



CONTENTS

Message from the Commander	1-2
Department of Texas Engages Community During Fleet Week	4-5
American Legion History	6
Post 593 Quilts of Valor Recipient	6
New Home for Post 572	7
Post 164 Hosts First Responders Award Dinner	8
CPR Instruction at Post 164	8
Post 164 Flag Patrol Training	8
ALR 593 21st Annual Rolling Run	9
Post 164 Competes at JSSP State Match	10
Eagle Scout Project at Post 164	10
Troop 1096 Practice Orienteering Skills	11
Post 174 Recognizes New Eagle Scout	11
Post 164 Celebrates Legion's 107th Birthday	12
Post 164 Assists the DAR	12
Self Care is a Thing	13
Post 593 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year	13
2026 Department of Texas Media Awards Program	14

Message from the Commander

"What is the American Legion?"

I was recently asked this question while at a gas station on my way to another American Legion event in the State Commander's vehicle.

That is an excellent question we should always be ready to give an answer. I responded, "The American Legion is the largest Veteran Support organization in the nation. A Pillar of Veteran Support and Community Service in the United States." Yes, I did say "Veteran Support" twice in my reply because it is what I believe is our primary mission.



Looking up what Google says to the question:

"The American Legion is the largest U.S. veterans service organization, founded by Congress in 1919 to support veterans, service members, and their families. Operating through local posts, it focuses on four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth, promoting patriotism and serving communities nationwide."

That is good reply; but I disagree with "founded by Congress". It was a group of veterans and then Congress did its thing to make us "Official".

But to further examine the question, "What is the American Legion?"

The following might help to give a larger answer.

The American Legion is a prominent organization in the United States dedicated to supporting veterans, active-duty military personnel, and their families. Founded in 1919 by veterans of World War I, the Legion has grown into the largest veterans' service organization in the country, boasting millions of members and thousands of local posts across all 50 states.

The primary mission of the American Legion is to advocate for the rights and well-being of those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The organization offers a wide range of programs, including assistance with veterans' benefits, educational scholarships, youth mentorship, and community service initiatives. The Legion is also well-known for its role in shaping national policy on veterans' issues, often working closely with lawmakers to ensure veterans receive the care and recognition they deserve.

(continued)

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Beyond advocacy and support, the American Legion plays a vital role in fostering patriotism and civic responsibility. Through events like parades, memorial services, and youth programs such as American Legion Baseball and Boys State, the organization helps instill a sense of pride and civic duty in communities nationwide.

Membership in the American Legion is open to all U.S. military veterans who have served honorably during periods of armed conflict, as well as to current members of the armed forces. With its enduring commitment to service, the American Legion continues to be a respected and influential presence in American society.

Now to focus your reply to" What is the American Legion in Texas?"

The American Legion has played an active role in supporting veterans and communities across Texas. For example, various posts in the state regularly organize programs to assist veterans with benefits claims and provide scholarships to local students. Additionally, the American Legion in Texas has hosted events such as Memorial Day ceremonies, sponsored youth baseball leagues, and participated in disaster relief efforts during hurricanes and other emergencies. These actions demonstrate their commitment to both veterans and the broader Texas community.

Some might answer this way:

The American Legion is a patriotic veterans organization dedicated to serving those who have served our country. At the national level, it advocates for veterans' rights, supports active-duty military personnel, and promotes American values such as freedom and democracy. In the State of Texas, the American Legion works closely with state agencies to ensure veterans receive the benefits and recognition they deserve, while also fostering civic engagement and youth programs.

Within our local communities, the American Legion is often at the heart of charitable initiatives, hosting events, supporting local schools, and providing a network for veterans and their families. By strengthening community bonds and offering assistance where it's needed most, the organization continues to honor its commitment to service, patriotism, and the well-being of all Americans.

With all the above I am going to use the below for my short reply:

The American Legion is the largest U.S. veterans organization founded in 1919. It is dedicated to supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and serving communities through various programs and advocacy efforts. The organization provides resources, camaraderie, and assistance to veterans and their families across the United States.

Rich Huntley
Department Commander



2025-2026 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Richard Huntley, DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

John Hince, National Executive Committeeman
Bret Watson, Alternate National Executive Committeeman
Tom Marty, Immediate Past Department Commander
William West, Department Adjutant
Jimmy Mitchell, Department Chaplain
Gary Sanders, Department Treasurer
William Wallace, Department Judge Advocate
Shirley Platt, Department Historian
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Don Gray, 21st District Commander
Robert Harvey, 22nd District Commander
Jose Gamez, 23rd District Commander

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Texas? If so, please follow these guidelines for submissions.

