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Message from the Commander

MOTTO: Veterans Strengthening America How Service Continues Beyond the Uniform

It has been a successful Fleet week in Texas, the first ever for the state. Many thanks to the members of Post 560 and the leadership of their first Vice Commander, Heath Irlbeck. The Post made an impact on the community and are veterans strengthening America.



For millions of American veterans, service to their country does not end when they hang up their uniform. While military duty may be over, the sense of purpose, leadership, and commitment to community often persists, leading veterans to continue serving America in countless ways. Their unique skills, experiences, and dedication make a profound impact, both locally and nationally, long after their active-duty days are done.

One of the most visible ways veterans continue to serve is through volunteerism. Many veterans become involved in organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and local community groups, where they support fellow veterans and their families. Others volunteer for disaster relief efforts, mentor young people, or offer their expertise to schools and nonprofits. The values instilled in the military — teamwork, responsibility, and perseverance — translate seamlessly into these roles, allowing veterans to lead and inspire others.

Veterans are also invaluable assets in the workforce. After leaving the military, many pursue careers in public service, law enforcement, emergency response, and education. Their discipline, adaptability, and strong work ethic contribute to safer communities and more effective organizations. Veterans often find fulfillment in roles that allow them to protect, serve, and educate, continuing their commitment to the nation in new forms. Additionally, many veterans start their own businesses, fueling economic growth and innovation. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, veteran-owned businesses employ millions and generate hundreds of billions in revenue annually, creating jobs and opportunities for others.

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Advocacy is another powerful avenue through which veterans serve. Many lend their voices to issues affecting their peers, including access to healthcare, mental health services, and employment opportunities. By working with lawmakers and nonprofit groups, veterans help shape policies that improve the lives of service members, veterans, and their families. Their firsthand experience brings authenticity and urgency to these efforts, ensuring that vital concerns are addressed at the highest levels.

The spirit of service also extends to veterans' families. Many veterans encourage their children and love ones to engage in civic activities, fostering a legacy of responsibility and patriotism. Through hosting community events, participating in local government, or simply setting an example of integrity and compassion, veterans help build stronger, more resilient communities. Their ongoing involvement reminds us that the values of honor, courage, and commitment are not only military ideals — they are cornerstones of American society.

Despite facing challenges such as transitioning to civilian life, coping with physical and mental health issues, and finding meaningful employment, veterans consistently demonstrate resilience and determination. Their continued service stands as a testament to the enduring power of the American spirit. Whether through formal roles or everyday acts of kindness, veterans enrich our nation and inspire all citizens to contribute in their own ways.

Ultimately, veterans are much more than former soldiers, sailors, airmen or marines; they are lifelong patriots, leaders, and community builders. Their service to America is ongoing, evolving, and essential. As we honor their contributions, it is important to recognize and support the many ways veterans still serve, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive in their post-military lives. In doing so, we uphold the legacy of service that has shaped — and continues to shape — the fabric of our nation.

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
Jerry Tatman, Department Sergeant-at-Arms
Michael Wheeler, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Michael Simon, Director of Internal Affairs
Michael Lacy, Department Service Officer
Ron Peterson, Department Service Officer
Allen Sharp, Department Service Officer

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS

Andy Lowen, 1st Division
Steve Kim, 2nd Division
Jose Lopez, 3rd Division
Chris Holt, 4th Division

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

Johnny Norris, 1st District Commander
Cheryl Williams, 2nd District Commander
Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander
Michael Olivarez, 4th District Commander
Tynetta Runnels, 5th District Commander
Russ Foster, 6th District Commander
Terry Batson, 7th District Commander
Irene Infante, 8th District Commander
Deborah Waldrop, 9th District Commander
Phillip Kelly, 10th District Commander
John Potts, 11th District Commander
Chad Page, 12th District Commander
Chris Garcia, 13th District Commander
Gea Clausier, 14th District Commander
Edward Villafranca, 15th District Commander
Ramon Montano, 16th District Commander
Chris Grantham, 17th District Commander
Reyna Ruiz, 18th District Commander
Kevin Bright, 19th District Commander
Eric Mayer, 20th District Commander
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!

