

THE POST SCRIPT

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

EDWARD J. KEARNS POST 6024

P.O.BOX 4457

MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA 92690-4457

vfwpost6024.org

August 2026

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In memory of Tom Goodall

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<u>Trustee #2:</u> vacant	
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NEXT MEETING

POST: Monday, September 14, 2026, 1900 hrs. - Norman Murray Center

AUXILIARY: Monday, September 14, 2026, 1900 hrs. - Norman Murray Center

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(NOTE: A donation of at least \$15.00 allows you to be a Post Script Booster for one year. The date after your name indicates your donation expiration. Our Boosters help offset the costs for mailing and printing this newsletter.)

COMMANDER'S CORNER

The Mission Continues: The Purple Heart – A Reminder of the Cost of Freedom

As we gather this August, I want to begin by thanking each of you for your continued dedication to our Post, our mission, and to one another. August is a month of transition — the height of summer giving way to the early signs of fall. Families return from travel, schools prepare to reopen, and communities begin planning for the busy months ahead. For us, August is a moment to reflect, to honor, and to prepare.

One of the most meaningful observances in August is **National Purple Heart Day**, recognized on August 7th. The Purple Heart traces its origins to 1782, when General George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit. Today, it stands as one of the most sacred symbols of sacrifice in our nation's military history. The Purple Heart is not just an award — it is a reminder of the cost of freedom. It represents blood shed, wounds endured, and the courage of those who faced danger head on. To all of our Purple

Heart recipients, and to the families of those who earned it but never returned home, we honor you. Your sacrifice is not forgotten, and your presence strengthens the very foundation of our Post. Purple Heart Day also reminds us of our responsibility as veterans: to ensure that those who carry visible and invisible wounds are never left to face them alone. That is part of our mission — and part of our promise.

As we move through August, I ask each of you to stay engaged with our mission:

- **Check on a fellow veteran.** A simple call or visit can make a difference.
- **Support our community outreach.** Our presence matters, especially as local schools and organizations prepare for fall events.
- **Bring in new members.** There are veterans out there who need a place like this — a place where they belong.
- **Share your ideas.** Our Post grows stronger when every voice is heard.

The VFW’s mission is not seasonal — it is constant. But August gives us the breathing room to prepare, organize, and recommit ourselves to the work ahead. Let us continue to be a Post where veterans and families feel supported. If you know someone struggling, reach out. If you see a need, bring it forward. If you can lend a hand, do so. This is how we honor the sacrifices represented by the Purple Heart— through action, compassion, and unity. Our Post’s strength is not measured by numbers — it is measured by commitment. And commitment is something this Post has never lacked.

Comrades, thank you for your service — not just in uniform, but here, continuing the mission. The legacy of the Purple Heart reminds us that sacrifice is honored not only by remembrance, but by action. Let us carry that spirit forward through August and into the months ahead. Let us remain united, purposeful, and proud of the work we do. And let us continue to be a Post where every veteran feels valued, respected, and supported.

Thank you, comrades,
Commander, Harry Steelman

New Members: At our August Post Meeting, new Life Member **Michael Huddleston** , US Army, Vietnam, was sworn in. Welcome Mike.

Post Script Delivery Reminder: We have only received a few replies—please email the editor if you would prefer to receive a digital copy of the Post Script rather than paper. tommyg0910@aol.com

New VFW Commander-in-Chief: **Cory L. Geisler**, a highly decorated U.S. Army Iraqi War veteran who served from 2002-2012, was elected as the 118th Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on July 29 at the 127th National Convention in Reno NV.

He earned multiple commendations, including recognition as the 2006 USO Soldier of the Year in Korea. He joined VFW Post 721 in Waukesha, WI in 2008 and rose through its ranks to become a respected national leader. He brings more than a decade of military service, extensive VFW leadership experience, and a strong record of community and veteran advocacy. He holds a degree from the University of Wisconsin and has worked in national commercial leadership roles in the private sector.



Cory lives with his wife and daughter in Hartland, Wisconsin.

