



## CONTENTS

Message from the Commander	1
Message from the Department Historian	2
Department of Texas Elects New Commander	4
Department of Texas Convention	5
Legionnaire Honored as Recruiter of the Year	6
Post 174 Troop 1096 Activities	7
American Legion Baseball Banquet	8
Legionnaires Donate \$17k in Support of Flood Disaster	9
Post 493 Collaboration to Support Texas Hill Country	10
Legion Continues Relief Efforts in Support of Kerrville Flood Victims	11
Post 174 Honors Boys State Attendees	12
Corpus Christi Resident Installed as Vice Commander	13
Post 174 Pack 151 Conducts Rainwater Regatta	14
Post 174 Initiates New Members	14
GI Joan Project and American Legion Unite for Women Veterans	15

## Message from the Commander

### "American Legion Post 208: A Pillar of Service"

Founded on the principles of service, camaraderie, and patriotism, American Legion Post 208 has long been a fixture in the Kerrville community. Its membership comprises veterans, their families, and supporters who are committed to serving both fellow veterans and the broader public. When the flooding began, these values were more than words—they became a rallying cry for action. When heavy rains pounded Kerr County and caused flooding along the Guadalupe River, American Legion Post 208 responded by serving as a logistics center for first responders.

Post 208, situated next to the FEMA command post on the river, serves as a logistics hub for first responders. Robert Garcia, the post commander, and his team have kept their post open 24/7 providing a place for first responders to get meals. They also sorted key donations such as bug spray, clean and dry socks, and other hygiene items.

The Legion's parking lot became a bustling center of activity, with volunteers sorting donations, assembling care packages, and distributing goods to families in need. The organization also helped manage monetary donations, ensuring funds were directed to the most urgent relief efforts and to families facing immediate hardship.

The Post's hall also served as a meeting venue for agency briefings, public updates, and volunteer training sessions. By providing space and logistical support, the Legion ensured that relief operations could proceed smoothly and efficiently.

The post closed its hall to allow first responders to sleep overnight. Volunteers transported them to nearby gyms to get showers. They also fed them breakfast and dinner.

During the day, other post volunteers transported donated lunches to those on-scene.

Garcia also added that when he came to the July Texas Department annual meeting, he was greeted with donations from other posts throughout Texas. Later, checks from other state American Legion posts arrived.

At the close of the annual department convention, he had over \$20,000 in cash and gift cards. The response to Post 208's logistical work typifies a key aspect of the American Legion constitution preamble with this phrase: "To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation."

As you recite this line from the preamble before your next post meeting, I hope you will remember how Legionnaires throughout Texas and in parts of the nation practice this key principle. When bad things happen in our community, our organization always steps up to help those in need.

The latest official reports from Kerr County's leadership are that cleanup could take six months to search for missing people. So, the work will continue.

American Legion members and other veterans can send checks or gift cards to the post. Garcia asks if you send those donations with a check, you designate flood relief on any check sent to Post 208 at the following address:

American Legion Post 208  
P.O. Box 290121  
Kerrville, TX 78029

Rich Huntley, Commander  
American Legion, Department of Texas

# THE LEGION TIMES VOLUME 107, ISSUE 1 AUGUST 2025

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## Message From the Department Historian



Thank you Legionnaires for electing me to be your Department Historian for 2025–2026. I will continue to be available for any questions, training or assistance with the History Book compilation for your Post.

Here is a synopsis of the History Book competition that took place in Austin at the Department Convention. There were 135 Posts represented at the Convention and there were 8 books turned in this year (1 more than 2024), from 8 different districts. The books were from Post 490 - 2nd District, Post 597 - 5th District, Post 159 - 6th District, Post 133 - 11th District, Post 655 - 12th District, Post 240 - 17th District, and Post 828 - 20th District. Four judges (1 from each of the Divisions) reviewed all the books and made their decision. The results were as follows: 1st Place Post 133, 2nd Place Post 828, 3rd Place 490 and 4th Place Post 597. Thank you again for all the Posts that submitted a book for the competition and I hope to see more next year.

