

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post 9934 & Auxiliary 9934
Dana Point, California



Mail Call

April 2026



On March 17th, the City of Dana point had a groundbreaking ceremony in which Dana Point Mayor and Post 9934 Life Member John Gabbard, OC Supervisor Katrina Foley and Dana Point Harbor Partners executives participated. Post Officers Bob Pruitt and Wayne Yost performed a ceremonial raising of the American flag at the entrance to Dana Point Harbor.



At the invitation of Assemblywoman Laurie Davies, several of our post members rode in carriages in the Swallows Day Parade on March 21st in San Juan Capistrano.



Commander's Message

Greetings Comrades,

I would first like to thank all the Comrades and friends who participated in the Dana Point Festival of Whales last month. There were quite a few people who came by the booth to say hello and some to ask us what we were all about. A couple of Veterans inquired about membership.

Sunday March 29th was Vietnam Veterans Day. Several of us met that morning to share stories, memories and remember the 58,000 Americans that never returned home. It is for reasons such as these that we as Comrades work towards keeping the spirit of our departed alive. We as proud Veterans should always be grateful to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for this Country.

During the April Post meeting we will elect our Post Officers for the 2026-2027 year. Even though we held nominations for officers at the last meeting, any Post Member who would like to run for office should notify one of the Post Officers as soon as possible and be present at the meeting on April 14th.

During the May meeting, we will discuss several upcoming events in which your participation is vital for Post 9934 to remain successful. Other than Buddy Poppies and Memorial Day, we have several other activities that will need your participation, please review and choose what fits your abilities.

As part of our VFW Day of Service, we have two activities planned:

On May 8th we will deliver flowers and bring joy to the residents of the Belmont Village Senior Living facility in Aliso Viejo. We have visited them several times before and have always received tons of gratitude from the residents.

On May 13th, we will be cooking and serving dinner for the Dana Point Police Services personnel. The final details should be worked out in the next few days.

I will not be available for the April meeting, but Sr Vice Commander Alonzo will take my place and do his usual outstanding work.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, April 14th at 6 PM at South Shores Church.

Please be safe and be kind to each other.

Rick Jauregui, Commander
Post 9934, Dana Point



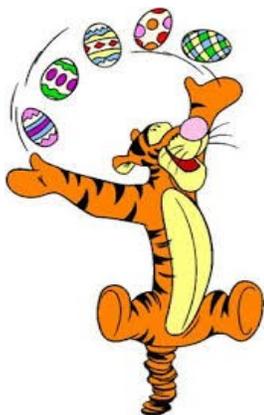
POST OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026

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



As March Madness approaches its final four, I hope your team is still in the running. Perhaps next year we can organize a friendly bracket challenge among our fellow comrades. Speaking of winning teams, we can all take great pride in our own our small but mighty Post 9934.

Our members consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to service. Whether called upon for events or volunteer efforts, we are always ready to step up. That spirit of dedication and readiness is what makes our Post so special.

As we move into April, we welcome the arrival of spring; a season that symbolizes renewal, hope, and new beginnings. It's a time to reflect on the values that bring us together and to look ahead with optimism for the months to come.

In the coming months, we have several important events, including our Memorial Day services, poppy distribution and the summer concerts.

These are meaningful opportunities to get involved, contribute, and connect with fellow veterans. Participation is not only vital to our mission, but also a rewarding way to strengthen the bonds within our Post. Let's continue to show our support and enthusiasm for all that we do.

Our Auxiliary is also preparing for their annual garage sale on April 18th. This is a great time to begin sorting through closets and garages for items to donate. The Auxiliary plays a vital role in supporting our Post and contributes greatly to the success of many of our events—their support is truly appreciated.

As we celebrate Easter, may it serve as a reminder of hope, renewal, and the importance of faith, family, and community. Wishing all of you and your families a very Happy Easter filled with peace and joy.

