



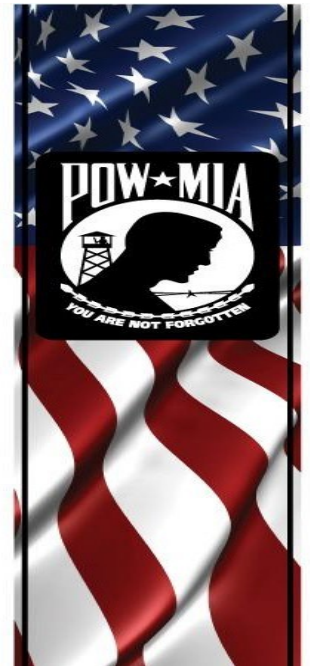
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®

August 2026/ Volume 8, Issue 8

VFW Post 8555 Newsletter/Calendar

Message from the Commander, Victory over Japan (VJ-Day), American History August, National Purple Heart Day, and District 20 Events.



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A Commander's Message for August

Comrades, Auxiliary members, and friends of Post 8555,

It is with genuine pride that I write this month to recognize the outstanding work of our members and volunteers. Your recent efforts at the Poth Food Pantry stand as a clear example of the values we carried in uniform and continue to live out in our community.

With the help of eleven dedicated volunteers, our Post supported the distribution of food that reached 111 people from 64 local families. That is not simply a number. It represents neighbors who received help when they needed it, children who went to bed with full stomachs, and families who felt the quiet strength of people willing to serve. This is the American ideal of looking out for one another—voluntary service freely given, without fanfare, because it is the right thing to do. The same sense of duty that once took us overseas now shows itself in the simple, steady work of feeding our community. Well done to every volunteer who showed up and made a difference.

We also gathered for our Appreciation Luncheon, a time set aside to give proper thanks to those who strengthen this Post. We honored our Auxiliary, whose partnership remains essential to nearly everything we accomplish. Their dedication multiplies our ability to serve veterans and the wider community. We recognized local businesses that stand with us—proof that the free enterprise system and community spirit still work hand in hand in small-town Texas. And we celebrated our VFW Member of the Year, Juan Padilla. Comrade Padilla's consistent service, reliability, and commitment to the mission of the VFW set a standard for all of us. His example reminds every member that the strength of this Post rests on individuals who quietly and faithfully answer the call.

These moments—feeding families and recognizing those who serve—are not separate from our mission. They are its continuation. The Veterans of Foreign Wars exists to ensure that those who have worn the uniform are never forgotten, and that the communities that supported us while we served continue to feel our support in return. When we feed the hungry, honor the Auxiliary, thank our business partners, and single out a member like Juan Padilla, we are living the principles of service, comradeship, and patriotism that define this organization.

I am proud of this Post. I am proud of our volunteers who make the food pantry effort possible. I am proud of our Auxiliary, our community partners, and Comrade Padilla. Let us carry this same spirit forward in the months ahead. There is always more work to do, and together we will continue to meet it with the same resolve that has always marked the American veteran.

Thank you for all you do.

In comradeship and service,

Johnathon Farrell Commander
VFW Post 8555 Wilson County
Memorial Post



Victory over Japan Day: Sacrifice, Resolve, and the Close of a Global War

August marks the anniversary of the events that brought the Second World War to an end in the Pacific. On August 14, 1945 (August 15 in Japan and much of the Allied world), Japan announced its acceptance of the Allied terms of surrender. The formal Instrument of Surrender was signed aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945. These dates are remembered as Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day—a moment of profound relief after nearly four years of bitter conflict for the United States and more than six years of global war.

The path to that day was measured in blood and resolve. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, American forces fought a long and costly campaign across the vast distances of the Pacific. The first major Allied offensive began on August 7, 1942, when U.S. Marines landed on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. That six-month struggle marked a turning point, as American forces seized the initiative and began the long island-hopping advance toward Japan. Later campaigns, including the ferocious battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa, demonstrated both the courage of American service members and the determined resistance of the enemy.

By the summer of 1945, the Allies issued the Potsdam Declaration demanding Japan's unconditional surrender. When that demand was refused, the United States employed atomic weapons against Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9. On the same day as the second bombing, the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan. Facing these combined pressures, the Japanese government accepted the Allied terms. Emperor Hirohito announced the decision to the Japanese people on August 15.

In Washington on the evening of August 14, President Harry S. Truman told reporters that Japan had surrendered unconditionally. "This is the day we have been waiting for since Pearl Harbor," he said. Spontaneous celebrations erupted across the United States. In Times Square and cities large and small, Americans poured into the streets in a release of long-held tension and gratitude. Truman later designated September 2—the day of the formal signing—as the official V-J Day.

