



CONTENTS

Message from the Commander	1
History of The Legion Times	2
Department Hosts 2025 Fall DEC	4-5
Legionnaire Receives Scout Knot Award	6
Post 490 at the Night of Cuisine	7
Post 178 Chaplain Assists Families & First Responders	8
Department of Texas Continues to Provide Disaster Relief	8
Post 413 Visited by Texas Historical Commission	9-10
Post 174 Activities	11
Post 164 Holds Patriot Day Event	12
Remember Everyone Deployed	13
Post 21 POW/MIA Sunset Vigil	14-15
Post 291 12th Annual 9/11 BBQ Cook-Off	16
Veteran Strength	17
Post 490 Labor Day Party	18
Post 27 Dedicates Texas Historical Marker	19-20
Post 472 Salute to Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans	21
Post 21 Provides New Flagpoles for Troop 226	22
Post 164 Receives Support from Local Prince Hall Shriners	23

Message from the Commander

When the city of Houston hosts its first Fleet Week, Nov. 5-12, I am working with our American Legion posts to welcome the hundreds of sailors, Marines, and Coast Guard professionals to Texas.

As a Marine aviator, I participated in three Navy Fleet Week events. I remember these events as a chance to share my military experience with younger people, to encourage them to serve our nation. It was a great opportunity to educate our taxpayers but also to connect with our veteran community.



Fleet Week Houston will mark the first time the U.S. Navy has brought this tradition to Texas, featuring three naval vessels and more than 1,000 sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.

The weeklong lineup includes ship tours, family-oriented activities, educational outreach, community service projects, business forums and lively celebrations. Houston will also host the U.S. Marine Corps' 250th birthday on Nov. 10 and celebrate the Navy's yearlong commemoration of its own 250th anniversary.

The Department of Texas will be working with our districts near Houston to host an info booth Nov. 8-9. We want our Legionnaires to work with our community leaders to welcome these military professionals to the Lone Star State.

To me, the Fleet Week opportunity provides an excellent chance to showcase the American Legion's leadership to our future members and their families. It's also an opportunity for our posts to collaborate with their local high school Junior ROTC units to showcase potential careers in these three branches of military service.

<https://houstontx.gov/moc/2025/fleet-week-experience.html>

Rich Huntley
Department Commander

**AMERICAN
LEGION**
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THE LEGION TIMES

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OCTOBER 2025

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History of "The Legion Times" – Wow, How Things Have Evolved

Submitted by Shirley Platt – Department Historian

A serious attempt was made to inaugurate a Department Publication, a newspaper, from the very beginning days of the Legion, in 1919. Initial starts were unsuccessful and publication was suspended. Instead of a newspaper, the Department was obliged to send out bulletins to disseminate official information. For ten years the Department struggled, as reflected in the minutes of the Department Executive Committee and the Department Convention. Many things occurred to upset plans. There were printers' strikes, funds vanished, and editors resigned without warning.

Placed under new management, following the Amarillo Convention in 1926, the newspaper was published irregularly until 1929. At the Convention that year, delegates earmarked twenty-five cents from each member's dues for the "Texas Legion News" and instructed the Department to take charge of the publication. After that the newspaper came out regularly once per month, except in 1946 and 1947 when it was published semi-monthly. At the end of each year, copies of each issue have been bound and placed in the Department Headquarters where they furnish a rich source of Legion information.

Costs for the publication of the Texas Legion News, like other things in an environment of slowly moving inflation, began to rise. Other programs were curtailed sometimes, but somehow the publication of the Department's bi-monthly newspaper was never interrupted. To 1983, the Legion News consisted of 16 pages, eight by eleven inches. From that year, the Texas Legion News accepted the Auxiliary's paper, the Lone Star News, as an "inside" four-page section. The News was printed on a fold of 12 pages, twelve by eighteen inches, yielding a more economical arrangement for both the Department and the Auxiliary. Subscription rates were stabilized at 80 cents per year per member.

*Extracted from: The American Legion Department
of Texas 1919-1985 by Harold M. Branton,
Copyright 1987*



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), 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!

Department of Texas Hosts 2025 Fall DEC Conference

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA



Department Commander Rich Huntley convenes the Department of Texas' Fall DEC Conference held at the Austin SouthPark Hotel. Various reports from commissions and committees were delivered for consideration to include resolutions



Department Commander Rich Huntley spoke about the conditions that hired Department Staff endured during the summer at Department headquarters. The convention hall was darkened to mirror one of the working conditions

AUSTIN, Texas – (Sept. 23, 2025) – By authority of Department Commander Richard Huntley, department commissions and committees met at the Austin SouthPark Hotel for the Department Executive Committee Conference, Sept. 17 – 21. Ten commissions and committees of the Department were represented which included Legion Baseball; Americanism; Training; Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; Budget and Finance; Marketing, Media & Communications; Membership, Organization & Post Activities; Long Range Planning; Board of Trustees; and the Texas American Legion Development Foundation.

