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Do you have an article or announcement for The Legion Times?

If so, please send all submissions to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month to appear in the following issue.

Message from the Commander

Community

As the summer comes to an end, we will get a little cooler weather, school will start back up, and we will begin to enjoy Fall. This is the perfect time of year to ensure that The American Legion engages with our communities. There are three different areas I would encourage every American Legion Post in Texas to work on. These are Schools, the City or County officials, and the Veteran Community.



To begin with the schools, as they begin the new year it is a great opportunity to establish the relationship for the next year. Identify the contacts that will be the key to keeping or establishing a great Oratorical program in your Post. Each school will have a different leader that will be critical in finding the best Oratorical candidates. Next figure out who will be the best contact for Boys and Girls State. These may or may not be the same counselors or teachers. Also identify the JROTC contacts if the school has them. This is a good time to establish the relationship for JROTC awards at the end of the year, and a great opportunity to explore the possibility of creating a Junior Shooting Program. Do not forget to get involved with the elementary schools with your Flag program teaching Flag Etiquette and School Awards.

The next level of involvement is with the City or County offices and officials. Attend a City Council meeting and speak during Citizens to be heard. Make sure you are wearing your Legion Cap and shirt and let them know what your Post can do for the Community. Become the resource for Veterans issues, offer your Post as a shelter during times of need, and offer your membership as volunteers during community crisis. Every Community has a Disaster Preparedness Plan; make sure your Post is a part of it. Contact the Police Chief and the Fire Chief and begin the discussion about the National Defense awards for Policeman, EMT, and Firefighter of the year. You will want these packets back before the end of December, so they can be worked on to ensure completeness by your District Spring Convention. Now is the time to become part of the plan for the year's Veterans Observances. Veterans Day Parades, Memorial Day, The Legion Birthday, get involved with the planning and take the lead in your city on all things Veteran related.

Now that your Post is set up as the lead for all things Veterans, invite the Community into your house. Open your doors for coffee and camaraderie during the days, schedule meals that cater to the events and needs of your Post and the Community. This may be a monthly breakfast, a special meal for the first responders, or a picnic lunch for all Veterans on Veterans Day. It may be providing a hall for rent for birthdays, weddings, retirements, and baby showers.

Take this time to establish your Post as the center of the community. Engage with the schools, get involved at City Hall, and open up your Post home to the Veteran Community. I always ask the question, "Is your Post a building in the community, or is your Post Building Community." Get outside of your four walls, Build Community, and make sure you have fun while you do it.

Danny Muth
Department Commander

**AMERICAN
LEGION**

BE THE ONE

THE LEGION TIMES VOLUME 108, ISSUE 2 SEPTEMBER 2026

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Building Better Posts with MOPA

Creating Value Beyond the Membership Card

By Ventura "Ace" Tounsel, MOPA Commission Chair, Department of Texas

As we continue through the membership year, every Post leadership team should ask an important question:

Why should a veteran keep coming back after they pay their dues?

Membership is about more than collecting annual renewals. It is about creating a Post where veterans find friendship, purpose, and opportunities to connect. Providing value to our members can be one of our most effective tools for both retention and recruitment.

One of The American Legion's greatest strengths is that every Post is unique. What works in San Antonio may not work in Amarillo, Houston, El Paso, or a small rural community. That's okay. The goal isn't for every Post to offer the same activities. The goal is to discover what works for your Post.

At William J. Bordelon Post 300 in San Antonio, they have developed a weekly **Dungeons & Dragons Night**. Tabletop role-playing may not be the first activity that comes to mind when thinking about an American Legion Post, but it attracts veterans of different ages and backgrounds. Some may never visit the Post for traditional "bar" activities such as pool, darts, or cards, but D&D gives them another reason to walk through our doors, build friendships, and become part of our Post family.

That's what adding value looks like.

Dungeons & Dragons may not work at your Post. Maybe a monthly hiking group would. Perhaps members would enjoy a cycling club, fishing group, book club, photography club, or movie night. Have some open floor space? How about Zumba or another fitness class?

The specific activity isn't the point.

The point is creating opportunities for veterans to gather, develop relationships, and find a sense of belonging.