In recognition and sincere appreciation of outstanding promotion through submission of articles to the Texas Legion Times, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, in showcasing the American Legion and their programs and activities dedicated to God and country, I presented certificates to the following:  
Post 828 - San Antonio submitted 48 articles, Post 174 - Georgetown submitted 31 articles and Post 164 - Katy submitted 14 articles. Out of 466 Posts in the state of Texas only 22 posts submitted articles this past year. We need to change this by sharing your events to let everyone know what we are doing!

Shirley Platt  
Department Historian



# 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 text file (.txt or .rtf) or as a PDF. ONE ARTICLE PER EMAIL PLEASE.
- The ideal word count for our format is 200 - 500 words (maximum), preferably 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 of any corresponding photo captions, 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](mailto:times@txlegion.org) by the 20th of every month, for it to appear in the *following* issue. This way we have plenty of time to work with in case we need to clarify anything with you.

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



# The American Legion Department of Texas Elects New Commander

Story and Photos by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA



U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Rich Huntley of S. Mike Lacy American Legion Post No. 554 in League City, Texas, was elected and installed as the Commander of The American Legion Department of Texas during the Department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. Joining him on stage were two of his three sons along with Past Department Commander Tom Marty



Past Department Commander Tom Marty installs incoming Department Commander Rich Huntley (right) along with Department Treasurer Gary Sanders, Department Historian Shirley Platt, and Department Judge Advocate William Wallace during the Department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel

AUSTIN, Texas – (July 13, 2025) – U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Rich Huntley of S. Mike Lacy American Legion Post No. 554 in League City, Texas, was elected and installed as the Commander of The American Legion Department of Texas during the Department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.

Huntley has a distinguished record of service within The American Legion. He served as a department vice commander for the 3rd Division as well as chairman of Texas Boys State, one of the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for high school students in the state.

In his new role as department commander, Huntley aims to lead the American Legion's statewide efforts in membership growth, public relations, and the promotion of the organization's programs and services.

The American Legion is the largest U.S. veterans organization with nearly two million members in more than 12,000 posts across the nation and in foreign countries.

Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is dedicated to the motto of "Veterans Strengthening America."

Legionnaires accomplish this through the organization's four founding pillars of mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans.

For more information about the Department of Texas visit [www.txlegion.org](http://www.txlegion.org)



## 2025 American Legion Department of Texas Convention

Photos by Burrell Parmer, Texas American Legion Press Association



Medal of Honor Recipient Ret. Col. Donald "Doc" Ballard, Army National Guard, delivered remarks during The American Legion Department of Texas' annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.



National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr., The American Legion, visited with Legionnaires during the Department of Texas' annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.



National Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation Director Cole Lyle, a member of Johnson-Wiggins American Legion Post No. 22 in Corsicana, Texas, delivered remarks during The American Legion Department of Texas' annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.



Zachary Moore of the Universal City Fire Department was named Fire Fighter of the Year by The American Legion Department of Texas during its annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. The award honors firefighters who have demonstrated exceptional service, community involvement, and professional achievement, exceeding the normal expectations of their role.



Oliver Burke, of Dallas, the Department of Texas and The American Legion's National Eagle Scout of the Year, addresses Legionnaires during the Department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel



Legionnaire Thomas Koepke of Fort Mason American Legion Post No. 285 in Mason, Texas, was recognized as the Legionnaire of the Year during The American Legion Department of Texas' annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel





## South Houston Legionnaire Honored as Recruiter of the Year

### David Witucki Sets New Standard for Membership Recruitment

Submitted by Rene Sanchez

In a heartfelt display of dedication to community and country, David Witucki of South Houston Post 490 has been named the 2025 American Legion Recruiter of the Year for the Department of Texas. This prestigious recognition was presented at the Department of Texas American Legion Annual Convention on July 12, 2026. This was his ninth consecutive recruiter of the year award.

Witucki's efforts have set a remarkable benchmark: in 2025 alone, he recruited an astounding 105 new members to the organization. His outstanding work was formally acknowledged by the Department of Texas Commander and the National Commander—underscoring the far-reaching impact of his service.

Legionnaires who bring in 50 or more members in a year are inducted into the elite Gold Brigade, a mark of extraordinary achievement. Witucki has achieved this honor an impressive nine consecutive times. He earned the title of Master Recruiter—a distinction he wears proudly on his Legion cap.

