



LAVA LEDGER



JULY 2025, EDITION 14

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER JASON SEAL

It is with much pleasure as the newly elected Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii that I welcome you to the July 2025 edition of the Lava Ledger. I hope you had an enjoyable 4th of July holiday and were able to take part in the many events commemorating our Independence Day.

First and foremost I would like to begin by acknowledging my predecessor and the outgoing State Commander, Ben Fuata. Undoubtedly, his year in command was a resounding success and through his efforts our Department was awarded All American honors. This hard earned accomplishment has brought acclaim to our State and he has my heartfelt congratulations.

Within this same vein, the Commander in Chief and the Adjutant General have recently decided to alter the policy of determining the designation of the Triple Crown award. As most of us know, to be a recipient of this prestigious honor, one must have earned All American status as a Commander of a Post, a District, and a Department. As the Department of Hawaii does not have internal Districts we have been historically prohibited from receiving this award. Based on this new policy directive deserving comrades from our State are now eligible for the Triple Crown by one of two ways: a) being All American twice as a Post Commander and once as a Department Commander or b) being All American twice as a Department Commander and once as a Post Commander. As such, and based on this new policy being applied retroactively, the following comrades from Hawaii have now earned Triple Crown distinction: Frederic Chang, Stanley Fernandez, Joseph F. Bragg and Benjamin Fuata.

This is indeed quite an honor - not only have they been awarded the Triple Crown but they have also made history as the first recipients of this award in the Department of Hawaii. They will be recognized at this year's National Convention. Bravo Zulu!

General Order #1, Headquarters Bulletin #1, and the Department of Hawaii 2025-2026 All-State Program, Awards and All American Summary have been disseminated. I ask that you review them as they identify my main focuses for the year, list the elected officers and appointees, explain All-State and All-American requirements, and highlight the Post inspection schedule as well as the Department calendar.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be your Department Commander and I look forward to meeting all of you personally as I visit each Post during the upcoming year.





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VFW NEWS

A LIFE OF SERVICE: HONORING THE ENDURING LEGACY OF JOHN HENRY FELIX

BY CHELSEA MACK
VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When the State flags were lowered to half-staff across Hawai'i from sunrise on Tuesday, June 24 to sunset on Thursday, June 26, it was more than a symbolic act of mourning—it was a gesture of deep reverence for a man whose very life was a masterclass in service, valor, and enduring impact. Dr. John Henry Felix, a United States Army Korean War veteran, a proud member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Hawaii, humanitarian, and former Honolulu City Council member, passed away on May 5th at the age of 94. Yet, in every corner of the Hawaiian Islands and with every cause he endorsed, his legacy lives on.

Born in Honolulu in 1930, Felix witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor as a young boy—an experience that would forever shape his devotion to country and community. His accomplishments began early in life: he became a Cub Scout at the age of eight, earned Eagle Scout recognition at 15 and later was honored as Distinguished Eagle Scout.

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But Felix didn't hang up his service uniform when he left active duty. He merely changed it.
”

Drafted into the Army in 1952, Felix served in the infantry during the Korean War. He later continued his service in the 442nd Infantry Reserves and the U.S. Air Force Reserve, where he rose to the rank of Colonel. His military service was not a chapter—it was a cornerstone of his life's mission: to protect, to serve, and to uplift. Advocating for veterans remained a lifelong priority: he led the nationally recognized Jobs for Veterans Task Force under Hawai'i Governors Burns and

Ariyoshi, he was the catalyst in the establishment of the Hawaii State Office of Veterans Affairs, and he also donated 35 acres of prime real estate and a perpetual easement to the State of Hawai'i for the establishment of a Veterans cemetery.

But Felix didn't hang up his service uniform when he left active duty. He merely changed it. His battlefield became the world's most vulnerable regions—from Kalaupapa's Hansen's disease settlement on the island of Moloka'i to refugee camps in Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique. There, he delivered humanitarian aid, built prosthetics factories, and comforted the wounded and displaced with unwavering compassion.