Innovation doesn't require a large budget or an official American Legion program. Sometimes it simply requires asking members, **"What would make you want to spend more time at our Post?"**

As MOPA leaders, we want to help build stronger Posts. Strong Posts recognize that our traditions and Four Pillars remain our foundation while understanding that how we engage today's veterans can continue to evolve.

This month, think outside the box. Try something new. If it works, build on it. If it doesn't, learn from it and try something else. Remember, every great Post tradition started as someone's new idea.

MOPA Challenge: Before your next Executive Committee meeting, ask: What new activity could we introduce in the next 90 days that adds value to being a member of our Post?

Building Better Posts isn't about doing more, it's about doing what matters most, together.

2026–2027 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

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Bret Watson, National Executive Committeeman
Gene Toohey, Alternate National Executive Committeeman
Richard Huntley, 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
Michael Wheeler, Department Sergeant-at-Arms
Roy Clark, 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

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Cheryl Williams, 2nd Division
Eric Mayer, 3rd Division
Jeff Meurer, 4th Division

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John Vickery, Jr, 2nd District Commander
Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander
Kenneth Milburn, 4th District Commander
Tynetta Runnels, 5th District Commander
Scott Hines, 6th District Commander
Terry Batson, 7th District Commander
Stefanie Otto, 8th District Commander
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Chris Grantham, 17th District Commander
Reyna Ruiz, 18th District Commander
Kevin Bright, 19th District Commander
Billy Hill, 20th District Commander
Don Gray, 21st District Commander
Hector Hernandez, Jr., 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 might 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 continue to help us grow and improve The Legion Times!

20th District Commander Throws First Pitch at SA Missions Game, Convenes First District Meeting

Story by Past Commander Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA

SAN ANTONIO – (Aug. 20, 2026) – The San Antonio Missions hosted a Military Appreciation Day game at Nelson Wolff Stadium, Aug. 9, where the Missions defeated the Springfield Cardinals 7-4, winning the series for the first time since 2021.

During the festivities, 20th District Commander Billy Hill of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 had the distinct honor of throwing the ceremonial first pitch.

The first pitch is a ceremonial throw that happens before a baseball game officially begins. The honoree, often a local leader, celebrity, sponsor or community member, is invited onto the field to throw a baseball from near the pitcher's mound toward home plate.

"It was a great feeling to actually be on the field again," said Hill, a retired U.S. Navy master chief. "My childhood dream was to be a left-handed pitcher in the World Series. This was the closest I've ever been to that goal."

Hill and his wife were invited to the game by the Legionnaires of Audie L. Murphy American Legion Post 336.

"This was an opportunity for The American Legion to actively engage with the community, veterans, and youth while demonstrating the Americanism we stand for as an organization," said Hill. "I would do it again and again if given the opportunity."

On Aug. 12, Hill, who was duly installed as the "Mighty" 20th District Commander at the 107th Department Convention in July, convened his first bi-monthly district meeting held at Bicentennial American Legion Post 579.

The "Mighty" 20th District, comprised of 17 posts with approximately 6,000 members, serves veterans, active-duty service members, and communities across the San Antonio and Bexar County area with the 3rd Division, Department of Texas.



20th District Commander Billy Hill of Post 828 had the distinct honor of throwing the ceremonial first pitch during the San Antonio Missions' Military Appreciation Day game at Nelson Wolff Stadium (Photo courtesy of SA Missions)



20th District Commander Billy Hill of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 convened his first bi-monthly district meeting held at Bicentennial American Legion Post 579 (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/TEXALPA)



20th District Vice Commander Tounsel "Ace" Ventura held a live District 20 Membership Scoreboard where posts were recognized for membership excellence during the "Mighty" 20th District Meeting (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/TEXALPA)

A Little Bit of History – DID YOU KNOW?

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department of Texas Historian

The movement to organize the Sons of The American Legion in Texas began in 1931, with the adoption of a resolution at the El Paso convention calling for an organization of sons of veterans and deceased veterans to be known as "Legion Heirs."