In 2018, David achieved a remarkable milestone by being honored with the National Recruiter of the Year award, following his unprecedented recruitment of 578 new members—a feat that set a new standard in excellence. He replicated this extraordinary accomplishment in 2020, once again earning national distinction after enlisting over 200 new members, further solidifying his legacy as a transformative leader in recruitment.

Witucki's approach is rooted in confidence, knowledge, and a genuine sense of service. He is always prepared to guide potential members, addressing questions and dispelling any misinformation, while exemplifying professionalism and patriotism. Above all, he never fails to thank veterans for their service, embodying the core values of "Veterans Strengthening America."

Witucki's tireless recruiting has tangible results for South Houston Post 490 and the broader veteran community. Every new member strengthens the Legion's ability to advocate for veterans' healthcare, support troops, and promote educational opportunities for children.

South Houston takes great pride in David Witucki's accomplishments, which serve as a shining example of the positive impact one person's service can have on the lives of many.





## Post 174 Troop 1096 Activities

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174



Troop 1096 handed out water to the crowds at the Round Rock 4th of July parade. Despite the rain the Scouts had fun and did a fantastic job!

At a recent Troop meeting, the Troop had a visit from the Florence Police Department Chief Wayne Thompson to learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, a requirement for rank advancement.

Troop 1096 traveled to Waco to visit the Mammoth National Monument. They explored the site learning about the conservation involved in maintaining it. The Scouts also earned their Junior Ranger Badges. After a sack lunch picnic, the Troop toured the Dr. Pepper Museum.





# Department of Texas Hosts American Legion Baseball Banquet

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

BRENNHAM, Texas – (July 23, 2025) – The American Legion Baseball Banquet is more than a simple end-of-season gathering; it stands as a cherished tradition that honors the rich history of American Legion Baseball, celebrates the achievements of players and coaches, and fosters a deeper sense of community among participants, families, and supporters.

This year's banquet, held at Buddy Wright American Legion Post 48, served as a heartfelt culmination of the summer's competition and an affirmation of the enduring values promoted by The American Legion: citizenship, sportsmanship, leadership, and service.

This year, four teams attended the banquet: Texarkana Indians, El Paso Pirates, League City Post 554, and Hawkins Saints-Greenville.

During the banquet, attendees heard remarks from Department Commander Rich Huntley, Department Auxiliary President Leigh Ann Stewart and Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander Ken Dorsett.

They shared words of wisdom and encouragement with the players to include the importance of sportsmanship, commitment, and the broader lessons baseball can teach about life.

"The primary purpose of the banquet is to recognize the hard work, commitment, and achievements of the players who have represented their posts with pride and determination throughout the season," said Huntley. "The banquet also provided an opportunity to thank coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and the families whose unwavering support makes the program possible."

Few youth sports programs in America carry the storied prestige of American Legion Baseball. Established in 1925, the league was founded with a dual purpose: to provide young people with structured athletic competition and to teach the ideals of loyalty, respect, and teamwork.

Over the decades, the program has grown into one of the nation's largest amateur baseball organizations, producing countless future stars—including numerous Major League Baseball players—while also shaping the character of generations of young athletes.

In the end, The American Legion Baseball Banquet is more than a meal or a ceremony; it is a celebration of youth, teamwork, and the enduring power of community. By honoring achievements, expressing gratitude, and reaffirming shared values, the banquet encapsulates the spirit that has sustained American Legion Baseball for generations.



Attending the Texas American Legion Baseball Banquet at Buddy Wright American Legion Post 48 were (l-r) Department Commander Rich Huntley, Department Auxiliary President Leigh Ann Stewart and Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander Ken Dorsett (Photo by: Post 48 Historian Ted Hemmer)



Attending the Texas American Legion Baseball Banquet at Buddy Wright American Legion Post 48 were (l-r) Americanism Chairman Tom Tyrdik, Committeeman Jim McGuire, Tournament Director Ken Cannon, and Baseball Chairman Jay Jernigan (Photo by: Legionnaire Ted Hemmer)





# Legionnaires Donate \$17K During Convention in Support of Kerrville Flood Disaster

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA



National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. (third from right), The American Legion, visited with Legionnaires of Kerrville Memorial Post 208 and members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1480 to thank them for their help during the recent disastrous floods

AUSTIN, Texas – (July 16, 2025) – In the aftermath of the recent catastrophic flooding that swept through Kerrville, Texas, and neighboring communities, Legionnaires rallied together at the 106th Annual Convention of The American Legion Department of Texas to provide emergency disaster relief funding, July 11–13.

