

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post 9934 & Auxiliary 9934
Dana Point, California



Mail Call

February 2026



Commander Rick Jauregui, along with three others, were honored as Veterans of the Year for 2025 by Assemblymember Diane Dixon (Assembly District 72) at her office in Newport Beach on Friday, January 23, 2026. Congratulations to Commander Rick for a recognition well deserved!!



Sunday, January 11th - During the VFW CA Dept Official Visit, Post 9934 Veteran Quilt Program Chair Marcia Kuehl hosted a meet and greet with the veterans living at Whitten Heights Assisted Living and Memory Care, La Habra. Dept of California Commander David Kuta and his wife Serena, and Sr Vice Paula Jansen were in attendance. The Dept Commander spoke about the VFW, and thanked the veterans for their service. Each veteran was acknowledged by name and service, and presented a quilt and a pillowcase, made by the quilters of the Surfside Quilters Guild. Residents include AirForce, Army, Navy, and Marines, serving in Korea and Vietnam. Bed-bound Veterans were visited in their rooms.

Commander's Message

Greetings Comrades,

I feel so blessed to be around my brothers and sisters as we start off on new adventures and missions together. We should all remember that we are a family. As that family, we suffer at times, and together share sadness and happiness.

But we also as a family should be there to lift each other up and be able to share those feelings as we move forward. I believe that because we are such a close unit, our guests and new comrades are amazed at how well we function as a Post and how we manage to participate in so many activities...and do so positively.

As some of you know, volunteerism is dropping at an alarming rate in the United States. Also, the numbers of VFW members have also dwindled.

Our Post, however stays strong and active.

I know that as your Commander, I can count on all of you to maintain that "true comradeship" that we recite at our meetings.

We don't have many activities planned during the next couple of months, but I do have some ideas that will promote us to the community and the VFW as well.

Please feel free to invite a friend or a neighbor (Veteran or not) to a meeting and share time with other members of the community ... and enjoy true fellowship.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 10th at 6 PM at South Shores Church. I hope to see you there.

Please be safe and be kind to each other.

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



POST OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026

Post Commander	Rick Jauregui	Post Chaplain	Tim Laursen
Senior Vice Commander	Richard Alonzo	Judge Advocate	Michael Turner
Junior Vice Commander	Carlos Garcia	Post Color Guard Captain	Carlos Garcia
Post Quartermaster	Phil Jimenez	Benefits Advisor	Aaron Pluff
Adjutant	David Vera	Trustee (3-year term)	David Priddy
Assistant Quartermaster	Wayne Yost	Trustee (2-year term)	Rodney Bradley
Post Surgeon	Gil Castro	Trustee (1-year term)	Bob Pruitt

AUXILIARY OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026

President	Lisa Mers	Conductor	Ralph Mariano
Senior Vice President	Sharon Miller	Chaplain	Carlene Chew
Junior Vice President	Lupe Brady	Trustee 3	Judy Brandmeier
Secretary	Terry Marr	Trustee 2	Ralph Mariano
Treasurer	Cindy Laursen	Trustee 1	Sharon Miller

From the Desk of the Quartermaster



It is hard to believe we are already past the halfway point of our Post year. Time truly does fly when you are busy and engaged. At our January meeting, we approved an amended budget for the final six months of the year. We continue to maintain a careful balance between income and expenses, which can be challenging at times—much like managing a household budget—but we remain committed to staying fiscally responsible.

In January, we were able to assist a Veteran, his spouse, and their nine-month-old baby who were living out of their car. Through the combined efforts of our members and Auxiliary, we were able to provide them with a one-week motel stay with kitchenette in San Clemente while their housing voucher was approved.

This is just one example of how the contributions of our members and the hard work of the Auxiliary at fundraising events directly impact lives in our community. I wanted to share this story for those who may not be directly involved with assistance requests, as this is truly the most rewarding part of serving as Quartermaster. Seeing the smiles on the faces of families, the joy of the children, and the gratitude ex-

pressed through heartfelt hugs reminds us why we do what we do. To our Post members and Auxiliary members—thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this possible.

