

THE PATRIOT'S CALL: *United in Faith & Freedom*

ASSEMBLY 1818

Valentines for Veterans Special Edition February 2026

Valentines for Veterans Dinner Dance Shines as a Night of Honor, Unity, and Deep Gratitude

North Port — The Bishop Charles McLaughlin Assembly 1818 of the Knights of Columbus hosted its annual Valentines for Veterans Dinner Dance on Saturday, February 14, 2026, transforming the San Pedro Parish Activity Center into a vibrant celebration of patriotism, fellowship, and heartfelt appreciation for America's veterans. With an impressive attendance of 224 guests, including priests from the Assembly's four parishes and distinguished dignitaries, the evening was a resounding success.

The venue, adorned with patriotic décor and flags of all six branches of the United States Armed Forces, set a tone of reverence and pride. The Color Corps from North Port High School NJROTC opened the evening.

Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice, delivered a moving invocation offering a warm welcome to all and a solemn blessing of gratitude specifically for the veterans and their families in attendance. A moving "Missing Man" tribute, presented by Sir Knight Kevin Szopinski, brought the room to a solemn hush as attendees reflected on those who never returned home.

The keynote address delivered by Reverend Monsignor Robert R. Cannon, Colonel, USAF (Ret.), whose distinguished career in military chaplaincy has touched countless lives. Monsignor Cannon spoke passionately about the spiritual resilience of service members, the unique pastoral challenges faced by military chaplains, and the enduring importance of faith in times of hardship. He acknowledged Bishop Dewane as a mentor expressing his gratitude for the Bishop's continual support during his own personal journey in the service.

A salute to every branch of the U.S. Military came next, earning cheers as veterans from each service were honored for their commitment and sacrifices.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the honorees that underscored the Assembly's mission to honor veterans who served with distinction.

- Michael LaVecchia, USN, was recognized in absentia, his service warmly acknowledged by all present.
- Colonel & Reverend Monsignor Robert R. Cannon, USAF, received recognition for his decades of service both in uniform and in ministry.

- Sergeant Rick Miller, USA, was honored, and, in an especially poignant tribute, he was presented with a letter of recognition from President Donald J. Trump and First Lady Melania Trump. The President praised Sgt. Miller's honorable service in the United States Army and the United States Secret Service. "Your courage reflects the power of the human spirit, and your tenacity is an inspiration to so many," he wrote.

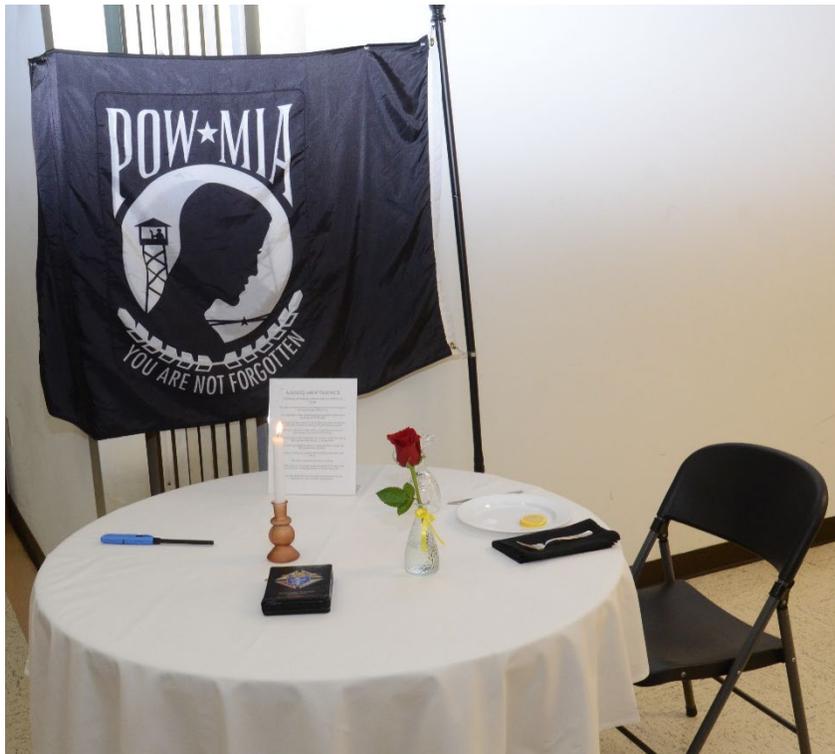
Sgt Miller served in the Secret Service under five presidents. Don Stanson, Sgt. Miller's brother-in-law from Abilene Texas, presented the award. This moment of profound respect, patriotism, and family devotion will be remembered by Sgt. Miller and his wife Laura, and his sister Mariette as well as all in attendance.

Guests enjoyed a delicious Italian dinner followed by dancing provided by BIG TIME ENTERTAINMENT. A touching moment was when all gathered sang along to *Proud to be An American* by Lee Greenwood.

The Valentines for Veterans Dinner Dance proved to be more than an event it was a heartfelt tribute to courage, sacrifice, and the enduring spirit of the American veteran.











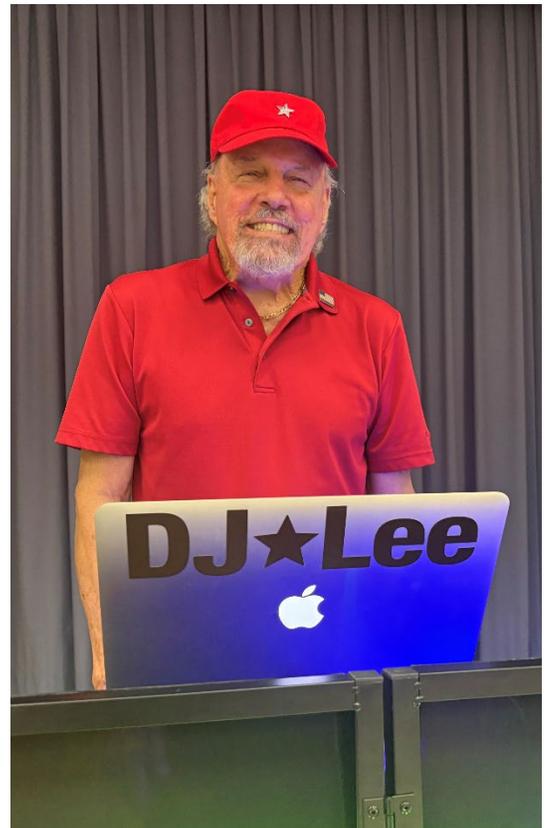






















THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 11, 2025

Mr. Richard Miller
Venice, Florida

Dear Richard,

Melania and I are thinking about you and your family during this difficult time and send our prayers for your complete healing and recovery.

Your honorable service in the United States Secret Service and in the United States Army is worthy of every American's admiration, and you should feel pride in the dedication to freedom you have displayed throughout your life. Our Nation continues to be great due to the sacrifices made by the best among us and those who support them.

Your courage reflects the power of the human spirit and your tenacity is an inspiration to so many. We pray that the support of your loving family and dear friends will provide abiding peace and comfort.

May God continue to bless you and your family. Stay strong!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donald Trump", written in a cursive style.