During the convention, held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, Legionnaires and numerous American Legion posts donated \$17,705 to assist Kerrville Memorial American Legion Post 208, which has been providing urgent relief and support for those affected.

“One of the most effective ways to help at this time is by contributing for disaster relief,” said newly-elected Department Commander Rich Huntley of League City, Texas. “Providing financial contributions allow Legionnaires and posts throughout the Department of Texas to quickly address changing needs and assist in purchasing supplies in bulk.”

Fifteen counties have been identified as eligible for The American Legion’s National Emergency Fund grants which are available for Legionnaires and Legion posts impacted by recent flooding in central Texas.

Membership in The American Legion must be active at time of disaster and the time of application. For more information, visit <https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/emergency/2025/july/texas-counties-eligible-for-nef-grants>.

Regular updates on recovery efforts and ways to help are posted on the Kerrville city website and local news outlets.





# Bulter-Redd Post 493 Collaboration with Taylor Sudden Services to Support Texas Hill Country

Article by David Wedgeworth, Post 493 Commander, and Alyssa Broussard • Photos by David Wedgeworth



In a true demonstration of community spirit and service, members of the American Legion Bulter-Redd Post 493 of Nederland, Texas, joined forces with Taylor Sudden Services of Beaumont, Texas, to provide critical support to residents of the Texas Hill Country following recent catastrophic flooding. This natural disaster left many families displaced and in desperate need of basic necessities as they began the daunting task of recovery.

Understanding the urgency of the situation, volunteers from both organizations worked tirelessly to collect, organize, and package a wide array of much-needed supplies. Among the items donated were essential cleaning supplies, batteries, children's snacks, bottled water, and pet food. These were carefully selected to address both immediate needs and long-term cleanup efforts. Buckets were filled with disinfectants, gloves, sponges, and other sanitizing tools thanks in large part to a generous contribution from Lowe's Home Improvement. In addition, large totes were packed with supplies by dedicated veterans and volunteers from the local community.

On Friday, July 18, 2025, a team of volunteers personally delivered the supplies to Comfort, Texas—a community significantly impacted by the flooding. From there, local organizations and relief teams began distributing the donations to surrounding towns and rural areas hit hardest by the disaster.

This collaboration between American Legion Bulter-Redd Post 493 and Taylor Sudden Services represents more than just a relief mission—it is a testament to the power of local partnerships, civic responsibility, and the unwavering commitment of veterans and citizens to support their fellow Texans during times of crisis.





# Texas American Legion Continues Relief Efforts in Support of Kerrville Flood Victims

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

KERRVILLE, Texas – (July 23, 2025) – Legionnaires from across the state of Texas are continuing to provide support to relief victims of the disastrous floods which affected Kerr County.

Delivering a trailer of supplies to Kerrville Memorial Post 208 on July 16 were 12th District Commander Chad Page and 12th District Judge Advocate Amy King, both Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) certified personnel.

After unloading supplies, they were assigned to a search and rescue (SAR) team operated by American Core, in partnership with Post 208.

Over the next several days, SAR teams, consisting of Legion volunteers, conducted detailed searches in assigned sectors of the Guadalupe River.

While Page and King were searching, 12th District Historian Robin York was volunteering at the community food and first responder supply distribution point at Post 208.

On July 19, an additional trailer of supplies was delivered to Post 208 from Post 655 in Haltom City, Texas, and Mansfield Post 624 in Mansfield, Texas. These supplies were quickly distributed to the areas needed and to exhausted first responders.

“Post 208 has been a vital resource for the disaster response to the catastrophic flooding on the 4th of July,” said Page. “Their strategic location on the Guadalupe River, to include being located next door to the Kerr County fairgrounds and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the response, has allowed them to play a vital and key role in their community’s recovery.”

According to Page, within hours of the flooding, supplies started to roll into the Post 208 from all over the state, and the post’s bingo hall became a general store that allowed residents to get a two week supply of food and essentials. Additionally, a special area of the general store was designated only for emergency responders.

The general store is open daily at 7 a.m. and manned by members of the Post 208 Legion family along with Legion family members from throughout the Department of Texas and beyond.

