AMERICAN LEGION Department of Texas

THE LEGION TIMES

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Message from the Commander

Members



Now that we have discussed Community and Programs, it is time to discuss our Members. We need to make sure our interaction with our Members is personal. We need to attract our Members by promoting The American Legion, recruiting new members, and retaining our current members. It is important to be aware of all three areas, even though you may concentrate on them at different times.

As November and Veterans Day near, it is a great time to promote The American Legion. This is accomplished by doing our Programs in our Communities, organizing and participating in our Community Veteran's Day parades, events, and ceremonies is a great start. As you interact with the Veteran Community, be prepared to discuss what your local American Legion Post does in the community and for the local Veterans. Wear your Legion cover and shirts as you are out, this is a great way to promote The American Legion. If a Veteran walks into your Post, make sure they are greeted by someone; listen to their story, engage them to understand their passion and assist them in fulfilling their passion or resolving their needs.

During these interactions at your Post and in the community, this leads to recruiting new members. Identify how the member can be assisted by The American Legion, or how as a member they can assist the Veterans in their community. Once recruited, make sure they promptly get a membership card, a welcome letter from the Commander, and a copy of the current newsletter or details for upcoming meetings and events. Follow up with a phone call or conversation to ensure their questions and needs are being addressed. The worst thing that could ever happen to a newly recruited member is for them to be left to figure the Post out to themselves. The moment a new member is recruited is the moment you begin the next area of retaining our current members.

The best way to retain our members is with the acronym LEAD. Listen, Engage, Assist, and Develop. Listen to your members and find out what they need and desire. Not all members will be involved in everything, but we need to listen to them and Engage them according to their passion and needs. This is as opposed to plugging them into the needs of the Post, if they do not have a passion for what needs to be done, everyone will be dissatisfied. Assist the members as they learn The American Legion and new areas they may want to pursue. Allow the Members to exercise their initiative and new ideas and advise of possible pitfalls. Never stifle initiative with "that is not the way we do it". We need to allow for change. This will allow the Post to develop future leaders through their successes and sometimes from their failures. Be supportive of new initiatives and ideas.

By Promoting The American Legion, Recruiting new Members, and Retaining our current Members we will make The American Legion Stronger. This is where the passion of the Members will promote our Programs in our Communities.

Danny Muth
Department Commander

AMERICAN LEGION | BE THE ONE

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Hints and Advice from a Past Department Sergeant-at-Arms

By Kimberly A. Biggerstaff

A few months ago, I received my 2027 PUFL membership card in the mail and saw 30 years of membership printed on it. Over those years I've held various officer positions and been on multiple committees and commissions. One position I continue to help with is sergeant-at-arms. If it weren't for the sergeant-at-arms, who would help set up your meeting room, post and retrieve the colors, escort individuals to the dais/podium, and pass out materials?

"The sergeant-at-arms, a key figure in the post, arranges the meeting hall and assists the post commander and adjutant in preliminary meeting arrangements. This person leads the color detail during presentation and retirement ceremonies, showcasing the post's respect and dignity. The sergeant-at-arms is also the flag etiquette expert, leading in the post color guard, burial detail and other pageantry.

2026 Officer's Guide

It's important, at any level, to share our knowledge. Whether you are a formal mentor or not, others may be watching. I'm reminded of a time I was at a post during a convention and a boy approached me. We were on a break and eating. Even sergeant-at-arms make mistakes, and I had my cap on. But I took the opportunity to educate my young Sons of the American Legion friend. Finding an officer's guide, I showed him the proper section where it states that female Legionnaires, by tradition, may eat with their cap on. While female Legionnaires in Texas remove their caps during meals, prayer, and the Pledge of the Allegiance, according to the Officer's Guide, you don't have to. (Information only. You may get the evil eye if you do this.)

The same is true for memorial services. Again, I'm reminded of the time I attended a funeral for a Past Department Commander and saw a female legionnaire with her cap on. I had to consult the guide to make sure this was appropriate. It is.