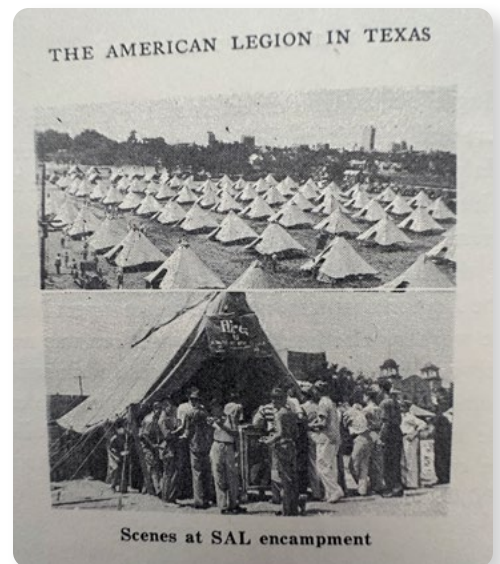
The national organization approved the organization of the Sons of The American Legion in May, 1933, and the Texas Legion Heirs were simply renamed the SAL. A squadron was immediately organized in Beaumont, and several posts quickly sponsored squadrons. Publicity in the Department newspaper explained the purposes of the SAL organization, and gave the proper procedure for forming squadrons. Squadrons were organized by posts in Amarillo, Elcra, Houston #52, Memphis, Overton, Port Arthur and Wichita Falls.

In 1936, the Sons of The American Legion organization continued to grow in size and activity, with twenty-eight squadrons reported at the close of the year. At the Beaumont Encampment the Palestine squadron won a cash prize for making the best showing in the convention parade, while the Forty and Eight Grand Voiture Cup went to the Dallas Squadron as the most outstanding in the state. The Overton Squadron Drum and Bugle Corps, state champions, also won first prize at the national convention in Cleveland.

In 1937, the threat of an epidemic caused last-minute cancellation of the SAL encampment at San Angelo. The committee chairman, Vincent Chiodo, reported to the convention that there were now 34 squadrons in the Department, with a total membership of 926. Twelve musical organizations within the squadrons were taking an active part in memorial services, Armistice Day parades, Legion birthday celebrations, and many other patriotic programs. Rifle competition was held on the home range of the competing teams: Mercedes Squadron No. 172, Abilene-Parramore No. 57, and Houston No. 52, with Oak Cliff Squadron No. 275 of Dallas declared the winners.

THE BIG QUESTION – HOW ACTIVE IS YOUR SAL SQUADRON?

Extracted from: The American Legion in Texas – 1919 - 1949, Copyright 1951, 1st Edition



Favre Baldwin American Legion Post 12, Tyler School Supply Donation

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander

Favre Baldwin American Legion Post 12, Tyler, TX delivered school supplies to Jackson Elementary school in Chapel Hill, TX Monday, August 12, 2026

Legion Family members, Kandy Conger (Aux), Steve Conger (Legionnaire), Jim Cope (SAL), Curtis Harmon (Legionnaire), Steve Rudder (Legionnaire), Sean Rudder and James Belle-Isle (Legionnaire) delivered the supplies.

This is a yearly thing that keeps getting bigger for us.

We want to thank our members and guests for making it a big success!



Post 828 Legionnaires Receive Congressional Certificates, Coins for Veterans History Project

Story by Fred Brock Post 828 Public Relations

SAN ANTONIO – (Aug. 12, 2026) – Veterans from across city, also known as Military City USA, were invited to a special gathering hosted by U.S. Rep. Greg Casar (TX-35) at the Mexican American Unity Council – Community Room.

The event's purpose was to honor those veterans who participated in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project (VHP).

Serving as mistress of ceremonies, Constituent Advocate Tina Bracy served as the lead for the local VHP and introduced Casar who thanked all the veterans for their service and for sharing their oral histories which will be archived in the Library of Congress.

"This is important history for historians, young people and lawmakers to see and have preserved," said Casar. "We want to ensure we are not just preserving this for history but also taking care of the veterans that we have."

Two of the honorees included members of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, Past Commander Burrell Parmer, major, U.S. Marine Corps retired, and Legionnaire Jerry Cheatom, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army retired, who both received congressional certificates and coins from Casar.

Launched in 2000 by Congress, the VHP preserves and makes accessible the firsthand recollections of U.S. military veterans who served from World War I through more recent conflicts and peacekeeping missions, so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand what they saw, did, and felt during their service.

