

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post 9934 & Auxiliary 9934
Dana Point, California



Mail Call 📢

July 2025



At our June 10th Post Meeting, we had the installation of our newly elected Post Officers for the upcoming year 2025-2026. List of Officers is on Page 2. We welcomed new member, Jeff Upton, to Post 9934. Richard Alonzo presented our Scouting Award to Eagle Scout Ella Haugo.



Commander's Message

Greetings Comrades,

I hope all of you have made plans for the summer with family and friends.

As most of you know, I just attended the Department Convention in Orange. There was mandatory training for most of the Post Officers. The rest of the convention involved the work of the VFW including new bylaws, impending legislation and the recognition of Posts in the Department that have distinguished themselves in various categories.

You should know that Post 9934 received recognition for the community service hours that all of you have given to our community.

Probably the most important part of the convention was the election of new Department Officers for 2025-2026. The new Officers for the Department of California are as follows:

Department Commander – David Kuta
 Department Sr Vice Commander- Paula Jansen
 Department Jr Vice Commander- John Hernandez
 Quartermaster- Deb Johnson
 Adjutant – Andrew “Skip” Miller
 Chaplain – Frank Correa

Let us wish them success in the upcoming year. I have already started to meet with the Post Officers to plan for the upcoming year. At the present, we are looking at a more involved membership drive, looking at having a renewed presence in the Laguna Beach area and planning on more social events for the Post comrades. I want all of you to become more acquainted with each other outside of the once-a-month Post meeting.

We will discuss our summer activities at the Post meeting in July.

I want to thank all of you again for allowing me to be your Post Commander for another year. I will try to live up to the hard work from all of the commanders that preceded me.

The next meeting is July 8th. The meeting will be at South Shores Church at 6 PM.

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 Color Guard Captain	Carlos Garcia
Senior Vice Commander	Richard Alonzo	Service Officer	Aaron Pluff
Junior Vice Commander	Carlos Garcia	Service Officer	Rodney Bradley
Post Quartermaster	Phil Jimenez	Service Officer Advisor	Marty Hoffman
Adjutant	David Vera	Service Officer Support	Debbie Yost
Assistant Quartermaster	Wayne Yost		
Post Chaplain	Ron Egigian	Trustee (3-year term)	David Priddy
Judge Advocate	Dolores Padgett	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 Somerville	Trustee 1	Sharon Miller

From the Desk of the Quartermaster



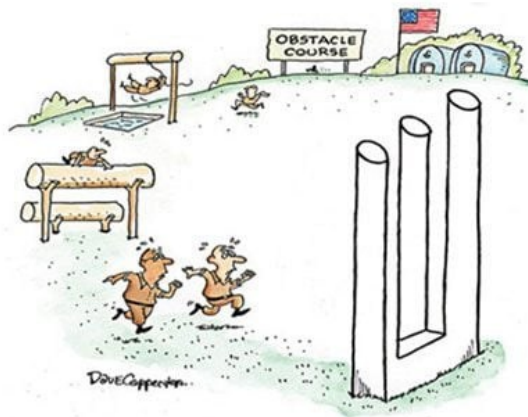
Happy Birthday, America! We celebrate the 249th year of our nation's independence. This year is the count down to America's 250th Anniversary. We thank all that fought and gave the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom that we enjoy today.

In July, we start our fund raising events at the City of Dana Point's Summer Concerts Series on Sunday, July 13th at Sea Terrace Park. Please see page 5 for the schedule and the list of band's playing. This event is very important to our Post. The money donated at the concerts is used for assistance to Veterans for emergency housing, car repairs, medical, food and gas. We have received an increased amount of requests for assistance over last year.

Summer is here and the weather is getting warmer. It's that time of year that we have family barbeques at home and the beach. Our Post is planning to have a barbeque for members and their families as a get together and especially to thank everyone for their assistance at our Post events.

We are looking for a place and an energetic individual who would like to be a chairperson for the event. We anticipate fun and games for the kids and comradeship for us all. Please call the office if you'd like to volunteer to be this very important person (there is the possibility of earning a commander's gift of a jacket!) at (949) 248-1419.

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



"This here is where the course starts getting a lot tougher."

Invitation: July 8th VFW Post 9934 Meeting

Our guest speaker will be our newly elected Dept Jr. Vice Commander John Hernandez.

Pizza will be served at 5:15 pm. All Post and Auxiliary members are invited to attend this Meet-n-Greet. The regular Meeting will begin at 6:00 pm.

South Shores Church
32712 Crown Valley Parkway
Dana Point



On June 10th, Laguna Beach Officer Zak Martinez was presented the Law Enforcement Award by Commander Rick Jauregui.