So, the Officer's Guide is just that, a guide. Texas has its own traditions, and we take pride in them. Other "traditions" include the following:

- When placing your cap on a table, the Legion emblem should be face up. This is not written anywhere but shows respect for the emblem.
- We collect "fines" when your phone goes off during a meeting.
- Texas also goes to the dais/podium on the American flag side and leaves on the Post/Department colors side.

One thing I would recommend to anyone wishing to be a sergeant-at-arms or enforcing these rules is to pick your battles. Be respectful when correcting others and do not argue with them. Use the officer's guide as a reference and brush up on your flag etiquette (The United States Flag Code, 4 U.S.C. §§ 5–10).

If you would like to be an assistant sergeant-at-arms at the Department (Fall/Midwinter) Conventions, please contact the current sergeant-at-arms or any past Department sergeant-at-arms. No experience required. We'll train you.

2026–2027 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Danny Muth, DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

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

W.S. Turner, 1st Division
Cheryl Williams, 2nd Division
Eric Mayer, 3rd Division
Jeff Meurer, 4th Division

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

Johnny Norris, 1st District Commander
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
Deborah Waldrop, 9th District Commander
Tim Moore, 10th District Commander
John Potts, 11th District Commander
Amy King, 12th District Commander
Chris Garcia, 13th District Commander
Willie Leal, Jr, 14th District Commander
Edward Villafranca, 15th District Commander
Tony Morgan, 16th District Commander
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!

Building Better Posts with MOPA

Beyond the Four Walls: Taking The American Legion Into Our Communities

By Ventura "Ace" Tounsel, Chairman, Membership, Organization & Post Activities (MOPA) Commission

This past August, I had the opportunity to attend the National Membership Workshop at The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis. As expected, there were plenty of conversations about membership goals, recruiting, and retention. But one discussion particularly stood out to me, and I believe its message deserves to be shared throughout the Department of Texas.

My friend and fellow Legionnaire, Matthew Shuman, led a discussion that challenged us to think differently about how we engage veterans.

Rather than focusing on traditional recruiting methods, Matthew introduced five creative activities that American Legion Posts across the country were already using to connect with veterans outside their buildings.

What impressed me wasn't just the ideas. It was the enthusiasm in the room as Legionnaires began discussing possibilities for their own communities.

The message was simple: The American Legion is a community, not just a building!

Think about that for a moment.

How often do we measure the success of our Posts by what happens inside our four walls? Meetings, dinners, canteen activities, and special events certainly have their place. But what about the veterans who aren't interested in those activities? Are we giving them opportunities to experience the camaraderie and purpose of The American Legion?

Matthew recently shared an expanded collection of 17 creative ideas developed from that discussion. They include pickleball tournaments, bowling nights, fishing trips, hiking clubs, gaming events, community cleanups, and even breakfast gatherings at local diners.

None of these activities requires a Post to own a building.

Imagine a group of Legionnaires meeting monthly on a hiking trail, wearing Legion shirts and inviting fellow veterans to join them. Or a Post organizing a bowling night where members bring a veteran who has never experienced our organization.

We're building relationships before asking anyone to complete a membership application.

That's where MOPA comes in.

Healthy Posts understand that membership, organization, and activities must work together. Recruiting introduces veterans to The American Legion. Meaningful engagement gives them reasons to stay. Strong organization ensures those opportunities continue.

Every Post is different. Your members may not enjoy pickleball or hiking. That's fine! Find something that fits your community and gives veterans another opportunity to connect.

MOPA Challenge: Before your next Executive Committee meeting, review the accompanying graphic and identify one activity your Post could organize outside its building within the next 90 days. Invite veterans who aren't members and focus on fellowship first.

Remember, we don't have to bring every veteran into our building to bring them into our Legion Family.

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



A Little Bit of History – DID YOU KNOW?

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department of Texas Historian

Following is a chronology of significant dates in Legion history, randomly selected from the many events listed on The American Legion national website:

June 9, 1919 - The National Executive Committee adopts The American Legion emblem.