For those interested in participating in the San Antonio area, contact Rep. Casar's office at 210-580-7000 or sign up online at <https://casar.house.gov/VHP>



Legionnaire Jerry Cheatom, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army retired, and member of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, received a congressional certificate and coin from U.S. Rep. Greg Casar (TX-35) at the Mexican American Unity Council – Community Room



Past Commander Burrell Parmer, major, U.S. Marine Corps retired, and member of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, received a congressional certificate and coin from U.S. Rep. Greg Casar (TX-35) at the Mexican American Unity Council – Community Room



Legionnaires Burrell Parmer (left) and Jerry Cheatom (right) of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 received congressional coins from U.S. Rep. Greg Casar (TX-35) at the Mexican American Unity Council – Community Room

William M. Randolph Post 593 Quilt of Valor Recipient

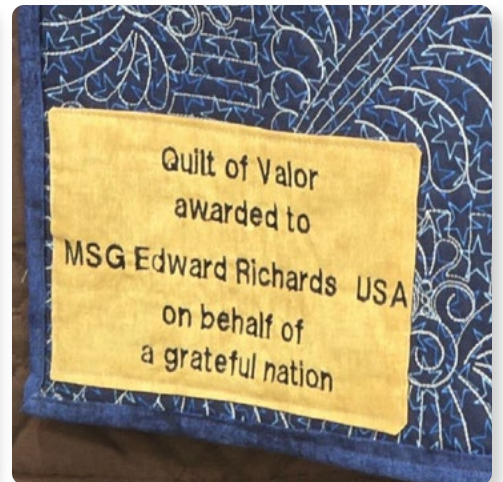
Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department of Texas Historian, Post 593 Member

Ed Richards, a Legionnaire, SAL and ALR member was nominated and presented with a Quilt of Valor on August 16, 2026. He served honorably in the Army from 1976 to 1996, and retired as an E-8.

His deployments included Germany, Kelly AFB, TX, Turkey, Ft. Huachuca, AZ, and Bosnia. He deployed to the Inter-Germany Border to collect, analyze and report items of intelligence. He also worked with NATO countries to provide intelligence. While in Augsburg he provided intelligence on the Chernobyl nuclear incident. While at Ft. Huachuca he assisted in the design, test, and deployment of the Trojan Spirit Intelligence Communications System. While in Germany he was assigned to Army Military Intelligence unit assigned to Bosnian Civil War. In Bosnia he provided firsthand information to support the separation of forces and set up the Mine Action Center to collaborate with the Bosnian, Serb and Croatian forces to identify and locate mine fields.

He is a dedicated Legionnaire with William M. Randolph Post 593 in Converse, TX. He has been awarded the high award of Legionnaire of the Year for the Post, has held numerous positions at the Post, District and Department level and the American Legion Riders chapter. He is always there if you need him, whether it's shopping for an event, helping another veteran, or donating time, equipment and money to his community.

He is responsible for the start-up of Post 593 Tuesday Morning Coffee at the Post. Started with a couple people, now there are anywhere from 15 to 40 people showing up to enjoy coffee, donuts and camaraderie with veterans, family members and the community.



Post 174 Installation of Officers

Submitted by Amery Vasso, Post 174 Commander

On August 13th, 2026 members of Abe Harrison Post 174 in Georgetown, Texas held an installation of officers and member awards and recognition event.

The installing officer, District 10 Commander Tim Moore, installed the two newly elected officers for Post 174, the other Post Officers were retained in their current positions.

Brothers, Michael and Andy Tischer, both US Army veterans were installed as Post Judge Advocate and Post Historian respectively. In attendance were Mike and Andy's sister, Sara Vasso, also a US Army Veteran, and their brother in-law Post Commander Amery Vasso.



Newly installed officers of Post 174 after their installation on August 13th, 2026. From left to right: District 10 Commander Tim Moore, Post Judge Advocate Michael Tischer, Post Member Sara Vasso (née Tischer), Post Historian Andy Tischer, Post Commander Amery Vasso

Post Finance Officer William Catron was honored as the 2025-2026 Post Legionnaire of the Year.

The Post Commander shared with the Post members and guests an overview of the Post's activities over the preceding year. The Post also recognized Legionnaires, David Perez and William Shean with continuous membership certificates.

America 250 at Post 363

Submitted by Bonni Randall, Post 363 Adjutant

In June, Carl Morrison Post 363 in Rockport held a canned food drive for our local food bank. Our goal was to collect 250 cans. We exceeded that goal by over 100 cans thanks to our members and community support!