Each morning, a steady flow of first responders are receiving essentials for their day to include food before they head out to perform SAR operations. Along with providing personnel at the EOC, Post 208 has partnered with American Core, LLC., which provides management, equipment, and materials to organize volunteers for SAR/Recovery Operations and Recovery Operations for residents’ homes.

The partnership between Post 208 and American Core is helping multiple communities recover, providing closure for the families that have been affected.

The American Legion is dedicated to the motto of “Veterans Strengthening America.” Legionnaires accomplish this through the organization’s four founding pillars of mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans.



12th District Commander Chad Page conducts search and rescue (SAR) operations during disaster/relief efforts. Page, along with other Legionnaires of the 12th District, delivered supplies to Kerrville Memorial Post 208’s community food and first responder supply distribution point (Photo by Legionnaire Amy King)



12th District Judge Advocate Amy King conducts search and rescue (SAR) operations during disaster/relief efforts (Photo by Legionnaire Chad Page)



12th District Commander Chad Page (third from right) with members of Posts 624, 655, and 12th District Historian Robin York (left) (Photo courtesy of Legionnaire Chad Page)



## Post 174 Honors Texas Boy's State Attendees

*Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174*

Prior to our last Post meeting, we honored our Texas Boy's State attendees. First, we had a pizza party, with vegetable and fruit trays, plus assorted desserts provided by our Auxiliary. Once everyone finished eating, we had each attendee talk about their experience at Texas Boy's State.

The Commander presented each young man with a Post certificate and coupon for a free haircut from Sports Clips.





## Corpus Christi Resident Installed as Texas American Legion Vice Commander

Story and Photos by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

AUSTIN, Texas – (July 20, 2025) – U.S. Army Veteran Jose A. Lopez, a resident of Corpus Christi, Texas, was installed as a vice commander of The American Legion Department of Texas during the department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, July 13.

In his role as a department vice commander, Lopez aims to lead the 3rd Division's regional efforts in membership growth, public relations, and the promotion of The American Legion's programs and services.

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps as an infantryman from 1984-1988, Lopez enrolled at Texas A&M University at Kingsville, earning a commission through the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps program in 1993. He served in the U.S. Army until his retirement in 2012 at the rank of major.

During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Lopez served in Kuwait (2003-2004), Iraq (2009), and twice in Afghanistan (2006/2010-2011).

As a legionnaire, he served as commander of Bill Roper Country Post 364 in Corpus Christi for three years from 2019–2021 and again from 2022-2023. He currently serves as the commander of Cicero Wood Post 155 in Robstown, Texas.

Additionally, he served as the 14th District vice commander from 2019-2021 and 14th District commander from 2021 to 2024; and 3rd Division vice commander 2024-2025. In May 2025, he was elected as the department vice commander for the 3rd Division at the Division annual convention held in Seguin, Texas.

Lopez is a licensed professional counselor and is also licensed in chemical dependency, and certified as an anger resolution therapist. He has worked with and continues to work with both veterans and the public.

He is a life member of The American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Marine Corps League.

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For more information about the 3rd Division, Department of Texas visit [www.txlegiondiv3.org](http://www.txlegiondiv3.org)



U.S. Army Veteran Jose A. Lopez, a resident of Corpus Christi, Texas, was installed as a vice commander of The American Legion Department of Texas during the department's annual convention held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel



## Post 174 Pack 151 Conducts Rainwater Regatta

*Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174*

On June 28th, Pack 151, chartered by Post 174 conducted their annual rainwater regatta. The Cubmaster brought all the parts needed for the Cub Scouts to build their sail boats. The parents assisted their Cubs with designing and building their sail boats.

Once the boats were built, the Cubs evaluated their boats and adjusted as needed to the sails and rudders. The Cubs then raced their boats. The key goal of the event was for parents to enjoy time collaborating with their Cubs. The event was an enormous success.



## Post 174 Initiates New Members

Post 174 continues to grow! We have initiated new members at our last two regular Post meetings.





## Strength, Healing, and Honor: GI Joan Project and American Legion Unite for Women Veterans

Belton, Texas — In a powerful show of unity and purpose, the GI Joan Project and The American Legion Walton H. Walker Post 55 in Belton, Texas, partnered this year to bring targeted support and healing to veteran women across the state and the nation.