Finally, let us keep our military men and women serving abroad, often in challenging and uncertain conditions, in our thoughts and prayers, along with their families.

*Phil Jimenez, Quartermaster
Dana Point VFW Post 9934*



Post 9934 Officers and Members rode in the Festival of Whales Parade on March 7th.

We still have a few of the new VFW Post 9934 ball caps available. Contact the office if you'd like one at the Post's cost of \$32.

Chaplain's Corner



As we enter spring, I am reminded of the renewal of life that it displays, and I thank our Creator for His sovereignty. Happy Easter and/or Pass-over to all who celebrate.

I have started to forward emails that I receive regarding VA and VFW actions and benefits. I encourage everyone to subscribe to these emails. There is a wealth of information in them.

On March 27, Cindy and I participated in a presentation given by Dave McCann. Dave partners with the United Way of Orange County to help those in need. He is specifically targeting homeless veterans. Around 30 people were in attendance including our own Michael Turner and Gil Castro. The project goal is to house one homeless veteran in Orange County.

There will be more presented on this topic at a future meeting.

We are establishing what I call a Blessing Box for homeless veterans. We ask that you bring items to the Post office or the monthly meeting to be donated to local organizations that assist homeless veterans. I will email a list of recommended items later this month.

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 family members of comrades, 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 March 2026 MIA Identifications

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 32 identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War.

World War II

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Merlin H. Reed
Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Loyst M. Towner
Army Air Forces Cpl. Joseph A. L. Richer
Army Pvt. Lewis B. Bolton
Navy Seaman 1st Class Clyde C. McMeans
Marine Corps Pvt. Joseph P. Karnaghon
Navy Fireman 1st Class Robert G. Shove
Army Air Forces Capt. Marvin E. Lancaster
Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Rae G. DeMatteis
Army Air Forces Technician 4th Grade William P. Butler
Army Pvt. Elmer F. Blonien
Army Pvt. Marvin N. Everts

Army Staff Sgt. Carl F. Abbott
Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Andrew J. Litz
Army Pfc. Richard A. Meech
Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Edward T. Mossman, Jr.
Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. James A. Reinhart, Jr.
Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Charles C. Palmer, Jr.
Army Cpl. Charles K. Adam
Army Pfc. Vito Luceno, Jr.
Army Pvt. Mike R. McDowell
Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. William E. Archer, Jr.
Army Air Forces Cpl. Robert C. Pierce
Navy Fireman 1st Class Howard L. Adkins
Army Pfc. Guido G. Giaquinta
Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Jim W. Verhines

Korean War

Army Sgt. Willis F. McNiel
Army Pfc. Lawrence L. Burleigh
Army Pfc. Obert B. Flowers

Army Sgt. 1st Class Irvin T. Crews
Army Sgt. Henry L. Huber
Army Pvt. First Class Richard W. Young

Auxiliary Corner

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” Elizabeth Andrew

April is National Volunteer Month! Start thinking about what kind of service you are going to offer. It doesn't matter about the amount of time you give, just give! April is full of opportunities to help our Auxiliary.

Our new goal is to showcase our local hometown heroes!

We would like to put up lamp post 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 in which military branch they serve. Send it to Cindy Laursen at vfw9934cindy@gmail.com

We have two awesome fundraisers for April.

Flower Power! Great Selection of Spring flowers. Use this QR code to order.



Our second fundraiser is our infamous Garage Sale Fundraiser! Looking for one-of-a-kind items at AMAZING prices come shop on April 18th.

Are you ready for spring cleaning? Consider donating your gently used unwanted items to our garage sale fundraiser. 100% of the proceeds go to the VFW Auxiliary 9934.

