



# LAVA LEDGER



FEBRUARY 2025, EDITION 8

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## Message from the Department Commander

Welcome to the February edition of the "Lava Ledger". This has been an exceptional month, highlighted by an outstanding Homecoming Celebration. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated VFW Department of Hawaii team whose hard work made this event a resounding success.

A special thank you to Department Auxiliary President Stanford "Taka" Shiroma, whose foresight secured the venue a year in advance. Taka's contributions didn't stop there, coordinated Auxiliary support and provided delicious desserts. Sr. Vice Commander Jason Seal kept the event on track as Master of Ceremonies, ensuring everything went smoothly. Comrades JT Tauau, Rodney Boucher, and Greg Agonoy expertly handled logistics and electronics, while Chief of Staff Randy Grant and George Bartlett offered valuable leadership. Norbert and Gerri ensured the registration process was seamless. Fa'afetai Tele Lava to everyone involved!

I also want to give special appreciation to Comrade Jame Schaedel, our Legislative Liaison, for his leadership during the legislative conference. Jame led our delegation to meet with every member of Hawaii's Congressional delegation, securing support for our VFW Legislative Priorities. His exceptional coordination ensured that our representatives were well-informed and aligned with our mission.

Thanks to Jame's efforts, I had the privilege of attending the Presidential Address to the Joint Session of Congress as a guest of Representative Ed Case. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, including meeting astronaut Scott Kelly, speaking with Representative Al Green, and sitting near Melania Trump, Elon Musk, and Kash Patel. Mahalo Nui Loa, Comrade Jame Schaedel!

Congratulations to Makoa Arnett-Cook, who placed 6th in the National Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program and earned a \$5,000 scholarship. Makoa's dedication and hard work exemplify the excellence we strive for within our community.

Lastly, I proudly recognize Comrade Joshua "JT" Tauau as Comrade of the Month for February. JT's selfless service, loyalty, and mission-focused leadership make him an invaluable asset to our organization. This recognition is long overdue. JT, your dedication has not gone unnoticed, and we deeply appreciate all that you do for our veterans and our organization.

As we continue forward, let's embody the spirit of service, commitment, and excellence that defines the VFW Department of Hawaii. Until next month, stay healthy, positive, and ready to serve those who served us.

Fa'afetai ma ia fa'atasi le Atua!

Ben Fuata  
Commander  
VFW Dept. of Hawai'i



# VFW NATIONAL NEWS

## VFW CONTINUES ADVOCACY FOR UNADDRESSED TOXIC EXPOSURE

\*THIS ARTICLE WAS  
PUBLISHED IN THE JAN/FEB  
2025 EDITION OF THE VFW  
MAGAZINE

### VFW'S WORK RELATED TO MILITARY TOXIC EXPOSURES IS NOT OVER AS MANY HEALTH CONDITIONS STILL NEED TO BE COVERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Honoring Our PACT Act, passed in August 2022, provides veterans who served in countries such as Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq with expanded access to VA health care and earned disability benefits due to exposure to burn pits and other toxic substances. Some consider the PACT Act to be the most significant piece of veteran legislation in history.

But VFW's work on military toxic exposures is not over. The PACT Act was originally intended to address not only health conditions due to burn pit exposure but also it called for VA to continuously research and review conditions related to any toxic exposures from the past, present and future.

However, lawmakers instead included a process that is internal to VA, and advocates have found it to lack transparency, timelines, and input from veteran stakeholders.

VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli said that VFW wants more health conditions related to toxic exposures to be recognized by VA. One of these includes suspected uranium exposure at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2 or Camp Stronghold Freedom) in Uzbekistan. There also was water contamination at Alabama's Fort McClellan and at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

"Despite the abundance of conditions already covered under the PACT Act, veterans continue to report many unaddressed issues tied to toxic exposure," Figlioli said. "The VFW will continue to demand that VA continually updates the presumptive conditions evaluation process."  
VFW IS HERE TO HELP.

In August 2024, VA reported that 333,767 veterans with PACT Act-related symptoms enrolled in VA health care thanks to the law. About 1 million veterans are receiving PACT Act-related disability compensation, according to the department.

VFW urges veterans to visit <https://pactactinfo.org/questionnaire> and answer a few questions to determine eligibility and connect with one of VFW's VA-accredited service officers. Also, services that VFW service officers provide are free to all veterans (members and nonmembers) and families, no matter what. VFW also wants veterans and their families to be aware of predatory companies, known as "claim sharks," that target veterans' earned VA benefits. These companies promise veterans increased disability ratings and expedited claims decisions. Charging fees for initial claims assistance is illegal, and veterans should be aware that they put themselves at risk of committing fraud by working with any unaccredited consultants. Learn more at <https://dontfeedthesharks.org>.

