

# VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post 9934 & Auxiliary 9934  
Dana Point, California



## Mail Call

March 2025

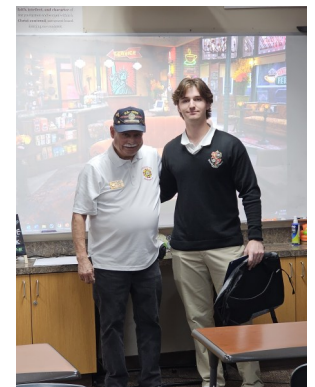


### Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy Awards Presentations

Every October over 100,000 students nationwide enter the VFW essay contest for a chance to win their share of nearly \$1 million in state and national awards.

On January 31st, our Post Youth Chairman David Vera, Commander Rick Jauregui, and Quartermaster Phil Jimenez presented Post 9934's First, Second, and Third place winners with Awards for their submissions to the Patriot's Pen Contest. The theme for the essay was "My Voice in America's Democracy." Entries were submitted by students grade 6-8. All three winners were from St. Anne School in Laguna Niguel. Gregory Lay received the Post's award for Teacher of the Year, Grade 6-8.

The Voice of Democracy contest is for students in grade 9-12 and essays are submitted as a vocal recorded speech. The theme was "Is America Today Our Forefather's Vision?" In February, awards were presented to our Voice of Democracy winners. First Place went to a student from Portola High School in Irvine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place to a student from a charter school, Sky Mountain in Mission Viejo. Third place tied between JSerra High School and St. Margaret's Episcopal, both in San Juan Capistrano. The award for St. Margaret's student will be presented on March 3rd.



### Commander’s Message

Greetings Comrades,

As some of you know I was away the last two weeks in February. While away I was able to spend a day with Active-Duty members of my family at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. I had visited Pearl Harbor before but this time I was accompanied by my son-in-law CPO Christopher Petersen USN, also a Post 9934 Comrade.

Christopher has taken on the duty as a unit historian. His stories and narrative regarding December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 were moving and educational. As a veteran I was honored and humbled to be in the presence of the hundreds of young Americans that paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom.

As your Commander on behalf of Post 9934, I rendered honors at the USS Arizona and the USS Utah.

I would also like to share another experience from my time away. On February 9<sup>th</sup> Superbowl Sunday I was on a Princess Line Cruise Ship. I found out the game was being televised in one of the lounges. So, my wife Sandy and I found a seat and waited for the game to start.

The announcer told us that the National Anthem was commencing. I immediately stood up and removed my cover. As did a women one table over. Almost in unison the rest of the people in the lounge stood up together and sang the National Anthem.

At the end of the Anthem the entire lounge stared chanting “USA ...USA”

It was something unexpected and a moment that gave me faith in our country and made me proud to serve this Nation.

Take care, my Brothers and Sisters, I will see you at the next meeting on March 11th at South Shores Church at 6 PM.

Please be safe and be kind to each other.

*Rick Jauregui, Commander.  
Post 9934, Dana Point*

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#### POST OFFICERS FOR 2024-2025

|                          |                 |                         |                |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Post Commander           | Rick Jauregui   | Service Officer         | Aaron Pluff    |
| Senior Vice Commander    | Richard Alonzo  | Service Officers Team   | Jim Socks      |
| Junior Vice Commander    | Carlos Garcia   |                         | John Coon      |
| Post Quartermaster       | Phil Jimenez    |                         | Ben Valencia   |
| Assistant Quartermaster  | Wayne Yost      | Service Officer Advisor | Marty Hoffman  |
| Adjutant                 | David Vera      | Service Officer Support | Debbie Yost    |
| Post Chaplain            | Ron Egigian     |                         |                |
| Judge Advocate           | Dolores Padgett | Trustee (3-year term)   | Rodney Bradley |
| Post Surgeon             | Gil Castro      | Trustee (2-year term)   | Robert Pruitt  |
| Post Color Guard Captain | Carlos Garcia   | Trustee (1-year term)   | Scott Roberts  |