Sept. 16, 1919 - Congress charters The American Legion.

Sept. 27, 1920 - The poppy is named the official flower of The American Legion.

Aug. 9, 1921 - The Legion's efforts result in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration.

Nov. 11, 1921 - Dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

March 21, 1924 - American Legion uniform caps are introduced.

June 17, 1925 - The American Legion formally accepts its first permanent national headquarters home in Indianapolis.

June 17, 1925 - American Legion Baseball is born.

June 30, 1930 - The federal Veterans Administration is established.

Sept. 12-15, 1932 - The Sons of The American Legion is founded.

June 23, 1935 - The first American Legion Boys State convenes in Springfield, IL.

Aug. 22, 1941 - The U.S. Navy commissions the USS American Legion.

May 1, 1942 - The American Legion Blood Donor Program is established.

June 22, 1942 - Congress passes U.S. Flag Code.

June 22, 1944 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs into law the original GI Bill, or Servicemen's Readjustment Act.

Aug. 9, 1946 - The American Legion Boys Forum of National Government, later renamed American Legion Boys Nation, is conducted for the first time at American University in Washington, D.C.

July 18, 1979 - The American Legion, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is accepted.

February 1980 - After decades post-traumatic stress disorder is recognized as a psychological diagnosis.

June 15, 1991 - The Legion hosts its first Junior Shooting Sports National Air Rifle Championships.

Sept. 3, 1997 - The Legion presents its first National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award.

Sept. 5, 2000 - The American Legion presents the first "Spirit of Service" Awards to active-duty service members for their off-duty volunteer activities.

Oct. 10-11, 2001 - The American Legion creates the American Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Oct. 17-18, 2007 - American Legion Riders becomes a national program of The American Legion.

May 5, 2010 - Shelby, NC, is officially selected to be the site of The American Legion Baseball World Series.

Sept. 1, 2010 - Marcus Haynes of the Valdosta, GA Fire Department receives the first American Legion Firefighter of the Year Award.

Aug. 24, 2017 - Denise H. Rohan of Wisconsin is elected national commander, the first woman to hold the role in the Legion's history.

March 15-17, 2019 - The American Legion celebrates its 100th birthday.

Oct. 1, 2023 - American Legion accredited service officers secure what is believed to be an all-time one-year high in VA benefits for disabled veterans, with $18.8 billion. Claims related to the PACT Act account for a $4 billion increase in benefits between 2020 and 2023.

One Post, Two Pillars, One Program

Submitted by Espiridion Castillo, Post 166



Three years ago, Victoria TX, Leon A Zear American Legion Post 166 created and sponsored a program at STEM Middle School built around two important American Legion pillars: Americanism and Children & Youth.

The STEM Middle School Flag Team gives sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students an opportunity to learn responsibility, leadership, teamwork, discipline, and respect for our nation's flag.

Team members are taught:

- Proper respect, care, and handling of the American flag.
- How to properly display the flag in the classroom and at the flagpole.
- How to properly fold the flag in a triangular fold.
- When and how to prepare a flag for retirement.
- The importance of community service.
- How to lead and follow those in leadership positions.
- How to counsel and mentor new members.
- Drill and ceremony.
- How to prepare younger members to assume future leadership roles.

Students volunteer to become members or teachers suggest for them to tryout for the team. Membership comes with responsibility. Students must maintain passing grades in core subjects and avoid disciplinary issues. They participate in team activities three times a week to earn their hoodies, which serve as part of their team uniform, and they are required to complete community service hours. Failure to follow the team's expectations can result in suspension from the program.

The results over the past three years have been remarkable. The team has had a Principal's Student of the Year recipient every year, and approximately 90% of team members have received multiple awards each year. This year, three team members have already received Perfect Attendance Awards.

The program is led by MSG Espiridion Castillo, US. Army (RET.), who also serves as the Service Officer for American Legion Post 166.