Fleet Week Houston Showcases the Power of Connection, Service & Community

Story by Garden Oaks American Legion Post 560 Public Relations



U.S. Sailors and Marines aboard the Wasp-class amphibious ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) man the rails as they pull into Bayport, TX for Fleet Week Houston, April 15, 2026 (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jimmy Ivy III)



The U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard Drill Team performs during a welcoming ceremony to open Fleet Week Houston, April 15, 2026 (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jonathan Word)

HOUSTON – (April 22, 2026) – The inaugural Fleet Week Houston brought the spirit of the Nation’s Sea Services to the heart of Space City, and with it, a powerful reminder of what connection, service, and community truly look like in action.

Throughout the week, Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen were welcomed across Houston with open arms. From community engagements to large-scale public events, the energy was unmistakable: Houston showed up.

At the center of that engagement was the presence of The American Legion Department of Texas, led by Department Commander Richard Huntley, whose leadership continues to exemplify the Legion’s mission: bringing people together, bridging generations, and ensuring those who serve know they are seen, valued, and supported.

Garden Oaks American Legion Post 560 proudly served as an official community partner, activating across multiple Fleet Week touchpoints. From the high-energy Fleet Week EXPO at POST Houston to community events across the city, Legionnaires were on the ground connecting with service members, families, and civic leaders.

A cornerstone of Post 560’s engagement was The American Legion’s Welcoming Room, hosted at the Best Western Plus Downtown Inn & Suites. Designed as a space for connection and camaraderie, the Welcoming Room brought together Legion leadership, civic leaders, community stakeholders, and Sea Service members in a setting that reflected the very best of what the Legion stands for: hospitality, respect, and unity.

“The first-ever Fleet Week Houston brought our city together in a way we’ve never felt. This week wasn’t just about events, it was about impact,” said Post 560 1st Vice Commander Heath Irlbeck. “It was about creating meaningful moments where service members felt the full support of the community they serve. That’s where we thrive.”

Fleet Week Houston also highlighted the importance of partnerships. Collaboration between military leadership, local government, veteran service organizations, and community partners created a unified effort that amplified the reach and success of every event.

(continued)

Behind the scenes, dozens of volunteers dedicated their time and energy to ensure a seamless experience: from logistics and coordination to hospitality and outreach. Their commitment reflects the enduring strength of the Legion Family and its ability to mobilize in support of a shared mission.

As Fleet Week Houston ends, its impact will continue to resonate. The relationships built, the connections made, and the visibility created for the Nation's service members represent more than a successful week — they represent a foundation for future engagement.

For Post 560, this is just the beginning.

“The mission doesn't end here,” Irlbeck added. “We're building on this momentum to deepen our partnerships, expand our reach, and continue serving those who've served, here in Houston and beyond.”

Fleet Week Houston proved what is possible when a community rallies around its service members. And once again, The American Legion Department of Texas was right in the middle standing exactly where it belonged: at the center of every meaningful touchpoint.



Maj. Jarrett Loftis, assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 (MWSS-272), renders a salute during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Medal of Honor Monument in The Woodlands, Texas, April 21, 2026, as part of Fleet Week Houston. The ceremony honored Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipients from Texas, recognizing their valor and sacrifice in service to the nation. More than 1,000 Sailors and Marines from the visiting fleet proudly engage with the people of Houston during Texas' first-ever Fleet Week, showcasing the professionalism and warfighting readiness of America's sea services while celebrating 250 years of dedicated Navy and Marine Corps service as part of the Nation's Freedom 250 commemoration (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Louis Rojas)