- Submit text in Word format (.doc, .docx) or as a plain text file (.txt or .rtf). ONE ARTICLE PER EMAIL PLEASE.
- The ideal word count for our format is 200 - 500 words (maximum), with no double spacing.
- Give your article a TITLE! Create a HEADLINE and save with a proper file name so we can easily recognize it.
- Tell us who the author is, whether it's you or if you are just forwarding it to us.
- Attach any photos or artwork for your article separately in your email. DO NOT embed them in your Word or PDF file. Larger photos are best, and high resolution JPG files of 300 dpi or better are preferred. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article.

- Let us know in your e-mail or Word doc of any photo captions, the name of the photographer, etc. Please note that due to spacing and layout requirements, we may not be able to use every photo or caption submitted (preferably 2 - 3 photos per article).
- Please spell check everything! Especially people's names, web addresses, etc. We do our best to catch typos, and make corrections, but sometimes they still slip by. You can help us greatly by simply running the spell check function in your word processing software.
- We publish on our Website on the FIRST FRIDAY of the Month, with few exceptions. E-mail everything directly to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month, for it to appear in the *following* issue. Submissions received after the 20th will be considered, but may be held over or discarded due to space and layout restrictions.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and hope you continue to help us grow and improve The Legion Times!

American Legion Department of Texas Engages Community During Fleet Week Houston 2026

Story by American Legion Post 560



The American Legion Department of Texas, representing more than 55,000 members across the state, will support Fleet Week as a community partner, reinforcing its long-standing commitment to veterans, service members, and their families. (Navy Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Li Zhang)

HOUSTON – (April 1, 2026) - As Houston prepares to welcome active-duty service members and their families during the inaugural Fleet Week Houston 2026, The American Legion Department of Texas is proud to stand at the intersection of service and community: continuing its mission to support those who've worn the uniform while strengthening the communities they call home.

Fleet Week offers a unique opportunity to connect the public with the men and women currently serving in the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. For many Texans, it's a rare chance to engage directly with active-duty personnel, learn more about their mission, and express appreciation for their service.

The American Legion Department of Texas, representing more than 55,000 members across the state, will support Fleet Week as a community partner, reinforcing its long-standing commitment to veterans, service members, and their families.

At the local level, American Legion Post 560 in Houston will serve as an official community engagement partner, helping bring this mission to life. Legionnaires and volunteers from Post 560 will be actively present throughout Fleet Week EXPO, engaging attendees, welcoming visiting service members, and fostering meaningful connections between the military and the Houston community.

(continued)



Sailors “man the rails” on the flight deck of USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) as the ship arrives in port for the annual San Diego Fleet Week parade of ships ceremony, Oct 4, 2003. (Navy photo by Photographer’s Mate 3rd Class Joshua Word)



HOUSTON - (Sept. 09, 2025) - Navy Band Southeast Woodwind Quintet - Fairwinds performed at the KPRC 2 studio in Houston to promote the upcoming Fleet Week (Navy Photo by Musician 2nd Class Andrew McCormick)

Leadership from across the Department will also be in attendance, including State Commander Richard Huntley, a retired U.S. Marine aviator. His presence underscores the importance of this event and reflects The American Legion’s continued leadership in supporting both active-duty personnel and veterans at every stage of service.

The Fleet Week EXPO, hosted at POST Houston, will serve as a central hub for activities throughout the weekend. The event will feature interactive exhibits, community organizations, and opportunities for attendees to participate in official U.S. Navy ship tours via coordinated shuttle services.

For The American Legion, Fleet Week represents more than a public event: it’s a continuation of its core mission. It’s an opportunity to bridge the gap between military and civilian communities. It’s a chance to ensure that service members feel welcomed, valued, and supported. And it’s a reminder that service does not end when the uniform comes off: it evolves into continued leadership, mentorship, and community impact.

“This is about connection,” said Irlbeck. “Fleet Week creates a visible and meaningful opportunity to bring service members, veterans, and the community together. Our role is to help ensure those connections extend beyond the event itself and continue to strengthen the fabric of our communities.”