This is more than a flag team. It is an investment in young people — teaching them respect, responsibility, service, discipline, teamwork, and leadership while helping them become positive members of their school and community.

One Post. Two Pillars. One Program. Building tomorrow's leaders today.







When Our Legion Family Needs Us, We Stand Together

Story by Bicentennial Post 579 Dual Member Tina Garcia



SAN ANTONIO, TX – Members of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 579 and the Legionnaires of Bicentennial Post 579 recently came together to support a young girl in our American Legion Family who is courageously battling cancer.

The child, whose grandmother is an auxiliary member and whose grandfather is a Legionnaire, has been undergoing treatment while her family navigates the emotional and financial challenges that come with a serious illness.

On September 26, the American Legion Family hosted a special Steak Night fundraiser to help provide assistance to the family during this difficult time. Auxiliary members and Legionnaires volunteered their time preparing meals, serving guests, selling desserts, and ensuring the event's success.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who attended and supported the fundraiser, the Auxiliary raised $2,140. The Legionnaires of Post 579 then matched that amount dollar for dollar, bringing the total donation to $4,280.

October 11, 2026 the donation was presented to the family to help ease the burden of medical expenses and other costs associated with the child's ongoing treatment.

This effort is a powerful example of what it means to be part of the American Legion Family. When one of our own faces hardships, we come together with compassion, support, and a commitment to helping wherever we can.

The family expressed their sincere gratitude for the kindness and generosity shown by the members of Post 579 and everyone who contributed to the fundraiser.

As Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of the American Legion, and we are proud to stand beside our veterans, families, and community members in their times of need.

"When one member of our Legion Family faces a challenge, we stand together. Through acts of service and generosity, we remind each other that no one walks their journey alone."

Together, the American Legion Family of Post 579 raised $4,280 and, more importantly, showed a young girl and her family that they have a community standing behind them every step of the way.

Mico Post 380 Service Officer Provides Support to Veterans Facing Military Trauma

Submitted by Mico Post 380, Mico Texas

On September 25, 2026, Jackie Mixon-Johnson, Service Officer for American Legion Mico Post 380 and the regional VAVS/VA & R representative, represented Mico Post 380 at a special recreation therapy program for veterans hosted by Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center. The event was held in Seguin Texas. Jackie prepared 90 hamburgers for veterans after they completed a series of scheduled challenges and activities designed to help them address fears associated with military trauma.

The event was made possible after Jackie responded to a request received on August 17, 2026, from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE). The request, submitted on behalf of the Recreation Therapy Department, sought two to three volunteers to prepare hamburgers for the September 25th program.

The program supported veterans referred by recreation therapists or mental health counselors as they worked through challenges related to military trauma. The volunteer request was distributed by email to American Legion Posts throughout Districts 20 and 23.

Mico Post 380 was the only American Legion Post to respond. Through Jackie's participation, the Post provided both volunteer support and a meal for the veterans participating in the program, demonstrating Mico Post 380's continued commitment to serving veterans through the VA and in the community.





Post 240 and Unit 240 Participate in Safe Trick-or-Treat Event

Submitted by Post 240 PUFL member Roger Easter, Text and photos by Auxiliary Unit 240 member Julie Littlefield



Auxiliary Unit 240 Chaplain, Patricia Cadena (C) and Auxiliary Unit 240 President, Martha Fredrickson (R) welcome special guests Patricia's daughter and son-in-law. Post 240 members Robert Segura and Chris Grantham were also present at the event

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Hosted by the Stephenville Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City of Stephenville, the 2026 Stephenville Safe Trick 'R Treat event was held Monday, October 26, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Birdsong Amphitheater in Stephenville City Park. This annual family-friendly Halloween event provided a safe, supervised trick-or-treat experience for children of all ages.

Chamber member businesses and community organizations sponsored treat stations, fun zones, and costume contest activities throughout the event. Booths lined the sidewalks surrounding the amphitheater, where children eagerly stopped to enjoy candy, games, and other Halloween-themed activities.

