



The Ranger Way

January 2026



Commanders Corner

Greetings Fellow Legionnaires,

I hope that everyone had a good Christmas or Chanukah and a good start to the New Year with fun New Years Eve parties. We will probably be doing our "traditional" Chinese Food takeout. 😊 We do have some good news from the VA which is in the Service Officer Section of the Newsletter along with other good VA benefits information. We also have both Holocaust Remembrance Day along with Vietnam Peace Day on the 27th with details in the History Officer Section.

Maureen and I were able to attend the Pearl Harbor Day Parade with the Pipes on Parade Band. I wasn't able to attend the Post Christmas Dinner because we flew out on the 4th to Oahu. The Band also played at the USS Missouri which held the Japanese Surrender Ceremony on September 2nd, 1945. The Band and visitors were able to visit the USS Arizona Memorial which always a moving experience during our stay as well as a Luau at the historic Paradise Cove. [You can watch the band play in the opening ceremony and parade here at about 27:00 and 2:50:15.](#)

All are invited to our Post meeting which is on January 5th where we have a social hour prior to the meeting with meals served, so please plan on attending. There are also the usual District-wide events like Monday chess at Post 858, Vet to Vet Café at Post 419 on Thursdays. Post 419 also hosts a First Sunday Breakfast on the 4th. [Check the District 13 Calendar](#) for information. We also have [the De Anza Student Veterans Lunch on the 7th.](#) [The District 13 Meeting is on the 21st.](#)

Remember that we generally meet at [the Odd Fellows Lodge #70 on Homestead Road](#) on the first Monday of the Month at 1800 for socializing and a light meal and refreshments then check out the meeting at 1900.

We really want to get more people attending the Post meetings and events and to be more social, so let us know your ideas by coming to our meetings. **I would like the current attending members/officers to use the roster to call and invite members**

to our meeting which is also a form of Buddy Check. Newly attending members do give us a heads-up, so that we can requisition extra rations versus our regular contingent. The next person on the meals roster ([on the Adjutant's Corner](#)) will take the cooler with drinks, etc. for the next meeting. If additional drinks are required, it will be reimbursed above the normal meal amount. I have the cooler and will bring it to the meeting for the meal.

We need a Finance Officer to step up as our long time Finance Officer Mike O'Meara needs to step down for personal reasons. If you have questions about the position, please reach out to Mike O'Meara at (408) 691-8277 or momeara47@yahoo.com. In our Post Bylaws Section 5. Duties of the Finance Officer. The Finance Officer shall be charged with custody of the funds of the Post. He shall keep its accounts and report thereon at regular meeting of the Post. They shall receive all funds of the Post and pay all bills approved by the Post. The office of Finance Officer and any other officers and/or positions charged by the Post Constitution and/or Bylaws, with the responsibility of handling Post funds, should be bonded and must pass a credit check. This position is especially important for maintaining the Post Charter and eligibility in the District.

Please remember that if you have Post or Veterans events that you would like on the calendar get them to Arturo. Please include pertinent information like event information, contacts, address, where to meet, etc.

<https://www.americanlegionpost642.com/site/eventscalendar.php?y=2023&m=3>

If you know of deceased members during the past few months either bring their name and share with our District Chaplain, (currently vacant) so contact the Adjutant at wheimsoth@aol.com with information or if you would like to volunteer for the District 13 Chaplain position.

To Comradeship!
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First Vice Commanders Notes

None

2026 Membership Report (As of 26 December 2025)

2026 Membership Goal: 65
Paid Up for Life (PUFL): 13
Online Annual Renewals: 10
Multi-Annual Renewals: 4
Mail Renewals: 11
Post 1000 Transfers: 0

Total Members: 38/58.46%
Newly renewed Members: 0
New Members: 0
Renewals Pending Submittal: 0
Members not yet renewed: 24
District Rank: 10th out of 11

Renewed Members Since Last Report: 0

[Membership Report URL](#)

Adjutant Update

Fellow Legionnaires,

Post Christmas greetings to all of you, hopefully you all had a chance to be with family and friends during this Christmas season. We are now saying goodbye to 2025 and hello 2026!

With the start of 2026, this is a great opportunity for members to check out their personal data on mylegion.org to ensure all the information is up to date. It's quick and easy, go to mylegion.org if you already have a login then click on the icon and once you are logged in, click on my account. This will take you to your my account page. On the left is where the various sections of your account information are stored. Click on each of those sections, review the info, and make any additions, changes as required. Once this is saved it will be uploaded into the Legion database. While you are there you can subscribe to various email newsletters and dispatches to receive the latest Legion happenings. Those who do not yet have an account, once you are on the mylegion.org page click on the register icon and follow the instructions to register. Once you have registered, then follow the instructions above for account holders. I will be sending out hard copies of legion members' info for those who have not yet provided their email addresses or do not have email.

