



## American Legion Post 1995 February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - Defender Newsletter

### Monthly Military Quote

#### U.S. Armed Services Core Values:

**Army:** Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage.

**Marine Corps:** Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

**Air Force:** Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do

**Navy:** Honor, Service Before Courage, and Commitment.

**Coast Guard:** Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty.

**Space Force:** Guardianship, Innovation, Excellence, Selfless Service, Teamwork, Integrity, and Respect.

**The American Legion's Values:** A Veteran is a Veteran, Selfless Service, American Values and Patriotism, Family and Community Engagement, Advancing the Vision, and Honoring those who came before us.

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### Commander's Corner

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year** – At our January membership meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>, Vice Commander Chris Torelli outlined preliminary plans for a staff ride to Yorktown National Battlefield. Look for more information later in the newsletter. He also alerted us to the Social Hour on February 27<sup>th</sup> so save the date.

**17<sup>th</sup> District Oratorical Contest** – Our contestant Twisha Sinha represented Post 1995 at the District competition at Fairfax Post 177 on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The competition was very close, and Twisha represented us very well. The judges admitted scoring the contest was difficult and all the ladies earned high marks. Twisha took 3<sup>rd</sup> place and earned a certificate of participation and a \$100 prize. The winner, Nafa Zaina from King Abdulla Academy represented the 17<sup>th</sup> District at the Northern Region contest at Springfield Post 176.

**Day on the Hill (Richmond)** - Post 1995 attended the Department of Virginia's annual "Day on the Hill" with other Legion members to show support for the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations' legislative priorities with the State's legislature. Those priorities are detailed in the attachment brochure to the February newsletter distro. Legionnaires assembled at the Department's offices in Richmond where we were briefed on what to expect from our visit to the legislature and talking points to have with our representatives (delegates/senators). The Department provided a bus to transport about 35 Legionnaires and Auxiliary members to the capital and back as parking near the Capital is difficult. While we were not able to personally meet this time with Delegate Delaney, but we did have a 15-minute conversation with her chief of staff where we discussed the JLCs priorities for this year's legislative session. We then reassembled with other Legionnaires to attend a session of either the Senate or Delegates in session. Our time in the gallery was spent mostly hearing introductions of various groups attending Day on the Hill to advocate for their organizations' legislative priorities, the American Legion and VFW being only two of many. The visit was hectic as there were only a few hours for everyone to visit their representatives/office staff. It was a great opportunity to see the capital from the inside and learn a bit more about state government .

The Virginia JLC is consists of 27 Veteran Service organizations from across Virginia. See the attach scanned copy for its list of legislative priorities for 2025.



**Steve and Karen Hunter with Delegate Delancy's Chief of Staff Jacki Garry**

**2025 Washington Conference - The Legion's Agenda for Congress** - Open this link to review the top level issues the Legion's legislative office will be advocating on our behave:

<https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/legislative/2025/january/the-legions-agenda-for-congress> To learn more you can also download the Legislative Agenda for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. Karen Hunte will be attending the conference as the Department's Auxiliary Legislative Affairs Chair.

**Flag Training at Centre Ridge Elementary** – At the invitation of Karen Helmer at Centre Ridge Elementary School Post 1995 conducted flag code training for 60 students of the Safety Patrol. With Mike Reilly in charge, and assisted by Legionnaires Hunter, Schenck, Miller, Robison, and Young, we taught the student about how to display and care for the flag. We distributed 40 copies of the Legion booklet about the flag and a color pamphlet to Mrs. Helmer for reference. The highlight for the students was hands-on training in how to fold the flag properly. I can report the kids were all engaged and wanted to master the technique. Mrs. Helmer reports the training stuck and the Safety Patrol in handling the flag that flies in front of the school precisely.



Flag Etiquette and History Education Team



Al Schenck and students folding a flag

**Helping with American Heritage Merit Badge** – On Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> Vice Commander Chris Torelli and I met with 15 Scouts of Troop 1995 to discuss our time in military service. The Scouts were working on one of the requirements for the merit badge. We answered questions ranging from combat to ice cream. We were candid about military values, and the attributes we acquired in long careers in the Army. The Scouts visited the Manassas Battlefield and were soon going to Washington's Mount Vernon in fulfillment of more of the merit badge requirements.

