



LAVA LEDGER



JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026, EDITION 17

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER JASON SEAL

Aloha Comrades and Friends,

As we move forward into this new year, I'm proud to share that the VFW Department of Hawaii has had an incredibly successful and impactful few months. Our focus has remained steadfast on serving those who served—especially our fellow veterans on the island of Maui who continue to rebuild in the wake of the devastating Lahaina Fires.

Through generous financial contributions and hands-on support, we've stood shoulder-to-shoulder with those affected, providing much-needed relief. Equally important, our accredited Service Officers have been on the ground assisting veterans with their VA disability claims, helping ensure they receive the full benefits they've earned through their service.

We also wrapped up a highly successful Mid-Winter Conference, where we were honored to host the Junior Vice Commander in Chief. The event brought together our Council of Administration for important discussions and planning, while we celebrated our outstanding youth participants by awarding scholarships and recognitions to the Department winners of the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy contests. These young voices remind us why we do this work—preserving the values of democracy and patriotism for future generations.

The Department of Hawaii remains fully committed to supporting our local communities and the veterans across our islands. Whether through disaster response, claims assistance, youth education programs, or everyday fellowship, we continue to honor the contract we made with those who answered the call to serve.

Mahalo for your dedication and continued membership. Together, we keep the mission strong.

In service,
Jason Seal, Commander





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HEALTH REMINDER

Comrades,

Cardiovascular disease remains a leading health concern for veterans and the broader American population. The February 2026 Surgeon's Report from VFW Post 2875 focuses on two critical areas: cardiac rehabilitation and heart failure awareness.

Cardiac rehabilitation is a medically supervised program designed for individuals recovering from:

- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Angioplasty
- Heart surgery

The program consists of three integrated components:

- Exercise training and counseling to strengthen the cardiovascular system
- Education for heart-healthy living, including risk factor management and nutrition
- Stress reduction counseling, recognizing the impact of chronic stress on heart health

Cardiac rehabilitation does not reverse prior damage but plays a significant role in improving long-term cardiovascular outcomes and reducing future risk.

Early recognition and rapid response are critical. Warning signs of heart attack include:

- Chest discomfort (pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain)
- Pain in arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness

Warning signs of stroke include sudden:

- Facial drooping
- Arm weakness
- Speech difficulty
- Vision problems
- Severe headache

The F.A.S.T. acronym (Face, Arm, Speech, Time) serves as a rapid assessment tool. Immediate activation of emergency services (911) significantly improves outcomes.

Managing Heart Failure Effectively includes key management strategies:

- Dietary control, particularly limiting sodium and fluid intake
- Structured exercise, potentially including cardiac rehabilitation programs
- Daily weight monitoring, reporting gains of 2–3 lbs in 24 hours or 5 lbs in one week
- Medication adherence and active engagement in care

Empowered patients who actively participate in their care demonstrate improved management and early detection of complications.

VFW NEWS

THANK YOU, GULF WAR VETERANS

THIS IS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, CAROL WHITMORE'S, MESSAGE FROM THE MOST RECENT EDITION OF THE VFW NATIONAL MAGAZINE

The 35th anniversary of the Gulf War, also known as Operation Desert Storm, occurs this January. Thank you to all our VFW members and veterans who served in that swift and decisive conflict.

Nearly 700,000 U.S. troops served in the theater of operations during Desert Storm and its predecessor, Operation Desert Shield. All military services participated, and every soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, and Coast Guardsman contributed in his or her own way.

In the 35 years since the war, VFW has passionately supported Gulf War veterans. We donated \$500,000 — more than any other veterans service organization — to build a Gulf War memorial in Washington, D.C. The VFW is adamant about properly recognizing the 146 uniformed Americans who died of hostile causes, the 235 who died of non-hostile causes, and the 467 who were wounded in Desert Storm/Desert Shield.

“ I encourage all Gulf War veterans to seek the free help of an accredited VFW service officer who can help file a claim for benefits provided by the PACT Act.

We also have been at the forefront of caring for Gulf War veterans. In 2022, the VFW was instrumental in getting the PACT Act approved. This monumental legislation provides real help in the form of VA compensation and benefits to generations of veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances during their service.

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Now, veterans who served in the Gulf War theater after Aug. 2, 1990 (the start of Desert Shield) are eligible for VA health care without needing to prove a service-connected disability. The PACT Act also adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures, including various cancers and respiratory diseases.

I encourage all Gulf War veterans to seek the free help of an accredited VFW service officer who can help file a claim for benefits provided by the PACT Act.

The Gulf War veterans' struggle to find the cause of their many mysterious ailments was a main reason for the enactment of the PACT Act, and a recent development could help solve that mystery. On Oct. 1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved a diagnostic code for Gulf War Illness.

The Gulf War showed what the U.S. military could achieve with a clear purpose and the cooperation of coalition forces.

Our troops freed Kuwait, protected Saudi Arabia, and drove Saddam Hussein's forces back to Baghdad in quick order. The U.S. goals were clear, and our troops achieved them on schedule. We are proud of our fellow VFW members who served in the Gulf War and salute them for a job well done.



THE WALL THAT HEALS TRAVELS TO OAHU



In January 2026, O'ahu stood in solemn reflection as The Wall That Heals (TWTH) arrived at the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu in Kapolei. The 375-foot, three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., opened to the public 24 hours a day, offering veterans, families, students, and community members a powerful opportunity to honor the sacrifices of those who served during the Vietnam War.

This marked the first time TWTH was exhibited on O'ahu. The memorial previously visited Hawai'i in January 2024, drawing thousands of viewers in Hilo on the Big Island, after which it was displayed in Wailuku in Maui. Its return to the islands reflects both the deep military heritage of our state and the enduring need for remembrance and healing.