Felix was Chair Emeritus of the Hawai'i Red Cross, founder of multiple Red Cross Societies across the Pacific, and the first American recipient of the International Red Cross Dunant Medal of Honor—one of the organization's highest distinctions. His “Walking Blood Donor” program in the Pacific predated today's mobile blood banks and showcased his signature combination of ingenuity and empathy. President Reagan assigned him the U.S. Representative to the South Pacific Commission where he served four years.

And yet, despite his international acclaim, Felix never lost touch with his local roots. He was active in the scouting movement his whole life, serving in a leadership role as Commissioner, Distinguished Commissioner, and Regent for life. He was also a volunteer leader in the Civil Air Patrol serving three terms as Wing Commander of the Civil Air Patrol Hawaii Wing and earning a first-place ranking among the nation's 52 Air Patrol Wings.



***This article will be published in an upcoming edition of the VFW National Magazine

A LIFE OF SERVICE: HONORING THE ENDURING LEGACY OF JOHN HENRY FELIX

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An institution in Hawai'i's civic and business communities, he served as Chief of Staff to Hawai'i's last territorial governor, William F. Quinn, helping to guide Hawai'i into its first days of statehood. He was later elected to the Honolulu City Council for four terms, serving on every City Council Board and Commission, chairing all but one.

Felix was awarded a Ph.D from Walden University, chaired the Board of Regents at Manchester College, Oxford University for 25 years, while also earning a Masters Degree from Oxford University. He remained actively engaged in the community well into his 90s—driving himself to dialysis, all the while chairing boards like Abilities Unlimited and the Hawaii Medical Assurance Association.

To many of us in the VFW, Felix is a reminder that military service is not just defined by a DD-214. It is defined by a lifetime commitment to the ideals of duty, honor and sacrifice. His combat service may have earned him the uniform, but it was his post-service devotion that made him a local and national treasure.

Hawai'i Governor Josh Green's official flag order said it best: "Few people have lived life that reads more like an epic novel than John Henry Felix... Hawai'i has lost a giant in compassion and public service." The VFW community could not agree more.

Felix is survived by his wife, Sandrine Belanger, his son John "Johnny" Morgan Felix, his daughter Melinda DiCiro, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. But in truth, he is survived by every life he touched, every veteran he honored, and every cause he championed.

May we all aspire to serve with even a fraction of the heart, humility, and honor of Colonel John Henry Felix.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AT PEARL HARBOR

Earlier this month, Department of Hawaii Commander Jason Seal met with CAPT Samuel “Smokey” White, Commanding Officer of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, to present a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii. The gesture recognized CAPT White’s continued support of our mission and his commitment to the service members, veterans, and families under his command.

More than just a courtesy call, this meeting served as a meaningful opportunity to strengthen our relationship with one of the most strategically important commands in the Pacific. Commander Seal and CAPT White discussed several collaborative opportunities aimed at enhancing VFW’s visibility and service efforts on base:

Adopt-a-Unit Program: CAPT White expressed interest in the VFW’s Adopt-a-Unit initiative – a program which facilitates Posts and our Auxiliary connecting directly with active-duty service members and their families. He was grateful that this program offered such support as Yellow Ribbon ceremonies, Family Day celebrations, as well as Deployment support and Welcome Home events.

Retired Activities Office (RAO): The RAO at JBPH-H was identified as a valuable space for coordinating veteran support initiatives. Veterans or Posts seeking to collaborate with the base can connect through this office at (808) 474-0032.

TAP Class Participation: VFW BDD Service Officer Charles Tibbetts already plays a key role in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes, providing crucial support to those separating from service. CAPT White welcomed additional VFW members to join these efforts and further enhance our outreach to transitioning service members.



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He deeply appreciates what we’re doing in
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”

VFW BDD Office Praise: CAPT White gave high marks to the work of Charles Tibbetts and the newly established BDD office, stating he’s received glowing feedback on the services provided. It’s clear that our presence on base is not just appreciated—it’s making a real difference.

