



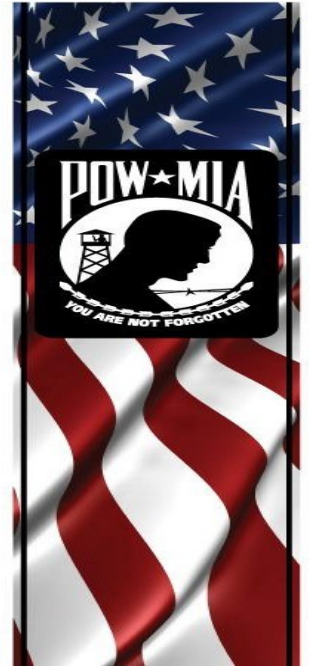
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

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## VFW Post 8555 Newsletter/Calendar

**Letter from the incoming Commander, The Battle of Midway, The True Meaning of Memorial Day, and VE Day Remembered.**



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# A Letter from the Incoming Commander - Johnathon Farrell

Comrades, friends, and fellow veterans of VFW Post 8555,

It is with deep humility and profound pride that I stand before you this evening as your incoming Commander. To be entrusted with the leadership of this Post is one of the greatest honors of my life. I accept this responsibility with a full heart and a clear vision — a vision rooted in the same American ideals that have guided every generation of those who have worn the uniform: duty, honor, sacrifice, and service above self.



We are the living legacy of men and women who answered the call when freedom was threatened. From the battlefields of World War II to the mountains of Afghanistan, our brothers and sisters gave their all so that the United States of America would remain the land of the free and the home of the brave. As we approach Memorial Day, we feel that legacy more deeply than ever. Their sacrifices are not history — they are the foundation upon which we stand. But a legacy is only as strong as the hands that carry it forward. That is why I am asking every one of you to join me in building a stronger, more vibrant, and more relevant VFW Post 8555 for the years ahead.

My mission is clear: **First, we will grow our membership.** There are thousands of veterans in our community who have not yet found their way to our Post. Many are younger veterans returning from recent service. Others are spouses and family members who share our commitment to those who served. We will reach them with respect, with genuine camaraderie, and with a message that is simple and true: **You are not alone. You belong here.**

**Second, we will bring our brothers and sisters back home.** Too many of our members have drifted away over the years. Life gets busy. Priorities shift. But the bond of service never breaks. I ask each of you to personally reach out to one comrade who has not been to a meeting or event in a while. A phone call, a visit, a simple invitation — these small acts of brotherhood can reignite the fire that once brought them through our doors.

**Third, we will strengthen our Post through community service.** A strong Post is not measured only by the number of members on the roster — it is measured by the bonds we share and the impact we make. We will expand our social calendar with events that bring camaraderie, laughter, and fellowship: Lotteria, food services, comedy nights, family picnics, and patriotic celebrations. Through the revenues of these events, we will increase our community service projects — supporting local veterans in need, partnering with schools on patriotic education and scholarship, and standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our fellow citizens during times of crisis.

As we move forward, let us remember the words of President Ronald Reagan: “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.” Our generation has a sacred duty to keep that flame alive — not only by honoring those who came before us, but by building something worthy for those who will follow.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. I am ready to serve. I am ready to lead. And I am ready to work side by side with each of you to make VFW Post 8555 stronger, more vibrant, and more impactful than ever before. God bless our veterans. God bless the United States of America. And God bless VFW Post 8555.



Thank you.

# The Battle of Midway:

## How a Handful of American Heroes Turned the Tide

In the spring of 1942, the United States Navy faced a seemingly unstoppable Japanese advance across the Pacific. Yet in a matter of days in early June—following critical operations in May—American sailors and airmen delivered a blow that changed the course of the war.

The Battle of Midway was one of the most decisive naval engagements in history. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto planned to lure the weakened U.S. Pacific Fleet into a trap at the tiny Midway Atoll. Thanks to brilliant code-breaking work at Station Hypo in Hawaii, Admiral Chester Nimitz knew the enemy's intentions. He positioned his forces—centered on the carriers *Enterprise*, *Hornet*, and the battered *Yorktown*—to meet the Japanese fleet.



On the morning of June 4, 1942, American dive bombers from Bombing Squadron 6, Bombing Squadron 3, and Bombing Squadron 8 found the Japanese carriers *Akagi*, *Kaga*, and *Soryu* in the midst of rearming their aircraft. In a matter of minutes, these “handful of heroes” turned the tide. Three Japanese carriers were turned into infernos. A fourth, *Hiryu*, was sunk later that day. Japan lost four fleet carriers, over 240 aircraft, and thousands of experienced aircrews—losses it could never replace.