Aboard the Missouri, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, accepted the Japanese surrender on behalf of the Allied nations. Representatives of the United States, China, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and other Allied powers stood witness as Japanese officials signed the documents that ended the fighting. The ceremony closed the most destructive conflict in human history.

More than 400,000 Americans died in World War II. Millions more served, many in the Pacific Theater under conditions of extreme hardship. V-J Day marked not only military victory but the preservation of the free institutions and democratic ideals for which they fought. For the veterans of that generation—the men and women who answered the call after Pearl Harbor—the day remains a time of remembrance and gratitude. Their service helped secure a peace that allowed subsequent generations to live in freedom. The legacy of V-J Day continues to call upon all who have worn the uniform to uphold the liberties purchased at such great cost.



August in American Military History: Turning Points Across the Centuries

August has repeatedly proven a decisive month in the military history of the United States. From the earliest days of the Revolution through the great conflicts of the twentieth century, American service members have faced critical tests during these late-summer weeks. The events of August reveal enduring qualities of the American character: perseverance under adversity, bold leadership, and the willingness of ordinary citizens to defend the principles of liberty and self-government.



In late August 1776, the Battle of Long Island (also known as the Battle of Brooklyn) became the first major engagement after the Declaration of Independence. British forces under General William Howe outflanked George Washington's Continental Army, forcing a costly American defeat. Yet the campaign is remembered less for the battlefield loss than for Washington's masterful evacuation of approximately 9,000 troops across the East River to Manhattan under cover of night and fog on August 29–30. That skillful withdrawal preserved the Continental Army and, with it, the cause of independence itself. The episode demonstrated that American resolve could survive tactical setbacks and continue the fight for a free republic.

Nearly a century later, on August 5, 1864, Rear Admiral David Farragut led a Union fleet into Mobile Bay, Alabama. Facing Confederate forts, mines (then called torpedoes), and the ironclad CSS Tennessee, Farragut is remembered for the order that has entered American legend: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" The Union victory closed one of the last major Confederate ports on the Gulf Coast and tightened the naval blockade that was slowly strangling the Southern war effort. Farragut's boldness and the courage of the sailors under his command helped preserve the Union and the constitutional government established by the Founders.

In the Pacific during World War II, August 7, 1942, marked the beginning of the Guadalcanal campaign. Elements of the 1st Marine Division landed on the island in the Solomon chain in the first major Allied offensive against Japanese forces. The objective was an unfinished airfield that would become known as Henderson Field. What followed was a six-month struggle of jungle combat, naval battles, and air attacks under harsh conditions. American Marines, soldiers, sailors, and airmen endured malaria, shortages, and determined enemy counterattacks. Their eventual success marked a strategic turning point: for the first time, Japanese expansion was halted and the initiative shifted decisively toward the Allies. Guadalcanal remains a powerful symbol of American endurance and the fighting spirit of the Marine Corps and the broader U.S. military.

Other August milestones reinforce the pattern. On August 16, 1777, American militia under General John Stark defeated a British and German foraging force at the Battle of Bennington, providing a critical morale boost and contributing to the later American victory at Saratoga. Across these widely separated campaigns, a common thread appears: citizen-soldiers and professional service members alike answering the call to defend the nation and its founding ideals.

These August chapters remind veterans and their families that the freedoms enjoyed today were secured through the steady courage of earlier generations. From the retreat that saved the Revolutionary Army, through the bold naval action that helped reunite the country, to the hard-fought island campaign that turned the tide in the Pacific, American service members have demonstrated that liberty is worth the sacrifice required to preserve it. Their example continues to guide and inspire the members of VFW Post 8555.



National Purple Heart Day: Honoring Sacrifice, Merit, and the Citizen-Soldier

On August 7 each year, Americans observe National Purple Heart Day. This date commemorates the creation of the nation's oldest military decoration and offers a moment for reflection on the price of liberty. For members of VFW Post 8555 and veterans everywhere, it is a day of remembrance for those wounded or killed in the service of the United States.

On August 7, 1782, from his headquarters at Newburgh, New York, General George Washington issued General Orders establishing the Badge of Military Merit. At a time when formal military honors were largely reserved for officers, Washington deliberately opened recognition to enlisted soldiers and non-commissioned officers. He directed that "whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding." Washington's guiding principle was clear: "The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all."