It was an enjoyable and productive evening for members of TURNBOW-HIGGS Post 240 and Auxiliary Unit 240 as they met and greeted thousands of children and parents while sharing information about the American Legion's Four Pillars of Service. Members treated children of all ages to candy, coloring books, and good cheer.

"It was great seeing so many kids in some amazing costumes come out and participate," said Auxiliary Unit 240 Chaplain Patricia Cadena. "We were told to prepare for up to 3,000 attendees, but according to event workers, attendance seemed much higher. Lots of candy, coloring books, and Auxiliary pamphlets were given out. It was fun for all."

Special recognition goes to Auxiliary Unit 240 Chaplain Patricia Cadena for her leadership in planning and organizing the Auxiliary's participation in this outstanding community event.

Local Veterans Support Middle School Community

Submitted by Sylvia Flores, Adjutant for AL Hal Jones Post 128, Hondo TX





For the third year in a row, local military veterans from Post 128 are supporting the 7th grade football team with sideline action. A handful of Legionnaires are dutifully augmenting parents and other volunteers to “run the chains” for the football games.

The game on Oct 8, 2026 demonstrated the skills between Hondo 7th graders and Crystal City’s own. And on the visitor’s sidelines, running chains were Brad Price, Commander; David Hook, Finance Officer, and Sylvia Flores, Adjutant for Post 128.

This partnership between Post 128 and the McDowell Middle School History Club began a few years back. The History Club sponsors, Coach Solis and Ms. J Chandler, invited the Post to speak on several occasions about military history and patriotic topics.

Since then, the alliance between Post 128 and the History Club (and school) has grown. The Post led the pledges to the US Flag every Wednesday morning for a year. The History Club adopted two miles on Hwy 173 and Post 128 has helped them pick up trash along the road. Additionally, Coach Solis reached out to the post when more volunteers were needed to help out during football games. The post set up patriotic displays in the school’s breezeway for POW/MIA Remembrance Day and ensured each classroom had a US flag on display.

American Legion Post 128 is not shy when asked for help. The post members provide support around the community and are proud to represent the county’s military population. Should you hang around long enough, you’ll spot the members wearing a military hat or shirt, showing their affiliation to the world’s greatest nation.

The Shooters Corner: On the Line – In the Circle

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

CORPUS CHRISTI – November is a month of deep reflection, a time when our hearts turn toward both gratitude and country. As we gather with family, we are reminded of the rich blessings that define the American spirit: our freedom, our heritage, and a continuous dedication to the core principles of Americanism.



Photo by Chet Strange, TAL

We begin this season by honoring our Veterans. On Veterans Day, we express our profound gratitude to the brave men and women who stood on the front lines to defend our liberties. Their selflessness serves as the foundation of our patriotism, inspiring us to uphold the values they fought so hard to protect. True patriotism means not only remembering the sacrifices of the past but actively investing in the future of our nation.

One of the most meaningful ways we pass on these values is through our Junior Shooting programs. This November, we celebrate the young marksmen and markswomen who demonstrate the discipline, focus, and respect that embody true Americanism. Junior Shooting is about far more than competitive excellence; it teaches our youth the importance of safety, personal responsibility, sportsmanship, and teamwork. By mentoring the next generation in these essential skills, we instill a deep respect for our constitutional rights and foster a lifelong commitment to active citizenship.

And as we approach Thanksgiving, our appreciation for these cross-generational connections deepens. We are incredibly thankful for the Veterans who secured our peace, the families who support our youth, and the community leaders who keep our traditions alive. This holiday, as we share meals and memories, let us give thanks for the unique freedoms we enjoy as Americans. May we continue to honor our heroes, support our youth programs, and live out the true meaning of Americanism every day. Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Post 164 Eagle Scout Ceremony

Submitted by Dennis Wells, Post 164 Commander

Post 164 of Katy was honored to be invited to attend the Eagle Scout ceremony for Wilson Maifield. This young man has been an integral part of many of Post 164's functions. In attendance along with other Troop 567 scouts, were family, friends, and Post 164 Adjutant Jennifer Lowry, Post Finance Officer Harry Woodstrom, and Past Post Commander Sandy Krum. Our Past Commander Sandy Krum also gave the Invocation and Benediction. We see great things in the future for this scout.