The United States lost the *Yorktown* and suffered heavy casualties, but the strategic victory was complete. Never again would Japan hold the offensive initiative in the Pacific. The road to Guadalcanal, the Philippines, and ultimately Tokyo Bay had begun.

The Battle of Midway exemplified the very best of American ideals: ingenuity under pressure, individual initiative, and the willingness of free men to risk everything for the defense of liberty. These were not professional warriors in an imperial navy. They were citizen-sailors—mechanics, farmers, teachers, and students—who answered their nation's call and changed history.

Many veterans of that pivotal campaign, and those who served in the long Pacific war that followed, later joined the ranks of the VFW. Their courage reminds us that when Americans stand together in defense of freedom, no enemy is too great.

This spring, as we remember Midway and the sacrifices it required, we honor not only the victory, but the character of those who secured it. Their example continues to inspire every generation that follows the flag.

Image Top: “An American naval aviator and his aircraft on a Pacific carrier deck — symbols of the individual courage that helped secure victory at Midway.”

Image Right: “On the flight deck of an American carrier in the Pacific, 1942 — aircraft and crew prepare for the decisive Battle of Midway. This image honors the courage and skill of the sailors and airmen who changed the course of the war.”



# The True Meaning of Memorial Day

Each year, as spring blossoms fade and the warmth of early summer approaches, the last Monday of May arrives with a quiet but powerful summons. Memorial Day is far more than a long weekend or the unofficial start of the barbecue season. It is a sacred national observance—a day set aside to honor the men and women who gave their last full measure of devotion while wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

The roots of this solemn tradition reach back to the aftermath of our nation's bloodiest conflict. Following the Civil War, which claimed more than 620,000 American lives, General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued General Order No. 11 on May 5, 1868. He called for May 30 to be observed as Decoration Day, when communities would decorate the graves of soldiers who died defending their country. Both Union and Confederate dead were honored, reflecting an early spirit of reconciliation. Over the decades, as the United States fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the day evolved to encompass all who made the ultimate sacrifice. In 1971, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, moving the observance to the last Monday in May while preserving its sacred purpose.

At its core, Memorial Day reminds us that the freedoms we cherish were never free. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Constitution established a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. These ideals have been defended in every generation by ordinary Americans who answered the call to extraordinary service. They left behind families, futures, and the comforts of home so that the great American experiment in self-government would survive and flourish. From the fields of Gettysburg to the beaches of Normandy, from the jungles of Southeast Asia to the mountains of Central Asia, they fought not for conquest or glory, but for the preservation of liberty itself.

Here at VFW Post 8555, this truth resonates with particular force. Many of our members have stood on foreign soil and returned home carrying both the pride of service and the weight of memory. We have lost comrades whose names are inscribed on our Post's honor roll. Memorial Day gives us the solemn privilege—and the sacred duty—to ensure their stories are told and their sacrifices are never reduced to statistics. It is a day when we gather not only to lay wreaths and salute the flag, but to speak their names aloud and rededicate ourselves to the principles they died defending.

Modern observances across our nation reinforce this meaning. At 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day, Americans are encouraged to pause for the National Moment of Remembrance, a simple but powerful act of unity. Parades in towns and cities feature veterans marching alongside active-duty service members, while children place flags on graves in national cemeteries. These rituals are living affirmations that the United States remains a nation willing to honor its debt to the fallen.

As we prepare for this year's observance on May 25, 2026, let us approach the day with the reverence it deserves. Let us teach our children and grandchildren why their freedom carries a sacred debt. Let us support Gold Star families who bear an especially heavy burden of remembrance. And let us, as veterans, model the quiet strength and selfless service that have defined the American character for nearly two and a half centuries.

Memorial Day is our annual reminder that the greatest tribute we can offer is to live lives worthy of the sacrifices made on our behalf. May their memory be a blessing, and may their example forever guide our path.



# VE Day Remembered – 81 Years Since Victory in Europe

Eighty-one years ago this month, on May 8, 1945, the long nightmare of war in Europe came to an end. VE Day—Victory in Europe—marked the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and the liberation of a continent that had endured six years of brutal conflict. For Americans who had fought, sacrificed, and waited anxiously at home, it was a moment of profound relief tempered by the knowledge that the global struggle was not yet over.