We are fortunate to have the resources to meet many assistance requests, thanks to the dedication of our former and current members who continue to serve by helping others.

May will be here before we know it, and we are looking ahead to the VFW Day of Service event. “Still Serving” is an important requirement for our Post, and we are eager to hear ideas for meaningful community service projects. If you have an idea or know of one for a community service event that is not military-related, please contact the office so it can be discussed at our next Post meeting.

Finally, February 14th is a special day to celebrate someone important in your life. Remember, it doesn’t require roses, candy, cards, or an expensive dinner—sometimes a simple hug and love from the heart say it best. If we could all share a little more kindness and love, the world would truly be a better place.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

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



VFW DAY OF SERVICE

An Annual Community Service Event

If you’re a VFW member, you have probably received an email from VFW National regarding the Annual VFW Day of Service. This annual event is established to reach out to the local community in service.

Every year, we as a Post host such a community service event during the Month of May. We are looking for ideas from our membership. In the past, we assisted the City of Dana Point with renewing their Monarch Butterfly habitats. Last year we hosted a Mother’s Day event at Belmont Village Senior Living Center in Aliso Viejo.

If you’d like to submit an idea for the upcoming Day of Service in May, please send an email to: dpvfwpost9934@gmail.com or call the office (949) 248-1419.

Chaplain's Corner



Two Great Presidents

For me, the month of February brings to mind two of the greatest presidents that ever served our nation: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. I recall in my youth that their birthdays were celebrated in this month. Here are some facts about them that you may or may not know. I will skip the obvious.

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia on February 22, 1732. He was the eldest of 6 six children. Due to his father's death when George was 11, he took on the role of self-educator. One of the exercises he used in his education was copying out the 110 rules covered in *The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior*. This was a major influence on his character.

In his early years, he was a professional surveyor. He was appointed as a major in the Virginia militia in February of 1753 at the age of 20. He delivered the ultimatum to the French in Ohio to stop impeding on British territory. He fought in the French and Indian War and had 2 horses shot out from under him. He also had 4 bullet holes go completely through his outer coat. He received no wounds from any of them.

Washington and his wife, Martha, were the owners of several slaves. He granted them their freedom upon the death of his wife, Martha.

Abraham Lincoln was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809. He was the second of 3 children. He served in the Illinois militia as a captain from April to July 1832 during the Black Hawk War. He never saw battle but served in an independent spy company.

Abraham Lincoln stood 6'4" tall and wore a size 14 shoe. He was the first president to wear a beard. He was a skilled wrestler and the only president to ever hold a patent.

In many polls, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln rank #1 and #2 as the most beneficial presidents in US history. In my humble opinion, those polls are correct. There is much more I can say, but I'll leave the rest of their history for you to explore and discover. They were both fascinating men and should be studied if not emulated.

As always, I am available as your spiritual leader. Let me know if and how I can serve you. Keep me posted on comrades and their family members, living and deceased, who are in need of assistance.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America!

Tim Laursen,
Chaplain VFW Post 9934, Dana Point
vfw9934chaplain@gmail.com



VFW Action Corps Weekly January 2026 MIA Identifications

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 7 identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War.

World War II

Army 1st Lt. Thomas W. Frutiger
Army Air Forces Cpl. Joseph A. L. Richer

Army Cpl. Byron F. Beard, Jr.
Army Air Forces Pfc. Weber S. Underwood

Korean War

Army Pfc. Otmer F. Hodges

Army Cpl. Orestus M. Stewart

Vietnam War

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. James H. Calfee

Auxiliary Corner

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

We are speeding through the new year! It's already February; can you believe it!?

We received a great opportunity to join forces with the Surfside Quilters Guild. I helped deliver beautiful handmade quilts made by the members of the Surfside Quilters Guild to veterans at the Whitten Assisted Living in La Habra. It was a special day with Marcia Kuehl and Ron Egegian of Post 9934, John Carson (District 2 Commander), Mark Bryant (District 2 COS) and California Department Commander Dave Kuta and Sr Vice Commander Paula Jansen.

We also had a great visit with the VFW Department of California. During the visit was our District 2 meeting. It was great to hear what the other groups were up to.

