



LAVA LEDGER

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Talofa Comrades,

Welcome to the November edition of the "Lava Ledger". This month we united to honor Veterans Day with ceremonies across Hawaii, including at the WWII Memorial in Honolulu, the Korean/Vietnam Memorial at the Capitol, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the World War I Memorial at the Natatorium in Waikiki, and various Veterans Cemeteries on the outer islands.

Special recognition goes to Comrades George Bartlett and Randy Grant for their leadership in the November 2024 Adjutant and Quartermaster training, enhancing our operational readiness.

Our "Comrade of the Month" is Duane Albrecht of VFW Post 3830, who, as Post Quartermaster, dedicates significant time to maintenance and other essential duties.

We also commend Richard Bartlett for outstanding contribution in providing veteran disability claims support. Together with the rest of the VFW Department of the Hawaii Department Service Officer, they played a pivotal role in contributing to the VFW's recovery of over \$14.6 billion in compensatory awards, surpassing last year's \$11.2 billion.

Thank you for submitting the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher Award entries by the end of November. We anticipate strong contenders from Hawaii for national recognition.

Until next month, stay healthy, positive, and ready to support fellow veterans.

Fa'afetai ma ia faatasi
le Atua,

Ben Fuata
Commander
VFW Dept. of Hawai'i



VFW NATIONAL NEWS

THIS YEAR OUR FOCUS IS ON COURAGE

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
AL LIPPHARDT

The following is an excerpt of VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt's acceptance speech at VFW's 125th National Convention in Louisville, Ky.

It is my custom when I speak to groups like yourselves, that I want five Vietnam veterans to join me: Pvt. Lewis Sloan, Cpl. Kenneth Adams, Cpl. Philip Adams, Pfc. Robert Waddell and Cpl. Rodney Loatman. But they can't. Their names are inscribed on the Wall in Washington, D.C., but forever living in my heart. These men served under my command when they paid the ultimate price for freedom.

I promised myself that I would honor their service and sacrifice by saying their names whenever I had the opportunity. No greater love hath a man than to lay down his life for another.

You elected me to lead this organization in accordance with VFW's National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Lead I shall.

This year, our focus at all levels is on courage. Your courage is undeniable.

Many of our soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen perceive they are but pawns to be used over and over in this Global War on Terror. Even more dangerous to this nation is the failure of its leaders to keep the promises they made to those ordered to place their bodies between the weapons of our enemies and these shores. Slowness to grant health care and service-connected disabilities is only one part of this failure.

Credibility also is known as integrity. You can only claim one element that belongs to no one else, and that is your word. Of the values we learned — loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, honor and personal courage — none is more important than integrity.

If your word is not to be trusted, everything and anything you do is unreliable. You can't be called on nor can you be counted on. There is no place in the Veterans of Foreign Wars for these individuals.

When you talk about members of the VFW, you are talking about our nation's heroes and warriors, of men and women who would sacrifice all to keep our loved ones safe and secure in accordance with our Constitution, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with inalienable rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Evil exists and it cannot be appeased, reasoned with or converted. Evil is, and there is only one way to eliminate it, and that is to destroy it wherever it appears. Like many of you in this room, I have seen the face of evil.

My ask is for you to embrace the vision of courage. Rekindle the warrior's fire in your belly. Put that vision into action. I am proud to lead you, as together, we seek the courage to be the best we can be in all things and at all times.

God bless you, the VFW, its Auxiliaries, and God bless the United States of America. Follow me.

Thank you.

VFW DEPARTMENT OF HAWAII RECOGNIZES COMRADES GEORGE BARTLETT AND RANDY GRANT

RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE: GEORGE BARLETT AND RANDY GRANT NAMED DEPARTMENT COMRADES OF THE MONTH FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING CONTRIBUTIONS



Congratulations to George Barlett and Randy Grant.

On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Hawaii, I am honored to extend heartfelt congratulations to George Barlett and Randy Grant for being recognized as the “Comrades of the Month” for the Month of November due to their exceptional contributions to our organization.

Your leadership and expertise in planning, coordinating, and conducting the November 2024 Adjutant and Quartermaster training for the respective VFW Posts have set a new standard of excellence. By addressing the department's and posts' specific needs, you effectively incorporated critical lessons learned from the comprehensive post inspections conducted throughout 2024. This training not only enhanced operational readiness but also ensured that each post is better equipped to fulfill its mission.