#### AUXILIARY OFFICERS FOR 2024-2025

|                       |                  |           |                 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| President             | Lisa Mers        | Conductor | Ralph Mariano   |
| Senior Vice President | Sharon Miller    | Guard     | Tory Boegeman   |
| Junior Vice President | Lupe Brady       |           |                 |
| Secretary             | Terry Marr       | Trustee 3 | Mary Koebler    |
| Treasurer             | Cindy Somerville | Trustee 2 | Sharon Miller   |
| Chaplain              | Carlene Chew     | Trustee 1 | Judy Brandmeier |

## From the Desk of the Quartermaster



As a Non-Profit, we rely on the energy, passion and generosity of our members. Your support, whether through time, talent, or treasure enables us to continue making changes and helping others.

### Get Involved

The work we do together shows our outreach to veterans and the community. Here is why you should consider getting involved this year:

1. Strength in Numbers
2. Sense of Belonging
3. Expand your Network
4. Direct Impact

### How To Get Involved

It's easier than you might think. Here are a few suggestions:

*Renew your Membership* - if an annual member  
*Volunteer* - Spending an hour or a day of your time is an invaluable and fulfilling way to give back.

*Spread the Word* - Tell your family, friends and colleagues about the kind of work you do. The more people who know about our cause, the more hands and hearts we have to support us.

*Fundraising & Donations* - Every little bit helps us to reach our goals.

*Join a Committee or Event* - Be a team player and get involved. You may enjoy being around your fellow comrades.

***Phil Jimenez, Quartermaster  
Dana Point VFW Post 9934***

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## Auxiliary Corner

“Nothing is as strong as the heart of a volunteer.”  
(Jimmy Dolittle)

The New Year is off and running! We hope you are starting it in good health. January was quiet, but February 1st was the beginning of our community outreach. Terry Marr volunteered at the San Juan Capistrano Camino Real Playhouse and on February 15th Lisa Mers once again joined Welcome INN whose mission is “To Feed the Hungry.”

We are always looking for ways to volunteer for our community and support our veterans. Please contact Lisa Mers at [VFWAux9934@gmail.com](mailto:VFWAux9934@gmail.com) for opportunities.

We want to thank everyone that supported our Flower Power fundraiser, it was a strong success. Thank you!!

Speaking of fundraising, mark your Calendar for Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. It is our Garage Sale Fundraiser. If you would like to donate, contact us at [VFWAux9934@gmail.com](mailto:VFWAux9934@gmail.com). We accept all working, gently used items except for mattresses and large furniture. We may be able to assist with pick up as well. Please check out our Facebook page for details on the Garage Sale fundraiser, one-of-a-kind items at spectacular prices and 100% goes straight to the

VFW Auxiliary to support our Veterans. Wonderful way to shop for a cause.

If you are an auxiliary member but live too far or find the drive difficult, please consider joining us on Zoom! You can participate from the comfort of your home. It is a terrific way to participate. We value everyone's thoughts and ideas.

If you want to learn more about us, please reach out at [VFWAux9934@gmail.com](mailto:VFWAux9934@gmail.com), and we will set up a time for a meet and greet at one of our fundraisers or monthly meetings.

If you'd like to become a member, please contact Cindy Somerville at [vfw9934cindy@gmail.com](mailto:vfw9934cindy@gmail.com).

We are asking you to join the VFW Auxiliary 9934 Dana Point Facebook page. This is a fantastic way to find out what we are up to.

Contact us at [VFWAux9934@gmail.com](mailto:VFWAux9934@gmail.com) for more information and join us!

***Terry Marr,  
Secretary, Historian  
VFW Auxiliary 9934***



**VFW AUXILIARY**

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®



## ‘Brothers After War’ to Debut Nationwide February 28

The long-awaited release comes seven months after Director Jake Rademacher addressed VFW convention delegates

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – From Executive Producer Gary Sinise and Director Jake Rademacher, “Brothers After War” combines footage from Rademacher’s time embedded with elite soldiers and Marines during the height of the Iraq War with present-day reunions, capturing the resilience and humanity of those who serve. Through moments of humor, vulnerability and reflection, the film speaks to audiences in the unique language of veterans to shed light on their struggles — PTSD, depression, suicide, loneliness, and the search for meaning — while inspiring dialogue, connection and hope for military families, veterans and supporters alike.