Adjutant Dean Neuvar (left) of Garden Oaks American Legion Post 560, joined by The American Legion Department of Texas Commander Richard Huntley and Post 560 1st Vice Commander Heath Irlbeck, speaks with Rear Adm. John W. Hewitt, commander, Navy Region Southeast, at Sylvan Beach Park in La Porte, Texas, during Fleet Week Houston, April 20, 2026. (Photo by Legionnaire Henry Guidry)



The American Legion Department of Texas Commander Richard Huntley, joined by 1st Vice Commander Heath Irlbeck and Post Adjutant Dean Neuvar of Houston Garden Oaks American Legion Post 560, spent some time with Marines and Sailors who are participating in Fleet Week Houston at Sylvan Beach Park in La Porte, Texas, during Fleet Week Houston, April 20, 2026. Houston welcomed Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and their families to Space City for this historic event, April 15-22 (Photo by Legionnaire Henry Guidry)

American Legion History Book Competition

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department of Texas Historian

I'M REPEATING THE FEBRUARY 2026 ARTICLE AS A REMINDER - DEPARTMENT CONVENTION IS COMING UP AND I HOPE TO SEE A GOOD NUMBER OF HISTORY BOOKS SUBMITTED FOR COMPETITION.

I hope everyone has taken time to gather and start compiling a History Book for your post. I'm sure you have all been busy with activities since the 2025 Department Convention, and took tons of pictures. Please take the time to put those together for your history and as I have always said, "Use your History Book as a recruiting tool".

OVERVIEW FOR PRESENTATION OF HISTORY BOOK INFORMATION FOR - 2025 - 2026

The History Book competition is alive and well in Texas and we will have the competition at the Department Convention. The best part is, according to the National Historian, we can do our own thing to get more participation. I'm encouraging posts to use the same guidelines we did for 2025, but allow the books to be in 3 ring binders. Hard copy books need to be turned in at Department NLT 4:00PM, Friday July 10, 2026.

We WILL be judging digital and hard copy histories at the Department Convention for 2026. The 2026 Historian's Guide is available online. Also available on the website, for you to view, are the results of the digital history book competition at National. The digital history books need to be sent to the Department Historian by June 22, 2026 as the winner will be announced at the Department Convention. You may view the Guide and the showcase on the website noted here. <https://legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net>

History is easily changed or forgotten if it is not written down. We may forget all of the great activities we accomplished throughout the year. Pictures never taken are never seen. Pictures not identified become useless. We need to show our pride in what we do by recording and organizing our history or it will disappear. There was an individual that looked at a picture on the wall at his post and wondered who was in the picture. If the individuals had not been identified on the picture, he would not have known he was one of the people in the picture taken many years before.

You are the one who will make sure our history is not lost. We have so much to be proud of. We help our community, state, and nation. We make a difference. That difference we make will be forgotten if we do not share what we do with the local newspapers. We will never know how we influenced the children, but they will be affected and changed by what we do.

As a reminder, we are the ones that will make sure our history is not lost. We have so much to be proud of. No history book is perfect, but if we do not document our history, it will be forgotten.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or call me.

Shirley Platt
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1955 - The "Big Ten" Posts

Submitted by Shirley Platt

Here are the Top Big Ten Post membership numbers from 1955 compared to end of 2025 membership numbers! What a huge difference!

	Post	Then	Now
1.	Killeen	223	1473
2.	Houston	52	1328
3.	San Antonio	2	1287
4.	Odessa	430	1229
5.	Amarillo	54	1229
6.	Beaumont	33	1178
7.	Tyler	12	1069
8.	Denison	62	1010
9.	New Braunfels	179	972
10.	Laredo	59	862

Extracted from "A History of the American Legion Department of Texas" Vol. II 1949 - 1969 Library of Congress No. 76-18296

Mighty 20th District Hosts Spring Convention

Story and photos by Past Commander Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

SOMERSET, Texas – (April 11, 2026) – Legionnaires journeyed to Gene Ramirez American Legion Post 443 to attend the Spring Convention of the “Mighty” 20th District.