During the convention, members attended training on numerous topics to include the Department Administrative Manual by Department Adjutant Bill West, Post History Contest Update by Department Historian Shirley Platt, and MyLegion.org by Past Department Vice Commander Danny Muth.

A cornerstone of the Department's effectiveness is its comprehensive training programs for members and leaders. Understanding the importance of American Legion training reveals how it strengthens the organization and extends its positive impact throughout society.

(continued)



Department Historian Shirley Platt provided updates on the 2026 Post History Contest



Department Adjutant Bill West provided training on the Department Administrative Manual

On Sept. 21, the Fall DEC Meeting was convened by Department Commander Huntley with visits from Department Auxiliary President Leigh-Anne Stewart and Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander Ken Dorsett.

“The Department of Texas is a vital organization dedicated to supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and strengthening communities across the state of Texas,” said Department Commander Huntley. “At the heart of the Department’s operational structure is the DEC, which plays a crucial role in guiding the direction and activities of the Department.”

Various reports from chairpersons of commissions and committees were delivered for consideration to include resolutions. Additionally, division and district leaders were recognized for membership excellence.

According to Department Commander Huntley, regular DEC meetings are essential for effective governance and strategic planning to ensure that the mission of The American Legion is fulfilled.

In between presentations of reports, the convention hall was darkened to mirror one of the working conditions that hired department staff had to endure at Department headquarters during the summer due to electrical issues with the headquarters’ building.

“I want to express my gratitude and thanks to the Posts within the Greater Austin area that assisted by permitting our Department staff to work remotely in their facilities,” Department Commander Huntley said.

The Fall DEC Convention will no longer be held at the Austin SouthPark Hotel. For 2026, Department Conventions will be held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.



Past Department Vice Commander Danny Muth provided training on the use of MyLegion.org during the Fall DEC Conference held at the Austin SouthPark Hotel



District 22 Commander (4th Division) Robert Harvey (left) received recognition as the current District leader in membership within the Department of Texas



Department Vice Commander (4th Division) Chris Holt received recognition as the current Division leader in membership within the Department of Texas

Legionnaire from Post 133 - Temple - Receives Scout Knot Award

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department Historian



On September 2, 2025, at the General Membership meeting at Post 133 in Temple, Texas, Paul Sarle was presented The American Legion Square Knot Award in recognition of dedication and work to assist in furthering the Scouting program in the American Legion, by Past Department Commander Tom Marty.

Paul has been involved with the Scouting program as early as 1965 to 1975 as a youth. He was Assistant Scoutmaster to 4 scout troops and the Scoutmaster to 3 scout troops from 1976 to 1988. He completed Wood Badge in 1981 and received the Scouters Training Award in 1983. He has taken three treks to Philmont Scout Ranch, 1981, 1982 and 1983 and became Order of the Arrow (OA) Chapter Advisor in 1983.

Paul became Chartering Organization Representative (COR) for Temple Pack/Troop 101 in 2022. He is now the Assistant District Commissioner for the Chisholm Trail District, Longhorn Council, with 28 scouting units.

Just recently he has been assigned to the staff for the 2026 Scout Jaboree, at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia.

On the Legion side, he is the COR, Post 133 Finance Officer, 11th District Finance Officer and 11th District Eagle Scout Scholarship Fund Committee member. He also serves on the Americanism and National Legislation Committees.

CONGRATULATIONS TO A WELL DESERVED LEGIONNAIRE!!



United in Flavor and Fellowship: American Legion Post 490 at the Night of Cuisine

Submitted by Rene Sanchez, Commander, Post 490

South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce hosted their annual Night of Cuisine at the Lone Star Flight Museum at Ellington Field—an iconic venue home to the Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base and the Houston Spaceport. This evening was not just a celebration of culinary delights but a testament to the power of community connection. The Chamber generously provided a spotlight table for South Houston American Legion Post 490, empowering our members to stand proudly among fellow citizens and local leaders.

Twenty-eight distinguished restaurants showcased their signature dishes, inviting guests to savor an array of flavors and experiences. The event buzzed with excitement as attendees mingled, sampled exceptional foods and beverages, and shared in the spirit of fellowship. Door prizes added a spark of joy throughout the gathering, while every moment contributed toward a greater cause—proceeds from the event will fund scholarships for graduating seniors, helping nurture future leaders.

For American Legion Post 490—including Legionnaires, Riders, SAL, and Auxiliary—this evening was more than just outreach; it was an opportunity to inspire, connect, and demonstrate the vital role we play in uplifting our community. Through meaningful conversations and new partnerships with local businesses, Post 490 can continue to grow, thrive, and extend its positive impact.

