

VFW Uncases Its Colors Again on Guantanamo Bay

Post 12225 becomes pillar of support to close-knit military community

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – This week, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) instituted VFW Post 12225, reestablishing a permanent and physical location on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay after a 30-year lull. The move brings ease of access to the VFW's many programs and services directly to some 6,000 service members, veterans and other members of the military community.

Post 12225 was established with already 136 members as “plank owners” of the new Post, which include the naval station's commanding officer and other leaders among its ranks. The “GITMO Post” is the latest to join a small handful of currently active Posts located directly on military installations and the 36th Post operating overseas.

During a fact-finding mission to the naval station in August, a delegation led by VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento and included Past National Commander Hal Roesch, met with various decision makers to determine the need for and feasibility in establishing a physical VFW location. Some of the key leaders the delegation met with were Captain Samuel “Smokey” White, Commanding Officer NS Guantanamo Bay; Senior Chief Mark House, Command Master Chief NS Guantanamo Bay, and the commander and operations sergeant major of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, the principal of WT Sampson Elementary/High School, commander and 1st Sgt of Marine Corps Security Force Company Guantanamo Bay and leaders of Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay. Less than two months later, the Post is ready and operational.

“The need and desire for convenient access to the support and resources, most notably the VA claims assistance we provide, was made explicitly clear,” said Sarmiento. “We’re excited about this opportunity and look forward to becoming a pillar of support in this close-knit community.”

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VFW Post 12225 now sits on the very ground upon which the VFW's founders fought during the Spanish-American War 125 years ago.