Only three men are known to have received the original Badge during the Revolutionary War, all Connecticut sergeants whose service exemplified the citizen-soldier ideal. Sergeant Elijah Churchill of the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons earned recognition for leading daring raids against British positions on Long Island, including the successful attack on Fort St. George in November 1780 and a later assault on Fort Slongo. His leadership helped capture prisoners, destroy supplies, and disrupt the enemy. Sergeant William Brown of the 5th Connecticut Regiment was cited for gallantry in leading a "forlorn hope"—the dangerous advance party—in the assault on British Redoubt No. 10 at Yorktown on the night of October 14, 1781, under Alexander Hamilton's command. That action helped force the British surrender. Sergeant Daniel Bissell of the 2nd Connecticut Regiment received the badge for an extended intelligence mission behind British lines in New York City, where his fidelity, perseverance, and good sense provided valuable information to the Commander-in-Chief.

The Badge fell into disuse after the Revolution. It was revived on February 22, 1932—the bicentennial of Washington's birth—by Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. Redesigned as the modern Purple Heart, the medal features a bronze heart with Washington's profile and coat of arms, suspended from a purple ribbon with white edges, and bears the words "For Military Merit." Initially awarded for both meritorious service and wounds, the criteria were refined during World War II. By late 1942, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order, the Purple Heart became the decoration for those wounded or killed in action against an enemy of the United States, and eligibility was extended across all branches of the armed forces.

Estimates indicate that roughly one million Purple Hearts were awarded during World War II alone—the largest number of any conflict—reflecting the immense scale of American sacrifice in that global struggle. Across all of American history, nearly two million have been awarded. Many of the medals produced in anticipation of a possible invasion of Japan continued to be issued long after the war ended.



The Purple Heart remains a solemn symbol. It does not measure rank or length of service; it recognizes the personal cost of defending the Constitution and the ideals of liberty, self-government, and individual dignity. For recipients and their families, it marks both physical sacrifice and the enduring strength required to carry the burdens of war. On this day, VFW Post 8555 joins the nation in honoring every recipient—those who returned home and those who gave their last full measure of devotion. Their service affirms Washington's original vision that in a free country the path of honor is open to all who answer the call.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>
National Convention						
	Korean Armistice					
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
			08:00 - 10:00 Food Distribution		Start of Guadalcanal Campaign (World War II, 1942)	
<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>
	19:00 - 21:00 Monthly Post Meeting					
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
		08:30 - 12:00 San Antonio River Authority - Flood Plane Mapping Review Meeting				
<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
	Iraqi Freedom		VJ Day 08:00 - 10:00 Food Distribution			
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
	Labor Day				Patriots Day	
<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
Battle of Chapultepec (Mexican-American War, 1847)	19:00 - 21:00 Monthly Post Meeting			Battle of Antietam (Civil War, 1862)	POW/MIA	Battle of Incheon (Korean War, 1950) First Battle of Saratoga (Revolutionary War, 1777)
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>
			End of Tet Offensive (Vietnam War, 1968)			Start of Meuse-Argonne Offensive (World War I, 1918)
<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Auxiliary Lotteria	Start of Siege of Yorktown (Revolutionary War, 1781)	VFW Birthday				



VFW DISTRICT 20 2026-2027 EVENTS

★ VETERANS SUPPORTING VETERANS & OUR COMMUNITY ★

Join Us. Get Involved. Make a Difference.

AUGUST 21, 2026

VFW DISTRICT 20 **GOLF** TOURNAMENT

📍 OLYMPIA HILLS
🕒 7:00 AM



NOVEMBER 15, 2026

VFW DISTRICT 20 **BOWLING** TOURNAMENT

📍 Rush Fun Park
6301 NW410 Ste. 200
🕒 1:00 - 4:00 PM



DECEMBER 5, 2026

VFW DISTRICT 20 *Christmas* **PARTY**

📍 POST 9186
🕒 5:00 - 11:00 PM



FEBRUARY 6, 2027

VFW DISTRICT 20 **PICKLEBALL** TOURNAMENT

📍 CHICKENPICKLE
🕒 3:00 - 6:00 PM



MARCH 20, 2027

VFW DISTRICT 20 **ROSIE** THE RIVETER *Event*

📍 POST 7108
🕒 2:00 - 7:00 PM



MARCH 21, 2027

VFW DISTRICT 20 **CLAY SHOOT** FUNDRAISER

📍 SHOT THERAPY
🕒 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM



APRIL 17, 2027

VFW DISTRICT 20 **FAMILY** *Appreciation* **PICNIC**

📍 POST 4815
🕒 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM



APRIL 30, 2027

VFW DISTRICT 20 **BATTLE OF** THE POSTS ★ *Karaoke* ★

📍 POST 8541
🕒 7:00 - 11:00 PM



MORE THAN A POST. WE'RE A COMMUNITY.



SERVICE



FRIENDSHIP



PATRIOTISM

TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

JOIN VFW
MAKE AN IMPACT.

Be Part of Something
★ BIGGER. ★

HONORING HEROES ★ STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES ★ CHANGING LIVES