We are deeply grateful to the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce and all their sponsors for their steadfast support. Let this event remind us that together, we can accomplish extraordinary things—and as we look ahead, may Post 490 be motivated to embrace each new opportunity to serve, engage, and lead with unwavering dedication.



Post 178 Chaplain Assists Families and First Responder Volunteers

Submitted by Ed Reed, Immediate Past Commander, Post 178

Dale Outland is no stranger to being called to provide emotional and spiritual support to families and Post 178 veterans who have dealt with tragedy. As post chaplain he completes buddy checks with members who are experiencing major health problems, giving them words of comfort.

Chaplain Outland, who is a 14-year U.S. Army infantry veteran, is also a former disaster chaplain volunteer for the Austin Disaster Relief Network. As a disaster chaplain he has assisted in providing services and resources to families affected by hurricanes in South Texas.

After his military service, he served 23 years as a Mississippi police officer and 10 years in the MS State Guard, attaining the rank of Command Sergeant Major. As the result of major hurricanes, he helped provide police security and safety operations for Red Cross shelters.

Additionally, as a disaster chaplain volunteer for the Crisis Response Ministry of Collin County Law Enforcement he recently answered the call to deploy to the Kerrville, Texas flood area. He was contacted in July to assist families and first responder volunteers affected by the recent disastrous flooding of the Guadalupe River. He was assigned to the Camp Mystic site near Hunt, TX. During his weeklong stay, he frequently met and prayed with parents, families, and friends of flood victims, as well as volunteer responders, to provide spiritual and emotional support.

Chaplain Outland shared that it was tremendously sad to see the extent of the devastation and loss of life, but he felt grateful to share the word and strength of God's blessings.



Volunteer Alicia and Tom Evers of Tyler, Texas along with Chaplain Outland assisted Camp Mystic relief efforts

Department of Texas Continues to Provide Disaster Relief

Story by TEXALPA



L-R: Post 208 Judge Advocate Woody Chambless, Department Commander Rich Huntley, and Post 208 Adjutant George McHorse

SAN SABA, Texas (Sept. 11, 2025) – While attending the unveiling of a new Texas Historical Subject Marker at City National Bank, Department Commander Rich Huntley presented \$10,000 checks from The American Legion, Department of Texas to members of Wiley B. Murray Post 27 and Smith-Bryant Post 572 in support of the posts and for flood relief.

During a visit to Kerrville Memorial Post 208, Sept. 5, Huntley presented a \$30,000 check from The American Legion, Department of Texas to members of Post 208 in support of the post and flood relief from the catastrophic flooding that swept through the area, July 4.

Live Oak County Post 413 - Three Rivers - Visited by Texas Historical Commission

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department Historian



In recognition of the American Legion's 90th birthday (2009), the Senate and House of Representatives passed a resolution designating Sept. 16 as "American Legion Day".

On September 16, 2025, The Texas Tropical Trail Region, which is part of the Texas Historical Commission, hosted its Partner Event. This event started at the Three Rivers City Hall, a walk to the Rialto Theater for a tour, a drive to Choke Canyon State Park for a presentation, lunch at the Live Oak Restaurant, ending at the Live Oak County American Legion Post #413 in Three Rivers, Texas, for a presentation. Post Commander Rosendo Pena, Joe Crawford - Post Historian, Lenore Hackenyos - Post 380 Commander (representing Tony Lopez, 3rd Division Department Commander), Gea Clausier - 14th District Commander and Shirley Platt - Department Historian gave greetings to the audience, the history of the American Legion and the history of Post #413. The post was chartered on December 7, 1946. The building they occupy is over 100 years old.

(continued)



The Mission of the Texas Tropical Trail Region and its partners identify, is to preserve, interpret, and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources of South Texas. The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) award-winning heritage tourism initiative. This economic development initiative encourages communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources. These successful local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites and bring more dollars to Texas communities. This in turn supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The THTP is based around 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968 by Gov. John Connally and the Texas Highway Department (now the Texas Department of Transportation) as a marketing tool. The trails were established in conjunction with the HemisFair, an international exposition that commemorated the 250th anniversary of the founding of San Antonio.

In 1997, the State Legislature charged the THC to create a statewide heritage tourism program. The program began with the establishment of the Texas Forts Trail Region in 1998. Other heritage regions made a formal application to the program, demonstrating knowledge of area attractions and broad support from organizations and local government. The suite of heritage regions was completed in 2005 with the additions of the Texas Pecos and Hill Country Trail Regions.