#### MORE TOXIC REFORM IS NEEDED

The Disabled American Veterans and the Military Officers Association of America in September 2024 released a report titled Ending the Wait, that found on average, veterans who were exposed to toxins while in the military wait an average of 34.1 years to receive expanded access to VA health care and earned benefits.

VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Kristina Keenan, who was a consultant for Ending the Wait, said this only highlights the need to establish a more efficient presumptive process for toxic exposure-related health conditions.

"The PACT Act was an historic piece of legislation that primarily addressed dozens of serious illnesses associated with burn pit exposure for Persian Gulf War and Post 9/11 veterans," Keenan said. "The presumptive process established in that legislation is not the robust and transparent model we originally wanted. We will work with VA, Congress, and our partner veteran service organizations to find solutions that will ensure there is a continuous review of toxic exposure conditions for all eras of veterans."

This article is featured in the January/February 2025 issue of VFW magazine, and was written by Dave Spiva, associate editor for VFW magazine.



# VFW POST 12138 COMRADE OF THE MONTH JOSHUA TAUEU

## HONORING JOSHUA "JT" TAUEU: THE RELENTLESS FORCE BEHIND THE MISSION



The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Hawaii proudly recognizes Comrade Joshua "JT" Taueu as the Comrade of the Month for February 2025 for his relentless dedication, exceptional leadership, and unwavering service to veterans and the VFW.

JT is a powerhouse of commitment and integrity—always leading from the front yet never seeking the spotlight.

Renowned as the "Go-To Person" at the department, Comrade JT is loyal, dependable, extremely humble, and consistently exceeds expectations. He ensures that every task he undertakes is ahead of schedule, professionally executed, and delivered with excellence while maintaining his trademark humility and enthusiasm.

As the Post 12138 Service Officer, he plays a pivotal role in guiding veterans through benefits processes, spearheading community outreach initiatives, and ensuring that no veteran is left behind. At the department level, JT serves as a National Aide-De-Camp (FY23-25), Assistant Adjutant, Safety Officer, and IT Coordinator, modernizing VFW operations by streamlining communications, standardizing essential forms, and upgrading audiovisual capabilities for enhanced efficiency.

JT's contributions extend far beyond administration—his impact in community service is profound. He has led and coordinated flag-folding ceremonies at Pearl Harbor, organized the Mauna Ala Royal Mausoleum cleanup with the Hawaiian Civic Club, and actively participated in multiple Post Service Days. During VFW Western Regional Conference 2024, JT served as a key logistics leader, ensuring seamless DPAA visits and delivering outstanding hospitality support, demonstrating his dedication to both national and regional VFW initiatives. He also played a pivotal role in Veterans Day ceremonies at Punchbowl, the WWI and Korean War Memorials, ensuring a dignified tribute to our fallen heroes.

Beyond service events, JT is a driving force in fundraising and veteran welfare advocacy. He was instrumental in organizing Post 849's Bowling Tournament fundraiser, coordinating the donation of 20 Thanksgiving turkeys to the VA Akaka Center, and fostering partnerships to establish monthly food distributions for veterans in need. His leadership was further evident when he represented the VFW at the VA Director's Briefing with Dr. Adam Robinson and participated in the December 7th Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony alongside National Sr. Vice Commander Carol Whitmore.

JT's exceptional leadership, tireless commitment, and profound dedication to veterans and the VFW mission have left an indelible mark on Post 12138 and the Department of Hawaii. His behind-the-scenes efforts drive success, inspire comrades, and reinforce the core values of the VFW. For his outstanding service and unwavering commitment, JT is truly deserving of the VFW Department of Hawaii Comrade of the Month for February 2025!

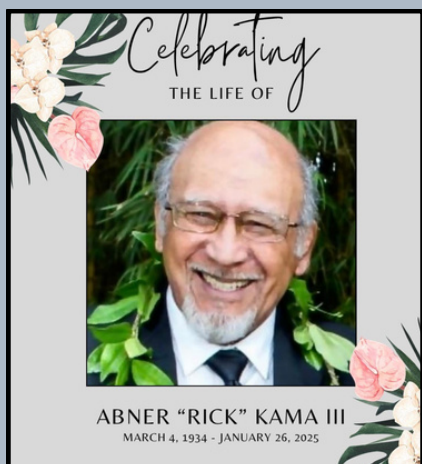




# VFW POST 3830 CELEBRATES THE LIFE OF ABNER "RICK" KAMA



## REST IN PEACE, COMRADE ABNER "RICK" KAMA



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our dear brother and comrade, Rick Kama, who passed away in Idaho, where he and his wife, Jan, moved to be closer to their son, Jason.

A dedicated and long-time Life Member of VFW Post 3830, Rick played a pivotal role in the relocation and redesignation of the Post from Camp Kamehameha on Hickam AFB, Oahu, to its current home in Pāhoā, Hawaii. His service as All-State and All-American Quartermaster for many years was instrumental in the Post's success. Even after moving to Idaho, Rick and Jan's unwavering passion and commitment to the Post and Auxiliary remained strong.