During the morning session, Legionnaires held a memorial service to honor those members who entered Post Everlasting and heard remarks from Department Vice Commander (3rd Division) Tony Lopez and VFBA representative and Legionnaire Brian Piacentini, followed by district officers and post commanders’ reports.

Prior to lunch, three breakout sessions were held on lessons-learned to include discussions on improving post operations and recruitment/retaining/reclaiming of members.

Following lunch, the membership heard an oration by District Oratorical winner Sara Frost followed by award presentation to the District Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Sgt. Ricardo Lozano.

“Being considered among professionals across the state is both humbling and meaningful, and it would represent not only my individual efforts, but also the dedication and support of my department and colleagues,” said Lozano with the Converse Police Department. “I take great pride in the work I do and remain committed to serving my community with professionalism, integrity, and accountability.”

Additionally, recognized as the National Guard/Reservist of the Year was Staff Sgt. Benjamin Lund.

“I am extremely grateful to be recognized with this honor, not only because of the prestigious and storied organization that it comes from, but more so for the fact that my chain of command took time out of their day to submit my name for this award,” said Lund, a food inspection observer/trainer assigned to the 7304th Medical Training Support Battalion. “It is a tremendous honor to be able to compete at state level.”

Afterwards, members heard remarks by 2025 Texas Boys State Alum Enzo Turnipseed and his father, Trey.

Attending the convention was Department Commander Richard Huntley who lauded the leadership and programs conducted by the District.

After Huntley’s remarks, District Commander Eric Mayer recognized finalists for District Legionnaire of the Year and announced District Americanism Chairman Michael Knott as the winner.

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District Americanism Chairman Michael Knott, of Alamo American Legion Post 2, was recognized as the “Mighty” 20th District Legionnaire of the Year by District Commander Eric Mayer during the District’s Spring Convention held at Gene Ramirez American Legion Post 443



Department Vice Commander (3rd Division) Tony Lopez attended the Spring Convention of the “Mighty” 20th District. During the convention, Lopez moderated a breakout session on lessons-learned to include discussions on improving post operations and recruitment/retaining/reclaiming of members



Department of Texas Commander Richard Huntley attended the Spring Convention of the “Mighty” 20th District. Huntley lauded the leadership and programs conducted by the District and reinforced the importance of being able to inform veterans on what The American Legion is



Converse Police Sgt. Ricardo Lozano, of Dilley Texas, was announced as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for the 20th District of The American Legion Department of Texas at the district's Spring Convention



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Benjamin Lund, of Wiggins, Colo., a food inspection observer/trainer assigned to the 7304th Medical Training Support Battalion, was announced as the National Guard/Reservist of the Year for the 20th District of The American Legion Department of Texas at the district's Spring Convention

The 2026 District Elections Results were as follows: Commander: Billy Hill (828), Vice Commander: Ventura Counsel (300), Adjutant: Jack Caniglia (300), Financial Officer: Randal Remaley (592), Judge Advocate: Ed Richards (593), Service Officer: Garrett Stacy (336), Chaplain: Tony Vega (667), Historian: Paul Goymerac (593), and Sgt-at-Arms: Dan Frith (579).

"As the world and other things change, the largest veterans service organization in the world must change too," said Hill. "My goals for the district are (1) to take an aggressive approach to serving veterans across the District, (2) to improve the awareness and execution of Children/ Youth programs, and (3) to increase our membership footprint in San Antonio and surrounding areas."

According to Hill, who served as a department vice commander for Maryland, the three goals are directly connected to the mission and vision of The American Legion.

"I know I can add value if given the opportunity and my previous experience has prepared me for the role of district commander of the 'Mighty' 20th District," said Hill. "This is an extension of the commitment I had to this country while in uniform."

Special thanks to the Legionnaires of Post 443 and Auxiliary members of Unit 443 for hosting this year's District Spring Convention.