Event Information:
 Fleet Week Houston EXPO
 POST Houston
 Saturday–Sunday, April 18–19
 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



Fans of the Navy Band’s Fleet Forces Popular Music Group watch a performance during the Houston Rockets’ season opener pregame at the Toyota Center in October 2024. (Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Bryan Niegel)

American Legion History — World's Largest American Legion Post — 1957

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department of Texas Historian

As you are working on getting new members for your posts, to increase your membership, look at what happened in the American Legion in 1957:

In 1957 the title of the world's largest American Legion Post had been captured by Denver, Colorado. The Leyden-Chiles-Wickersham Post No. 1 of Denver, with a final 1957 enrollment of 9,875 won the championship by a large margin, Omaha, Nebraska, Post No. 1, which held this title for a number of years qualified as a runner-up with 7,515; the third place among the king-sized posts went to Memphis, Tennessee, Post 1, with a membership of 6,040. The Alamo Cudworth Post 23 of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with 5,442 members placed fourth. Forty six American Legion Posts enrolled 2,000 or more members during 1957 according to reports made by the department of adjutants.

Extracted from: *The History of The American Legion Department of Texas Vol II, 1949-1969, Library of Congress No. 76-18296.*

Quilts of Valor Recipient - Post 593 - Converse, TX

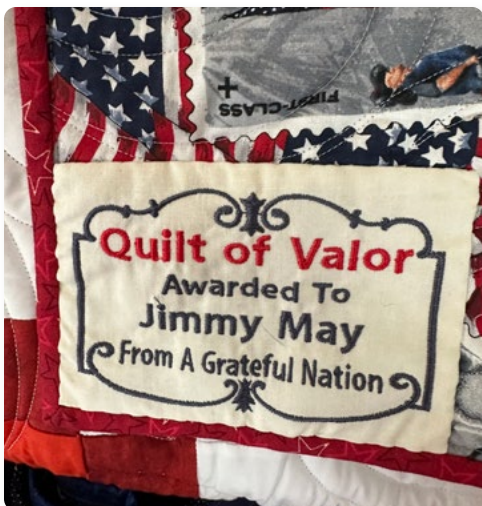
Submitted by Shirley Platt

A William M. Randolph Post 593 Legionnaire and Squadron 593 member was nominated and received a Quilt of Valor in March.

Jimmy May served honorably in the Air Force (including Air National Guard/Reservist) from 1969 to 1989, and retired at the rank of E-6. His duty stations included Germany, Iceland, New Mexico, Texas and Virginia.

His deployments included England, Italy, Singapore, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, just to name a few.

Jimmy is a dedicated Legionnaire and is well deserving of this award.



New Home for Smith-Bryant Post 572

Story and photos by Rana Krussow, Historian, Post 572

San Angelo TX – (Feb 21, 2026) – Legionnaires of Smith-Bryant Post 572 held their first general membership meeting in their new post home. We also stood up Sons of the American Legion Squadron 572 directly after the meeting! It has been 43 years since Post 572 had their own building! In attendance for both exciting events were dignitaries: Mike Wheeler 4th Division Sgt-At-Arms, Shirley Platt Department Historian and Ken Dorsett SAL Detachment Commander. Thank you all for being a part of our new journey!

It was in 1983 when Post 572 last had a permanent home. From 1983 to 2015, we met at VFW Post 1815. We then began meeting at Elks Lodge 1880 located at 2121 S Chadbourne St, San Angelo from 2015 to January 2026. We appreciate the Elks and the VFW for being so hospitable to our post!

A lot of effort was put in this past year by our current members and officers to get us into a place of our own. Once we had a location our building and grounds committee worked hard to get our new home looking good for our first meeting!

On April 18, 2026, Post 572 will have our grand opening and American Legion Family Day rolled into one event. The invitees will be from TX Dept, San Angelo Mayor, Tom Green County Judge, Tom Green County Sheriff, San Angelo Chief of Police and Chamber of Commerce among others. The post will host a BBQ right after our monthly general membership meeting.



Front of our new home



Post front door



Flag raising

Post 164 Hosts Gary Tilton Memorial Awards Dinner for First Responders

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164



Katy Mayor Dusty Thiel



Table decorations and arrangements courtesy of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 164



22nd District Vice Commander Jim McGuire announced the award winners

Post 164 held its annual First Responders awards dinner on February 21, 2026.

We had William "Dusty" Thiel, Mayor of Katy and State Representative for State District 132 as our guest speakers.

During our dinner we awarded the top performers from the Katy PD, Katy Fire Department, Katy ISD Police and Harris County Emergency Services District 48.

CPR Instruction at Post 164

On Saturday March 21st, Natasha Moreno of Harris County Emergency Services District 40 joined members of the Post 164 family to conduct CPR training.

She also showed us how to use the AEDs that the post was gifted. We are thankful for the continued support of our community partners.

Of course the practice dummy "Annie" was in attendance.



Flag Patrol Training

Post 164 of Katy was invited by the staff of Carl Briscoe Bentley Elementary School in the Lamar CISD to conduct training for their newly formed flag patrol.