Rick's kindness, leadership, and dedication to our mission will be deeply missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire us.

Our hearts go out to Jan, Jason, and the entire Kama 'Ohana during this difficult time. May they find peace and comfort in the cherished memories of a remarkable man.

We bid Comrade Rick a fond farewell and Aloha 'Oe. May he find clear skies and calm winds as he embarks on his final journey to meet our Lord and Savior, flying with the angels.

A Celebration of Life was held at VFW Post 3830 in Pāhoā on February 22nd at 10 AM.





# VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII: COMMANDER'S HOMECOMING

**Celebrating Leadership: 2024 VFW Department of Hawaii Commander's & Auxiliary President's Homecoming.**

The Department of Hawaii VFW proudly hosted the 2024 Commander's and President's Homecoming Celebration on Friday, February 9, 2024, honoring the dedicated leadership of Benedict Fuata, VFW Department Commander, and Cassie Ale, Auxiliary President.

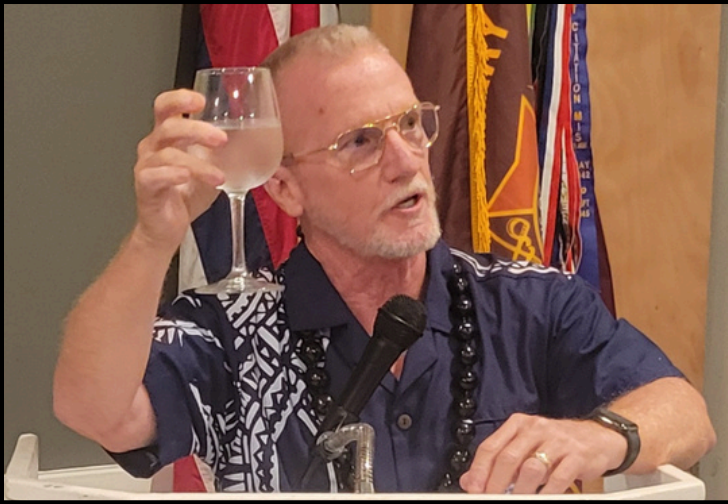
The event took place at Buca di Beppo in Honolulu, where comrades, friends, and supporters gathered to recognize the outstanding service and commitment of our Department Commander and Auxiliary President. From 17:30 to 20:30, attendees enjoyed a night of camaraderie, good food, and heartfelt tributes to those who tirelessly serve our veterans and communities.

This annual tradition highlights the dedication and sacrifices made by our VFW leaders, reinforcing the spirit of service that defines our organization. Mahalo to all who attended and contributed to making this a memorable evening!





# VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII'S COMMANDER'S HOMECOMING





# VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAI'I: VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNERS

## VFW POST 3830



**VOD Awardee: Olga Lehua Arianoff**

## VFW POST 110



**VOD Awardee: Maddison Miyasato**

## VFW Department of Hawai'i



**National VOD 6th Place Finisher: Makoa Arnett-Cook**



# VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII: VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNERS







# 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 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.net/vfw/register)





# LAVA LEDGER ANNOUNCEMENTS



## IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS:

**87th Annual VFW & 66th Auxiliary State Convention**

**Date: June 12th-16th**

**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:  
[chelsea.mack@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.mack@gmail.com)





# **87th VFW & 66th AUXILIARY STATE of HAWAI'I CONVENTION KILAUEA MILITARY CAMP**



**JUNE 12-15, 2025  
KILAUEA MILITARY CAMP  
99-252 CRATER RIM DRIVE  
HAWAI'I VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, HI 96718**





**87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION**



**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**Wednesday, June 11, 2025**

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION**

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Early Bird Registration TBD

**ROOM**

**Thursday, June 12, 2025**

12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

**ARRIVAL DAY**

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Registration

Hospitality Room Open

TBD

TBD

**Friday, June 13, 2025**

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. 9:00

a.m. – 10:00 a.m. 10:30

a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 12:00

p.m. – 1:00 p.m. 1:15 p.m.

– 4:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. –

Pau

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Registration

Joint Opening Ceremony

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Business Sessions

Lunch

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Business Sessions

Hospitality Room Open

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

**Saturday, June 14, 2025**

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. 9:30

~~a.m. – 10:30 a.m.~~ 10:30

a.m. – 12:00 a.m. 12:00

p.m. – 1:00 p.m. 1:15 p.m.