Bunko is back!!! Please save the date: February 28. Wear red, white and blue. Bring a friend, it's a TON of fun.

We want to showcase our local hometown heroes! We would like to put up banners showcasing our local military members throughout downtown. Do you have a family member or friend from Dana Point serving in the Military? Please send us a photo and tell us which military branch they serve. Send it to Cindy Laursen at vfw9934cindy@gmail.com.

It's never too late to be a part of this small but mighty group! To become a member, please contact; Cindy Laursen at 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 for more information and join us !

Although June is PTSD awareness month, it's very important to be aware of it daily and especially now during the holidays. Please check out the resources the VFW provides: <https://www.vfw.org/home-bottom-rotator/national-ptsd-awareness-day>

**SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 28
BUNKO IS BACK !!!**

*Terry Marr
Secretary, Historian
VFW Auxiliary 9934*



A 'Big Step Forward' for Gulf War Veterans

Gulf War Illness (GWI) is now officially recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 30 years after symptoms began

On October 1st, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved an official diagnostic code for Gulf War Illness (GWI) more than 30 years after symptoms of the condition began to be reported.

The illness, which is described as an amalgamation of several chronic symptoms including fatigue, respiratory issues, joint pain and gastrointestinal pains, has been historically dismissed by doctors and physicians as psychological.

In an article posted by the Boston University School of Public Health, Denise Nichols, a Gulf War veteran and veteran advocate, said the implementation of the code has been a "big step forward for medicine, research and the health of our military community."

With an established diagnostic code, patients with GWI can be easily found through medical search records, as opposed to being found through less efficient methods, such as social media. The code also will allow for faster, more intensive research into the condition, better monitoring of symptoms and better tracking of effective treatments.

VFW Director of National Veteran Services Michael Figlioli claims that VFW Gulf War veterans will benefit greatly from this new diagnostic code.

"The CDC recognizing Gulf War Illness in a formal manner is significant for a number of reasons," Figlioli said. "First off, there is validation that this is not 'made up,' or it's 'no such thing.' It also provides for evidence-based care and not anecdotal treatment, better overall symptom management and finally, it will help substantiate veterans' claims for benefits from the VA, leading to an overall better quality of life."

It is believed that the condition affected as many as one-third of the 700,000 troops who were deployed in the Persian Gulf War between 1990 and 1991.

THE PUSH FOR MORE ANSWERS

The demolition of a chemical weapons depot in 1991 in the Khamisiyah region in southern Iraq is believed to have been a cause of GWI for more than 100,000 troops. According to an article written by Linda Hersey for Stars and Stripes, inquiries into the demolition were "revived" when a group of veterans began to push for the declassification of tens of thousands of documents that could be detrimental to the research of GWI and chemical exposure during the war.

Ronald Brown, a retired Army specialist and Gulf War veteran, was present during the demolition of the weapons depot in the Khamisiyah region. He claims he began to feel sick just 15 minutes after the building was demolished. "I came home sick and the problems continue," Brown said. "This has been going on for 34 years."

Included among the unreleased documents are interview transcripts with troops who also were present during the demolitions. This information could help doctors establish a timeline for GWI, which could help with the identification of effective treatments.

Brown is helping to lead the effort in the push for these critical documents to be released, along with veteran advocacy groups Veterans for Common Sense and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

"Whether [declassifying the documents] reveals something — that remains to be seen," said Army veteran Anthony Hardie, a former staff sergeant and national director of Veterans for Common Sense. "It is a matter of justice to Gulf War veterans."

While efforts from veterans' advocacy organizations have been persistent, the declassification and subsequent releases of Gulf War Illness-related documents have been slow and inconsistent.

Despite this, Gulf War veterans continue to push for answers so that there is a stronger understanding of the largely misdiagnosed illness.

This article is featured in the 2026 January/February of VFW Magazine, and was written by Danny Cook, senior writer..

Beware of social media scams. Scammers will promise quick cash in exchange for your financial information. They often want you to send money so they can "invest" it for you. If you send them money, you'll likely never see it again.