The collaboration launched several impactful initiatives, including a Veteran Women's Resource Fair, that drew over 124 participants. Women veterans in attendance gained access to critical services, heard from expert speakers addressing Military Sexual Trauma (MST), Mental Health First Aid, and Grace Trials, and connected with over 24 veteran-focused vendors. Each guest received a swag bag filled with helpful information, wellness gifts, and tokens of appreciation. Lunch was provided, giving attendees time to connect, recharge, and build community.

At the heart of the year's efforts was a faith-based mental health wellness program designed specifically for women who have served. The program directly reached over 800 women veterans, filling vital gaps in care by focusing on PTSD, anxiety, depression, spiritual crisis, and MST—challenges often under-addressed in traditional support systems.

Over 650 wellness packages were thoughtfully assembled and distributed. Each package included educational materials on VA services, suicide prevention, mental health and trauma recovery, along with faith-based resources, grounding tools, inspirational literature, an MST recovery book, and healing arts and crafts kits donated by Help Heal Veterans.

Support for the initiative came from a wide network of dedicated partners, including The American Legion Joe Knot Post 317 in Jarrell, The American Legion Post 133 Temple, GI Joan Project, Help Heal Veterans, The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 317 and local businesses such as Just Crafty LLC, DM Wellness and Wells2000 LLC.

Beyond the wellness kits, the program hosted three six-hour MST healing workshops in Belton, Waco, and Jarrell. These transformative events were led by Dr. Miette Wells, an award-winning author, combat-disabled veteran, MST survivor, and nationally recognized expert. The workshops provided trauma-informed education, local resources,



and spiritual tools for recovery. Each participant left with a wellness tote—and many with a renewed sense of strength.

One Marine Corps veteran, after a session, tearfully hugged Dr. Wells and said, “I felt alone and at the end of a rope—this saved me.”

Of the wellness packages delivered, 550 were distributed in Texas, with another 100 mailed nationwide. Combined with workshop attendance, email outreach, and social media support, the program served over 800 women veterans throughout the year.

Encouraged by the program's success, GI Joan Project has announced ambitious plans this next Legion year: 1,000 wellness packages, a Veteran Woman Resource Fair and four MST healing workshops, are already in the works.

Donations and sponsorships are needed to continue this vital mission. To contribute or learn more, visit [www.GIJoan.org](http://www.GIJoan.org). Your support can help save lives.

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- Hospital HELP Plan
- Cancer Care
- Accidental Death Protection
- On-The-Move Travel Accident
- Emergency Assistance Plus
- ID Resolve
- Medicare Supplement Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Long-Term Care
- Lifeline Medical Alert Service

**Hospital HELP Plan** — Provides benefits for hospital stays including intensive care, cardiac care, care for cancer, rehabilitative facilities, and V.A. hospitals.\*

**Cancer Care** — Provides important protection and a daily benefit if you are hospitalized due to cancer.\*

**Accidental Death** — Helps provide financial protection for you and your family. Up to \$5,000.00 LegionCare AD coverage at no cost to Legionnaires is available: (activation required).\* You can also purchase additional Accident coverage up to \$100,000.00.

**On-The-Move Travel Accident** — Provides up to \$200,000.00 coverage when fatally injured in a covered accident while traveling, plus \$500.00 per day if a covered accident lands you in the hospital.\*

**ID Resolve** — Provides 24-hour identity theft resolution that helps protect your money, your time and your financial reputation.\*

**Emergency Assistance Plus** — Provides you with 24/7 emergency medical and travel assistance services should something happen to you or your family while traveling away from home.

**Medicare Supplement Insurance** — Supplements your Medicare Coverage at group rates.

**Health & Dental Insurance** — Request a quote on various Health & Dental Insurance Plans designed with you in mind.

**Long-Term Care** — Can help provide home health care, supervised adult care, and more.

**Lifeline Medical Alert Service** — Provides fast access to help in the event of a fall or medical emergency so you can live confidently and independently.

**DeviceGuard** — A simple, comprehensive, and affordable way to protect your devices—from smartphones to laptops to digital doorbells. Flexible plans and bundles ensure that you only pay for the protection you need.



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DIR-ONLN-SLP-04/2013

## 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.

**CONTACT YOUR POST ADJUTANT TO GET YOURS!**

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



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# AMERICAN LEGION

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