

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Post 9934 & Auxiliary 9934
Dana Point, California



Mail Call 📣

May 2026



Dana Point City Council Meeting - April 21st. VFW Post 9934 presented our 2026 First Responder awards. Heroes are: Law Enforcement - Deputy Joseph Hodges and Firefighter Clay Mottern. A huge “Thank You” to our courageous local public servants!



Post Meeting - April 14th. VFW Post 9934 presented two Voice of Democracy Awards. Department Jr. Vice Commander, John Hernandez attended and delivered a short talk on his military experiences and his campaign for California Department Sr. Vice Commander.

Commander's Message

Greetings Comrades,

Are you all ready for the month of May? I hope that all of you are looking forward to the activities that will keep us busy this month.

Before we talk about that, I want to take a moment to remember that this month is the most important and solemn time for us as Veterans. For the nation, Memorial Day is the start of summer. A holiday for friends and family to gather around and enjoy their time together.

For many of us though, it is a time to remember and pay respect to those brothers and sisters who are not with us anymore. We still see them laughing or sharing a letter from home. Sometimes we would share that "care package" from home. Usually, it wasn't much more than some cookies... handwipes or just pictures of the birthday party we missed. We were all home again, if only for a few minutes.

But here we are, Home; we made it back! We should never take that for granted. That is why as the VFW, we give back to those who also served and to their families. That is why we support those who still serve and protect the homeland every day and night.

Also, we will always "Perpetuate the memory and history of our dead."

So, Comrades lets saddle up and get to it.

On May 8th we will work on our VFW Day of Service for Belmont Village Senior Living. Like we have for the past several years, we will make these residents feel recognized and show them that they are supported by Post 9934.

The Day after the Post Meeting, we will be serving burgers to the men and women of Dana Point Police Services on Wednesday May 13th. This is to show our appreciation for their work and service to the community.

At the Post meeting we will finish up plans for Buddy Poppies and Memorial Day.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, May 12th at 6pm 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



Our Post has been actively preparing for a meaningful and busy month of May, filled with opportunities to serve our community.

On May 8, we will present bouquets to the

mothers at Belmont Village Senior Living in Aliso Viejo. On May 13, we will host the Dana Point Sheriff's BBQ at City Hall in honor of our local law enforcement. These events are part of the VFW's "Still Serving" commitment to our community.

From May 23-24, we will conduct our Annual Poppy distribution, and on May 25, we will hold our Memorial Day services at Pines Park. Our Annual Poppy Drive is a long-standing tradition dedicated to honoring the sacrifices of military service members while supporting those who have returned home. Donations collected during the drive go directly toward our Post 9934 relief program that assists veterans in need and their families. Beyond fundraising, the Poppy Drive serves as a meaningful opportunity for communities to pause, reflect, and express gratitude, helping to keep the memory of fallen heroes alive while providing tangible aid to those who have served.

We have been experiencing an increase in requests for assistance from active-duty military and veterans, particularly in light of the ongoing Iran conflict. Your support is essential to help us meet these needs. While many of us, when we served in the military, were once advised by our comrades, not to volunteer; we now ask you to consider doing just that - please donate your time and lend a hand to support your Post and fellow veterans.

As Mother's Day approaches, we take a moment to reflect on the bonds that shape our lives and to honor the strength, compassion, and love of our mothers. It is impossible to fully repay the women who gave us life, nurtured us, and guided us along the way. It is often said that, even in the most difficult moments, thoughts turn to one's mother. On May 10, we celebrate that enduring love. Whether your mother is with you or in your memory, take a moment to honor her - and don't forget to share those simple but meaningful words with the ones you love: "I love you."

Wishing you a heartfelt and Happy Mother's Day.

*Phil Jimenez, Quartermaster
Dana Point VFW Post 9934*



Memorial Day Weekend Buddy Poppy Drive

Saturday, May 23rd and Sunday, May 24th
Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Locations:

Albertsons - Laguna Niguel
Laguna Heights Market Place
30241 Golden Lantern
(Crossroad Marina Hills Drive)



Pavilions - San Clemente
Plaza Pacifica
989 Avenida Pico (Crossroad La Pata)

Please contact the office at dpvfwpst9934@gmail.com or (949) 248-1419 to volunteer. There will be a sign up sheet for each location at the Adjutant's table during our next monthly meeting on May 12th at 6:00pm



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



Chaplain's Corner



Remembering Our War Dead

Memorial Day is a very special day on our calendar. But don't wish me, "Happy Memorial Day," or thank me for my service on this day. Let me explain.