Despite the timing of the training being later in the VFW 2024–2025 year, your decision to align it with upcoming elections demonstrated strategic insight and proved invaluable to all participating posts. The training's relevance and timeliness prepared our members to meet future challenges with confidence and competence.

Your instrumental efforts in revamping the Inspection Program have further strengthened our department's foundation. By ensuring that all posts uphold National standards and providing constructive, actionable feedback, you have empowered posts to address discrepancies with reasonable time and resources. This proactive approach has not only enhanced accountability but also fostered a culture of continuous improvement within our organization.

Moreover, your ability to tailor post training sessions to address specific questions—with appropriately selected topics, schedules, and locations—has created invaluable opportunities for growth and collaboration. Your dedication to ensuring that every post receives the tools and knowledge necessary for success has significantly improved our department's readiness and operational standards.

George and Randy, your hard work, vision, and unwavering commitment to the core values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have left a lasting impact on our department, posts, and veterans. Our organization is stronger and more unified because of your efforts.

Mahalo Nui Loa for your tireless dedication and all that you continue to do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Hawaii. Your exemplary service inspires us all.



VFW POST 3830 COMRADE OF THE MONTH

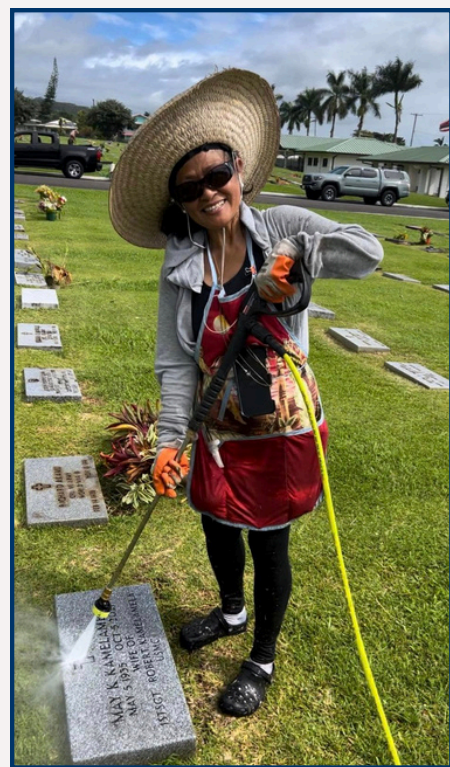
COMRADE DUANE ALBRECHT – DEDICATED SERVICE ABOVE SELF

VFW Post 3830 is proud to recognize Comrade Duane Albrecht as our Comrade of the Month. For years, Comrade Albrecht has been a cornerstone of our Post, embodying the very best of what it means to serve with honor, dedication, and reliability.

As our Post's Quartermaster, Comrade Albrecht ensures that our operations run smoothly, but his contributions extend far beyond the duties of his title. He is the first to volunteer for any project or event, always ready to lend a helping hand and support those in need. Whether it's organizing events, providing logistical support, or simply being a steady presence, Comrade Albrecht's commitment has been vital to the success of our Post.

His tireless efforts are matched by the unwavering support of his wife, Cecelia. Cecelia is not only his dedicated partner but also a remarkable contributor to our Post's service projects and events. Together, Duane and Cecelia exemplify the spirit of selfless service, strengthening our mission and fostering a true sense of community. Their teamwork and dedication inspire us all, and we are deeply grateful for their impact on the Post.

The importance of Comrade Albrecht's efforts cannot be overstated. Quite simply, VFW Post 3830 would not be what it is today without his leadership and commitment. On behalf of the entire Post, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Duane and Cecelia for everything they do to support our mission and our members. Thank you for your service, dedication, and the example you set for us all.



I HIGHLY RECOMMEND VFW SERVICE OFFICERS

After 26 years in the military, veteran Mary Maier, 73, lives in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. She joined the Army in 1973 when it began opening to women and served as a military police officer. Maier retired as a colonel after serving as a brigade commander at Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg) in North Carolina.

"I found that I truly loved serving in the military and being a military police officer," Maier said.

While at Fort Liberty, Maier sustained repetitive injuries during her airborne assignments. She has undergone a knee replacement, knee surgeries and three back surgeries, one of which was to replace two discs in her neck. Maier also had cancer due to burn pit exposure in the first Gulf War.

"I've always enjoyed physical activity, but needed to cut back. I had seven major surgeries that required my family to help with my recovery. It's also reduced our ability to travel and do many of the things we planned for my retirement," Maier said.