– 2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m. –

Pau 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. 6:30

p.m. – 9:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

– Pau

Joint Memorial Service

Joint Session

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Business Sessions

Lunch

VFW and Auxiliary Convention Business Sessions

Council of Administration

Hospitality Room Open

Social Hour

Aloha & Awards Banquet

Hospitality Room Open

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

**Sunday, June 15, 2025**

**DEPARTURES ALL DAY**

**\*Meeting Places and Times are subject to Change**





87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION



**\*\*ATTENTION VFW AND AUXILIARY MEMBERS\*\***

**ROOM RESERVATIONS**

The room reservation block for the 2025 Department of Hawai'i – Veterans of Foreign Wars and Auxiliary State Convention at KMC has limited availability. A reminder was sent to members in June 2024 to book early.

Reservation lines are now open, and rooms are still available. **However, the room reservation block will be released on February 28, 2025.** To guarantee your room, please call or book online today, and mention that you are with Veterans of Foreign Wars Hawai'i (VFW-HI). While we still have blocked rooms for our members, reservations must be confirmed ASAP!

Kilauea Military Camp (KMC) is located 4,000 feet above sea level within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, offering 90 accommodations including 1, 2, and 3-bedroom cottages and apartments, fully equipped for your comfort.

In addition to the convention and planned activities, KMC provides various amenities such as an arcade game room, bowling, bike rentals, and live music. You can also explore the active Kilauea Volcano, from its majestic crater to the hardened lava riverbeds leading to the ocean.

Rates are exempt from the 11% Hawai'i State excise and hotel taxes.

**\*\*Reservations\*\***

- Phone: 808-967-8333 or 808-967-8335
- Email: [usarmy.kmc-reservations@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.kmc-reservations@mail.mil)
- Website: <http://www.KilaueaMilitaryCamp.com>

**\*\*Cancellation Policy\*\***

Your one-night deposit is refundable if cancellation is received at least 30 days prior to your arrival date. Any changes to arrival or departure dates must also be made before this 30-day period to avoid forfeiting the deposit.





87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION



## ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FORM

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Post #: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Post #: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Driving ☐ Flying ☐ Airline/Flight Number: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Registration Includes:

- Swag Bag
- Friday Joint Opening Ceremony
- Friday Lunch
- Saturday Lunch
- Saturday Banquet
- Banquet Entertainment
- Hospitality Room on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Evenings

**Conference Registration Fee: \$200.00 per Attendee**

**Registration must be received by June 1, 2025**

**Read the Fine Print: Print a copy of this package for your files. Send your saved copy as an attachment to the following e-mails: George Barlett, VFW Department of Hawai'i, Adjutant [vfwhawaii@yahoo.com](mailto:vfwhawaii@yahoo.com), and Norbert Enos, VFW Department of Hawai'i, Quartermaster [vfwhhaq@aol.com](mailto:vfwhhaq@aol.com).**





**87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION**



**DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION AD REQUEST**

All ads and payments must be received by **June 1, 2025**.

Prices are as follows:

Full Page \$150.00 ☐

Half Page \$100.00 ☐

Amount Due: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide the following information:**

**Sponsor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Graphics provided for Ad (Check One):** ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**(Attach Graphics Electronically or Mail with Payment)**

Ads can be e-mailed to Department Adjutant at [vfwhawaii@yahoo.com](mailto:vfwhawaii@yahoo.com) or mailed to:

Department of Hawaii Convention Ad  
438 Hobron Lane, Suite 407  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815





87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION



## SUMMARY AND PAYMENT

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Post#: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Post#: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Ad - Sponsor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Page: ☐ Half Page: ☐ Graphics Provided: Yes ☐ No ☐

Registration Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ Ad Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ Donations: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by check, make check payable to: VFW Department of Hawai'i

Credit Card: Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ AMEX ☐

Name (as it appears on the card): \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address for Card: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by check or credit card, please print and return this page to:

VFW Dept. of Hawai'i Quartermaster \_\_\_\_\_

438 Hobron Lane, Suite 407

Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

**SEE NEXT  
PAGE FOR  
ONLINE  
PAYMENT  
INFORMATION**





87TH VFW AND 66TH VFW AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII CONVENTION



## ONLINE PAYMENT INFORMATION

The Department of Hawai'i is utilizing Clover to accept online payments. Clover is a safe and trusted third-party payment processor used by many small business owners, including many restaurants and doctors.

**READ THE FINE PRINT:** After remitting your payment on Clover, please copy your confirmation code/payment ID and provide it on this form below. Remit this form in addition to the form to the address on the previous page so the department can match payments to registrations. A receipt will be e-mailed to you. Please retain the receipt.

Click on the link below to remit convention and ad fees to the department:

<https://link.clover.com/urlshortener/qLjHpf>

All ads and payments must be received by **June 1, 2025.**

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Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Post#: \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

CLOVER CONFIRMATION CODE/PAYMENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

**AGAIN, please remit this form in addition to the form on the previous page so the department can match your payment to your registration.**