TWTH bears the names of 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. Among them are 278 sons and daughters of Hawai'i. Local service members who never came home. For many families, seeing those names etched into black granite, even in replica form, brings a profound and personal connection to history.

The exhibit included not only the Wall itself, arranged in its iconic chevron shape, but also a mobile Education Center featuring photographs of fallen service members, historical displays, and stories that remind visitors the Vietnam War was not an abstract chapter in a textbook.

Since its debut in 1996, TWTH has traveled to nearly 800 communities across the country. It is managed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the nonprofit organization that built the memorial in Washington, D.C. The mission remains clear: bring the healing power of The Wall to those who may never have the opportunity to visit the nation's capital.



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Rarely does one find a family in Hawai'i untouched by military service. The presence of The Wall on O'ahu was more than an exhibit; it was a reminder that remembrance is a living responsibility. Healing does not happen once. It happens in moments. In gatherings. In quiet reflection at 2 a.m. under the stars, when someone stands alone before a name.

TWTH came to O'ahu, but what it truly delivered was connection, across generations, across communities, across time.

And for those few January days in Kapolei, Hawai'i stood still long enough to remember.



QUILT OF VALOR PRESENTED TO RALPH E. MOORE AT PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM

On September 26, 2025, under clear skies and overlooking the deep blue waters of Pearl Harbor, retired U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Ralph E. Moore was presented with a Quilt of Valor at the Missing Man Monument aboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The setting itself carried meaning. The Missing Man Monument stands as a solemn reminder of those who never returned. It was there, in that sacred space, that Moore, a Korea and Vietnam veteran with more than 27 years of service in the United States Air Force, was wrapped in recognition for his own decades of dedication.

The ceremony was the result of seven months of coordination between Moore's daughter, Denise Honeycutt of Texas, and Sue Laufer, Quilt of Valor Foundation State of Hawai'i Coordinator, alongside her husband Jack Laufer. What began as careful planning across state lines became a deeply personal moment of honor.

Moore, who served as Commander of VFW Post 970 from 1999 to 2005 and held multiple leadership roles over the years, believed he was simply attending a small gathering with his daughters and wife. Instead, he was met by fellow comrades from VFW Post 970 and VFW Post 10154, along with Navy representatives and members of the Quilt of Valor Committee.

For a veteran who dedicated nearly three decades to the Air Force, and years beyond that to serving fellow veterans, the surprise carried the unmistakable power of brotherhood.

The Quilt of Valor Foundation honors service members and veterans touched by war with handmade quilts symbolizing comfort, healing, and gratitude. In Hawai'i, as anywhere, those ceremonies are never merely symbolic. They are tangible acknowledgments of sacrifice.

The presentation concluded Hawaiian style, with fragrant, colorful leis draped across Moore's shoulders, a gesture of aloha layered atop military respect.



QUILT OF VALOR PRESENTED TO RALPH E. MOORE AT PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM

For Denise Honeycutt, a reporter and Auxiliary Chaplain to VFW Post 10429 in Benbrook, Texas, the moment was deeply personal. A self-described military brat who lived in nine different homes and attended twelve different schools, she understands the quiet sacrifices made not only by service members, but by their families.

At 93 years old, SMSgt Moore's legacy stretches across generations, from Korea to Vietnam, from Air Force service to VFW leadership, from father to grandfather. The Quilt of Valor now stands as another chapter in that legacy, wrapped not only in fabric, but in memory.

In Hawai'i, we understand that honoring our veterans is not an obligation. It is a responsibility carried forward, one ceremony, one name, one life at a time.



WHAT IS THE QUILT OF VALOR FOUNDATION?

The Quilt of Valor Foundation was founded in 2003 with a simple but profound mission: to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. Each quilt is handmade by volunteers and awarded in a formal presentation ceremony.

The quilt symbolizes three things:

- Comfort for those who have experienced the wounds of war — seen and unseen
- Healing through acknowledgment and community recognition
- Gratitude from a nation that honors their sacrifice

Since its founding, the Quilt of Valor Foundation has awarded hundreds of thousands of quilts to veterans across the United States and abroad. Each quilt presentation is deeply personal, often involving family, fellow veterans, and community members.

The ceremony is not simply about fabric. It is about recognition. It is about speaking aloud what too often went unsaid: Thank you for your service and sacrifice.



DOWN RANGE



VFW Provides Support to Maui Fire Victims

In January, members of the VFW Dept. of Hawai'i traveled to Maui to support veterans impacted by the Maui/Lahaina fires. During the visit, 42 veterans were interviewed, and \$5,500 was given in financial assistance. 34 veterans met with a Veteran Service Officer for VA disability claims support.

The team included National Council of Admin. Rep. Ron Schaedel, Quartermaster Norbert Enos, Auxiliary Rep. Gerri Enos, Senior Vice Commander and VSO Rodney Boucher, Adjutant George Barlett, and Commander Jason Seal.





D O W N R A N G E



Retiree Seminar at Schofield Barracks

VFW Department of Hawai'i representatives attend the Retiree Seminar on January 25 at Schofield Barracks, engaging with service members and retirees while sharing resources and support.

Junior Vice Commander in Chief Visits Hawai'i

The VFW Junior Vice Commander in Chief (JVCINC), Glenn Umberger recently visited Hawaii to take part in our Mid Winter Conference (13 - 14 February). He attended the State Auxiliary President's and Department Commander's Homecoming, the Department's Council of Administration meeting, and the awards ceremony for local students awarded Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen recognition.

In addition to the Mid Winter Conference festivities, the JVCINC was provided with a tour of various historic landmarks throughout Oahu.

The JVCINC is a veteran of the United States Army and is a Gold Legacy Life member of Post 7155, Trappe, Pennsylvania.





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.





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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 and American Samoa - 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.