VFW Accredited Service Officer Richard Barlett helped Maier with her VA claim by providing thorough explanations of the claims process and her service-connected injuries. He also provided advice on how to proceed with the claim, including how to gather evidence and what to expect from the exams.



Maier retired with a 40% rating. With Barlett's assistance, her rating increased to 90%, with one outstanding issue to resolve. "The paperwork for a VA claim is extensive and daunting if you have not worked with it before. Richard, along with others in his office, talked me through each of my conditions," she said.

For veterans in a similar situation, Maier believes that a good VFW accredited service officer can make all the difference when filing a claim. "The VFW's [accredited] service officers were absolutely knowledgeable and professional. I highly recommend them."

If you or someone you know have questions or need assistance with the claims process, please visit vfw.org/NVS to find a service officer in your area. The service is FREE OF CHARGE

VFW SALUTES HEROES AT PUNCHBOWL VETERANS DAY CEREMONY



The pristine grounds of the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, or Punchbowl, was home to this year's Veterans Day ceremony. Comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) joined people from the community to honor those who served. The ceremony, held every year in Oahu, was an opportunity to unite military families, local dignitaries, and veterans from around the islands to recognize the courage and sacrifice of America's service members.



VETERANS DAY ACROSS HAWAI'I



VETERANS DAY ACROSS HAWAI'I



DOD IMPROVES INSTALLATION ACCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS

The Department of Defense (DOD) in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today an improved installation access process for veterans and caregivers eligible for medical appointments, shopping at commissaries and exchanges, and taking advantage of certain morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) services. Veteran and caregiver eligibility will now be electronically verified during the installation access process.

Eligible veterans who do not have a VA-issued Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC), as well as eligible caregivers, can enroll for installation access at the visitor center using their REAL ID Act-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card. Starting November 1, 2024, Veterans without a VHIC, as well as eligible caregivers, no longer need to present a VA-issued caregiver patronage letter, VA-issued service-connected disability letter, or VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A to enroll for installation access.

Eligible Veterans who do not have a VHIC, as well as eligible caregivers, will still need to provide a copy of their VA-issued caregiver patronage letter, VA-issued service-connected disability letter, or VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A to show eligibility at the commissary, exchange, or authorized MWR services, since these facilities cannot electronically verify eligibility. Currently — for purposes of MWR, commissary, and exchange shopping — eligible caregivers are those who are approved and designated as a primary family caregiver of an eligible Veteran under VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

"Our veterans and their caregivers deserve a smooth experience in accessing installations," said Ashish S. Vazirani, who is performing the duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. "We are glad to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs on this initiative and look forward to continuing to welcome eligible veterans and VA caregivers to military exchanges and commissaries, and at eligible facilities like golf courses, movie theaters and clubs."

The VA-DoD partnership will make it easier for our nation's veterans and their caregivers to more easily access benefits and services on military installations, including VA medical appointments," said Tanya Bradsher, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

To enroll for reoccurring installation access, individuals must visit each installation's visitor center. As with all individuals seeking installation access, eligible veterans and caregivers must establish identity, fitness, and purpose on their first visit to each DOD installation by stopping at the installation visitor center, where they will:

- (1) Present an acceptable credential (VHIC or REAL ID) to establish identity;
- (2) Undergo an on-the-spot criminal record and terrorism check to establish fitness; and
- (3) Have their eligibility for on-installation benefits verified electronically, to establish purpose. If your purpose is for health care, and the DOD installation doesn't have a commissary, exchange, or authorized MWR service, then proof of appointment will need to be provided.

Once a VHIC or REAL ID is enrolled for recurring access at an installation, at future visits the eligible patron can go directly to the installation gate and present the same VHIC or REAL ID enrolled at the visitor center to gain access. Enrollment is typically valid for one to three years, or one year after the last visit to the installation. If a patron's VHIC or REAL ID expires, they will need to reenroll with their new VHIC or REAL ID. The termination of eligibility under the Patronage Expansion Act will automatically result in the termination of installation access enrollment.

For more information visit, www.militaryonesource.mil.

About Military Community and Family Policy

Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for establishing and overseeing quality of life policies and programs that help our service members, their families and survivors be well and mission ready. Military OneSource is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of the 5.2 million service members and immediate family members of the military community. These DOD services can be accessed 24/7/365 around the world.



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



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