Sarah Frost, a senior at Advanced Learning Academy High School in San Antonio, delivers an oration during the "Mighty" 20th District's Spring Convention. Frost, nominated by Post 828, won first place at the District Oratorical Contest



Texas Boys State Alum Enzo Turnipseed spoke on his experience at Boys State during the "Mighty" 20th District's Spring Convention. Turnipseed, along with his twin brother, attended Texas Boys State held on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin in the summer of 2025



District Service and Training Officer Billy Hill, 1st Vice Commander of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, was unanimously elected as the next district commander of the "Mighty" 20th District during the district's Spring Convention

Troop 2G Makes an Impact on Post 169

Submitted by Michael Kurtz, Post 169

It's no secret that scouting and the American Legion go way back; in fact, the Boy Scouts were the Legion's first youth program adopted in 1919. Thomas Fowler Post 169 in Wichita Falls is home to Scout Troop 2G and Venture Crew 2. Troop 2G was picked up by the post in 2024 when a local Church chose to close its doors due to a lack of membership, and Post 169 was looking for ways to expand its impact on the children and youth in the community.

Over the past two years, Troop 2G has become an integral part of the Post. They actively participate in Post events like serving meals at the Post Welcome Home Dinner that recognizes our Vietnam and Vietnam Era veterans, performing flag retirement ceremonies, and simply helping with the upkeep of the grounds. The Troop has already produced four Eagle Scouts, which has resulted in opportunities for legionnaires to step up and mentor these young ladies. Our Scouts have participated in the Legion's Oratorical competition, already earning over \$3500 in scholarship money, and have also attended Girls State.

One of the best things to come out of this relationship with the scouts has been the love that our members have shown these young ladies. The reality is that we were a bit apprehensive about bringing in an all-girls Scout Troop to the Post, and we were a bit concerned about how it was going to ultimately be received. But when Lorelei Mitchell was set to become the Troop's first Eagle Scout since moving to Post 169, Legionnaire Gene Bashaw decided to do something more. Gene found and refurbished an old hatchet and presented the gift to Lorelei upon achieving this milestone. It was official, these young ladies were part of the 169 family.

If your post doesn't already support a Scout Troop, a Cub Scout Den, or a Venture Crew, maybe it's time to explore that option. If your post doesn't have a building, find a local troop in your area and find ways to partner with them. It's a simple way to attract new members and expand your footprint in your community.



Post 164 JROTC Awards

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164



On April 23rd, Post 164 was pleased to be able to award the American Legion JROTC Awards for Academic Achievement to Cadet Nathan Passavoy and Military Excellence to Cadet Ethan Goode.

The post also awarded two \$250 scholarships to Cadet Kenneth Avila and Cadet Isabelle Owens.

The ceremony was held at Maydee Creek High School in the Katy Independent School District.

District Vice Commander Jim McGuire and Post 164 1st Vice Commander Dennis Wells were the awards presenters.

Family Day at Post 164

On April 25th, the Post 164 Family held our first ever Family Day. We had lots of food, donated by our community neighborhood partners Chic-Fil-A and Cabo Bob's. There was a Band. The Bandits donated their time. Harris County Emergency Services District 48 brought out a fire truck. There were lots of games for the kids to play. Turnout was nice and we look forward to doing this again next year.



Honor Flight Houston

On April 25th, Post 164 was pleased to have been invited to participate in the welcome home ceremony for Honor Flight Houston.

Post Family members and our Honor Guard were on hand to welcome our local area veterans as they came back from their trip to the nation's capital. We are pleased to be a continuing part of this wonderful event.



Post 174 Recognizes Two New Eagle Scouts

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174



On Saturday, April 18, Post 174 recognized the two newest Eagle Scouts in Troop 151.

The two Eagle Scouts are brothers, Austin and Andrew Haertsch. Their father Joseph Haertsch is also an Eagle Scout!