Auxiliary Corner

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

Summer is here. Take important note that June is PTSD awareness month. Please check out the resources the VFW provides:

<https://www.vfw.org/home-bottom-rotator/national-ptsd-awareness-day>

Starting on July 13th, you will see us every Sunday through August 17th volunteering with the Post at their booth during the Dana Point Concerts at the Park series at Sea Terrace Park. Please come by to support and say hello. This a great way to meet some of the Auxiliary members and learn more about us.

If you want to become a member, please contact Cindy Somerville 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 !

Terry Marr,
Secretary, Historian
VFW Auxiliary 9934



VFW AUXILIARY
UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

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June 14th, Flag Day - A Celebration of the U.S. Army's 250th Birthday at Baby Beach in Dana Point was put on by Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley and her staff. Post 9934 Color Guard was part of the festivities. A Post 9934 information booth was set up for the public.



POWERED BY
RIVIAN
CITY OF DANA POINT PRESENTS

CONCERTS IN THE PARK

SUMMER
SUNDAYS AT
SEA TERRACE
PARK

JULY 13TH	2:30PM-4PM Britian's Finest 4:30PM-6PM Mick Adams and the Stones	AUG 3RD	2:30PM-4PM Flock of 80's 4:30PM- 6PM Yachty by Nature
JULY 20TH	2:30PM-4PM Anthony Small/Small World 4:30PM-6PM Family Style	AUG 10TH	2:30PM-4PM Wayward Sons 4:30PM- 6PM Queen Nation
JULY 27TH	2:30PM-4PM Kelly Boyz 4:30PM- 6PM Vegas McGraw	AUG 17TH	2:30PM-4PM Sega Genacide 4:30PM- 6PM Tijuana Dogs

Post and Auxiliary Volunteer Schedule

1st Shift: Noon - 3:30 pm. Set up at Sea Terrace Park. Man booth, accept donations for snacks and beverages, hand out flags, distribute information on the VFW, recruit new members.

2nd Shift: 3:30 pm - 7:00 pm. Man booth, accept donations for snacks and beverages, hand out flags, distribute information on the VFW, recruit new members. Pack up and return to VFW office.

WORLD WAR II PRISONER OF WAR DIARY UNCOVERED

"It reminded me how easy it is for someone's story to disappear if no one keeps track of it."

Louis Pape returned from World War II with stories he rarely talked about. Years later, his daughter and son-in-law opened a box he left behind and found a diary of his life as a prisoner of war written on toilet paper.



The Visit

It started with a visit to the family farm in Illinois in the late 1970s. Cheryl Denslow and her husband David had come to see her parents. Her father, Pape, had served in World War II as a P-38 fighter pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was a prisoner of war (POW). Like many Veterans of that generation, he didn't talk about it much.

That day, Pape brought out an old cardboard box. It was one of the Red Cross boxes sent to Allied prisoners during the war. These boxes were packed with food and basic supplies, such as powdered milk, cigarettes and canned meat. Most prisoners reused the empty tins. Pape used his to make a cover for a diary written in pencil on sheets of toilet paper. David remembers Pape showing a few items and quietly putting the box away.

"I was humbled by some of the stories he told," David said. "Cheryl told me I should feel privileged. She had never seen some of those items herself." When Cheryl's mother died in 2013, the box was given to them. They didn't open it for years.

Documenting History

In 2024, Cheryl and David took a cruise that stopped in Norway. At a war museum, David met a woman whose father had also been a POW at Stalag Luft III, the same camp where Pape was held.

"When we got home, I told Cheryl, 'I want to go through the box again,'" he said. David built a phone stand from scrap wood and began photographing each page of the diary. He enlarged the images on a screen to read Pape's writing. "It was slow work," he said. "But I didn't want to miss anything."

Shot Down

On Sept. 2, 1943, Pape was flying a mission over Naples, Italy, escorting B-25 bombers when more than 200 German fighters attacked. He shot down two enemy aircraft before taking hits from enemy and friendly fire. He lost both engines and crash-landed in the Mediterranean Sea.

He regained consciousness underwater. After freeing himself from the cockpit, he floated for hours before being picked up by a German-controlled, Italian flying boat near the Isle of Capri.

He was processed in Italy through Naples, Capua, and Rome, and in Germany through Munich, and a transit camp called Dulag Luft, near Frankfurt. He was eventually moved by boxcar to Stalag Luft III in what is now Żagań, Poland. Pape spent the next 20 months as a prisoner of war.