**Four Chaplains Service** – Our Chaplain, Al Schenck helped with the conduct of the 17<sup>th</sup> District Four Chaplains service at Fairfax Post 177 on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. District Chaplain Paul McComb always organizes a wonderful service to remember the sacrifice made by Chaplains George Fox, Alexander Goode, Clark Poling, and John Washington. Their story is compelling and inspirational. Many hands are needed to make the service a success and Al Schenck volunteered to read the portion detailing the life of Rabi Alexander Goode. The keynote address was by Chaplain (Colonel) Eddie W. Cook, Command Chaplain of the Army Medical Command. He spoke about what he thought the four chaplains were thinking about as the troop transport *Dorchester* was going beneath the

waves. This service is always conducted on the first Sunday in February and I encourage you all to attend next year.



17<sup>th</sup> District Four Chaplains Ceremony - Al Schenck second from left and Karen Hunter far right

**We Need Help with Baseball** – “If you have any experience coaching or managing a ball team or having a son who plays ball at any level we want you. I will mentor you and give you guidance for this rewarding position. Please write me at [rsyoung47@gmail.com](mailto:rsyoung47@gmail.com).” I still need someone to take this easy job. Planning begins in February so please raise your hand and “pitch” in.



**State of Centreville (SoC)** – I had the honor of addressing almost 100 business, community, and local government leaders on Friday February 7<sup>th</sup> at Chantilly National Golf Club. Organized by Legionnaire John Boylan, for the Dulles Area Chamber of Commerce, this was a report card about how the Centreville area is now and where it will go in the future. Along with reports from government entities and community based non-profit organizations, I got to briefly tell the story of how Post 1995 supports our community. In organizing my notes, I realized we do a lot of good for a lot of people. You can be proud of your membership in Post 1995. **.BE the ONE** – After the State of Centreville meeting broke up John Boylan came up to me to say he heard me mention our Be the One campaign. John on his own looked up the online training the Legion offers. This is an outstanding example of what any one of you can do to be ready to help end the scourge of Veteran suicide. With some elementary training you will be prepared to REACH out when a Veterans is struggling. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help for yourself or another Vet.



Commander Young addressing the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce at the Chantilly National Golf Club during the “State of Centreville” focus meeting.

### **30 Year Post Anniversary – Yorktown**

Post 1995 will celebrate its 30th Anniversary by sponsoring a Staff Ride to the Yorktown Battlefield Friday- Sunday (May 2-4, 2025). The game plan to date is to meet Friday at the Yorktown visitors center in the afternoon, time TBA. Saturday will encompass a tour of the battlefield and museum, followed by an anniversary dinner at a tavern. Sunday will be a tour of Colonial Williamsburg and departure.

I have not booked any hotels, but there are plenty in the area that offer Military/Veteran discounts. To date I have 10 members including spouses interested. I welcome all who want to join us, the more the merrier. Coordinator: Chris Torelli, [cgt548@gmail.com](mailto:cgt548@gmail.com)

### **No-Host Social**

The next Post Social is scheduled for February 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) from 1600-1900 at Ciao’s Osteria in Centreville (Centerwood Shopping Center, next to the Giant). Spouses, Auxiliary and friends are welcome to attend. Ciao’s owner is a Veteran who gives back to the community in many ways to include service as an auxiliary police officer and providing meal vouchers to a Sully Police Station officers of the month/quarter/year awards. (Coordinator: Christ Torelli)

### **Veteran Volunteer Drivers Needed**

One of the groups we talked with at the SoC was this organization that helps to find drivers for Veterans needing rides to medical appointments. It seems well organized in that they have a website that lists the needs from which volunteer drivers select which they can support. All are local to your location, and none require trips to the VA medical center in DC or elsewhere out of the area. This is a great way to support other Veterans in need in our area, so please consider volunteering.

The Veterans Connect program recruits veteran volunteer drivers to provide transportation to elderly Veterans in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties. Volunteer drivers, Veterans, and military supporters alike, use their own vehicles to offer “*more than just a*

ride” to nearby veterans in need. The program works closely with NV Rides and many local service organizations who receive ride requests from local Veterans. Far too many Veterans in Northern Virginia need help with rides to access healthcare, food banks/grocery stores, and other important appointments. With the help of volunteer drivers,



we can combat this growing transportation crisis and help those veterans most in need.

Thank you for your support helping to promote this program, and for sharing our critical need for volunteer drivers.

To learn more, please contact: **Luke Frazza** - Program Outreach Manager [lfrazza@datatrans.org](mailto:lfrazza@datatrans.org) or **703-819-3459**

## **New Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Veteran)**

Doug Collins was confirmed to lead the Department of Veteran Affairs this past week. To learn more about his service in the Navy/Air Force, see this link on Task & Purpose Newsletter: <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/va-secretary-confirmed-collins/>

## **Annual Reports**

As we prepare for reporting season, your inputs are needed that cover all the community service you perform, Legion activity, donations to charities, etc. Give us a few lines telling us what you did, and who benefited. Summarize how many Legionnaires were involved, how many hours you put in, how much money you spent, and how many miles you drove. Estimates are fine. If you served on your HOA board, donated blood, coached youth sports, helped with the marching band at your kids' high school, provided food and/or transportation to those in need, or ushered at church. If you helped make another Veteran's life better, let us know. We want to know about it all.