The ceremony began with lighting of candles for each of the ranks completed with an explanation of the requirements for that rank on the road to Eagle. Steffany Haertsch, their mother, gave a summary of the Scouts scouting career. She was followed by their father who talked about their Eagle Scout projects. The pinning of the Eagle Scout Medal, changing neckerchiefs and presentation of parent and mentor pins followed.

Special presentations were conducted by Vicki Rosengarten, the Capital Area Council Representative, Dr. Evelyn Robertson from Congressman Carter's office, and Past Post Commander, BJ MacMillan.

The ceremony was followed by refreshments. It was a grand event for two special Eagle Scouts.

Post 174's Troop 1096 Wins Big!

Troop 1096 competed in the Capital Area Council Spring-O, Orienteering competition on the weekend of March 20th at Lost Pines Scout Reservation near Bastrop, TX.

The eleven Scouts were divided into teams; each had an orienteering course to navigate.

One of the teams won Gold in the competition coming in first. The Troop's younger team came in third place!

All the orienteering training paid off. The Scouts had a fun time spending time outdoors!



Eastwood Post 36 Turns 105

Submitted by Tammi Say, Post 36 Judge Advocate

American Legion Eastwood Post 36, El Paso Texas, celebrates 105 years serving veterans and the greater El Paso community. From August 1920 to August 2025, it has proudly served El Paso and her veterans. Post 36 has moved around the city, having several homes over the years until the beginning of construction of their current home in June 1981. Post 36 currently has 309 members.

It was discovered in April 2025 that Post 36 was turning 105, and we had to celebrate this accomplishment. Planning began almost immediately with the post commander; Jesus Gandara, two past post commanders, Alberto Mora and Ruben Carroasco; current Auxiliary president Norma Flores; judge advocate Tammi Say; Legion Riders director Jerry Tillison; and several post members. In what seemed like endless planning meetings, they reached out to the Vietnam Veterans Association to present the MIA/POW table and the meaning of the symbols on the table, and El Paso's Hanks High School Junior ROTC color guard for the presentation of colors.

Our celebration included our Junior Auxiliary members reading the original American Legion charter from 1919 and the Gettysburg Address, and local County Judge Ricardo Samaniego reading a proclamation recognizing Post 36's accomplishments and dedication to the El Paso community. May we all remember to celebrate The American Legion for all American veterans, past, present and future.



Breakfast with a Veteran

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164

Post 164 hosted our monthly "Breakfast with a Veteran" on April 4th at the Katy Elks Lodge. While turnout was a little lighter than normal, we had many of our area veterans there to enjoy the food. We also had a visitor show up as well. Yes, the Easter Bunny paid us a visit. Is it me or does our Easter Bunny look suspiciously like past Unit 164 President Linda Malsbary. Also in attendance was our 22nd District Vice Commander Jim McGuire. We also got the chance to sing Happy 90th Birthday to one of the attendees.



Newest Eagle Scout at Post 164

On March 31, 2026, Post 164 Commander Morrow S (Sandy) Krum Jr. was on hand at the Court of Honor for Troop 567's newest Eagle Scout, Daniel Escamia.

Daniel stated that upon graduation from high school, he will be joining the Texas Army National Guard. Shown with Daniel are his parents.

Congratulations to Daniel and all of the leadership of Troop 567!

Post 164 Trains the Girl Scouts

On April 26th, Post 164 Honor Guard members 1st Vice Commander Dennis Wells, Sergeant at Arms Jose Neito, Assistant Sergeant at Arms Don Gentiles, Jim Scoggin Honor Guard Captain and Honor Guard member Rick Spacek provided training to members of Girl Scout Troop 129254 and other Girl Scouts from the Way-Out West Community. Training consisted of flag etiquette and flag folding.