There were 20 students from the 3rd through 5th grade who were anxious to learn how to fold the flag, along with the raising and lowering procedures.

The Honor Guard from Post 164 considers this to be one of our greatest contributions to our community.

William M. Randolph American Legion Riders Chapter 593 - 21st Annual Rolling Run

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Post 593

ALR Chapter 593, Converse, Texas, had a very successful Rolling Run on March 14th. 95 riders registered (plus many passengers) to participate in the 90 mile ride, returning to the Post for food, vendors, live and silent auctions, games, best St. Patrick's Day costume contest, award to Marion State Bank (2025 Business of the Year) and donation to Foundation 14 for their program that puts Combat Vets back on motorcycles.

With the many donations from the Legion Family, the Converse Police Department for their escort assistance, various businesses and the hard work of the volunteers at Post 593, this event was a huge success.



Post 164 Competes at the JSSP State Match

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164



Saturday, March 7th, Post 164 sent contestants to Bryan, TX to compete in the JSSP State match held at Post 159 in Bryan. Post 164 is very proud of Matios Titizian for finishing in 1st place.

A very special thanks to Post 159 for hosting this event.

Post 164 wishes to thank Legionnaire Mike Roper and his team for the time they spend training our Junior Shooters.



Eagle Scout Project at Post 164

As we continue to support our scouts from Troop 567, Post 164 became the recipient of another Eagle Scout Project.

Eagle Scout prospect Wilson Mayfield placed a children's lending library at Post 164. He also placed several others around the Katy area. Thank you, Wilson, it looks great!

Scout Mayfield was able to do the placement and presentation prior to our February membership meeting.



Post 174 Troop 1096 Practicing Orienteering Skills

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174

Troop 1096 worked on their orienteering skills in preparation for the Central Texas Spring-O event on March 28 at Lost Pines Scout Reservation in Bastrop, TX. One of our adult volunteers demonstrated how to use a compass and map to find points on a map and outdoors. At the next meeting, the scouts practiced finding points outside. The Scoutmaster put bags on their head, so they had to find the points by using the compass! The Scouts did well, some right on the point. They should do well at the event!



Post 174 Recognizes New Eagle Scout

On Saturday, February 28th, the Post Commander, Amery Vasso, presented an American Legion Eagle Scout Good Citizenship Citation and Post Challenge Coin to William Byrne, the newest Eagle Scout in Troop 151 chartered by Post 174.

William earned 39 Merit Badges, 3 Palms, the BSA Kayaking Award, the BSA Snorkeling Award, and the BSA Stand-up Paddle Boarding Award. William completed 31 nights camping and 52.5 service hours. He attended three winter camps and one summer camp.

In addition, William completed the Sea Base High Adventure. He served as a Troop Instructor and a Patrol Leader. His Eagle Project consisted of planning and building a butterfly garden at a local middle school. It took two full days to complete the project.

His parents were immensely proud as they should be.



Post 164 Celebrates the American Legion's 107th Birthday

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164

Post 164 of Katy, celebrated the American Legion's 107th Birthday. In attendance with many post members was Steve Kim the Department of Texas Vice Commander for the 2nd Division. Licia Kim Department of Texas Auxiliary President for 2nd Division and Jim McGuire 22nd District Vice Commander. Outback Steak House of Katy donated and served our meal.



Post 164 Assists the DAR

On March 7, 2026, the Daughters of the American Revolution held a plaque dedication to commemorate the founders of the City of Katy who were directly related to those who fought in the American Revolution. Post 164 was asked to participate and provide for the Honor Guard. Post members were invited to attend. This plaque was placed in Thomas Park in Katy for all to see.

The Honor Guard was joined by members of the Son's of the American Legion. Along with members of the Star of Destiny Chapter of the DAR, Katy Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris and Texas State Representative Mike Schofield were there to give brief remarks.



Self Care is a Thing!

By Chaplain Robert A. Crutchfield, Post 164

In the military we were conditioned to push limits. We were encouraged to think outward, to things larger than ourselves. This was necessary due to mission requirements. However even in the military, and as you transition to civilian life a self care mindset is critical to your resilience, and recovery.

Even before I was a fire chaplain years ago I taught what I called The First Rule of Rescuers. According to that rule, You can't take care of anybody else unless you take care of yourself. As veterans anybody else can include our families, co-workers, fellow Legion members etc. There are more than enough people in most of our circles, we could burn ourselves out, or grind ourselves up if we are not careful!