The road to VE Day was paved with unimaginable courage and staggering loss. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor drew the United States into the war, American forces joined the Allies in a two-front campaign. In Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower orchestrated the largest amphibious invasion in history on June 6, 1944—D-Day—landing more than 156,000 Allied troops on the beaches of Normandy. General George S. Patton's Third Army slashed across France with lightning speed. American airmen in the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces conducted relentless bombing campaigns that crippled German industry and morale. The Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944–45 tested American resolve in freezing conditions, yet our forces held and counterattacked. By April 1945, Adolf Hitler was dead, and Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz had formed a brief successor government. On May 7, German representatives signed the Instrument of Surrender in Reims, France; it was ratified the following day in Berlin. The war in Europe was over.

Yet victory came at a terrible price. More than 400,000 Americans lost their lives in World War II, with tens of thousands falling in the European theater alone. The discovery of Nazi concentration camps—Dachau, Buchenwald, and others—revealed horrors that shocked the world and underscored why the fight had been necessary. American soldiers who liberated those camps carried images that would haunt them for the rest of their lives. At home, families received the dreaded telegrams and Gold Star banners that signified an irreplaceable loss. The joy of VE Day was real, but it was a joy mixed with grief and the sobering realization that the war against Japan continued in the Pacific.

Here at VFW Post 8555, we count among our ranks many who served in that titanic struggle or whose fathers and grandfathers did. Their stories of camaraderie under fire, of quiet heroism in the face of overwhelming odds, and of the deep bonds forged in combat continue to inspire us. VE Day reminds us that the defense of freedom is a generational duty. The same spirit that carried American forces from North Africa to the Elbe River lives on in today's veterans who advocate for their fellow service members, mentor the next generation, and strengthen our communities.

As we mark the 81st anniversary of VE Day, let us honor the Greatest Generation not only with words but with action. Let us support legislation that ensures every veteran receives the care and respect they earned. Let us teach the rising generation the true cost of liberty so they will be prepared to defend it. And let us stand together, as they once did, in defense of the ideals that make America the last, best hope of mankind.

Their victory is our inheritance. Their example is our charge.



| Sun   | Mon  | Tue | Wed  | Thu  | Fri   | Sat   |
|---|--|-----|--|--|---|---|
| 26  | 27   | 28  | 29<br>11:00 - 14:00 Burger Burn<br>18:00 - 21:00 General Training (All State Credit) | 30<br>ROTC Competition<br>09:00 - 00:00 District 20 Convention | 1<br>Loyalty Day <a href="#">more</a>                           | 2<br>00:00 - 17:00 District 20 Convention<br>The Great Texas Airshow at JBSA-Randolph May 2-3 |
| 3<br>The Great Texas Airshow at JBSA-Randolph May 2-3 | 4  | 5   | 6<br>08:00 - 10:00 VFW Day of Service - Food Distribution                            | 7<br>End of Battle of the Wilderness (Civil War, 1864)         | 8<br>Battle of Palo Alto (Mexican-American War, 1846)<br>VE Day | 9   |
| 10  | 11<br>19:00 - 21:00 Monthly Post Meeting             | 12  | 13<br>17:30 - 19:30 US Lawshield seminar "The Castle Doctrine"                       | 14   | 15  | 16  |
| 17  | 18<br>Start of Battle of Vicksburg (Civil War, 1863) | 19  | 20   | 21   | 22  | 23  |
| 24  | 25<br>Memorial Day<br>Memorial Day                   | 26  | 27   | 28   | 29  | 30  |

| Sun  | Mon                                     | Tue | Wed  | Thu                         | Fri  | Sat   |
|--|---|-----|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 31   | 1                                       | 2   | 3<br>Food Distribution   | 4                           | 5  | 6<br>D-Day<br>Invasion of Normandy (D-Day, World War II, 1944)        |
| 7<br>Battle of Midway (World War II, 1942)         | 8<br>19:00 - 21:00 Monthly Post Meeting | 9   | 10   | 11<br>Department Convention | 12   | 13  |
| 14<br>Flag Day                                     | 15                                      | 16  | 17<br>Battle of Bunker Hill (Revolutionary War, 1775)  | 18                          | 19<br>Juneteenth National Independence Day   | 20  |
| 21   | 22                                      | 23  | 24   | 25                          | 26<br>Battle of Little Bighorn (Indian Wars, 1876)   | 27  |
| 28<br>Battle of Monmouth (Revolutionary War, 1778) | 29                                      | 30  | 1<br>Battle of San Juan Hill (Spanish-American War, 1898)<br>08:00 - 10:00 Food Distribution | 2                           | 3<br>Battle of Gettysburg (Civil War, 1863)<br>Independence Day (Observed Federal Holiday) | 4<br>End of Battle of Vicksburg (Civil War, 1863)<br>Independence Day |