Rademacher addressed delegates to the 125th VFW National Convention last August, providing insight into the need for the film and how he would go about achieving its production. He went on to share the “Brothers After War” trailer which received rousing applause by the nearly 3,000 VFW and Auxiliary members in attendance.

Following his appearance at the VFW National Convention, Rademacher worked with several VFW Department commanders to ensure the film is brought to their communities on its opening weekend. For those who’ve seen its advanced screening, the impact is lasting. One VFW member cited the film saved his life.

“Brothers After War” invites audiences on a raw and moving journey as veterans explore themes of loss, identity and hope as they transition from the battlefield to civilian life.

“The battle doesn’t end when they leave the war. ‘Brothers After War’ is an insider’s look at the extraordinary journeys veterans undertake to heal and move forward,” said Director Jake Rademacher, a military family member himself. “The production was an intimate opportunity to witness veterans’ sacrifices, unseen battles and post traumatic growth. With ‘Brothers After War,’ we want to have Americans see our veterans as they really are and walk beside them on their journey home.”



Executive Producer Gary Sinise added, “This film is a beautiful portrayal of the journey from warfighter to veteran. It’s important that we do all we can to ensure the public does not forget about the men and women who have served and the families who supported them. This film is a tribute to their sacrifices, their resilience and their character — and that is why I and the Gary Sinise Foundation supported the creation of this important film.”

“Brothers After War” will receive a full theatrical run from Regal Cinemas on 100 screens beginning Feb. 28, 2025, with additional openings at major chains across the country.

“I had the privilege of seeing the film and it does exactly what the title says, it shows the effects of combat on warriors after they return, and just as importantly the effects on the family which are often overlooked. It gives permission to those watching to realize and engage their own emotions,” said Past VFW National Commander (2020 – 2021) and Executive Director of the VFW Foundation Hal Roesch.

VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt, an infantry platoon leader during the Vietnam War shared this anecdote after viewing the film:

“Seeing some of my men from our unit some 40 plus years later at a reunion was surreal. It was like zero time had passed though it was years later our physical appearances had changed yet we remained the 20-somethings that I left in the jungle. The last time we were together was 1968, it was now 2013. I resisted going to other reunions for fear of recalling the hell we endured and the nightmare that was the Vietnam War.”

*[Continued on Page 5]*

## Festival of Whales BBQ March 9th

We are looking for volunteers to assist at the Festival of Whales BBQ on Sunday, March 9th at "Baby Beach" located at the North end of Dana Point Harbor Drive near the Marine Institute. This BBQ is for the benefit of Dana Hills High School Water Sports.

The first shift will set up and/or cook from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM. The second shift will be from 2:00 to 6:30 PM to finish cooking, clean up and put away items in our storeroom.

Email to [dpvfwpost9934@gmail.com](mailto:dpvfwpost9934@gmail.com) to volunteer.

## Visit to Long Beach VA Blind Center

Gil Castro, our Post Surgeon has scheduled another meet and greet this month at the Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center, 5901 E 7th St, Long Beach.

Volunteers will be distributing toiletries, socks, scarfs and other knitted items and will spend an hour or so visiting with the residents.

Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> - 11:30 am to 1:00 pm

If you'd like to join Gil, please call/text him at (949) 395-2455 or email him at [gilbertcastro1@att.net](mailto:gilbertcastro1@att.net)

## VA processes one million disability claims faster than ever before

Department claims-processing productivity is at record levels

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it has processed more than a million disability claims in Fiscal Year 2025, reaching the milestone nearly two weeks faster than it did in FY24.

Despite receiving 15.6% more claims than last year, the department completed its one millionth FY25 claim Feb. 20 — faster than at any point in the department's history. In fact, the 10 highest claims processing days in VA's history occurred within the last month, and the department's highest claims processing day ever was Feb. 12, when VA processed more than 12,000 claims.

Of the more than one million claims VA has processed in FY25, over 60% were granted.

Through January, VA has provided \$62 billion in compensation and pension benefit payments to 6.9 million Veterans and survivors. VA's claims accuracy rate has risen to more than 92%. To date, VA has completed 375,961 PACT claims in FY25.