The Legionnaire's Oath

Submitted by Billy Hill, 20th District Service Officer

In the next 60 days, many members of our American Legion will take office to lead Posts and continue on with the values, mission, and vision of the oldest and largest Veterans Service Organization in the world. Members are arranged in the center of the room, raise their right hand, and the oath is administered. For the next 2 minutes, we hear and agree to serve in a certain capacity as one of the Post Officers. From the Post Commander to the last Officer in the installation, an oath is taken. During this brief period a former active-duty service member agrees to serve our American Legion using the same agreement, supported by raising their right hand.

The logo for the American Legion, featuring the words "AMERICAN LEGION" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Above the word "AMERICAN" are three horizontal red stripes.The slogan "BE THE ONE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The word "THE" is smaller and positioned between "BE" and "ONE".

Our grandparents used to say “A man’s word is his bond” and in some cases that word weighed more than money. When we raise our hand to assume a leadership role, we must understand the power and expectations that come with it. We are in the business of taking care of Veterans on a regular basis, not only when we have nothing else to do. Occasionally, we find ourselves with the same Officers serving in the same roles, and doing the same thing, every year. Are we still honoring our oath or simply going through the routine we did five years ago? There is a moment when the Oath taker will have to decide whether to honor their oath or “let someone else” do it. This is the point that explains why members must honor their oath. Google says “An oath is a solemn, formal promise or declaration – often invoking a deity or a sacred object – to tell the truth or perform a specific duty, such as in an oath of office or a witness oath.” This is one definition that we all should live by because it sets the level of which we all can relate. For example: Doctors and Nurses take an oath. They have lives in their hands, which means there shouldn’t be any days off when it comes to their oath.

As a Legionnaire, we don’t have life or death situations in our Oath, but we do have situations that support Veterans and their families, as well as the members in the Post. Most Post Commanders appreciate it when Post Officers take a moment to re-read the oath, they took during the installation and act on it. The members need to see the actions tied to the oath we’ve taken, and the commitment we had in uniform transferred into the Post. The love of God and Country has been embedded into our organization mixed into the support, contributions, and programs put on by the Post. We all pay dues to be part of the American Legion, but we take an oath to remind us of the level of commitment we are agreeing to, trust we are putting into you as a Legionnaire, and the dedication we need from you as a leader. So, we ask, if you take the oath, remember those that have taken it before you. Their word meant so much more than annual dues.

How Self-Care is Done

By Chaplain Robert A. Crutchfield, Post 164

Ok, so self-care is important, but what is it, and how is it done? Self-care is any non-destructive thing you do to enhance your physical or emotional health. How do you know if something is non-destructive? The key question is, does it interfere with your daily life? If not it may be part of what you are looking for. Here are some other thoughts.

Hydration and Nutrition. These two work together. In fact proper nutrition is near impossible without proper hydration. Pure water and low sugar sports drinks are best. One common mistake is to wait until you are thirsty to drink something. By then you are already partially dehydrated. One benefit of being hydrated is it aids in the lubrication of the joints. This can be particularly important to veterans who suffer from service related knee injuries. Every bit helps, right?

On the nutrition end, eat as many fresh fruits and vegetables as possible. At the same time try to limit processed foods. Know your label terms. For instance “natural” by law means minimally processed, but the law doesn’t define what “minimally processed” means. On the other hand food labeled “organic” has to meet legal and industry requirements.

Rest and Recreation. This includes everything from getting a good night’s sleep, to taking breaks throughout the day. Sleep is how the body repairs and rebuilds itself. Even if you are otherwise healthy this process is necessary for your body to work at peak efficiency. Physical activity can reduce brain fog and stress. This is why practically every fire house seems to have a basketball hoop out back. I was even chaplain at one that had a full gym out back!

Feed Your Passions. It’s easy to get caught up in work, family etc. Of course those things are important. However, what gets you up in the morning? What makes your hear soar like an eagle? Sports like golf, basketball or soccer? Something creative like writing, or painting? Studying something new? Make time for these things in your normal routine.

Self-care is never one and done. Make it a regular habit and your life will be better for it!