The first national observance of what would become Memorial Day occurred on May 30, 1868.

Then known as Decoration Day, the holiday was proclaimed by Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic – a fraternal organization of veterans – to honor Union soldiers who had died in the American Civil War.

Official recognition as a holiday spread among the states, beginning with New York in 1873. By 1890, every Union state had adopted it. The world wars turned it into a day of remembrance for all members of the U.S. military who fought and died in service. In 1968, Congress changed its observance to the last Monday in May, and in 1971 standardized its name as "Memorial Day."

Two other days celebrate those who have served or are serving in the U.S. military: Armed Forces Day, which is earlier in May, a ceremonial U.S. day of commemoration for honoring those currently serving in the

armed forces, and Veterans Day on November 11, a legal holiday which honors all those who have served in the United States Armed Forces. You can acknowledge and thank me on those days. I will gladly accept it then.

But Memorial Day is reserved for those heroes who fought and died for our great nation. My Uncle Lyle Aubrey Daggett is one of those heroes. He fought and died on February 20, 1945 at Luzon, Philippines, while laying down suppressing fire for his platoon to retreat. He was wounded from a sniper's bullet and passed away two days later. I'm sure we can all relate a similar story of heroism. So, let us solemnly remember those who fought and died for the freedoms that we enjoy today.

Remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. They gave all.

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 April 2026 MIA Identifications

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 10 identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War.

World War II

Army Tech. Sgt. James E. Gadsey
Army Tech. Sgt. Richard E. Roe, Jr.
Army Air Forces Cpl. Delmor W. Erwin
Army Technician 5th Grade Ingwell V. Bartleson
Army Air Forces Pfc. Lloyd W. Irvine

Army Technician 5th Grade William P. Keele
Army Pfc. Harlan W. Melinsky
Army Pfc. Albert H. Marks
Army Pvt. Duane W. Payne

Korean War

Army Cpl. Harry R. Dobbins

Auxiliary Corner

“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.” Audrey Hepburn.

We want to begin with a big THANK YOU to everyone who donated to and purchased from our garage sale fundraiser. It was a huge success and we are grateful.

May is VFW Day of Service! Start thinking about what kind of community service you are going to offer. It doesn't matter about the amount of time you give, just give!

May is full of opportunities to help our Auxiliary.

Help us reach our goal to showcase our local hometown heroes!

Dana Point VFW Auxiliary 9934 is reaching out to our hometown heroes. We want to celebrate our active and retired military members throughout Dana Point on lamp post banners. If you are interested in honoring your hometown hero please send a picture, name, and branch of service, along with any questions to vfwaux9934@gmail.com.

Another way is to become a VFW Auxiliary Member! 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.

Although June is PTSD awareness month, it's very important to be aware of it daily. Please check out the resources the VFW provides:

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

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®



VA Announces Major Improvements in Benefits Processing and Delivery

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced a dramatic reduction in processing times for both Veteran disability claims and pension and survivor benefits, which shows that the Trump Administration’s year-long push to make VA work better for Veterans is paying off.

VA receives millions of claims from Veterans each year for disability benefits and continues to process them faster than ever while maintaining high accuracy rates. This means more Veterans are receiving the benefits they’ve earned through their service on a timely basis. For example:

- After processing a record of more than 3 million claims in fiscal year 2025, VA is on a similar pace in FY2026 and has processed more than 1.5 million claims halfway through FY2026.
- In FY2026, VA completed 1 million disability claims faster than ever and hit this milestone on Feb. 2, 2026.
- VA’s claims-processing accuracy has increased to 94.02%, which is the highest 12-month accuracy rate in the last two years. The average number of days needed to complete a claim has fallen from 141.5 days to 80.7 days since the start of the second Trump Administration, a 43% decrease.