For more information see <https://thetropicaltraveler.com/>



Post 174 & VFW Post 8587 Conduct POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174



Post 174 joined by VFW Post 8587 conducted a POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony on the Georgetown Square at 5 pm, on September 19. The ceremony began with welcoming the small crowd gathered. Past Commander, BJ MacMillan, gave an opening prayer. Kevin Wilkie, the 2nd Vice Commander, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then explained the history behind POW/MIA Recognition Day. Kevin gave the current number of POW/MIA by war era. John McCleskey, Commander, VFW Post 8587, told the story of the most recent Georgetown MIA, LT Woody McCook, who came home and laid to rest on August 3, 2025. John organized the welcome home ceremony for the WWII pilot, LT McCook. Kevin then explained the significance of the National League of Families' POW/MIA Flag which was followed by a moment of silence. John then explained the significance of each item displayed on the missing man table. Tolling the bell for each wars' POW/MIA was completed. A closing prayer was completed followed by playing of "Taps."



Post 174 Participates in National Day of Service

Several members of Post 174 helped with local National Day of Service activities. At Christ Lutheran Church in Georgetown, members checked flags to prepare for the Field of Honor. One participant said they checked thousands of flags to ensure they were clean and presentable to post at the Field of Honor. They worked for about two hours unrolling flags, checking them, and rolling them back up.

Troop 1096 Conducted a Court of Honor

Troop 1096 chartered by Post 174, conducted a Court of Honor on August 30, 2025. The Scouts received their merit badges and other awards they earned over the last six months. A total of fifty-two awards were presented. In addition, the Troop welcomed four new Scouts, two sets of twins! The Troop completed 152.75 hours of service to the community. The Troop has three community events coming up to help the community and recruit more scouts.



Post 164 Holds a Patriot Day Event

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164



On September 11th, Post 164 in Katy held an event to remember 9/11. We had members of Harris County Emergency Services District 48 on hand with fire trucks, ambulances, and other vehicles. Members of the Harris County Precinct 5 Constables office were on hand to include Chief Albritton.

Texas State Representative Mike Schofield was there to give a short speech on what the day meant to him. Katy Mayor Dusty Theil also made some comments on the meaning of the day and service to the community. U.S. Congressman had two members of his staff in attendance along with representatives from State Representative Matt Morgan's office and County Commissioner Leslie Briones office. Department Division 2 Vice Commander Steve Kim and Department Division Vice President Alicia Kim were in attendance. Post 164 family members were out in large numbers to help make this a success.

Our conservative estimate is that the 3 hour event was attended by 200 community members. The post members in attendance were well received by the community.

Members of the combined Honor Guard from American Legion Post 164 and VFW Post 9182 presented the colors and service flags to open the ceremony.

There were several veteran-owned food trucks on site as well.

Next year will be even bigger and better!



Remember Everyone Deployed

Submitted by Jose Gamez



For the past nine years members of American Legion Post 59 have gathered Fridays in observance of our active duty military personnel. Jesus (Guero) Segovia thought it would be a good idea to meet at the KC Hall on Fridays, which is now known as Red Shirt Friday.

The idea became a reality and eventually City of Laredo, Mayor Victor Trevino proclaimed Fridays as the official “Red Shirt Friday” for the veterans of our community. 23rd District Commander Jose Gamez stated, “meeting Fridays has brought a sense of unity as Legionnaires; on several occasions we have joined to assist families in need and collected funds and food our veterans clinic.”

“Recently, Mayor Victor Trevino showed up and presented us with a small replica of a key to the city pin,” Commander Gamez stated. “This is an excellent source of reaching out to other veterans who may be interested in joining our post,” Commander Gamez said.



Left to right: Mayor Victor Trevino, Ms. Trevino, 33rd District Commander Gamez and Post 59 member Roycroft.

POW/MIA Sunset Vigil Carries On Despite Storms

Submitted by Patricia A. Zuczek, Adjutant, Post 21



On September 21st, Holley-Riddle Post 21 of The Colony, TX prepared to host its 4th annual POW/MIA Sunset Vigil at Stewart Creek Park on the banks of Lake Lewisville. It began as a beautiful day, slightly cloudy, which managed to keep the temperature at 90 degrees as Post and Squadron 21 members arranged chairs, bleachers, flags, canopies, and sound equipment while musicians unpacked their instruments.

But this is Texas, where weather can change in an instant. Within minutes, thunderstorm watches were issued, sirens sounded, and lightning appeared on the horizon. Though skies above the lakeside site remained clear, dark clouds circled the park.

"We were watching the weather intently and receiving reports from The Colony Fire Department," said Commander Mary Garcia. "Safety was the top priority. But we also wanted our young performers and guest speaker to share their message. After so much practice and preparation, we didn't want to cancel the ceremony."