Eagle Scout Wilsom Maifeld with his Mother Amy Anderson Maifeld and his Father Mitch Maifield



Eagle Scout Maifeld with Post 164 Adjutant Jennifer Lowry, Post 164 Finance Officer Harry Woodstrom, Past Post 164 Cdr. Sandy Krum

Post 174's Pack 151 Conducts Award Ceremony

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Past Commander, Post 174





On September 29th, Pack 151 chartered by Post 174 conducted their first award ceremony of the year. Their twenty-four Cub Scouts earned forty-five awards. All the Cubs earned their rank required Bobcat award, which includes Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Cub Sign, handshake, and salute. Other awards included Tigeriffic, learning to follow the rules of games; Tech All Around, learning about common technology in homes; Bear Strong, personal fitness and keeping your body strong by eating right, exercising your body & brain, plus getting proper rest; Wolf Safety in Numbers, personal safety and how to protect yourself; Wolf Adventures in Coins, learning about coins, what the pictures on a coin are and how it tells about the country, culture, and history & where they are made. The Pack is off to a great start!







Post 174 Troop 1096 Creates Birthday Cake Kits for Church Food Bank

Troop 1096, chartered by Post 174, spent part of a meeting creating Birthday Cake Kit for the Santa Rosa Catholic Church food bank.

They bundled a 9"X13" pan, a cake mix, icing, sprinkles, and birthday candles together for families to use to celebrate birthdays.

This is an annual project they do for the church.



The Three R's of Membership Growth

Submitted by Robert A. Crutchfield, 1st Vice Commander, Post 164

This year seems like a tough year for membership in our Department. However does anybody remember a recent year that didn't seem like a tough year for our Department. Every report we get seems to indicate that renewals in particular are running behind last year at almost every post.

I am going to share the strategy I am using to buck that trend. Hopefully it not only will help my post, but many others around the department.

RENEW: Its important that we start here. If we are not taking care of, and providing value to our members where they renew we have bigger problems. The challenge here is in most cases they won't tell you, they will just go away and not come back. This is where things like Buddy Checks come in handy. An organized effort to speak to your members one on one is a strong technique here.

RECRUIT: Our former Department Membership Chairman, Butch Sparks is fond of reminding us, "Membership is a team sport, and every Legionaire is a team member!" What this doesn't mean is you stand up before your post every month and say "everybody recruit" and wait for the numbers to roll in. Do your members have the knowledge, training and resources to recruit new members? If not what are YOU doing to get it for them. Those of us who are vice commanders should always be thinking membership. What's working for you, what's not working, what specific challenges are you facing? A successful membership program can never be satisfied. Always be looking to do better!

REPRESENT: Our post has a building, many posts do not. Yet you would be surprised how many people in our community do not know we are there! Your individual members are the best representatives of your post. Encourage them to wear some form of legion gear every time they leave the house. Make your post one aspect of your community that can't be missed!

Post 164 Chaplain's Corner

Submitted by Bob Watts, Chaplain, Post 164, Katy, TX

To Texas State Department American Legion, Post 164 Legion Members, Auxiliary, SAL, Riders, and Friends,

Looking back on September, I've been reflecting on my first six months as a member of Post 164 in Katy, TX. For two years, I searched for a community where fellowship and service to God and Country could be shared in a warm, welcoming, and inclusive way — much like my training as a Hospital and Hospice Chaplain. I am so grateful to pause and reflect on why our American Legion Family gathers: to support one another, serve our wonderful communities, and share an unwavering commitment to look out for each other.

During my time as a Navy Medic and later a USAF Flight Nurse, we learned early on that no mission succeeds alone. The person standing watch beside you matters just as much as the mission itself. Life after service carries that same heart. While our operational days may be behind us, our duty and care for one another never end.