VA also receives hundreds of thousands of claims for Veterans Pension, Survivors Pension, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation each year. DIC benefits are for the surviving spouses, the children, or the parents of a service member who died in the line of duty or through a service-related injury or illness.

During the second Trump Administration, VA has stepped up its levels of service to ensure Veterans and Survivors receive the benefits they deserve:

- In February, the backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits fell to less than 100,000 claims for the first time since 2020.
- VA has decreased the average time to complete an initial Veterans Pension claim from 170 days to 57 days, a 66% reduction. The average time to complete an initial Survivors Pension claim has dropped from 172 days to 73 days, a drop of more than 55%.
- VA has nearly eliminated initial Veterans Pension claims that are part of the VA disability claims backlog (older than 125 days), reducing this backlog from 3,514 claims to just 71 claims, a 98% reduction. The Survivors Pension backlog has decreased from 3,391 claims to 115 claims, a 96% reduction.
- The average time to complete DIC claims has dropped from 163 days to 73 days, a decline of more than 50%.

The number of DIC claims in the VA disability backlog (older than 125 days) has dropped from 13,501 claims to 2,257, an 83% reduction.

Additionally, VA has cut the average time to complete burial claims from 70 days to 31 days, a reduction of more than 50%.

VA achieved these milestones through focused leadership, hard work and targeted use of overtime. About half of VBA’s claims processors are Veterans, and their firsthand understanding of military service strengthens VA’s ability to deliver benefits with both precision and compassion.

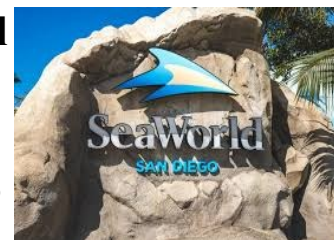
”Under the leadership of President Trump, VA is focused on delivering Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors all of the benefits they’ve earned as quickly as possible,” said VA **Secretary Doug Collins**. “These tremendous improvements underscore that commitment.”

news.va.gov/pressroom - April 15, 2026

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For Marine Animal Lovers

Seaworld San Diego is offering free admission to Veterans



Go to www.seaworld.com. Click on **Buy Tickets** at the far-right top of the page. Scroll down and click on **Military Discounts**. Right side of page is **Veterans Offer**. You must have an ID.me login to get this offer.

Free Admission for Veterans and Guests

For your service and sacrifice, we thank and salute you.

We hold the men and women that have served in our armed forces in the highest regard and are honored to host them at our parks as our guests. Through our Waves of Honor program, former military personnel and up to three friends or family members may enjoy one-time complimentary admission to SeaWorld® San Diego. **Veterans tickets must be obtained by May 10th and used by June 30th.**

- Eligibility: U.S. Military Veterans, retired Veterans and retirees who have honorably served.
- Includes: One-time free admission for the former military personnel and up to three friends or family members. Veterans can also purchase up to six additional tickets at 55% off!

(Excludes: Howl-O-Scream and separately-ticketed events.)

Important: A valid military ID is required for all visits. Dependents over the age of 10 must also provide ID.

VFW Commends White House Executive Order Advancing Research, Access to Emerging Treatments

The order marks a notable shift in federal policy towards a more proactive model

WASHINGTON – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) applauds President Trump for signing an executive order on Saturday aimed at accelerating alternative treatments for serious mental illness, a move the organization says could be transformative for veterans struggling with mental health challenges.

The executive order, titled *Accelerating Medical Treatments for Serious Mental Illness*, directs federal agencies, particularly the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Health and Human Services and the Food and Drug Administration, to speed up research, approval pathways and clinical access to emerging treatments for serious mental illness. A central focus is expanding study and potential medical use of psychedelic-assisted therapies (e.g., psilocybin, MDMA), including issuing clearer guidance for clinical trials and reducing regulatory barriers.

“For years, our members have prioritized research and clinical trials of alternative mental health treatments of all kinds,” said VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore. “The VFW applauds President Trump for signing this important executive order, which seeks to cut through bureaucracy and deliver innovative treatments to veterans who need them.”