Post 472 Celebrates Our Country's 250th Birthday with a Parade

Submitted by Natividad Corona, Post 472 Historian



We celebrated our country's 250th birthday with a 1st ever 4th of July American Legion parade. From Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church to Post 472 it was 8 city blocks. The parade started out with Police motorcycle escorts and 2 Houston Fire Department Fire Engines soundings horns.

Post 472 Color Guard followed with the American Flag flying high with a gusty wind. Post Members followed in a trailer, followed by the Auxiliary and their trailer. Magnolia Park Sharks little league baseball team followed for a total of 12 vehicles. People along the parade route were cheering us on. Plenty more people were waiting as we arrived at the Legion.

We had speakers such as Texas State Senator Carol Alvarado, Houston Councilman at-large Julian Ramirez, Houston City Councilman Joaquin Martinez, and others.

Over 120 people packed the Legion Hall. It was a traditional 4th of July with hot dogs, chips, apple pie and Michelob Ultra beer. DJ played "Choosin Texas", etc. until closing time of 6pm.



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Post 174 Scouts Recruiting

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174



Abe Harrison Post 174 had their Scout units out recruiting at back-to-school events. The first event was in Florence on August 10th, at the Florence Elementary School with Troop and Pack 1096. Our District Executive came to help as well. We had a great deal of interest and will have our first meeting of the year on September 3rd for the Pack.

Our second event was held at four elementary schools in Georgetown. We had teams at all four schools. Some Scouts came out to help Pack 151 recruit. The Pack had a great deal of interest with fifty families signing up to receive more information. Everyone who helped with recruiting had a grand time meeting and talking to all the families.



American Legion Post 133 in Temple, TX Holds Scouting Membership Drive

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department Historian

A Scouting America membership drive was held on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at Post 133, in Temple, TX. Scouting units from Temple, Belton, Salado and Troy gathered together to showcase different aspects of Scouting skills.

The Temple Fire Department brought a truck for display and the Temple Police Department brought its mobile police command center. A local tow truck was also on display, along with a special 60-foot-long video gaming trailer – stocked with video game consoles. There was also a bounce house and a few food trucks.



*Luke Woodrow from Cub Scout Pack 117 uses a PVC marshmallow shooter Saturday to knock down Styrofoam cups during the Scouting America membership event at American Legion Post 133 in Temple
(Photo by Nan Dickson/Special to the Telegram)*

There were five skills stations inside the Legion, where visitors learned about camping, fishing, pioneering, first aid and fire safety. There were three fun stations: marshmallow shooting, arts and crafts, and a pinewood derby.

Tina Amlin, committee chairman for Cub Pack 101 and Paul Sarle, assistant district commissioner with Scouting America, stated they hope to make this an annual event.



Leading Change in The American Legion: A Brief Guide for Post and District Commanders

Submitted by Billy Hill, 20th District Commander

The American Legion's strength comes from service-minded volunteers who bring military experience, civic pride, and a commitment to community. But leading volunteers is fundamentally different from leading service members under military command. There are no UCMJ consequences, only Constitutions and Bylaws and the voluntary choice to stay engaged. That reality demands a different leadership approach — one rooted in listening, clear purpose, structure, and measured expectations.

Start by listening. Ask members why they serve, then stop talking and hear their answers. Motivation lives in people's hearts — not in the canteen or the food — so discover what draws each member to the Legion.

Once you understand motivations, align tasks and roles to match interests and strengths; people will give their best when their work matters to them.

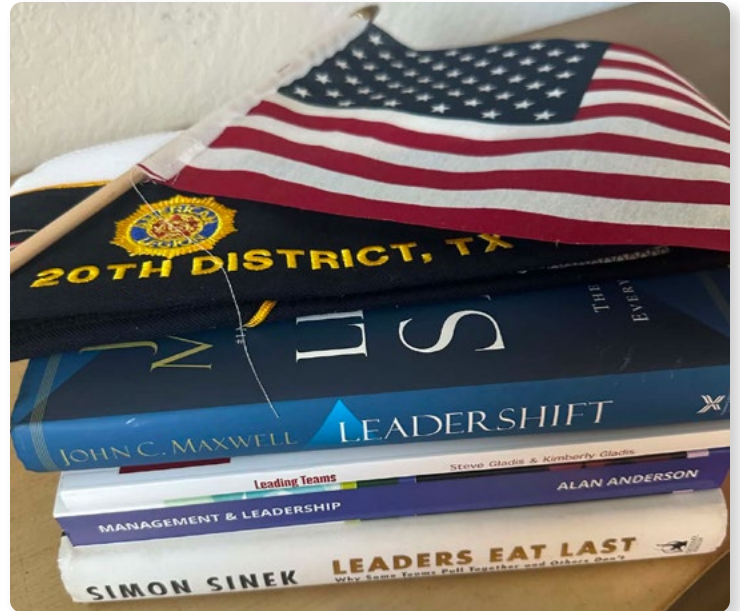
Define and share a clear vision. Ask yourself, "What does success look like?" Communicate that vision in simple terms and make it measurable. You cannot improve what you don't measure: track participation, meeting attendance, program outcomes, and volunteer engagement to know where you stand and where to focus effort.