As conditions worsened, Commander Garcia's military training kicked in. She conferred with city officials and proposed a solution to find an indoor venue. The City Annex, a large meeting room belonging to The Colony, just happened to be vacant that night. Commander Garcia made the decision to move the event indoors.

That is when the miracle started... Community came together - Scouts, performers, parents, Legionnaires, guests - everyone immediately pitched in and began loading up dozens of chairs, tables, canopies, gathering up all the equipment, completing the task in less than 15 minutes. Local attendees helped visitors find the new location, even riding with them to ensure they got to the site.

(continued)

Once indoors, Scout Troop 226 opened the ceremony with the Pledge of Allegiance. Richard Boyer, mayor of The Colony, emphasized the city's respect and support for the sacrifices made by veterans and their families, and thanked Post 21 for continuing to bring meaningful military observances to the community.

The vigil featured a moving POW/MIA table observance, staged as a family setting the dinner table while waiting for word of their missing loved one. Each item placed on the table was explained, symbolizing the sorrow of families still awaiting answers. A poignant moment came when Patricia Zuczek reported that the remains of Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Storekeeper Robert Stillman Garcia, a south Texas sailor, were positively identified through DNA testing by the DPAA. After 80 years, SK3 Garcia is finally coming home to be laid to rest in the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery.

The keynote speaker, Chaplain Nathan Tucker, LTC, US Air Force, delivered an uplifting message of comfort and hope, ensuring everyone that our POWs and MIAs are never alone as long as we hold them in our hearts. Noting the participation of Scouts and youth performers, he reassured listeners that new generations are returning to faith and American values. Chaplain Tucker told of presiding over the military funeral of a recovered MIA soldier at DFW National Cemetery. "I didn't need to give a sermon that day," he said, "You could see it in the eyes of the family who finally can lay their loved one to rest." He referred to Psalm 121, which symbolizes God's unwavering protection, guidance, and faithful care for His people.

The audience was treated to a beautiful collaboration of strings and flute, as a special youth group from a local congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints performed "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again." Pianist Grigoriy Gazaryan played a moving nocturne by Chopin. Alex Purser brought tears to the eyes of many with his singing of "You Raise Me Up" and "Homeward Bound."

The ceremony concluded with the playing of TAPS, and everyone holding up LED candles, vowing to share the light of hope and never forget. Though storms forced a last-minute change of venue, the vigil remained a powerful tribute—proving that with determination and community spirit, the mission to honor and remember POWs and MIAs will always carry on.



Smoke, Spirit, and Small Grill Masters: 12th Annual 9/11 BBQ Cook-Off at American Legion Post 291

Submitted by Deborah Waldrop, 9th District Commander



The scent of hickory and mesquite drifted through the air like a patriotic perfume as American Legion Post 291 fired up its 12th Annual 9/11 BBQ Off—a tradition steeped in remembrance, community, and a whole lot of smoked meat. Twelve adult teams, each armed with secret rubs and battle-tested brisket techniques, lined the lot with their smokers and grills, vying for bragging rights and the coveted BBQ crown.

But this year, the real stars weren't the pitmasters with decades of experience. They were pint-sized prodigies with oversized aprons and hearts full of fire—the Jr Grill Masters.

The Jr Grill Master Kids Cookoff: Six young chefs, split into three age groups, stepped up to the grills with spatulas in hand and determination in their eyes. Some were barely tall enough to see over the grill, and they brought their own flair to the flames. From sliders with smoky aioli to sweet-and-spicy chicken skewers, each dish was a testament to creativity and courage.

Each age group crowned a champion, and the winners received custom cutting boards engraved with "1st Place Jr Grill Master" on the back—a badge of honor they'll cherish long after the last ember fades. But the event wasn't just about winning. Every child received a basket filled with BBQ essentials: a crisp apron, a shiny meat thermometer, heat-resistant hot pads, and a few surprise goodies to keep the spark alive.

More Than a Competition: The crowd cheered louder for the kids than for the adults, and rightly so. These young grillers reminded everyone that tradition isn't just passed down—it's fired up and fed forward. As the sun dipped behind the Legion Hall and the final meats of choice were plated, the Jr Grill Masters stood proud, their faces smeared with sauce and smiles.

In a day meant to honor resilience and unity, Post 291 showed that the future of BBQ—and community—is in good hands. Small hands, maybe. But mighty ones.

Veteran Strength

Submitted by Dave Day, Commander, Colin Kiser Post 137



L-R: Dave Day, Commander Post 137, Maddie Rawl, Auxiliary Member Post 624, Coach Joe Kleiber, Board of Trustees Post 624

The Temple Barbell Club, owned by retired Special Forces Operator Coach Joe Kleiber, exemplifies the concept of veterans supporting veterans. As a private gym, the Temple Barbell Club prepares its members for strongman and powerlifting competitions throughout Texas and across the nation. Many of the athletes training at the facility are themselves veterans or family members of veterans. Additionally, Coach Joe serves on the Board of Trustees for Mansfield Post 624 in Mansfield, TX.