We had a great Wreaths Across America (WAA) ceremony on 13 December. The weather was much better than last year, and we had an excellent turnout. Over 1,100 wreaths were purchased by the community, civic groups, and our members. As previously mentioned, the American Legion sent their media representative to the event and they wrote a piece on our event. It can be found [here](#), and is also on our initial page

of our website. The article has an embedded video of the event where our own Dennis Whittaker is interviewed, additionally segments from the rest of the ceremony are shown in the video. For those who have never attended, this will give you an idea of what the event is all about. Also I would like to thanks the various members of our Post who attended and assisted with the event.

On a side note regarding WAA, one of our ex-Post members Michael McNutt who started and ran the first two WAA Ceremonies that our Post hosted, passed away on 26 December. He had been in poor health and was recently hospitalized for serious back issues. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Finally before closing, with the start of the new calendar year it is a great time to renew your membership if you haven't yet done so. You can either send the \$45 check to our PO Box address PO Box 302, Cupertino CA 95015, or you can renew online via mylegion.org

Happy and healthy 2026!

"Duty First"

Arturo

Upcoming events for January 2026-March 2026

5 Jan	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA
7 Jan	1200 hrs.	Post 642 Hosted Lunch for De Anza Student Veterans, De Anza College, SEM 3 Building
21 Jan	1900 hrs.	District 13 Meeting Post 558, Los Altos, 347 1st Street, Los Altos
2 Feb	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA
7 Feb	1000 hrs.	Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Service, St. Francis Cabrini Church 15333 Woodard Dr., San Jose
2 Mar	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA
21 Jan	1900 hrs.	District 13 Meeting, Location TBD

For more events and detailed event information please visit our [website events page](#).

Historian Report

<https://americanlegionpost642.com/index.php?id=102>

National Days and Months: There is a neat description of January here regarding the National Days where the rest of these links can be found.

<https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/january> Missouri, Arkansas, Michigan and Florida were all admitted to the Union in January.

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY - January 9

<https://youtu.be/IWVPu4mags0?si=58eETSOwEplggq8B>

STEPHEN FOSTER MEMORIAL DAY - January 13

<https://youtu.be/xZedTezlLOU?si=lqsgZTKbnP4r-x6t>

RATIFICATION DAY - January 14 <https://youtu.be/8wB-5cCXKxU?si=m3l9i4PH88U5a-aV>

NATIONAL IRISH COFFEE DAY - January 25

<https://youtu.be/91UTClwnD30?si=l0jO3LGAECpYVRm>

NATIONAL SPOUSES DAY - January 26

https://youtu.be/sN_1OYwC18I?si=BkwNQmcar6qSYF1s

VIETNAM PEACE DAY - January 27

<https://youtu.be/gA2mRQGbyMA?si=mQzPq3J0LO8DSuGz>

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY - January 27 <https://youtu.be/Bgs8JpoPEGA?si=hbNb-9BNZ56brkvA>

DATA PRIVACY DAY - January 28

Military History Notes: Vietnam and The Holocaust

Jan 2

1967: In just one day, Col. Robin Olds' 8th Tactical Fighter Wing - the "Wolfpack" – wipes out half of North Vietnam's MiG 21 fighter fleet in Operation "Bolo". Olds' advanced F-4C "Phantoms" tricked Communist intelligence into thinking the advanced fighters were just another easy target of F-105 "Thunderchief" fighter bombers by flying at altitudes, speeds, routes, and using radio callsigns typical to the less maneuverable F-105s. When the MiGs flew into Olds' ambush, seven "Fishbeds" are shot down in 12 minutes. Col. Olds scores one of the victories, making him the only Air Force ace with kills in both World War II and Vietnam.

Jan 5

1970: Staff Sgt. Franklin D. Miller

(<http://www.victoryinstitute.net/blogs/utb/2000/01/franklin-d-miller-medal-ofhonor-citation/>) was leading a long range patrol of Special Forces soldiers and Montagnards in Laos when a booby trap wounded several members. A firefight ensued, wounding the entire patrol. Despite a serious chest wound, Miller is the last man standing and keeps up the fight for several hours, holding off repeated enemy assaults against their position. That evening, as he is about to exhaust his ammunition, a team arrives to relieve the Green Berets. Miller would serve over six years in Southeast Asia. When asked by Richard Nixon upon awarding Miller the Medal of Honor, the president asks him where he wanted to be assigned next. Miller's answer: "Vietnam."

