



Greetings Comrades:

Whether you are reading this before or after Veterans Day, I would ask you to pause and reflect on the true significance of this observance. Often in modern societies the service and sacrifice of military members and veterans goes unnoticed and unappreciated. Sadly this is not a recent phenomenon. Below two lines from the final verse of a Rudyard Kipling Poem "Tommy", and it is sadly as true today as when written. (Tommy was the generic term for a common British soldier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.)

**For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' ``Chuck him out, the brute!''**

**But it's ``Saviour of 'is country,' when the guns begin to shoot;**

Look forward to seeing many of you at the mid-term C of a in Cebu City 8 – 10 December 2017. Our special guest from VFW National Headquarters is Past National Commander in Chief Bill Thien, an old friend of the Department of Pacific Areas. If you are unable to attend, please insure any required reports are submitted prior to the Department Adjutant. Also, insure that packets being submitted for VOD / PP and TCHR Awards are complete and your District report submitted to Chairman Merenda, (filling in for Chairman Moninger). The Public Safety Awards are also due and will be judged at the C of A. Contact Chairman Merenda with any questions.

My travels the past month included being a guest of the Veterans Affairs Council of Taiwan, where I attended the Taiwan National Day Ceremony and Reception, and was given tours of various Veterans facilities. They do an excellent job of taking care of their Veterans and we could learn from them in some areas. I also attended the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Monthly Veterans Recognition Ceremony at Post 124 in Baguio City, Philippines. Great event with over 140 members and guests enjoying the Hawaiian themed evening. I was honored to attend.

We are now over 90% in membership and retain our position as third among the 52 VFW Departments. Three Posts are now over 100%, but recruiting active duty personnel remains a major challenge and of the 4 Districts with large active duty populations, none is over 95% in membership. Simply stated, we must do a better job of reaching out to this population. Additionally, we have over 1,000 members who have not renewed their membership for this year, and we'll need a high renewal rate make to 100%, and reach our Department goal of 12,000 members.

As always, thank you for all you do on a daily basis to make the Department of Pacific Areas a high performing organization. This being the last issue of the Typhoon before the Holidays, I would wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and productive New Year.

Yours in Comradeship & Service,

John Gilbert  
Commander  
Department of Pacific Areas

***VFW – Honoring Our Past, Securing Our Future***