Supporting a friend rarely requires grand gestures. More often, as I've felt at our Post and District meetings, State Conferences, and Conventions, it's a warm handshake, a thoughtful check-in call to a comrade we've missed, or a simple chat over coffee. As part of our Legion mission to Be the One, taking just five minutes to connect with a fellow veteran can mean the world.

A Moment of Prayer:
Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wonderful blessings of liberty and for the brave men and women who stepped forward to defend them. Please grant peace to those fighting quiet battles, watch over our deployed service members in harm's way, bring gentle comfort to the families of our fallen comrades, and bless our Post with wisdom, compassion, and unity to serve our neighbors well. Amen.

Sick Call & Bereavement:
If you know of a comrade, auxiliary member, or family member who is hospitalized, homebound, facing hardship, or has passed on to the Post Everlasting, please reach out to the Post Chaplain directly so we can send our love, visitation, cards, and prayer support.

For God and Country,

Chaplain Bob Watts, RN, M.Div.
American Legion Post 164, Katy, Texas

3rd Division Earns Distinguished Harold L. Gregory Traveling Trophy

Story by District 20 Commander Billy Hill and Legionnaire Burrell Parmer



Department Vice Commander (3rd Division) Eric Mayer (center) is presented with his Gold No. 1 Membership Pin for the highest membership goal within the Department of Texas by Department Commander Danny Muth and District 20 Vice Commander Ace Tounsel during the Fall Department Executive Committee Meeting held at the Austin Renaissance Hotel

AUSTIN, Texas – (Sep. 27, 2026) – Beginning with the Fall Department Executive Committee (D.E.C.) Meeting held at the Austin Renaissance Hotel, the department vice commander who has attained the highest membership percentage of goal is presented with the Harold L. Gregory Traveling Trophy.

To qualify, the membership goal must be verified by The American Legion National Headquarters by close of business of the September target date.

This year, the award was presented to Department Vice Commander (3rd Division) Eric Mayer and the entire division membership.

“Let there be Legion! This award is a testament to the hard work of the seven districts and 149 posts within the 3rd Division,” said Mayer, who received his Gold No. 1 Membership Pin at the Fall D.E.C. “Our posts are providing something meaningful for our members and their communities, and that is reflected in our numbers.”

The final recipient of the award will be recognized at the Department Convention in July 2027.

Harold L. Gregory was the Department’s vice commander from 1991 to 1992. Before that, he commanded Post 626 in Fort Worth and District 12. The Harold L. Gregory Membership Trophy is permanently displayed at the Department Headquarters.

Rose City Air Fest Tyler

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander

Members from American Legion Post 12 and American Legion Post 320 participated at the Rose City Air Fest held at Tyler Pounds Regional Airport on October 10 & 11. A few prospective new members for the American Legion family to come!

Pictured below are Pam Heser, Steve Rudder, American Legion Post 12, Bobby Gilbert, and 3rd District SAL Detachment Commander. Last Picture: Jerry Bryant and Shirley Parnell, Post 320 Gilmer, Cory Alexander SAL Squadron 12, and Bobby Gilbert 3rd District SAL Detachment Commander.

Not pictured, Ron Ebert, Commander Post 12,Tyler, Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander.







3rd District Sons of the American Legion Fall Convention

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander

3rd District Sons of the American Legion held their convention at American Legion Post 12 in Tyler, TX on October 3, 2026. Several SAL members were in attendance.

Squadrons 12, 15, 320, 353, and 418 were in attendance. 1st Division SAL Detachment Commander, Tim Webb, was also in attendance.















Legion Family Turns Pink for Cancer Awareness, Raises $300 for ThriveWell

Submitted by Ventura "Ace" Tounsel, Post 300



SAN ANTONIO, Texas — A show of pink brought the American Legion Family together on October 15 as William J. Bordelon American Legion Post 300 hosted "Tuff Enough to Wear Pink?," an evening dedicated to cancer awareness, community support and giving back.