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>

Terry Marr
Secretary, Historian
VFW Auxiliary 9934

Garage Sale Fundraiser

Date: Saturday, April 18, 2026

Time: 7 am to Noon

Place: 33442 Coral Reach Street

Dana Point Stratford at the Pacific (off Del Obispo near Stonehill) Dana Point

Items for donation (big or small) can be dropped off one week prior. For donated large items, contact Lisa Mers (lisabmers@gmail.com) or text (949) 436-2427

We accept Cash, Debit and Credit Cards



VFW AUXILIARY

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

New Research Links Burn Pit Fumes and Brain Injuries

Results of a national study released last year link brain trauma to troops who served near toxic burn pits during their service overseas

Since the adoption of the PACT Act by lawmakers in 2022 — a decisive win spearheaded by VFW's lobbying on Capitol Hill — research on toxic burn pits and their effects on veterans who served near them has increased in scope.

"The PACT Act is the most significant toxic exposure legislation since the Agent Orange Act, but it must continue to evolve," VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli said. "A key component was continued research resulting from exposure."

Conducted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in collaboration with the Department of Defense and the VA, a new study in late July connected military service near burn pits to a greater risk of mental health issues and brain trauma.

The research examined the health records of more than 440,000 troops who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011. The findings linked higher rates of depression and other mood disorders, as well as intracranial injuries and traumatic brain damage, among troops stationed near toxic burn pits. The study also noted that the toxic chemicals released during uncontrolled combustion may include chemicals with "deleterious" neurobehavioral effects.

While there is cause for alarm among those exposed to burn pits during their service, the study also opens new possibilities for the advancement of health care services and benefits provided by the VA to veterans. Since 2022, the VA has delivered more than \$6.8 billion in PACT Act benefits to veterans and surviving family members as a result.

"As research advances, the VFW will keep pressing to ensure every link between service-related exposures and illness is recognized so veterans receive the care and benefits they have earned," said Figlioli, who saw NVS's network of VFW-accredited service officers recover more than \$14.6 billion in VA benefits in 2024 alone.

LONGER EXPOSURE EQUALS MORE RISK - Here are notable findings by the NIH on the examination of health records of more than 440,000 troops who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011:

- Troops who were exposed to burn pit fumes for at least 129 days during their deployments were 27 percent more likely to report symptoms of severe stress than individuals at bases without the toxic smoke, and 37 percent more likely to suffer from any intracranial injury.

- Troops with more than 474 days near the burn pits were 68 percent more likely to report severe stress than deployed troops without the smoke exposure, and 124 percent more likely to develop intracranial wounds.

Sleep disorder issues were 18 percent higher for troops with four months near the burn pits and 35 percent higher for those who spent about 16 months nearby.

This article is featured in the 2026 January/February issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.



Cemetery Update

We Are Making Significant Progress

1. The Federal Government has approved a \$10 million grant.
2. The City of Anaheim has initiated the process of installing utilities to the property.
3. On Tuesday, March 24th, the Budget Committee 5, chaired by Sharon Quirk Silva in the State Legislature, expressed readiness to begin allowing expenditures from the State Cemetery account for the Cemetery project.
4. The state's Cal-Vet and the Department of General Services (DGS) are completing their site assessment, which is necessary before substantive discussions regarding cost-sharing for utilities with the County Cemetery District and County can commence.
5. Former Speaker of the House and current Minority Leader of Congress, Hakeem Jeffries, met with us on March 11th and pledged his support for the Cemetery. Congresswoman Young Kim has also expressed her commitment and is working diligently alongside us. It's inspiring to witness a bipartisan coalition uniting in support of our veterans.

In conclusion, we are making substantial and positive strides forward. Everyone is collaborating effectively, and we are deeply appreciative of their efforts.

We understand the key question is, "When will the Cemetery be completed?" That's certainly a complex question to answer. This is a large-scale construction project that involves significant earth moving, utility installations, and necessary road closures. However, we can assure you that we are moving as swiftly as possible on this important project.

God Bless You, and God Bless America.

Sincerely,
VALOR BOARD (Nick Berardino, Bill Cook, Bobby McDonald, Steve Spriggs, Michelle De La Cruz)

VFW Debuts New Tool to Streamline VA Benefits Assistance

Free, skilled, accredited representation is now just a few clicks away

March 23, 2026 - The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) announced today the launch of a new online tool designed to simplify and accelerate the process for veterans seeking help filing for their earned U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits.

