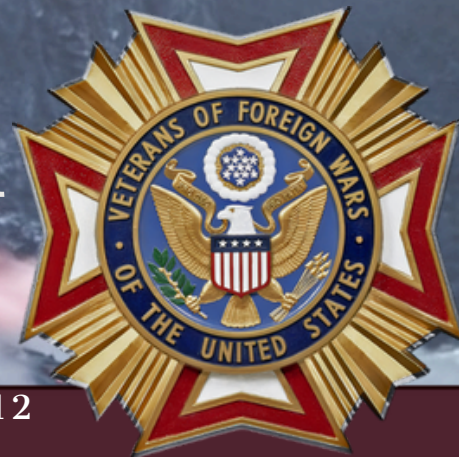




# LAVA LEDGER



MAY 2025, Edition 12

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## Message from the Department Commander

Talofa lava Comrades,

Welcome to the May edition of the Lava Ledger.

May is a special time here in Hawai'i—May Day is Lei Day, when we honor our island traditions by sharing lei, those beautiful circles of aloha that symbolize love, respect, and unity. At the VFW Department of Hawaii, Lei Day reminds us of the strong bonds of 'Ohana that tie together our veterans, families, and communities. This month, we also pause to celebrate Mother's Day, honoring the strength, sacrifice, and unconditional love of the mothers in our lives. A special mahalo goes to our Gold Star Mothers and military spouses—your courage and resilience inspire us all.

As we approach Memorial Day, we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Every fallen hero is a lei in our hearts—never forgotten, always honored. Whether we're laying wreaths, raising flags, or sharing moments of silence, we reaffirm our promise: "No Veteran Left Behind".

I'm proud to spotlight Sr. Vice Commander Jason Seal as our Comrade of the Month. Jason's dedication as both Sr. Vice and Department Service Officer is unmatched. From overseeing daily operations at Tripler and the Akaka Center to supporting service officers statewide—including American Samoa—Jason's leadership is the steady hand behind many successes. His work helped the Department recover over \$14.6 billion in VA benefits for veterans last year alone. Jason's commitment, professionalism, and humble approach make him a true asset to our organization.

Congratulations, Jason—you earned it!

We also want to extend a big mahalo to Posts 3391, 2875, 10276, 12138, and 110 for their ongoing dedication to veterans and their communities. You're the backbone of our department, and your work truly matters and means a lot to me and your members!

As we reflect this May, let's carry forward the aloha, honor, and gratitude that define us as veterans and guardians of freedom.

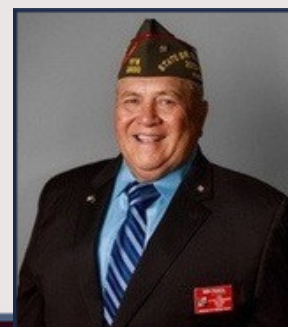
"Polynesian Pride -

Where Veterans Matter Most"

Fa'afetai ma ia fa'atasi le Atua!

Ben Fuata Commander

VFW, Dept. of Hawai'i





In Hawaii, May Day, which is on May 1st, is celebrated as Lei Day. It's a statewide celebration honoring Hawaiian culture, especially the art of lei making. Lei Day is a day to exchange and receive leis, which are garlands of flowers and other natural materials, symbolizing affection, greeting, and the spirit of "Aloha".

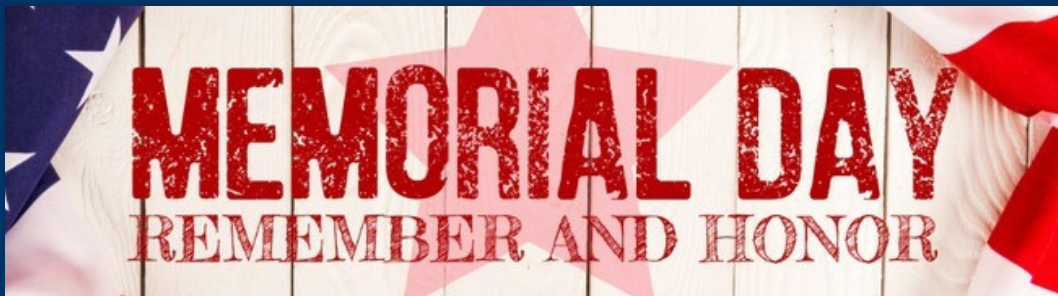
Lei Day began in 1928 to recognize the art and meaning behind lei making. The day includes lei contests, hula performances, and various cultural activities.



**Mahalo to our mothers on Mother's Day!!!**

Mother's Day in the United States is celebrated on the second Sunday of May, with traditions including giving gifts, sending cards, and family dinners. The holiday's origins trace back to Anna Jarvis, who initiated the first formal celebrations in West Virginia and Pennsylvania in 1908. Her goal was to honor her mother, Ann Jarvis, who had died the previous year and dedicated her life to serving others, including soldiers during the Civil War. Anna Jarvis pushed for a national holiday, which President Woodrow Wilson officially declared in 1914.





Memorial Day observed the last Monday of May. The holiday's origins can be traced back to the aftermath of the Civil War, with the first national observance taking place on May 30, 1868. At that time, it was known as Decoration Day, and the primary focus was on decorating the graves of fallen soldiers with flowers. Today, the holiday honors all military personnel who died in service.



Stan Fernandez presents a lei at the WWI Memorial.