"Under the leadership of President Trump, we are strengthening the department so it works better for Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors," said VA **Secretary Doug Collins**.

"VA's claims processing productivity is the highest it has ever been, and we look forward to continuing to provide record levels of service to Veterans and VA beneficiaries."

*February 25, 2025*  
<https://news.va.gov>

## 'Brothers After War' [continued from page 4]

"In a town hall with Joe Galloway of the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, from the movie 'We Were Soldiers Once and Young,' someone asked when he was in Vietnam and his answer shocked me because I thought I was the only one who answered, 'when was I in Vietnam? It was last night.'

"I have learned to deal with those memories but it was not until I connected with battle buddies of the VFW and the VA that I really began to heal. I continue to heal thanks to the camaraderie of the Veterans of Foreign Wars because conflict, branch of service, MOS,

or gender, we are permanently impacted by what we saw, by what we did, by what we heard, by what we smelled, by the inhumanity that is war."

"Brothers After War" will be released in Nashville, New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Antonio, Denver, Colorado Springs, Albuquerque, Atlanta, Seattle, Columbia, Norfolk, and many others. For more information please visit website [brothersafterwar.com](http://brothersafterwar.com).

**February 20, 2025** [vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/](http://vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2025/)

## VFW Prepares to Deliver 2025 Legislative Priorities to Lawmakers

National leaders, members primed to urge elected leaders to Honor the Contract

**WASHINGTON** — Per tradition, close to a thousand members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Auxiliary will flock to Washington, D.C., this weekend for VFW's 2025 Washington Conference, which will run from March 2 - 6. Held every year, the national mid-winter conference encompasses the VFW's largest legislative advocacy event, VFW business sessions and much more. The conference will be attended by elected and appointed leaders and delegates from across the VFW and its Auxiliary including members from Europe and the Pacific Areas.

"The might of the VFW lies in its members and nowhere is that more on public display than in Washington, D.C., every March," said VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt. "It is a spectacular sight to see hundreds of VFW members proudly wearing their caps as they walk the halls of Congress exercising their right to advocate for themselves and their comrades."

The VFW's 78th annual Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners, which is sponsored by Twisted X, will also take place during Washington Conference. Established shortly after World War II, the Voice of Democracy program challenges more than 26,000 high school students from across the country each year to craft democratic and patriotic-themed essays to win a portion of more than \$1.4 million in educational scholarships and incentives. A \$35,000 scholarship awaits the national competition's first place winner and is paid directly to the American university, college or vocational/technical school of their choice.

"Today's youth are the future of our beloved nation," Lipphardt said. "Inspiring within young people pride, patriotism and a sense of ownership in our democracy today means having an engaged populous tomorrow — one that understands both the strength and fragility of what our Founding Fathers bestowed upon us and charged us with preserving. I look forward to meeting each Department winner and congratulating them on their exceptional responses to this year's essay theme, 'Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?'"

One of the final events of the Washington Conference is the annual commander-in-chief's testimony set for March 4 at 10 a.m. (EST) before a special joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans'

Affairs held at the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

"Service to and advocacy for our brothers and sisters-in-arms is at the heart of who we are at VFW, and I could not be more honored and humbled to lead from the front and carry our message to Congress," Lipphardt said. "This year, we have a new Congress and new administration, and we will be heard. Some of these issues have long gone unresolved by our elected and appointed officials, which is unacceptable. Make no mistake — the VFW will not stop pounding the drum on what veterans need and care about, to include the federal government's inalienable responsibility to deliver on its promises. Members of Congress can count on us to "March Forth" with hats in their halls and offices until our concerns are rectified and they Honor the Contract."

Lipphardt is poised to discuss the VFW's top legislative priorities for 2025 including:

- Unresolved Toxic Exposures
- Alternative PTSD Treatments
- Military Transition
- Claim Sharks
- GI Bill Parity
- Concurrent Receipt (Disability compensation and retirement pay offset)

Washington Conference also marks the culmination of the 11th annual VFW-Student Veterans of America (SVA) Legislative Fellowship. Six fellows will join VFW advocates on Capitol Hill as they meet with lawmakers and staff to discuss Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility parity between active and reserve component service members. Last year, the VFW-grown and supported Not Just a Number Act was made law via the passage of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, also known as the Dole Act, in large part due to the unified advocacy of VFW members and VFW-SVA fellows.