This marks a notable shift in federal policy from a cautious, tightly restricted approach to these substances toward a more proactive, innovation-driven model. While it does not immediately legalize new treatments, it accelerates the pipeline from research to patient access, signaling federal support for unconventional therapies, especially for conditions like PTSD, depression and other severe mental illnesses where existing treatments prove inadequate.

“This executive order has been a long time coming and reflects years of advocacy from the veterans’ community, especially from our partners at the **Grunt Style Foundation**,” said Whitmore. “They have advocated that cocktails of pills alone are not enough to treat veterans’ mental illnesses. That is why the stroke of the president’s pen over the weekend has the potential to save lives today and into the future.”

Among those attending Saturday’s executive order signing were former U.S. Navy SEALs and veteran advocates Rob O’Neill, Marcus Luttrell and Rep. Morgan Luttrell, a member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

“Innovative therapies have shown life-changing results in treating combat-related mental health injuries, especially where conventional treatments, like opioids, have fallen short,” said Rep. Luttrell, who is also a Life member of the VFW. “If there’s a chance to give our veterans their lives back, we have a responsibility to explore it. As a proud member of VFW Post 4709 in Conroe, TX, I appreciate the support of my hometown brothers and sisters and look forward to sharing these new therapies with them.”

“We were proud to see congressional champion for veterans’ rights and fellow comrade Rep. Luttrell for this momentous occasion,” said Whitmore. “He is a leader who truly listens to veterans and acts to get things done on their behalf.”

In March of this year, Whitmore spoke on the topic during the VFW’s annual legislative presentation to Congress, demonstrating the scope of the crisis as nearly every VFW and VFW Auxiliary member in attendance stood during the hearing before the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees to show just how many veterans have been affected by suicide.

This latest executive order is the latest win for congressional supporters and veteran advocates of emerging treatments, such as the Grunt Style Foundation who have led the effort to bring change to the VA policy on alternate modalities. Last year, President Trump signed an executive order recognizing legitimate medical uses and expanding research into medical marijuana and cannabidiol, a decision applauded by the VFW.

The VFW remains committed to advancing innovative solutions that improve the health and well-being of America’s veterans.

“The VFW looks forward to working with the VA to ensure veterans can access the care they deserve,” said Whitmore.

Schedule of Events - May 2026

- ◇ Tuesday, May 5, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Wednesday, May 6, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Friday, May 8, 3:00, 3:00 to 4:00 pm - VFW Day of Service at Belmont Village Senior Living, 300 Freedom Lane, Aliso Viejo
- ◇ Saturday, May 9, 9:00 am to Noon - District 2 Memorial Service and Convention, Norman Murray
- ◇ Sunday, May 10 - Mother's Day
Community Center, 24932 Veterans Way Mission Viejo, Ca
- ◇ Tuesday, May 12, 6:00 pm - VFW Post 9934 Meeting, South Shores Church, 32712 Crown Valley Pkwy.
- ◇ Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 pm - VFW Auxiliary 9934 Meeting, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 33501 Stonehill
- ◇ Tuesday, May 19, 6:00 pm - Dana Point City Council Meeting
- ◇ Wednesday, May 20, 2:00 to 4:00 pm - Disability Clinic. Dana Point Community Center, 34052 Del Obispo
- ◇ Saturday, May 23 & Sunday, May 24, 9:00am to 4:00pm, Buddy Poppy Distribution - See Page 3 for details.
- ◇ Monday, May 25, 10:00am - Memorial Day Ceremony, Pines Park, 34941 Camino Capistrano, Capo Beach

Commemorative Tributes

May 1 - Loyalty Day
May 15 - Peace Officers Memorial Day
May 16 - Armed Forces Day

May 8 - WWII Ends in Europe (V-E)
May 15 - Women's Army Corps Founded (1942)
May 25 - Memorial Day

MAY 2026 MONTHLY MEETINGS

The next monthly meetings of the Post and Auxiliary 9934 will be on Tuesday, May 12th.

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.



On April 25th, the Wounded Warriors Club of Portola High School in Irvine hosted a Military Speakers Forum. Five Post members attended with three of them speaking of their military experiences to the 250 students in attendance. Teacher of the Year Jon Resendez was presented with both Post 9934 and District 2 awards.



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