Camp Life

Stalag Luft III held thousands of captured Allied pilots. Inside, prisoners called themselves *Kriegies*—short for *Kriegsgefangener*, the German word for POW.

Each day began with *Appel*, the roll call. "Each person had a specific spot in line, and we were not to move under any circumstances," Pape wrote. "The guards would walk in front and behind to count heads. Some liked to count using their rifles." *Appel* happened twice daily, at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"We lived *Appel* to *Appel*," Pape wrote. "It was a vicious cycle."

Prisoners taught each other to stay focused. They used hip-pocket classes, short, informal teaching sessions, to stay sharp. Pape taught agriculture and electrical engineering. Others covered languages, mechanics or whatever skills they could offer.

Prisoners built stoves out of tin cans. They carved toothbrushes by hand. Pape kept writing because it helped him hold on. Delicately written on toilet paper, he wrote: "This little book should contain a few notes and diagrams that sort of describe my life and experiences since I was shot down."

The Forced March

In late January 1945, the prisoners were ordered to evacuate Stalag Luft III ahead of the Soviet advance. Pape and thousands of others were forced to march over 58 miles through snow and subzero temperatures, pulling their gear on makeshift sleds.

They slept in barns, churches and empty buildings; often without food or firewood. Many became ill. The journey ended at Spremberg, where they were crammed 52 to a boxcar and transported to Moosburg, Germany.

Pape described the conditions as "deplorable." Still, the men stuck together. Every mile of that march was survived the same way they had survived captivity—side by side.

[Continued on Page 7 - WWII POW Diary]

[Continued from Page 6 - WWII POW Diary]

Life After War

Pape was liberated on April 29, 1945, when American forces reached the camp. Soon after, he and a group of fellow POWs visited the Dachau concentration camp, where over 41,000 people perished. Pape never said much about that day. "All he ever said," David recalled, "was that he saw things no one should ever see."

He returned to Illinois, took over the family farm and raised a family. He lived to be 91.

Cheryl said she wished she'd asked more questions.

"It was a part of his life that wasn't discussed," she said. "I regret not asking more questions of both my parents."

The Brick

After her father passed, Cheryl came across a reunion newsletter from his old squadron. It mentioned a commemorative brick program at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, so she ordered one in Pape's name.

During his time as a prisoner, Pape had been listed as missing in action. For a while, no one knew if he was

alive. When Cheryl visited the museum and followed the directions to her dad's brick, it wasn't where it should be. Emotional, she went to the front desk and said, "He appears to be MIA once again."

They eventually found it, but the moment stayed with her. "It reminded me how easy it is for someone's story to disappear if no one keeps track of it," she said.

The Story Continues

Cheryl and David have shared the diary with their son and are still deciding whether to donate it. For now, it stays with them—kept safe.

They've gone line-by-line through Pape's handwriting. Each page brought new understanding—about the war, the man he was and the silence he lived with after coming home.

Cheryl emphasized that Pape's service is part of their family's and our country's history and wants America to learn of it. "His story doesn't belong in a box," Cheryl said. "It belongs to the country he fought for."

Published in VA News, April 22, 2025

Jesus Flores, Writer and Editor of VISN 19

Creative Task Force and Marine Corps Veteran



Visit our Website

vfwpost9934.org



The Celebration of Life for our lost comrade and dear friend Scott Roberts was held at Pines Park on June 20th. Post 9934 Color Guard performed the flag ceremony.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - JULY 2025

- ◇ Wednesday, July 2nd, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Friday, July 4th - **INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- ◇ Tuesday, July 8th, 6:00 pm - VFW Post 9934 Meeting, South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Pkwy.
Guest Speaker Department Jr Vice Commander John Hernandez. Pizza served at 5:15 before meeting.
- ◇ Sunday, July 13th - Concerts in the Park - See details on Page 5
- ◇ Tuesday, July 15th, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Wednesday, July 16th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Sunday, July 20th - Concerts in the Park - See details on Page 5
- ◇ Sunday, July 27th - Concerts in the Park - See details on Page 5

CONTACT VFW POST 9934

Address: 33282 Golden Lantern, # 103
Dana Point, CA 92629
Phone: (949) 248-1419
Email: dpvfwpost9934@gmail.com
Website: vfwpost9934.org
Facebook: facebook.com/vfwpost9934

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

JULY 2025 MONTHLY MEETINGS

The next monthly meetings of Post and Auxiliary 9934 will be on Tuesday, July 8th.

The Post meeting will be held at South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Parkway, starting at 6:00 p.m. We will have a Meet-n-Greet at 5:15 pm. Pizza and Beverages will be served.

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