The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will livestream this year's testimony on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs YouTube channel here. Visit the 2025 VFW Washington Conference webpage <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/2025-vfw-washington-conference> and follow us on social media for all #VFWDC2025 Washington Conference updates.

February 27, 2025 <https://www.vfw.org/>

## Celebrating a Century of Service: VFW National Home's 100th Birthday Bash

On January 7, 2025, the VFW National Home celebrated a significant milestone: 100 years of dedicated service to veterans and their families. The event heralded the start of a year filled with festivities, commemorating a century of steadfast support and commitment to those who served the nation.

The celebration took place in the VFW National Home Auditorium in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. As guests arrived at 4:00 p.m., they were greeted with refreshments and displays that showcased the history and achievements of the organization. Event attendees mingled, sharing stories of their connections to the National Home and the impact it had on their lives.

At 5:00 p.m., the program commenced with a warm welcome and heartfelt remarks from distinguished speakers who underscored the importance of acknowledging the sacrifices made by veterans and their families. The speakers highlighted the vital role that the VFW National Home has played over the past century, providing support, housing, and community for those in need.

The highlight of the evening was a ceremonial cake cutting, symbolizing not just a celebration of the past but also a commitment to the future



of service to veterans. As the cake was cut, cheers erupted in the auditorium, embodying the communal spirit of gratitude and recognition for a century of dedicated work.

Overall, the 100th birthday party celebration of the VFW National Home not only honored its long-standing legacy but also inspired attendees to continue supporting veterans and their families in the future. The event marked a significant moment in history, setting the stage for a year filled with remembrance, appreciation, and renewed commitment to serving those who served.

*News and Events, [vfwnationalhome.org/](http://vfwnationalhome.org/)*



Visit our Website  
[vfwpost9934.org](http://vfwpost9934.org)



### ALL STATE POST

2004-05, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10,  
 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-2015,  
 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-2018-2019-2020, 2021-  
 2022, 2023-2024

### ALL AMERICAN POST

2007-08, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-  
 2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2019-2020, 2021-2022,  
 2023-2024

**2018 & 2022 NATIONAL OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - MARCH 2025

- ◇ Saturday, March 1st, 11:00 am - Flag Retirement, upper parking lot Dana Point City Hall.
- ◇ Tuesday, March 4th, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Wednesday, March 5th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo St.
- ◇ Saturday, March 9th, Festival of Whales BBQ, Baby Beach. Please see Page 5 for Volunteer Information.
- ◇ Tuesday, March 11th, 6:00 pm - VFW Post 9934 Meeting, South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Pkwy
- ◇ Saturday, March 15th, Time TBA - Flag Retirement, upper parking lot Dana Point City Hall.
- ◇ Monday, March 17th, **St. Patrick's Day**
- ◇ Tuesday, March 18th, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Wednesday, March 19th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Thursday, March 20th, 11:30am - VA Long Beach Medical Center 5901 E 7th St, Long Beach.

See page 5 for details.

Join Wayne Yost PPR Certified Pickleball Instructor to learn more how to play this exciting game. Instruction is given free of charge each Monday and Friday at the Laguna Niguel YMCA, located on Crown Valley Pkwy. 8:30 – 10:00 am. Wear court shoes and eye protection, all other equipment will be provided.



**Monday, March 17th**

### MARCH 2025 MEETINGS

The next meetings of Post and Auxiliary 9934 will be on Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

The Post meeting will be held at South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Parkway, starting at 6:00 p.m.

The Auxiliary will meet at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 33501 Stonehill, starting at 6:30 pm.



**Rosie the Riveter Day  
Friday, March 21st**

### CONTACT VFW POST 9934

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Website: [vfwpost9934.org](http://vfwpost9934.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/vfwpost9934](https://facebook.com/vfwpost9934)

CONTACT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
1-800-698-2411