Beyond managing the gym, Coach Joe organizes an annual strongman event, The Legion's Strongest. This competition debuted last year at Mansfield Post 624 and functions as a fundraiser for The American Legion, with all entry fees and sponsorship donations directed to support veterans and The Legion family.

This year, the event is co-promoted by Dave Day, a team member and Commander of Post 137 in Waxahachie, TX. Since joining the Temple Barbell Club in June 1994, Mr. Day has competed in numerous local and national competitions over the past year and is scheduled to participate in the World Strength Games in St. George, UT.

The Legion's Strongest II will again take place at Mansfield Post 624 on November 22, 2025. The competition welcomes all athletes who wish to measure their strength against some of Texas's top competitors.

TEMPLE BARBELL CLUB AND DAY STRENGTH PRESENTS:
November 22, 2025 11:00 AM

The
LEGIONS
Strongest

Events

MYSTERY OVERHEAD PRESS
FRAME DEADLIFT
FRAME CARRY
WHEEL OF PAIN
ROLLING THUNDER

Family Friendly, Live Music, Raffles, Food

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO HELP VETERANS, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES IN TIMES OF NEED

AMERICAN LEGION POST 624, MANSFIELD, TEXAS

AMERICAN LEGION
LEGION AUXILIARY
SOME OF THE
AMERICAN LEGION
RIDERS

South Houston American Legion Post 490 Labor Day Party

Submitted by Rene Sanchez, Commander, Post 490

At the South Houston American Legion Post 490 Labor Day Party, we celebrated the holiday in style! Picture this: the scent of smoky BBQ and sizzling hot dogs drifting through the air, ice-cold snow cones, and buttery popcorn in hand, all while live music filled the outdoor covered parking lot of Cheer Pub in Friendswood – our gracious host.

This was not just any end-of-summer bash—it was a vibrant gathering where neighbors became friends, families laughed together, and the spirit of community shone. The American Legion honored the hard work and dedication of Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Son of American Legion, and the Riders, making this party a meaningful way to mark Labor Day.

Labor Day was marked by a meaningful celebration of our community's spirit and resilience. Post 490's event featured activities suitable for children, effective fundraising initiatives, and recognition gifts for lifetime members and those who renewed their memberships through 2026.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our DJ, AROD, for his contributions.

We also wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Cheers Pub, whose extraordinary graciousness made this celebration possible. Their warm hospitality and generous support elevated the entire event, providing not just excellent food but an atmosphere of genuine welcome and camaraderie.

Do not miss next year's festivities! Join us for great food, lively tunes, and unforgettable memories!



San Saba Celebrates Legacy: American Legion Post 27 Dedicates Texas Historical Marker

Story by Ross J. Cox Sr, Adjutant, Post 27



San Saba, Texas – September 11, 2025 – On a crisp morning marking the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the American Legion Wiley B. Murray Post No. 27 unveiled a new Texas Historical Subject Marker at City National Bank, honoring over a century of service to veterans and the community. The dedication ceremony drew 43 attendees, including Legionnaires from neighboring posts in Goldthwaite, San Angelo, Llano, and Brownwood, as well as Texas Department Commander Richard Huntley, highlighting the ceremonies.

Held at 209 East Brown Street, the event began at 10:00 a.m. with Jerry Blankenship, representing the San Saba County Historical Commission, serving as Master of Ceremonies. C.K. Stevenson, First Vice Commander of Post 27, delivered an opening prayer. Post Commander Jan K. Huffstetler then led the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags. County Judge Jody Fauley offered warm welcome remarks, emphasizing the marker's role in preserving local history. Department Commander Richard Huntley followed with insights into the origins of the American Legion, founded in 1919 to support World War I veterans. Don Gray, 21st District Commander, spoke on the Legion's vital contributions to communities, from youth programs to veteran advocacy. Sam Murray, President of City National Bank, shared personal remarks on behalf of the bank and the Murray family, whose legacy is intertwined with the post's history.

The highlight came as Huffstetler and Huntley unveiled the 27-by-42-inch marker, while Past District Commander Jeff Meurer read its inscription aloud. The plaque details the post's founding in 1919, shortly after World War I, when San Saba veterans were aided by the local United Confederate Veterans Camp No. 322. Named after Wiley B. Murray, son of bank president T.A. Murray, who died in France in 1918, the post received its charter on August 13, 1919—making it one of Texas's earliest. Early efforts included escorting repatriated remains of local fallen soldiers, forming a women's auxiliary in 1921, and community projects like Christmas gifts for children, patriotic school programs, and developing Mill Pond Park.

