

VFW Mourns the Passing of Past National Commander John Gwizdak

John passed away Dec. 26 at the age of 81

Dec 28, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — With a heavy heart, the VFW salutes the life and service of past VFW National Commander John F. Gwizdak.

John was elected as the organization's national commander on Aug. 25, 2000, at the 101st VFW National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Born in Revloc, Pennsylvania, and raised in Carrolltown, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1958. In 1968, he attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He retired in 1978 in the rank of captain.

His service career included three tours in Germany, including a rotational tour in Berlin, and in Vietnam with Co. E, 4th Bn., 12th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Starting out as a heavy mortar platoon leader, he eventually assumed command of Company E based at Long Binh. The unit operated out of Camp Frenzell-Jones. He held the distinction of having served in all leadership positions from squad leader to company commander of an infantry company. He was inducted into the United States Army Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame.

John's military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Bronze Star Medal (including one for valor), Purple Heart, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with palm device, Army Commendation Medal (3), Army of Occupation Medal (Berlin), Vietnam Campaign and Service Medals, Good Conduct Medal (3), Armed Forces Reserve Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Parachutist Badge and Drill Sergeants Badge.

He joined the VFW in 1977 and established a distinguished record of service at the Post, District and Department levels. In 1988, he attained the status of All-American Department Commander, VFW Department of Georgia.

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Recognized as a leader in veterans affairs, John received numerous appointments to national VFW positions and was elected to the VFW National Council of Administration in 1990, representing the Departments of Georgia and Alabama. In addition to other VFW positions, he served many years as the VFW Department of Georgia Adjutant/Quartermaster, December 1992 to October 1998 and again from March 2004 through June 2006. He held the position of Assistant Quartermaster to the Department at the time of his passing.

John left an indelible mark on the VFW and was a friend to all. He will be deeply missed.

[View his obituary here.](#)