The initiative united members of American Legion Post 300, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 300 and Sons of The American Legion Squadron 300 in a shared effort to support individuals and families affected by cancer. The event demonstrated how the three branches of the Legion Family can work together around a cause that reaches well beyond the walls of the Post.

Through the event, the Legion Family donated $300 to ThriveWell Cancer Foundation, a San Antonio organization that supports people facing cancer. A portion of the evening's canteen beverage sales was designated for the cause, turning everyday fellowship into a tangible contribution.

The program also brought together voices from across the community. Scheduled speakers included the Post 300 commander, the Unit 300 president, a ThriveWell representative and a cancer survivor, reflecting both the organizational commitment behind the event and the personal experiences at the heart of cancer awareness.

Guests were encouraged to wear pink in solidarity, while a "Who Do You Fight For?" tribute wall offered an opportunity to recognize loved ones affected by the disease. The evening created space not only to raise funds, but also to honor survivors, remember those lost and stand alongside families still navigating a diagnosis.

For the Legion Family at Post 300, the event underscored a simple message: service takes many forms. Whether through veterans' advocacy, community outreach or support for local nonprofits, the organization's mission is strengthened when its members come together to meet a need.

The $300 donation represents the collective effort of Post 300, Unit 300 and Squadron 300 — and a reminder that even a single evening of fellowship can make a meaningful difference.

ALR Post 12, Tyler 5th Annual Bras On Fire

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, ALR Post 12 Director

Members from ALR Post 12 held their 5th Annual Bras on Fire Event with Firefighters from Smith County Emergency District #2. This annual event raises money for Breast Cancer Awareness. Food, fun and games by all.







Post 164 Activities

Submitted by Dennis Wells, Post 164 Commander





Post 164 and Unit 164 staffed an information booth at the annual Katy Rice Harvest Festival. The event was held the weekend of October 10th-11th.



Unit 164 of Katy featured an information table at the Bass Pro Shop at Katy Mills Mall. The Unit was there for their annual Pies for Hope program. The program offers the public an opportunity to purchase and donate Thanksgiving pies for the veterans staying at Camp Hope. Pictured are Post Commander Dennis Wells, Unit 2nd Vice President Maria Wells and Past Unit President Lindy Malsbary.



Post Commander Dennis Wells and 1st Vice Commander Robert Crutchfield staffed the information table at The Combined Arms Food Fair for Veterans. The event is held every second Monday of the month at Parkway Fellowship Church in Richmond for area veterans and their families who are in need.



Post 164 and Unit 164 hosted a neighborhood Halloween Trunk or Treat on Saturday October 31st. The event was held from 10AM to 2PM and was attended by neighborhood youth and their parents. The event featured info tables from vendors, The Post, The Auxiliary and first responders.

Post 12 Feed the Wildcats Program

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander



On October 29th, we had the honor of welcoming members of American Legion Post 12 from Tyler, Texas, to our Feed the Wildcats program!

These veterans and American Legion Post & Auxiliary members didn't just show up to support our student-athletes — they came to share their experiences, encourage our young people, and remind them what service, sacrifice, leadership, and commitment to something greater than yourself truly mean.

Our special guests included:

- Chet Johnson – First Vice Commander | U.S. Navy Veteran
- Steve Rudder – Finance Officer | U.S. Army Veteran
- Ron Wait – U.S. Marine Corps Veteran
- Pam Hesser – U.S. Air Force Veteran
- Kathy Waite – American Legion Auxiliary Member

Along with other veterans and Auxiliary members, they spent time speaking with our Wildcat football, basketball, and volleyball teams about military service, the mission of the American Legion, and the youth programs and opportunities available to the next generation.

This is what community involvement looks like!

It's about more than providing a meal. It's about building relationships, sharing wisdom, honoring those who came before us, and investing in those who will lead tomorrow.

On behalf of our Feed the Wildcats program and the Winona community, THANK YOU to American Legion Post 12 for showing up, giving back, and making a difference in the lives of our student-athletes.

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