Our combined reports are submitted to the Department of Virginia which takes reporting from Posts throughout the state to create Department reports that are sent to National. The narrative reports are divided up between Americanism, Children and Youth, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation or VA&R. Virginia has won the Americanism report 16 times in the Legion's 104-year history, that is 15.38%, not bad...it demonstrates an outsized impact Virginia Legionnaires make each and every year. A fourth report is essentially a tabulation of what each Post has done during the year and includes mostly yes/no type questions and numbers of things/events the Post did and/or money spent in support of Legion programs. I usually complete the narrative reports first then the latter, even though it is due to the Department first.

To meet the **Department's timeline for submitting reports by the middle of May** (no firm NLT date has yet been announced), I (your Adjutant) **need your individual reports NLT**

**than the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.** In addition to the previously mentioned reports, there are additional reports the Post must submit, so they all take time to consolidate and draft the reports. Submit your information in whatever form that works best for you. I just need it to be clear and have your totals tabulated to facilitate drafting the reports. I have attached a spreadsheet which may be useful in compiling your reports.( Coordinator: Adjutant, Steve Hunter, gesohunter@aol.com)

### **Flag Day (June 14<sup>th</sup>) Education Proposal:**

Attached to this newsletter is a proposal to conduct a community flag education event in Centreville to promote Americanism, flag etiquette, provide basic flag history facts, and display various historical flags. Additional event ideas are welcome to include location.

### **News You Can Use:**

#### **Air Force Retiree Newsletter/Services**

<https://www.retirees.af.mil/library/afterburner/>

**Army Retirement Services/Newsletter** – Depending on your status you may be eligible to shop at military exchanges either in store or online. See this link for the details:

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/army-echoes>

#### **Military Exchange Access/Services**

<https://publicaffairs-sme.com/Community/veterans#24VA>

#### **Need a copy of your DD214:**

<https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>

#### **National Membership Impact Report for January 2025**

<https://www.legion.org/about/reports/membership-impact>

#### **Donating Blood:**

Blood Donors Are Urgently Needed Multiple traumatic incidents and other medical emergencies have left INOVA's blood inventory for Type O blood critically low. All blood types are needed, but a boost to the supply of Type O blood will help patients in need significantly. Call 1-866-BLOODSAVES (1- 866-256-6372) or visit inovablood.org to schedule an appointment.

#### **Suicide Prevention Resources All Veterans Need to Know:**

See this link for VA resources to use to help prevent Veteran suicides.

<https://news.va.gov/137046/six-suicide-prevention-resources-veterans-know/>

Source: VA, January 6, 2025, via email distro)

## **Free Suicide Prevention Training**

PsychArmor offers free suicide prevention courses designed specifically for military and Veteran communities: [https://news.va.gov/135619/free-suicide-prevention-training-for-all/?utm\\_source=middle&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=VetResources&utm\\_id=16OCT2024](https://news.va.gov/135619/free-suicide-prevention-training-for-all/?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=16OCT2024)

If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You do not have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, [Dial 988 then Press 1](#), chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text [838255](tel:838255).

Columbia University and the American Legion has partnered to provide online Be the One training on February 19, 2025, 2:30-4:00 pm. Click on the link to register: <https://www.legion.org/information-center/calendar/be-the-one-training-feb-19/>

## **How Can I Apply for VA Health Care?**

See this VA link to learn what you need to do and where you go to start the process. <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>