Jan 6

Medal of Honor: 44 years ago in South Vietnam, Army helicopter pilot Maj. Patrick H. Brady (<http://www.victoryinstitute.net/blogs/utb/2000/01/patrick-hbrady-medal-of-honor->

[citation/](#)) conducted multiple medical evacuation missions in dense fog and in the face of heavy enemy fire. Over the course of the day, he rescued 51 soldiers and 400 bullet holes were counted in the three helicopters he flew.

Jan 8

1967: 16,000 U.S. and 14,000 South Vietnamese troops enter the "Iron Triangle," a major Viet Cong stronghold near Saigon, on a massive search and destroy mission. The Viet Cong largely avoided contact with the large force, withdrawing to Cambodia or hiding in tunnels. Operation "Cedar Falls" was the largest ground operation of the Vietnam War and marked the first time "tunnel rats" were used.

1973: An Air Force F-4D "Phantom" flown by Capt. Paul D. Howman and 1st Lt. Lawrence W. Kullman shoots down an enemy MiG - the last aerial victory of the Vietnam War.

Jan 11

1969: While leading an armored convoy down a highway in Vietnam's Binh Long Province, 1st Lt. Harold A. Fritz's formation is ambushed. Surrounded on all sides and in danger of being overrun, Fritz — who had been wounded in the initial moments disregards his injuries and heavy enemy fire, leaping from his vehicle to rally his men, directing them to reposition and shift their fire. As the battle wore on, a group of enemy soldiers closed in on the unit. Fritz, armed with just a pistol and bayonet, and some of his fellow men defeat the infiltrating force. Upon arrival of the relief force, Fritz again braves incoming fire to direct the unit. Today, Fritz is one of only 71 surviving Medal of Honor recipients.

Jan 12

1962: Ten miles west of Saigon, U.S. Army H-21 "flying banana" helicopters ferry South Vietnamese paratroopers into battle - the first major American combat operation in what will become the Vietnam War.

Also on this date, the U.S. military begins defoliation operations to deny the Viet Cong use of jungle cover for their movements. Over nine years, Operation "Ranch Hand pilots," whose motto was "Only you can prevent forests," would fly 19,000 sorties and drop an estimated 20 million gallons of defoliant. 10 percent of the vegetation in South Vietnam is destroyed.

1973: An F-4 "Phantom" flown by U.S. Navy Lieutenants Vic Kovaleski and Jim Wise splash a MiG-17, making it the Navy's final air-to-air kill and the last aerial-combat kill of the war.

Jan 19

Act of valor: On this day in 1967, A-4 "Skyhawk" pilot Capt. Michael J. Estocin (USN) earned the Distinguished Flying Cross during aerial combat over North Vietnam. His citation states: "As the leader of three Shrike-configured aircraft, Captain Estocin was responsible for providing warning, detection, and suppression of hostile surface-to-air missile activity directed at elements of the main strike group conducting a coordinated attack against the Dong Phong Thuong Railroad Bridge north of Thanh Hoa, North Vietnam. He lured the opposing missile sites to direct their fire toward his widely dispersed position by deploying the Shrike aircraft well ahead of the main strike group. During the course of the mission, Captain Estocin broadcast timely and

accurate warning of enemy missile firings and personally took under fire two enemy missile site, destroying one and causing significant damage to the radar facilities of the other. He was subjected to heavy and accurate enemy antiaircraft fire throughout the execution of these attacks. After exhausting his ordnance and at great personal peril, Captain Estocin remained on station to act as a lure in drawing any missile fire away from the remaining strike group. Only when assured that the main strike group was clear of the missile threat did Captain Estocin leave the hostile area." In April, Estocin will earn the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for two daring attacks against enemy surface-to-air missile sites.

Jan. 20

1968: North Vietnamese Army tries - and fails - to overrun Marines patrolling hills surrounding the Combat Outpost Khe Sanh. The Battle of Khe Sanh begins, and for the next 77 days, the heavily outnumbered and besieged Marines fought off their attackers, shattering two enemy divisions.

Jan 22

1968: With aerial photographs, ground reconnaissance reports, and a massive array of electronic sensors indicating that some 20,000 North Vietnamese Army soldiers surround the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Operation "Niagara", is underway. The massive air campaign, dubbed "the most concentrated application of aerial firepower in the history of warfare," will rain down nearly 100,000 tons of bombs - and eight times that amount of artillery shells - on the enemy. Meanwhile, transport planes ferry supplies to the besieged Marines in the largest aerial supply operation since the Berlin Airlift.

