

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Government House, An Appreciation Luncheon For Veterans

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ST. CROIX -- "Veterans Day is within this month, and we decided not to have just one day for the honoring of veterans. What we have is a slew of activities, and this is the very first event for the month of November."

Those were the words of Director of Veterans Affairs for the Mapp administration Patrick Farrell, speaking with The Consortium during a brief interview at Government House on Wednesday, following an appreciation luncheon organized by the Office of the Governor and Mr. Farrell's office. The event was held as a testament to the administration's efforts to bolster the territory's veterans, according to Mr. Farrell, and to help foster a better relationship with the men and women who constantly put their lives on the line to protect

freedom.

Mr. Farrell told the publication that his most pointed efforts will be to improve the relationship between his office and veterans, which he admits has been strained over the years.

"The image of not just the local Veterans Affairs, but the federal side of Veterans Affairs as well, is kind of tarnished already," Mr. Farrell said. "Our veterans are not happy with a lot of things, so this is one of the events that we're going to use to bring veterans back into the fold, to let them know we care about them, and we're going to honor



Veterans being served by the St.

Croix Educational Complex culinary class.

The director also gave an update on the [permanent social worker](#) that arrived here recently to assist struggling veterans. He said since the social worker's local placement, there has been a steady stream of veterans visiting the Barren Spot office in search of help.

And the luncheon saw strong turnout. There were veterans of all ages, male and female, sitting on elegantly adorned tables in the Second Floor Ballroom at Government House here, while being serenaded by the Central High School Band and served with meals by the St. Croix Educational Complex culinary class.

Asked how he felt about the luncheon, Floyd Petersen, a veteran seemingly in his 70s, told The Consortium that the effort by Mr. Farrell and Government House was "a good start," but much more needed to be done.

"There's a lot of things that they could do, but we have to be on their backs," Mr. Petersen said. "But I think they're trying, and this is a good start."

As for Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter, who currently holds the position of governor while Governor Kenneth Mapp [travels](#), the luncheon was the least they could do to show appreciation.

"I think any opportunity that you can utilize to recognize veterans for what they have done, you ought to do it," Mr. Potter told The Consortium. "Like I said in my short remarks, you can never thank veterans enough for what they have done to protect our

freedom. A freedom that we take for granted everyday."

*Feature Image: Veterans dinning in the Second Floor Ballroom at Government House
here.*

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