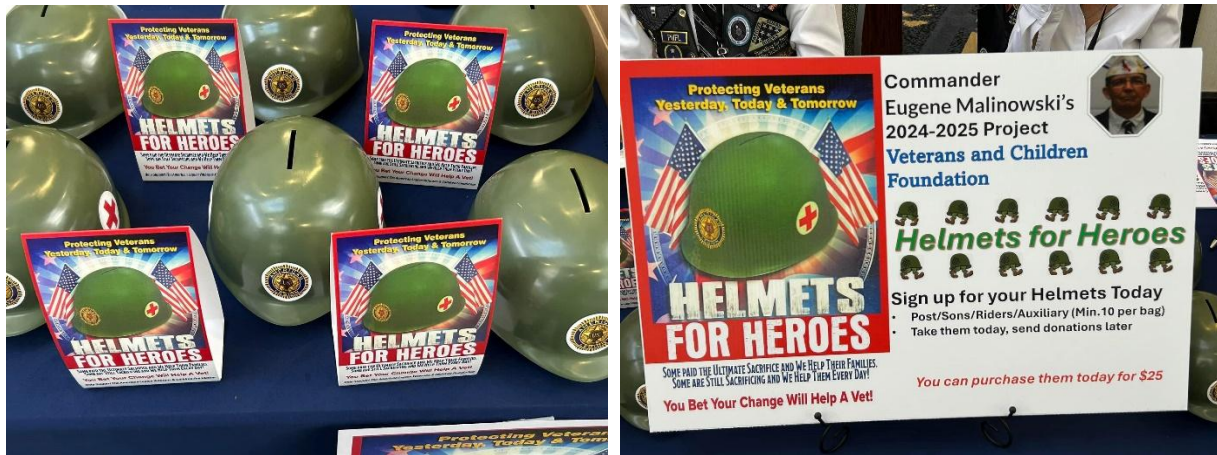
Source: VA, January 6, 2025, via email distro)

## **Veteran-Owned Businesses**

Learn more about Veteran owned businesses and demographic profile of them from this Census Bureau article. The link also has additional links to Trends in Veteran Disability Status and How to Access, Map and Compare Detailed Veteran Data. [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/11/veteran-owned-businesses.html?utm\\_campaign=20241115cnmp&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/11/veteran-owned-businesses.html?utm_campaign=20241115cnmp&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## **Helmets for Heroes**

This is the Department of Virginia's Commander's project this year to raise funds for the Legion's Veterans and Children Foundation. The helmets are actually "piggy banks" for donations. This is a yearlong effort with the collected funds being donated to National at the 2025 National Convention in Tampa. A helmet will be at all Post meetings/events. If you have a location that would support this project, let me know as I have ten. A helmet will be at all Post events for your contributions.



## Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management

To access their webpage and learn more about the office and/or access their monthly newsletters that are available online for the past three years, click on this link: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/emergency-preparedness-newsletter-0> The office encourages citizens to prepare for life's uncertainties and provides resources and references to help you do that. The February issue has information on preparing emergency food reserves, vehicle emergency kits, what to do to winterize your home, how to become a weather spotter, request an Emergency Preparedness workshop, and volunteer with the county's emergency management volunteer corps.

## Four Ways to Avoid Scams After a Weather-Related Disaster:

Whenever severe weather strikes — blizzards, heavy winds, or the recent devastating fires in Los Angeles — you can bet scammers are following the news to target people affected. So, how do you protect yourself against weather-related scams? (Source: Military Consumer, BCP Staff, February 7, 2025 email distro)

[https://www.militaryconsumer.gov/blog/four-ways-avoid-scams-after-weather-related-disaster?utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.militaryconsumer.gov/blog/four-ways-avoid-scams-after-weather-related-disaster?utm_source=govdelivery) Also check out the [ftc.gov/WeatherEmergencies](https://www.ftc.gov/WeatherEmergencies) link in the embedded article for useful information to better prepare for disasters and their aftermath.

## Membership Update

We currently are at 93.94% of our 2025 membership goal of 198 with 186. Our renewal rate is over 101.11%, which is significantly higher than all but one Post in the District.

I thank all those who have renewed for 2025. If you have not renewed, you may renew by sending back one of the renewal letters National sends out or going online at [Renew \(mylegion.org\)](https://mylegion.org) to renew. It is your choice, but doing so online is quick, simple, and saves you the cost of a stamp and you get your new membership card a bit faster. Should you

have any questions about your membership, please call or email the post's adjutant/membership chairman.

The next renewal notices from National will be mailed between March 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>. The cutoff day will be February 12<sup>th</sup>. This is the date National generates the renewal letter based on members who have renewed up to that date. So, if you renew after that date, you will probably get another renewal letter, which you can ignore. If you wish to verify your membership status, you may either contact me or review your profile on [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org).

**Multi-Year Memberships Are Now Available** - The Legion now has a three-year renewal option. The benefit of renewing it for three years and paying in advance is that you avoid any dues increases over the next three years and getting renewal notifications. While there is no discount for the multi-year membership, you are locked in at the current dues amount, even if the fee increases during this time. For details on this new option visit this Legion website: <https://www.legion.org/membership/260621/american-legion-multiyear-membership-here> Four out of the last six online renewals with the post have taken advantage of this new membership renewal option.