(continued)



During World War II, members supported the war effort and later assisted returning veterans with G.I. Bill benefits. In 1946, the San Saba Vocational School for Veterans was established, with Legionnaires Ray W. Harris, Warden Terry, and T.A. Davenport teaching classes. The post's 1959 meeting hall became a community hub, embodying the Legion's pillars of service.

This marker is the sixth known Texas Historical Commission (THC) recognition for an American Legion post in the state, joining esteemed sites like Donna Border Post No. 107 (the world's first Legion-owned hall, marked in 1964), Hurst-Euleless-Bedford Post No. 379 (2022), Hanson Post No. 54 in Amarillo (2011), Parramore Post No. 57 in Abilene (1998), and Hudgeons Post No. 230 in Hallettsville (2015). The THC's selective program honors posts with significant historical impact, and Post 27's century of dedication qualified it for this distinction.

Blankenship provided closing remarks on behalf of the Historical Commission, followed by Stevenson's benediction. Attendees then posed for photos at the marker and a group shot, capturing the camaraderie. Commander Huntley then presented Commander Huffstetler a check for \$10,000 to assist victims of the recent flood in San Saba. Participants then headed to a local restaurant for lunch and a roundtable with Commander Huntley.

Post Adjutant emphasized the event's significance: "This marker ensures our story inspires future generations." The dedication not only commemorated Post 27's past but reaffirmed its commitment to San Saba, where veterans continue to build community strength. As one attendee noted, "It's about remembering those who served—and serving those who remember."

That evening, the post hosted its quarterly meeting at the hall, starting at 5:30 p.m., with barbecue and pinto beans served at 6:30 p.m., complemented by member-brought sides. The gathering featured Boys & Girls State students from San Saba High School and welcomed all veterans, families, and supporters. For more information about belonging to the American Legion, call the post adjutant at 325-205-0180.

Post 472 Salute to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans

Submitted by Juan P. De Leon, Commander, Post 472

On September 13, 2025, American Legion Harrisburg Post 472 in Houston Texas, honored Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with a complimentary luncheon. This marks the second year that Post 472 has recognized these veterans for their service and sacrifice. The community came together in strong support of the program.

The Milby High School Honor Guard opened the event with the presentation of colors and members of Post 472 Auxiliary Unit graciously served the luncheon. Distinguished guest speakers included the Honorable Willie Davis, Houston City Council Member; U.S. Major General Richard Noriega; and U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Robert Glover.

Post Commander Juan P. De Leon served as Master of Ceremonies, joined by Service Officer Jesse Salazar and Historian Nat Corona. Each veteran in attendance received a commemorative cap in appreciation of their service. Lunch was generously provided by three Olive Garden locations, which were presented with a plaque of gratitude.

In keeping with tradition, Post 472 remains steadfast in its dedication to “Never forgetting our veterans, For God and country”