The new system allows veterans, service members within 180 days of separation and survivors to complete a brief online form that instantly generates a case record in the assigned VFW Accredited Service Officer's system, enabling an efficient review of qualifying information, and expediting the initial intake and follow up period.

“For more than a century, the VFW has helped veterans navigate and access the benefits they earned through their service – last year we recovered \$16.2 billion from the VA on their behalf,” said Mike Figlioli, VFW Director of National Veterans Service. “This new tool removes unnecessary barriers and connects veterans with expert help faster than ever before.”

VFW representatives are professionally trained and accredited to represent veterans before the VA. They provide free assistance with filing disability claims, appealing decisions, and accessing a wide range of benefits and services. Furthermore, they provide a life-long continuum of support, helping veterans navigate their benefits from their first claim through every stage that follows.



By automating the initial intake process, the new tool ensures that veterans are connected to the right representative quickly and efficiently.

The new system is designed to reduce paperwork, eliminate confusion and streamline communication between veterans and their VFW representative. With just a few simple questions, veterans

can begin the process of receiving personalized assistance while ensuring their information is securely transmitted and immediately available to the representative assigned to their case.

“This is about meeting veterans where they are,” added Figlioli. “Whether they’re just beginning the claims process or need help with an appeal, this tool helps ensure they are connected with a trained advocate who will stand with them every step of the way.”

The VFW encourages veterans and survivors to use the new online tool as the first step in accessing the benefits they earned through their military service.

To learn more or begin the process, visit [claims.vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org/claims.vfw.org).

<https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events>



Post 9934 is collecting donations for Camp Pendleton Pantry. Drop off your donations at the office (call first) or bring them to a Post meeting.



PENDLETON PANTRY:

Thank you for your interest in donating to our food pantry! Below is a list of items we are looking for:

- Formula: Enfamil & Similac
- Baby wipes
- Diaper Sizes 2, 5 & 6
- Pull Ups (all sizes)
- Cooking Oil (Vegetable, Olive, etc.)
- Glass Jar Pasta Sauce
- Spices (Salt, Pepper, Garlic, etc.)
- Rice
- Jelly
- Lentils
- Spam
- Instant Mashed Potato's
- Ready/Minute Rice
- Pancake/Biscuit Mix
- Condiments/Dressing
- Chicken & Beef Broth
- Dry Beans (Pinto, Black, Navy)
- Pasta (Macaroni, Penne, Rigatoni, etc.)
- Instant Oatmeal
- Cereal
- Hamburger Helper
- Rice Roni
- Pasta Roni
- Cleaning supplies

Schedule of Events - April 2026

- ◇ Wednesday, April 1st, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Tuesday, April 7th, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Tuesday, April 14th, 6:00 pm - VFW Post 9934 Meeting, South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Pkwy. Post Officer and Delegate Elections.
- ◇ Tuesday, April 14th, 6:30 pm - VFW Auxiliary 9934 Meeting, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 33501 Stonehill
- ◇ Wednesday, April 15th, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Saturday, April 18th, 7:00 am to Noon - Auxiliary Garage Sale, 33442 Coral Reach St. Dana Point
- ◇ Tuesday, April 21st, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting . Law Enforcement and Firefighter Awards
- ◇ Saturday, April 25th - Portola Wounded Warriors, Portola High School, 1001 Cadence, Irvine, CA. (Time to be determined)

Commemorative Tributes

April 9 - National Former POW/MIA Recognition Day

April 11 - Persian Gulf War Official Cease-Fire



April 1 through April 9, 2026



April 5, 2026

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

APRIL 2026 MONTHLY MEETINGS

The next monthly meetings of the Post and Auxiliary 9934 will be on Tuesday, April 14th.

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.