1969: Operation "Dewey Canyon", the Marine Corps' last major offensive of the Vietnam War, begins. Marines under the command of Col. Robert H. Barrow will spend 56 days clearing out the North Vietnamese Army's stronghold near the A Shau Valley.

Jan 28

1966: Marines hit the beaches of the South Vietnam's Quang Ngai province in the first amphibious landing since Korea. The Americans meet little resistance as they head inland, then move to cut off retreating North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces.

1973: B-52s carried out their final combat sortie in Southeast Asia – striking targets in South Vietnam. Operation ARC LIGHT had started in 1965.

Jan 30

1968: (Featured image) At 2:45 in the morning, a 19-man Viet Cong suicide squad blows a hole in the wall of the U.S. Embassy at Saigon, managing to hold the courtyard for six hours until paratroopers can retake the compound. 10,000 North Vietnamese soldiers take the city of Hue, triggering a grueling house-to-house battle with U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers. Meanwhile, virtually all of South Vietnam's major urban areas and bases are under attack.

The Vietnamese Tet Offensive launched by over 70,000 jointly operating North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces — has kicked off across South Vietnam. The Communists trade their typical guerilla tactics for a risky, more conventional strategy intended to weaken the government in Saigon and inspire a revolutionary uprising. Militarily speaking, the Communists are shattered, with an estimated 50,000 killed, wounded or captured. But in the United States, the psychological effect of Tet playing out in the media drains

the resolve of the American public thanks to the negative reporting of Walter Cronkite.

Service Officer Report

<https://americanlegionpost642.com/index.php?id=119>

#VetResources is a weekly newsletter for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. [Connect with Secretary Collins on X](#)



Correcting the record

VA Secretary Doug Collins corrects the record after the Washington Post misled the public about VA health care jobs.

[Watch](#)

VA launches Veterans Health Administration reorganization

VHA's reorganization will reduce duplicative management layers and put the right people in the right places without reducing staff.

[Learn more](#)

VA to improve health care choice and quality for Veterans

VA has released a request for proposals for new community care contracts that will improve health care choice and quality for Veterans over the next decade.

[Learn More](#)

Adding & changing dependents for VA disability, pension or DIC benefits

Veterans rated 30% or higher can add dependents, such as a spouse, child, or parent, to increase their monthly VA disability compensation. Watch the latest edition of SITREP to learn more.



[Watch](#)

VA resources, we're here for you.

- For any questions or requests, [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411) (1-800-698-2411) is always the right number.
- [Veterans Crisis Line: 988](#) and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text [838255](tel:838255)
- [Vet Centers: 1-877-927-8387](#)
- [Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838](#) or [Chat](#)
- [Ask VA](#)
- [Schedule a 1-on-1 Appointment with a VA Benefits Expert](#)
- [Find a VA facility near you](#)

For non-urgent questions, you can reach VA using the [VA Health & Benefits App](#) or [MyHealtheVet](#) secure messaging to schedule an appointment, refill prescriptions, and access your medical records.

Upcoming VA events

VA hosts free events around the country for Veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors. Check out the weekly outreach events calendar to find an event near you.

[View all events](#)

Jobs for Veterans

Employers from around the country are looking to hire Veterans. Get info about openings across the nation and multiple career fairs below.

[Find your next job](#)



Exclusive discounts for Veterans

Check out hundreds of recently updated discounts and deals available to Veterans, service members and retirees.

[Save money, find more discounts](#)

Veterans Benefits Newsletter
December 2025

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

More work ahead to help homeless Veterans

VA permanently housed more than 50,000 homeless Veterans in fiscal year 2025, but there is much more to be done. We're hard at work implementing President Trump's executive order to

establish the National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center.

[Watch](#)

VA makes it easier for women Veterans to access care

Women Veterans can now schedule appointments directly with gynecology specialists, eliminating the previous requirement for a VA primary care provider referral to access care. This important reform will better serve the more than 1 million women Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care.

[Learn more](#)

VA Disability Pay Increases

VA disability benefit rates are increasing thanks to the 2026 cost of living adjustment. Watch the latest edition of SITREP to learn more.



[Watch](#)

Get your 2025 VA health care coverage tax form this January

Your 1095-B IRS tax form shows proof that you had VA health coverage. Throughout January and no later than January 31, 2026, all VA health care beneficiaries will be able to electronically access their 2025 1095-B forms via their VA.gov account. Please note that VA will no longer automatically mail 1095-Bs to all Veterans. To request a paper copy by mail, please contact us at 877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.