Own meeting time. Volunteers give scarce time — honor it. Keep meetings focused on Legion business, enforce time limits, and reserve storytelling or socializing for appropriate occasions. Effective time management shows respect and increases productivity, which reinforces commitment.

Build relationships and secure buy-in. Change happens when influential members and committee leaders support it. Identify gifted volunteers, offer meaningful roles, and provide the guidance they need. Leadership based on relationships and situational judgment will produce better results than relying on seniority or time-in-seat.

Set standards and follow through. Make expectations clear, hold people accountable to the mission, and be ready to make adjustments when members opt out. Remember: leadership can be lonely when effective — own that responsibility and lead from the front.

In short: listen to understand, set a measurable vision, manage time and meetings tightly, cultivate relationships, and hold standards. These practices will help Posts and Districts adapt, stay relevant, and continue serving their communities with distinction. You have the support of the organization — now let's you and I go lead.



On The Line – In The Circle

Story by Past Department Vice Commander Tony Lopez, State Junior Shooting Sports Program Chairman



CORPUS CHRISTI – (Sept. 1, 2026) – On ranges across the country, young shooters step up to the firing line, shoulder their rifles, and focus on the target ahead. To the untrained eye, youth shooting sports might look like simple marksmanship training. In reality, these programs serve as a cornerstone for building exceptional character, instilling deep patriotism, and preparing the next generation of American leaders.

At its core, participating in youth shooting sports connects young athletes to the foundation of American freedom. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution is more than just a legal right; it is a vital strand of the nation's heritage that guarantees individual liberty and self-reliance. When young shooters learn to respect and handle firearms safely, they are not just engaging in a pastime — they are actively exercising and honoring a constitutional right that generations before them fought to secure. Learning the history, responsibilities, and duties tied to this freedom fosters a genuine sense of patriotism. It teaches young adults that freedom is not merely a privilege to enjoy, but a legacy to protect through personal accountability.

Beyond constitutional principles, youth shooting sports are an unparalleled training ground for personal leadership. On the range, excuses do not exist. Success depends entirely on self-discipline, focus, and emotional control. A youth marksman must learn to master their breath, manage their heart rate, and maintain composure under pressure. These habits directly translate to real-world leadership. Whether leading a group project, navigating academic challenges, or guiding peers in the community, the self-governance learned behind the sight picture creates confident, reliable decision-makers.

Furthermore, shooting sports cultivate a unique form of community leadership. Range safety demands an unrelenting responsibility — not just for one's own conduct, but for the safety of everyone nearby. Older and more experienced youth shooters frequently step into mentorship roles, helping younger participants master sight alignment, range commands, and fundamental safety rules. By mentoring others, young marksmen learn empathy, clear communication, and the importance of putting team safety and success above personal achievements. These qualities define true servant leadership.

Ultimately, youth shooting sports do far more than teach athletes how to hit a bullseye. They anchor young men and women in the timeless principles that built the nation: respect for liberty, dedication to duty, and service to others. As these young marksmen grow into adult citizens, the lessons learned on the firing line stay with them. Guided by patriotism and strengthened by the Second Amendment, they step forward as disciplined, principled leaders ready to serve their communities and carry American freedom into the future.

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition. Shooters use the .177 caliber air rifle. Both males and females can participate, through Legion sponsorship; disabled youth are encouraged to join, as competitive shooting is a sport that creates an equal playing field for all competitors. Contact your local Legion post, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Auxiliary unit for information about affiliating as a club or individual.





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