Rio Grande Valley Legionnaire Joins McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic’s VAVS Committee

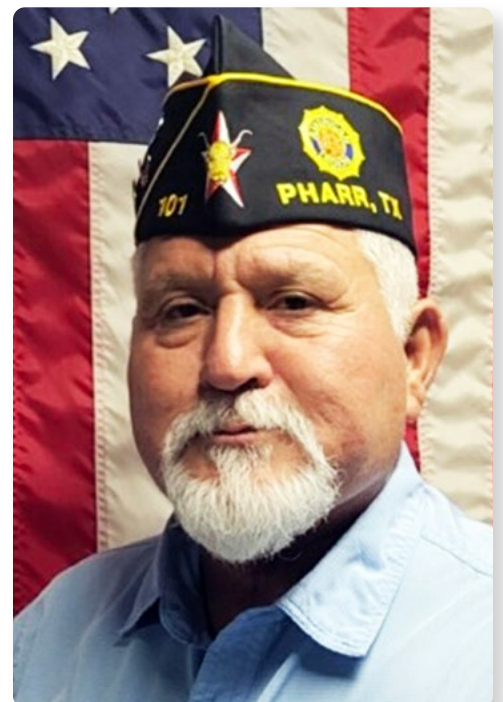
Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

HARLINGEN, Texas – (April 30, 2026) – On March 1, Lucio Gaitan was certified to serve on the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic’s Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Committee by the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission.

Gaitan, who served in the Army National Guard, is a life member of The American Legion and currently serves as adjutant and finance officer of Vermund G. Hansen Post 101 in Pharr, Texas.

Central to its mission of providing comprehensive care and fostering community engagement is the VAVS Committee, a group dedicated to coordinating, supporting, and expanding the reach of volunteer efforts for the benefit of veterans and their families.

The American Legion has supported and actively participated in the VAVS program since it began in 1946. Today, nearly 7,000 volunteers serve 900,000 hours annually at various VA medical centers, community-based outpatient centers, Vet Centers, nursing homes, state veterans homes and other facilities that support hospitalized veterans.



America250: Why Volunteerism Is the Real Story of American Greatness

Submitted by Chad Page, 12th District Commander



America's 250th birthday is more than a celebration of the past. It is a test of who we are now and who we intend to become. America250, the official nonpartisan effort created to help lead the nation's semiquincentennial commemoration, has framed this milestone as a nationwide call to educate, engage and unite Americans ahead of July 4, 2026. That ambition matters. But it also raises a serious question: what will make America250 more than a branding exercise, a parade or a once-in-a-generation calendar event?

The answer is volunteerism.

If America wants its 250th anniversary to mean something deeper than fireworks and speeches, the commemoration must be rooted in service. It must be visible in neighborhoods, schools, veterans' organizations, food pantries, youth programs, churches, parks and community centers. It must be measured not only in attendance, but in action. That is why the broader service emphasis around America250 matters so much. A meaningful national milestone should inspire Americans not only to remember the country's history but to participate in its future.

Volunteerism is not a side note in the American story. It is one of the clearest expressions of what has always made this country strong.

America has never thrived solely because of government, markets or institutions acting alone. It has thrived because ordinary people have stepped forward when their communities needed them. They coach Little League, staff local shelters, raise scholarship funds, organize food drives, mentor young people, honor veterans, respond to disasters and keep civic life alive. They do the work no system can fully automate and no policy can fully replace. Volunteerism is how patriotism becomes practical.

That is what makes service such a powerful frame for America250. The anniversary should not only ask Americans to look back at 250 years of history. It should ask them what kind of nation they want to help build now. Volunteerism answers that question directly and visibly. It reminds us that citizenship is not passive. It is participatory. It is not only about what we inherit, but about what we contribute.

And if volunteerism is the engine, nonprofits are the infrastructure.

Nonprofits are the backbone of volunteer service in America

Read the full article at: <https://www.alpost655.org/>



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