Holley - Riddle Post 21 Provides New Flagpoles for Troop 226

Submitted by Patricia A. Zuczek, Adjutant, Post 21



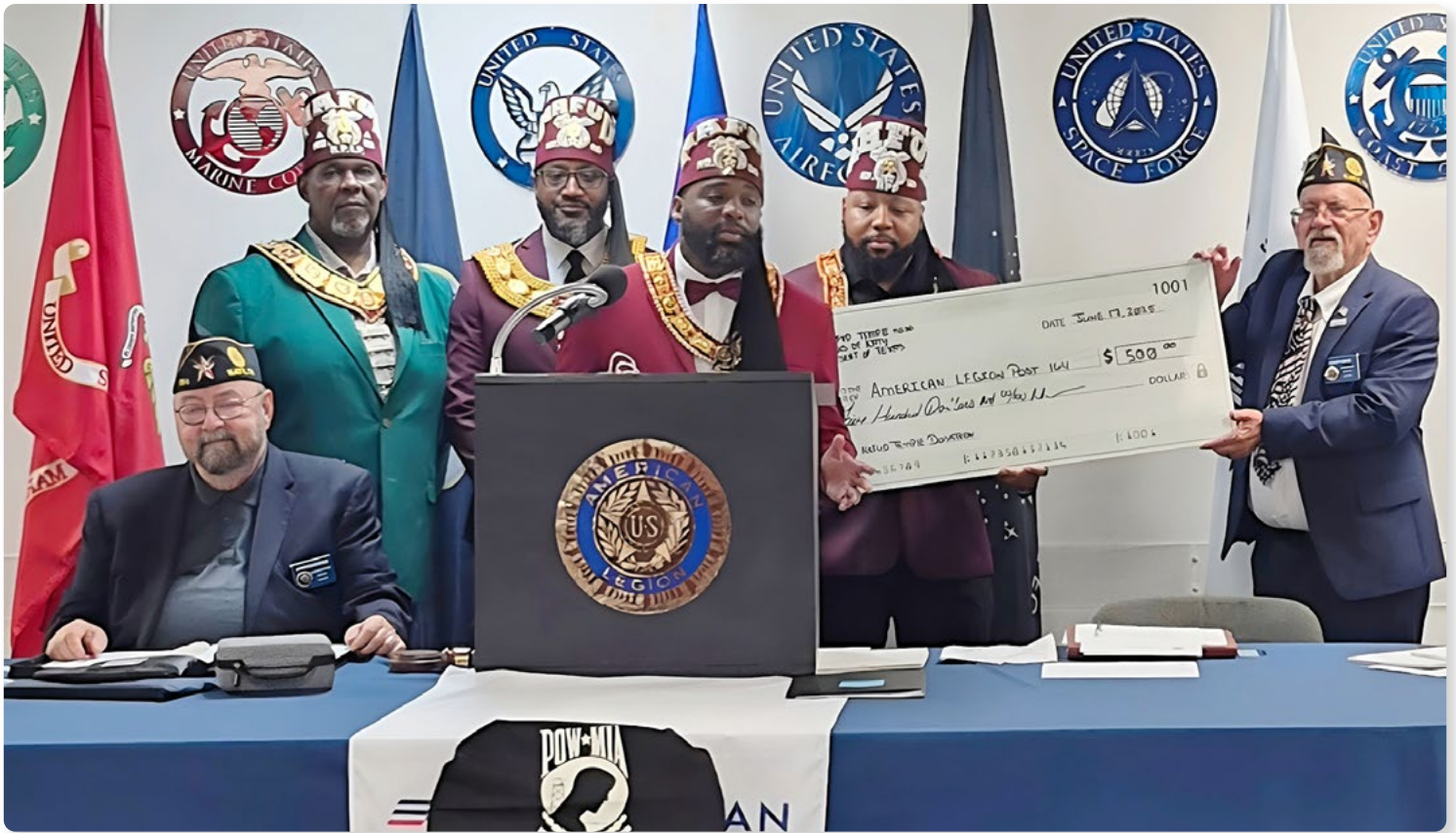
Holley-Riddle Post 21 in The Colony recently purchased new flagpoles and stands for Scout Troop 226. The gleaming gold poles and stands were put to immediate use as three members of the Post Color Guard provided hands-on instruction during the recent scout meeting. Scouts learned the proper way to carry the flags, the position of honor for the U.S. flag, and the respectful process of posting the Colors.

The scouts showed great interest in the training and expressed sincere gratitude for the Post's generous donation.



American Legion Post 164 Receives Support from Local Prince Hall Shriners

Story by Legionnaire Don Mills



KATY, Texas – (June 17, 2025) – Nafud Temple No. 80 (Prince Hall Shriners), under the leadership of Illustrious Potentate Jeremy Tye Sr., proudly presented a charitable contribution of \$500 to the American Legion Post 164 at the post.

According to Tye, the heartfelt gesture was more than a donation; it was a tribute to the enduring relationship between Nafud Temple and Post 164, a connection forged during a pivotal time in Nafud Temple's journey.

When the Temple embarked on its relocation efforts, Post 164 stood steadfast as a vital pillar of support. That early partnership has since matured into a bond rooted in mutual respect, service, and shared purpose.

In appreciation for their unwavering assistance, Nafud Temple has remained an active contributor to Post 164's core community initiatives.

From monthly veterans' breakfasts that nourish camaraderie to the spirited annual fireworks stand that celebrates national pride, Nafud Temple continues to be an invested ally in Post 164's mission.

"Our dedication to those who have served this nation remains unwavering," said Tye. "Veterans and veteran programs are not just part of our mission; they are central to our values and identity. We recognize that the freedoms we enjoy today were secured through their courage, sacrifice, and steadfast service."

The donation stands as a tangible expression of Nafud Temple's commitment to honoring that sacrifice while investing in the future of those who have worn the uniform. By supporting veteran programs, Nafud Temple aims to empower, uplift, and provide the tools and opportunities for veterans as they continue their journey beyond the uniform.

To every veteran, Nafud Temple says: your service is remembered, your sacrifices are honored, and your legacy is valued, today and always.

Notably, this collaboration is further enriched by shared membership. Among those who belong to both organizations are Legionnaires Don Mills, Philip Esaw, Keith Forney, and Robert Fluker, all individuals who exemplify cross-organizational fellowship and leadership.

Through this act of giving, Nafud Temple proudly reaffirms its role as a ceremonial and community cornerstone, uplifting veterans and strengthening the ties within its community.



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