

Testimony to the Committee on Government Operations,
Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection
35th Legislature of the US Virgin Islands: Bill No. 35-0116

Honorable Senator Carla Joseph – Chairwoman of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, Honorable Senate President Novelle E. Francis, Jr.— sponsor of Bill 35-0116, committee members, staff, veterans, and fellow Virgin Islanders. Good morning.

I am Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Dante P. Galiber, Juan F. Luis Hospital cardiologist and Chief of Medicine and the immediate past VING State Surgeon. I am honored to testify about the military achievements of a remarkable Virgin Islander and the Virgin Islands National Guard's first Acting Adjutant General and United States Property and Fiscal Officer (USPFO)—Honorary Brigadier General Leayle G. Galiber, Sr. Since he could not attend his promotion to Brigadier General during the VING's 50th Anniversary Military Ball and this senate hearing today, he humbly expresses his gratitude for this honor of remembrance, reflection, and reunion that spans over five decades.

Galiber, who was born on St. Thomas in 1932, pursued his dreams of a military career which began as a member of the Boy Scouts of America. These dreams were realized upon his being commissioned as a second lieutenant at his 1958 graduation from Howard University. His military path followed that of his father, Henry Alphonse—a US Navy First Class Petty Officer — and three older brothers: Flavius, a US Army Captain and Dentist; Rudolph, a US Army Sergeant and Engineer; and Andre, a US Army Medical Corps Captain, Physician, and Radiologist.

On May 2, 1973 Galiber arrived on St. Croix as the Special Assistant to the Commander of National Guard Affairs (VI) with the military objective of establishing federally recognized National Guard units. During this time, he received pertinent civilian guidance, had a place to work and relax, and ate home-cooked crucian meals at the Tide Village home of my father and mother, Dr. Andre A. Galiber, Sr. and Mrs. Edith Rose Lewis Galiber. On October 19, 1973 with joint military and civilian efforts, critical thinking skills, and a specific course of action, Galiber, the then Major, and Acting Adjutant General and USPFO, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gregory Francis, Governor Melvin H. Evans, and many military and civilian personnel achieved federal recognition of the first two VING units, a Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment and the 661st Military Police Company, both on St. Croix.

These interactions made this achievement more possible! Historically, VING's federal recognition was achieved 7 years before the last US territory (Guam 1980), 57 years after the 1st US territory (Puerto Rico 1916), and 337 years after the first state (Massachusetts 1636) received theirs. "How and with what?" Galiber only had to ask himself this before taking action! The formation of "The Guardians of the Eastern Front" was realized, and today the men and women

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@ The Fritz E. Lawaetz Legislature Conference Room
Testimony for Brigadier General Leayle G. Galiber

By: LTC Dante P. Galiber, MD, FACC

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of the VI Army and Air Guards continue to meet the military and civilian challenges in all corners of the world, with truth and justice.

In addition, as the footsteps of time march on, it is important that we continue to honor Virgin Islanders, as we have, who have contributed positively to humanity. Therefore, more resolutions like this one will show that “history is the thread of our existence,” is our story to be told, and should not be in the margins of memory. Brigadier General Galiber and I do believe that "humanity, truth, and justice are painted on the easel of time, and honorable men and women are its artists". In times of crisis and calm, the VING has proven its mettle! We stand proud of them for their character, commitment, and courage in defending our shores, borders, and freedoms.

Galiber's military service lasted 21 years and included two tours in Vietnam. He was promoted four times, received the Bronze Star Medal (M) during his first tour in Vietnam, and then received the medal's First Oak Leaf Cluster during his second tour. In March 1979 Galiber retired from active duty as a lieutenant colonel.

As a retired US Field Grade Army Officer myself, I thank the 35th VI legislature, committee members, Committee President, and bill sponsor for allowing me to testify today. I am honored to give testimony in support of Bill 35-0116, the resolution of Brigadier General Leayle G. Galiber. He has shown exemplary commitment to the US Virgin Islands and the United States. Thanks to his leadership as the VING's first Acting Adjutant General and United States Property and Fiscal Officer, the federally recognized units rapidly attained the cohesiveness of mature effective assets. Achieving this historic milestone on October 19, 1973, having served as a company and then as a field grade army officer in the US Army during war and peacetime, and being the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal with First Oak Leaf Cluster, he stands among the great men and women, past and present, of the US Virgin Islands and the United States of America.