This quote from the Department of Veterans Affairs website does a good job of putting self care in the proper perspective:

"Although sometimes thought of as something we do to pamper ourselves, self-care is essential to our well-being. Self-care is about developing the skills and support to improve mental health. Veterans who make self-care a priority can better cope with stress, overcome challenges, and achieve goals."

Or consider what Parker Palmer had to say in Let your life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation:

"Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch."

Now for an example from my own experience. Back in the eighties I was under contract to Shell Oil here in Houston. Our project was made up of endless days of reading through files. If one of our big bosses walked by and we seemed dazed or whatever they would send us on a walk around the block! They didn't care if it wasn't break time. Even many years ago they understood the value of self care. They were more concerned about us, and the quality of our work than the break schedule.

Self care is vital to mission success in the civilian world. Even more, it is critical to your health and happiness.



Law Enforcement Officer of the Year - William M. Randolph Post 593

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Post 593

Sergeant Ricardo Lozano, from the Converse Police Department, was selected as the LEO of the year for Post 593, Converse.

Commander Clayton Wallers presented a certificate at the March General Membership Meeting.

Pictured left to right: Lieutenant Gil Martinez, Assistant Chief Ray Chaires, Sergeant Ricardo Lozano, Clayton Wallers, Chief Bobby Lane.

2026 Department of Texas Media Awards Program

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, Chairman, Marketing, Media & Communications Commission

SAN ANTONIO – (April 1, 2026) – Submitting media awards for Department of Texas is crucial as it recognizes and honors organizations that effectively promote the mission, values, and achievements of posts with the Department of Texas.

These awards not only highlight outstanding media coverage but also encourage continued support and positive representation in the press and across various platforms.

By nominating deserving organizations, members help strengthen the public image of The American Legion and inspire others to share its impactful stories.

Over the past years, there have not been many submissions for the various categories, or posts have submitted nominations late or incomplete.

Posts are encouraged to submit local media outlets this year in one of the four categories:

- Daily Newspaper
- Weekly Newspaper
- Television
- Radio

This year's entries must cover June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. All nominations must be submitted by June 1, 2026, for consideration. Entries will be judged at the Department Convention and awards will be presented at the 2027 Department Convention.

Media award nominations must come from a post. Posts need to take into consideration that the stories published by the media should include some element of veteran's awareness for their community or promote the Four Pillars of The American Legion. A nomination form will need to be completed for each category submitted.

For daily and weekly newspaper submissions, a post must create a scrapbook of all the printed articles. The scrapbook must have the nomination form on the inside cover with the front page of the newspaper (with its name) on the first page. All articles should be laid out chronologically.

For the television and radio awards, each submission must have a completed nomination form and a list of URLs/links to the television/radio spots from the media organization's website.

The instructions and submission forms for each category can be downloaded from the Department of Texas website: <https://txlegion.org/forms/department-forms/>

We encourage posts to take advantage of the Department of Texas Media Awards Program. Again, the deadline for submitting nominations is June 1, 2026 . For additional information contact majparmer@gmail.com.



Past Commander Burrell Parmer of Fred Brock Post 828 accepted the 2024 Weekly Newspaper Media Award on behalf of the San Antonio Observer from Legionnaire Glen Moody, Chairman of the Department's Marketing, Media and Communications Commission during the 2025 Department Convention. Additionally, the San Antonio Observer won the award in 2023 (Photo courtesy of Past Commander Burrell Parmer)



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TEXAS LONE STAR RECRUITER PIN

Have you earned yours?



Awarded to Legionnaires for recruiting "NEW" members into The American Legion. This award is based upon the total accumulative number of New Members the Recruiter has signed up into The American Legion from the inception of this award through their Legion career. The pin will be awarded starting with the #1 for the first new member and then increase in increments of 5 (5, 10, 15, 20, etc.) based upon the accumulative total of new members recruited. Once the recruiter is awarded a pin level, he/she will work for the next higher pin level and once a pin level has been achieved a duplicate pin level will not be awarded.

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Please continue to support your fellow veterans, troops, their families, youth and our nation.



Your annual dues help support programs in your community and across the nation. American Legion programs and services include: Troop Support, Child Welfare Foundation, Heroes to Hometowns, American Legion Baseball, Department Service Officers, Family Support Network, Flag Advocacy & Etiquette, Junior ROTC & ROTC, Operation Comfort Warriors, Scholarships, Veterans Job Fairs, and many others.

Thank you for ensuring that The American Legion remains the most powerful voice in America on behalf of veterans, servicemembers, their families, and communities across the nation.

Go to www.legion.org/renew

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