[Learn More](#)



VA honors 60 years of SGLI protecting our nation's military members

VA is celebrating 60 years of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program. On Sept. 29, 1965, during the Vietnam conflict, an act of Congress created the SGLI program to address service member [life insurance](#) needs while in combat zones, and for other purposes.

Learn More



Informal Conferences offer opportunity to speak directly with claims processors

Veterans who disagree with their VA benefits claim decision can choose from three [decision review options](#). One of the options is a higher-level review (HLR), which is conducted by an experienced claims processor who didn't participate in the previous decision. As part of the HLR process, you are able to [communicate directly with a new reviewer](#).



Survivor Benefits and Reporting a Veteran Death

Losing a loved one is a challenging time — we are here to help. As the survivor of a Veteran or Service member, check to see if you qualify for survivor benefits, including help with [burial costs and survivor compensation](#).

Please contact VA to report the Veteran's death and avoid an overpayment of the Veteran's benefits. You can report the death in person at a [VA Regional Office](#), by mail, or by phone.



Overpayment Fraud

Scammers are alarmingly clever in targeting Veterans, surviving spouses and family members who receive VA benefits. They pretend to be official VA representatives and use official communication channels to demand repayment for alleged benefits overpayments. Fraudulent letters, emails and texts often include fake VA letterheads and logos, making it difficult to distinguish genuine VA communications from [scams](#).

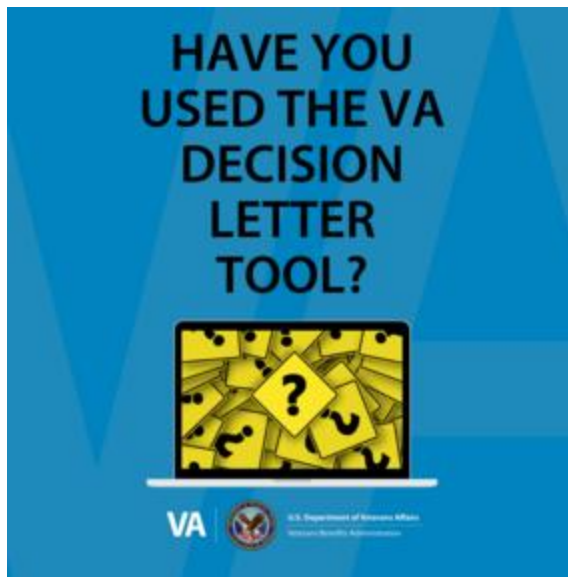
Learn more about overpayment scams from the SITREP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqowY9391ls>



File a Supplemental Claim

If VA denied your disability claim in the past, but now considers your condition presumptive, you are encouraged to file a Supplemental Claim. This will allow VA to re-adjudicate your claim when presented with new evidence or policy. [Learn how to file a Supplemental Claim today.](#)



Decision Letter Tool

Did you know you can access your VA notices and claims development letters on VA.gov? You no longer have to wait for mailed copies or request reprints from VA. By logging in using your [VA.gov](https://va.gov) login info you can view your documents. Learn [how to access decision letters](#) and notices.



VA History: Object 99

After World War II, U.S. Army investigators in the Philippines turned over a huge collection of captured documents, intelligence reports, press clippings, and Japanese banks checks to the VA office in Manila. The Manila office stored the collection in the “Loyalty Room,” so named because VA used the checks and other records to evaluate the wartime allegiance of Filipino Veterans applying for benefits.

Read more about [Object 99](#) in the History of VA in 100 Objects digital exhibit.



VA Home Loan Guaranty

As part of our mission to serve you, we provide a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help you buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for your own personal occupancy. Learn more about the [VA Home Loan Guaranty Program](#).



Holiday Scams

Common holiday season scams include shipping and delivery scams, impersonation scams, VA benefit scams, charity scams, phishing scams, gift card scams, prize and sweepstake scams, e-commerce scams and financial scams. Veterans who suspect they have experienced fraud can find out more and report it to the appropriate agency at [VSAFE.gov](#) or by calling 833-38V-SAFE.



Stay Connected with Team RWB

[Team Red, White & Blue \(Team RWB\)](#) is dedicated to enriching the lives of Veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity. By providing in-person and virtual opportunities, Team RWB can help you focus on your mental and physical health to ensure the best days are ahead. Download their free mobile app to meet local community members, access virtual challenges, and much more!

[Learn More](#)

VA: Health and Benefits App

For iOS and Android



Manage existing VA claims and appointments, securely message your VA health care providers, and more.

Download today!



Military Humor



**MARINES:
DOING MORE WITH LESS**



MURPHY'S MILITARY LAW #29

No combat ready unit has ever passed inspection

\o/ MotivatedPhotos.com