Upcoming VFW CINC Visit: Looking ahead, CAPT White offered to host a social hour for our National VFW Commander-in-Chief, Carol Whitmore, during her December visit to Hawaii. He’s eager to support the itinerary and showcase the strong bond between JBPH-H and the VFW.

As Commander Seal summarized: “This was a good meeting and a strong venue for advocacy. The CO sees the VFW as a force multiplier—and he deeply appreciates what we’re doing in support of our veterans and active-duty personnel.”

Mahalo to CAPT White and the entire JBPH-H team for their continued partnership. The Department of Hawaii remains committed to advancing the mission of the VFW, on base and beyond.



DOWN RANGE











POST

MEETINGS



Post 94: Oahu Veteran's Center (OVC), 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every 1st Saturday of the month at 0900 hours.

Post 110: OVC, 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every last Thursday of the month at 1200 hours.

Post 352: First Baptist Church, 1233 California Ave in Wahiawa. Meeting every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1800 hours.

Post 849: Pililaau Army Recreation Center, 86-010 Army St. in Waianae. Meeting every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1800

Post 970: OVC, 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every 2nd Thursday of the month at 1900 hours.

Post 1540: Sacred Hearts Academy Library, 3253 Waialae Ave in Honolulu. Meeting every 1st Wednesday of the month at 1830 hours.

Post 1572: Hawaiian Plantation Village, 94-695 Waipahu St. in Waipahu. Meeting every 1st Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.

Post 2875: OVC, 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every last Saturday of the month at 0930 hours.

Post 3292: OVC, 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every 1st Saturday of the month at 0900 hours.

Post 3391: American Samoa Veterans Memorial, Ottoville Rd. Equator Building in Pago Pago. Meeting every 3rd Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.

Post 3830: Post 3830, 15-775 Maluhia Rd. in Pahoa. Meeting every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1100 hours.

Post 3850: Wilber Tom Post, 1136 Uluniu Rd. in Kihei. Meeting every 1st Saturday of the month at 1300 hours.

Post 3855: Kauai Veterans Center, 3215 Kauai Veterans Memorial Hwy., Ste H in Lihue. Meeting every 4th Wednesday of the month at 1730 hours.

Post 3870: Molokai Veterans Center, 81 Kaunakakai Pl. in Kaunakakai. Meeting every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.

Post 3875: Kamana Senior Center, 127 Kamana St. in Hilo. Meeting every 3rd Saturday of the month at 0900 hours.

Post 8616: Elks Lodge 616, 2933 Kalakaua Ave in Honolulu. Meeting every 1st Saturday of the month at 0945 hours.

Post 10154: The Clipper Club at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, 44-245 Kaneohe Bay Dr. in Kaneohe. Meeting every 3rd Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.

Post 10276: OVC, 1298 Kukila St. in Honolulu. Meeting every 3rd Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.

Post 12122: Kailua-Kona Post, 74-5543 Kaiwi St. in Kailua-Kona. Meeting every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1130 hours.

Post 12138: Barbers Point Bowling Center, 91-1259 Saratoga Ave in Kapolei. Meeting every last Saturday of the month at 1000 hours.



ACTION CORPS



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 veterans' 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 Service 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](https://votervoicenet/vfw/register)



ANNOUNCEMENTS



DEPARTMENT WEBSITE: A CENTRAL RESOURCE FOR ALL MEMBERS

All members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii—including those across the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, and other affiliated territories—are encouraged to utilize the Department's official website as a primary source of information.

The site provides access to essential forms, official communications, program updates, leadership contacts, event calendars, and resources for both Posts and individual members.

To remain informed and mission-ready, please visit:
www.vfwhi.org

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Posts are encouraged to share information regarding upcoming events, fundraisers, service projects, and community outreach activities for inclusion in future editions of the Lava Ledger.

We also welcome event summaries, photographs, and highlights of recent initiatives to help showcase the continued efforts and impact of our membership across the Department.

Please send all submissions to:
chelsea.mack@gmail.com

Content may be edited for clarity and space. Mahalo for helping us share the important work being done throughout the Department of Hawaii and its affiliated Posts.