He will lead the VFW under his theme: **“One Team. One Mission. Veterans First.”**



National Purple Heart Day falls on Aug. 7 every year. The historical anchor for Purple Heart Day is General George Washington's General Order issued on **August 7, 1782** at Newburgh, NY creating the Badge of Military Merit awarded for "whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed". It is documented that 3 soldiers were awarded, the Badge of Military Merit in 1783, for "gallantry and extraordinary fidelity". There likely were more awardees but the book in which recipients' names were recorded has been lost for more than 200 years. The actual **Badge of Military Merit**, designed by Washington himself, was a heart-shaped piece of purple cloth or silk and had a narrow border of silver lace or binding. The word "Merit" was stitched across the face in silver thread.



Washington's order was allowed to lapse after the Revolutionary War ended and the award now dubbed "**Purple Heart**" wasn't revived until February 22, 1932, on Washington's 200th birthday. Once again, the medal was awarded for meritorious service, but now soldiers could also receive it if they had been wounded by the enemy.

The award was made retroactive — World War I soldiers who had earned certain awards could apply for the Purple Heart. The first medal was presented to General Douglas MacArthur, the Army chief of staff at the time.



The design of the modern Purple Heart medal features a purple heart-shaped medal with gold border, a profile image of Washington, Washington's coat of arms above the heart, purple ribbon with narrow white edges and the inscription on the reverse side: "For Military Merit". Although some of the details have changed over the years— color tone, texture of the ribbon, mounting hardware, and the addition of recipients name on the reverse— the medal itself has remained visually the same.

In 1942, Congress changed the rules for earning the award, authorizing it only for wounds, and included some civilians who worked with the military—like Red Cross workers or war reporters, who remained eligible for the award until 1997. Also on December 3, 1942, FDR officially extended Purple Heart eligibility to every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. Several later changes clarified and expanded eligibility for Terrorism injuries, friendly fire, POW injuries, and traumatic brain injury.

Two military service animals also received the Purple Heart. Army Sgt. Stubby, a dog who was smuggled to Europe by members of the 102nd Infantry Regiment, earned the Purple Heart twice during World War I — once for being wounded in a gas attack and once for being wounded by a grenade. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Reckless, a horse, received the Purple Heart twice for wounds she received in combat during the Korean War. However, service animal eligibility was suspended by an executive order issued by President Kennedy in 1962.

To date, it is estimated that 1.6 million Purple Hearts have been awarded—with World War II Purple Hearts exceeding the combined total of *all other* U.S. combat Purple Hearts.

Laguna Café: Join us for our weekly breakfast meetings on Fridays beginning at 7:00 am.
24310 Moulton Pkwy, Laguna Woods. **All Veterans Welcome.**



MONTHLY POWER QUOTES:

"The General, ever desirous to cherish a virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings, over his left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, edged with a narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward....."

————— George Washington, General Order August 7, 1782

"On National Purple Heart Day, we honor the immeasurable sacrifices of every valiant service member wounded or killed in combat in defense of our Nation and we reaffirm our eternal gratitude for their unrivaled heroism..... "

————— Donald J. Trump August 7, 2026



**Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
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UPCOMING AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

September 11, 2026 —Patriot Day Remembrance Ceremony, RSM Civic Plaza 1730– 1830 hrs.

September 14, 2026 ---Post Meeting 1900 hrs., Norman Murray Center

Pre-meeting social time begins at 1830 hrs.

September 14, 2026 ——Auxiliary Meeting 1900 hrs., Norman Murray Center

**September 22, 2026 —— Welcome Fall Potluck, Norman Murray Center 1730-2000 hrs.
entertainment by Flashback band**

***August 18, 1951 — Beginning of the Battle of Bloody Ridge, US captures strategic ridge after 3
weeks engagement at Gangwon Province, South Korea***

September 2, 1945 — Formal Japanese surrender signed on deck of USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay

***September 17, 1862 — Bloodiest single day in American military history-Battle of Antietam
22,720 combined casualties***