Watch out for:

- A "job recruiter" offering quick cash with little risk.
- Requests for your debit card number, PIN or passcodes.
- Pressure to act right now to keep your money safe.
- Messages claiming to be from police or government agencies.

If you give the wrong person your financial information or money, you could lose everything.

'That Is The Exact Reason VFW Provides Essential Free Services'

A new study found that two-thirds of troops surveyed upon separation from the military showed signs of a mental health condition requiring follow-up

A government watchdog study in June revealed a high rate of potential mental health conditions among more than 50,500 troops surveyed upon exiting the military in 2023 and early 2024.

Published on June 5 by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the report found that two-thirds of those troops might suffer from mental health conditions requiring follow-up.

"We know that military service is by nature dangerous and stressful," said VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Director Michael Figlioli. "Exposure to stressors of all types often causes PTSD, depression or other related issues. That is the exact reason VFW provides essential free services linking these separating members with their VA benefits."

GAO, which also examined the VA's mental health screening for troops on their way out of the service between 2023 and early 2024, noted flaws in the manner in which service members were screened for PTSD and other mental health risks.

"Given concerns about the risk of suicide and other mental health challenges following service members' separation from military service, it is essential that they receive effective mental health screenings prior to separation," GAO officials wrote. "Such screenings can lead to the early identification of individuals potentially at high risk and help direct them to further assessment, treatment and intervention."

The concern stemmed from another troubling statistic noted in the report. Of the troops who exhibited mental health risks, according to the study, more than half declined referrals to transitional programs run by the DOD, which offer counseling and other treatment opportunities to service members leaving the military.

For service officers at VFW, this conundrum is a two-fold problem requiring a solution.

"VFW knows statistically, separating service members are most at risk for suicide during the first year of leaving the military," Figlioli said. "That is why we stress the importance of working with these transitioning service members as early as possible. These critical benefits provide the safety net of income, housing, employment assistance and health care that their service has earned them."

Last year, VFW's NVS network of 2,000 service officers helped more than 590,500 veterans receive \$14.62 billion in VA benefits, including back pay. Among other locations, VFW service officers are located in 26 pre-discharge claim sites across the U.S. and abroad, with locations in Europe, Guantanamo Bay and Korea being covered remotely by service officers.

This article is featured in the November/December 2025 issue of VFW Magazine, and was written by Ismael Rodriguez Jr., associate editor.



On January 21st, David Priddy and Ben Shwackman participated in the Living History Program at Back Bay High School, Newport Beach. This event connects students with veterans to enhance history curriculum through personal narratives. This program brings veterans into classrooms to share experiences, enriching the educational experience.

Schedule of Events - February 2026

- ◊ **Tuesday, February 3rd, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting**
- ◊ **Wednesday, February 4th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo**
- ◊ **Tuesday, February 10th, 6:00 pm - VFW Post 9934 Meeting, South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Pkwy.**
- ◊ **Saturday, February 14th, Valentine's Day**
- ◊ **Monday, February 16th, President's Day**
- ◊ **Tuesday, February 17th, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting**
- ◊ **Wednesday, February 18th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo**
- ◊ **Saturday, February 21st, 11:00 am - Ben Valencia Celebration of Life, Pines Park, 34941 Camino Capistrano, Capo Beach**

Commemorative Tributes

February 15 - Sinking of U.S.S. Maine, 1898*

February 28 - Liberation of Kuwait—Operation Desert Storm 1991*



VA: Health and Benefits

US Department of Veterans Affairs

There are many programs available through the VA and several ways to access them. We will use this section of the newsletter to focus on them. One of the best things to do is download the VA APP. If you already have an account with the Veterans Administration, the APP will give you the most up to date information on all your dealings with the VA. If you don't have an account, you can set one up to access these items.

Let us know if you need help accessing the app or signing up for *myhealthvet*.



CONTACT VFW POST 9934

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Website: vfwpost9934.org
Facebook: facebook.com/vfwpost9934

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

FEBRUARY 2026 MONTHLY MEETINGS

The next monthly meetings of the Post and Auxiliary 9934 will be on **Tuesday, February 10th**.

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.