**PUFL Memberships** - PLFL members pay a one-time fee for a lifetime American Legion membership. You never have to pay yearly dues and future increases, which will come over the years. For those considering getting a Paid Up For Life membership, an added incentive would be a \$100 discount, but you must call National and request availability of it. The kicker, however, is that you must pay all of it with a credit card or check in a single payment. This option is not available with their payment plan. If interested in a PULF membership, call 1-800-433-3318.

### **Final Thought:**

**Harden's Law: "Every time you come up with a terrific idea, you find that someone else thought of it first"** (*Frank Harden, WMAL morning show radio host who teamed up with Jacson Weaver for the Harden and Weaver Show from 1960-1992 in Washington, DC*) *These guys were with me every morning on my drive to work for their last ten years.*

**Free Flags** - The Post has a considerable number of lightly used U.S. flags of assorted sizes from 3"x 5" to 5'x 9'-5" available to any Post member who needs to replace their house flag. All you need to do is let the Adjutant know what size you need and attend the next meeting after your request. These flags were turned in for retirement by community members for our annual flag retirement ceremony this past November and previous years, however due to their good condition they are not yet ready for retirement. The Post's collection (not giveaways) also includes some unique flags such as 45- and 48-star flags (possible museum donations), and copies of the Grand Union, Bennington, and Betsy Ross flags.

**Comments/Submissions to the Editor** - Comments about this newsletter relative to its contents and/or presentation style are always welcomed. We also encourage submissions

from Post members relative to anything related to the American Legion and/or what we as Legionnaires are doing to serve our communities. If you have missed previous issues of the Post's newsletters, let me know and I can forward any month want.

Editor's Note: Some of the links to articles are here due to the editor's opinion of their importance to veterans relative to News You Can Use, of interest to veterans, and/or to inform membership of the post's activities/meetings/events. The following is always at the bottom of each newsletter.

**Department of Virginia Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaLegion/>

**Website: The American Legion – Centreville, Virginia Post 1995**

<http://centrevillevapost1995.org/contact/> (Webmaster needed)

**Post 1995's Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/pg/LegionPost1995/posts/>

**1995 Centreville webpage Post:** <https://americanlegionpost1995.org>

**17<sup>th</sup> District X (aka Twitter) Account:** <https://twitter.com/va17thdistrict>

**Facebook:** 17<sup>th</sup> District's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VALegion17/>), is synchronized to its Twitter page and posts to the 17<sup>th</sup> District Facebook page are tweeted to the 17<sup>th</sup> District's Twitter page.

**Comments/Submissions to the Editor** - Comments about this newsletter relative to its contents and/or presentation style are always welcomed. We also encourage submissions from Post members relative to anything related to the American Legion and/or what we as Legionnaires are doing to serve our communities. If you are not active, now would be a good time to learn more about what your Post is doing and how you and we could do more. If you have missed previous issues of the Post's newsletters, let me know and I can forward any month wanted.

**Calendars** - To view the **National Legion calendar**, visit this website:

<https://www.legion.org/information-center/calendar>

**Post Calendars for February and March are on the next pages**

## February 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Four Chaplains Ceremony	3	4 National USO Day	5	6	7	8 National Scouting Day
9 Super Bowl	10	11 Post Meeting	12	13	14	15 Alexandria Presidents Day Parade
16	17 Presidents' Day	18	19 U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Birthday	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

# March 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	1 Post Meeting	12	13	14	15 American Legion Birthday
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Congressional Medal of Honor Day	26	27	28	29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day
30	31					

## Military History:

### Military Photo of the Month:

While not a purely a military photo, the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC construction was managed by four Army Engineering Officers. Since February 17<sup>th</sup> is President's Day, the editor felt it fitting that this iconic memorial be this month's photo. To learn more about the memorial visit both of these websites:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Digital Library:

<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15141coll5/search/searchterm/DC%20-%20Lincoln%20Memorial/field/subcol/mode/exact/conn/and>

<https://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/Historical-Vignettes/Parks-and-Monuments/152-Lincoln-Memorial/>



Dedication Photo: May 30, 1922

**Vespa Bazooka scooter for sale – with or without cannon** This is an interesting story about a piece of French military equipment designed for its special forces in SE Asia: [https://newatlas.com/motorcycles/vespa-bazooka-scooter-for-sale-with-or-without-cannon/?utm\\_source=New+Atlas+Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=fdd773be76-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2024\\_10\\_13\\_11\\_52&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_65b67362bd-fdd773be76-%5BLIST\\_EMAIL\\_ID%5D](https://newatlas.com/motorcycles/vespa-bazooka-scooter-for-sale-with-or-without-cannon/?utm_source=New+Atlas+Subscribers&utm_campaign=fdd773be76-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_10_13_11_52&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_65b67362bd-fdd773be76-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D)

**Auxiliary News – No news this month**