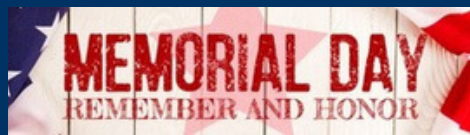


## Department of Hawaii VFW POSTS Honor the Fallen

On this Memorial Day 2025, we pause to honor and remember all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. Their courage, dedication, and sacrifice shall never be forgotten. Each year, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) hold solemn ceremonies at both the World War II and Korean/Vietnam War Memorials on Oahu to pay tribute to our fallen heroes. This year was no exception. Past Department Commander Norbert Enos led the ceremony, joined by Department Chaplain Stan Fernandez and Past Department Commander Randy Grant, who offered reflections honoring all veterans who have passed—from the Revolutionary War to the present day, whether in combat or due to other causes. Though these ceremonies are small, they are deeply meaningful. A dedicated group of members ensures these traditions continue each year, preserving the respect and honor our fallen service members deserve. Both the American Legion and the VFW Department of Hawaii will continue these traditions annually at the same time and locations each Memorial Day.



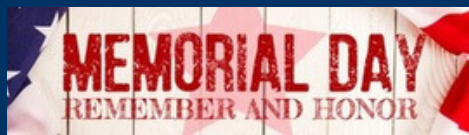




## VFW Post 3391 Amerika Samoa Memorial Day



VFW POST 3391 Commander Malologa Lagai hosted a Memorial Service at the Veterans Affairs Center in Tafuna, American Samoa. Together with the American Samoa Governor Pulaali'i Tuiteleleapaga Iuli Nikolao Pula, they honored their fallen comrades.



## Department of Hawaii VFW POSTS Honor the Fallen



VFW Post gather at Punchbowl during the Memorial Day celebration, honoring all those that gave their lives for our Freedom.



VFW Department of Hawaii Junior Vice Commander Jason Seal honors fallen comrades at the Kaneohe cemetery during the Memorial Day event.



# Comrade of the Month of May: Department of Hawaii Senior Vice CDR Jason Seal



It is with great pride that we recognize Department Senior Vice Commander Jason Seal as our Comrade of the Month—a long-overdue and well-earned recognition for his outstanding contributions to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii.

Comrade Seal has been the dependable cornerstone of our department—consistently leading with humility, precision, and purpose. In his role as Department Service Officer, he has overseen day-to-day operations at both the Tripler Army Medical Center E-Wing and the Daniel K. Akaka VA Community-Based Outpatient Center in Kapolei, while also managing a network of VFW Service Officers across the state—from Honolulu to Hilo and extending out to American Samoa.

His strategic leadership, extensive knowledge of the VA system, and unwavering commitment to our veterans have been instrumental in the Department's success. Under his guidance, the Department Service Office played a pivotal role in the recovery of over \$14.6 billion in VA benefits for veterans in 2024, a record achievement that reflects his tireless advocacy and professionalism.

Beyond his accomplishments, Jason has been a trusted colleague and a true friend to many of us. Working alongside him through the chairs has been an honor, and his loyalty, humility, and selfless service continue to inspire those around him.

Please join us in congratulating Comrade Jason Seal—our Comrade of the Month and a vital part of what makes the Department of Hawaii strong.

Mahalo Nui Loa, Comrade Seal—for all that you do and continue to do for our veterans and our organization.

# “Honoring our Future Leaders” VFW Hawaii POST 2875

During the Month of May the Veterans of Foreign Wars coordinate with their local high school JROTC Leaders to provide certificates for leadership and outstanding achievements during the school year.



VFW Post 2875 Comrade Lynn Gernert provided the Farrington High School JROTC Students with VFW Certificates for outstanding achievements and leadership.



# “Honoring our Future Leaders” VFW Hawaii POST 10276



Post 10276 at Aiea High School last night awarding four VFW Outstanding cadets from the first year through the 4th year. Presenters were Post Commander Howard Sugai and Youth Coordinator Stan Fernandez.

# “Honoring our Future Leaders” VFW Hawaii POST 12138



Kapolei High School, Marine Corps JROTC program that focuses on developing leadership, citizenship, and character education for high school students.

Ewa Beach Post 12138 (Rodney Boucher) and Post 110 (Jason Seal) presented Certificates to four Outstanding cadets for outstanding achievements and outstanding leadership throughout the school year.







# VFW DAY OF SERVICE 2025

Every first Saturday in May the Veterans of Foreign Wars celebrate A Day of Service. The VFW Day of Service is a day set aside for veteran-led local community service events. It is an outgrowth of the VFW's #StillServing initiative that since 2020 has brought recognition to how much U.S. military veterans continue to serve in their communities after they take off their uniform. VFW Day of Service events are community service focused, so whatever Day of Service volunteers identify as a community need and their work to meet it qualifies.

Some examples of community services events include:

- Drives – food, personal hygiene products, diapers
- Home repair
- Highway clean up
- Street / park / cemetery / vacant lot clean up
- Health fairs
- Back pack / snack
- Houseless to home support
- Playground rehab / installation
- Accessibility initiatives

Registering your Post with [VFWDDayofService.org](https://VFWDayofService.org).

# VFW Hawaii POST 2875

## "Day of Service"



VFW Post 2875, Auxiliary, and Ohana came together to support the VFW Post Day of Service. They worked tirelessly to clean up the local areas on Kamehameha Highway and the beaches in Laie, Hawaii. The Team collected about 20 bags of trash. It was truly inspiring to see comrades from Post 2875 and Auxiliary come together and give back to the community in such a meaningful way.





# 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 contact lawmakers. Open to all patriotic Americans, the Action Corps is free to join and helps amplify the voices of

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>



## 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](http://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](mailto:vfwhawaiiitech66@gmail.com)