



**AMERICAN  
LEGION**



**American Legion Post 1995**

# **DEFENDER NEWSLETTER**

**January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

## **Monthly Military Quote**

*“In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## **Military Photo of the Month**



Manila American Cemetery Sojourn 250

As part of America’s 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the American Battle Monuments Commission has flown the same U.S. flag at all 26 overseas cemeteries in 2025. To learn more about the largest ABMC cemetery located in Manila, click on this link. [https://www.abmc.gov/video/manila-american-cemetery/?utm\\_campaign=Website](https://www.abmc.gov/video/manila-american-cemetery/?utm_campaign=Website)

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*"Th' hell this ain't th' most important hole in the world. I'm in it."*

## Commander's Corner

**Recruiting at Coast Guard Exchange:** On Pearl Harbor Day, December 7<sup>th</sup>, also a Sunday this year, we set up our table at the Coast Guard Exchange to add new members to the Post and Legion roster. This was a very successful event resulting in our Post gaining four new members. They are Thomas Payne, Army; Veronica Cruz, Army; Dawnette Cerda, Air Force; and Jackie Kennedy, also Air Force. We are very pleased to welcome them as new Legionnaires.

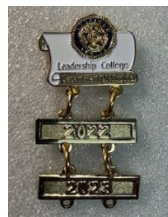
**Oratorical Contest Post and District —** Post 1995 held its oratorical contest on December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Sully Government Center. This year we were assisted by Dr. Phyllis Pajardo, and Reverend Kevin Laskowski. These community leaders are both veterans of the Legion oratorical program when they were in high school and did a very thorough job of judging the contest. Our representative to the District contest was Aadhya Edunuri, a Junior at Centreville High School. She received a customized Legion Certificate of Distinction, a Patrick Henry oratorical medal, and a check for \$150. At the 17<sup>th</sup> District contest on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, she competed against two other outstanding orators at Fairfax Post 177. Aadhya represented us well but came in third place. The other contestants represented Langley and Thomas Jefferson High Schools. The winner will compete at the regional level at Springfield Post 176 on January 25<sup>th</sup>.



Jim Robison, Randy Young, Steve Hunter, Aadhya Edunuri, Jeff White, Mark Miller and Greg Hinton

**Fallen Officer Memorial** – On December 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Sully District Police Station we remembered the line of duty deaths of Detective Vicky Armel, and Master Police Officer Michael Garbarino who died in a hail of gunfire on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This was the third year we memorialized these two officers and it happens in conjunction with our participation in the Wreaths Across America observance. In attendance were Major Russell and Captain Spooner of the police station leadership. Legionnaire Mike Reilly coordinated with the police station and was supported by Legionnaires Miller, Hunter, Schenck, Barrs, Robison and Young. Major Russell gave remarks about the qualities of Detective Armel and MPO Garbarino and told us the family of these officers appreciate our remembering their sacrifice.

**American Legion College** – For the first time the American Legion Family College will be held near where we live. This year the college will be held in three locations by region. The northern region will hold their all-day session on March 14<sup>th</sup> at Post 176 in Springfield, just a quick trip down the Fairfax County Parkway. More information is provided later in this edition of the newsletter. I encourage all officers and those who want to know more about post operations to register soon and attend. It will never be easier to attend and this year it is free!



Legion College Yearly Hat Pins

**Department Spring Conference** – From February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup> 2026 the Department of Virginia will conduct a spring conference at the Renaissance Waterfront Hotel in Portsmouth. All Legionnaires are eligible and welcome to attend this event. Committee meetings are held on Friday and general sessions by program such as Athletics,

Membership, or Be the One are held on Saturday. The Northern Region caucus is Saturday afternoon and the department commander's banquet is held Saturday night. Sunday morning hosts the general session, and an all-faiths religious service. This is a great way to see how the Legion operates at the Department (statewide) level. There will be a chance to meet prospective Department officers for the 2026-2027 Legion year. For information on attending and room reservations, contact the Adjutant at [geoshunter@aol.com](mailto:geoshunter@aol.com)

**BE the ONE** – At the National Convention in Tampa I learned a way to participate in this suicide prevention program can be easy. “Pay it forward” by small acts of kindness. Something you do for a Legionnaire who is on the struggle bus may divert their trajectory toward hope and away from despair. So, REACH out when a Veteran is struggling. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help for yourself or another Veteran.



### **Legion College – Department of Virginia**

This year's Legion College will consist of a one day of training at three different locations in the Spring. The Northern Region training will be conducted on March 14<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) at Post 176 in Springfield. All Legion family members are encouraged to attend. It is FREE to attend. See the attached Legion College document for the registration form, information sheet, and list of topics/instructors. Please email completed registration forms to [martydc1f@aol.com](mailto:martydc1f@aol.com). (please note, that is the number 1 between the c and f)

Reminder: After filling-in the registration form, individuals must save the form for it to retain the entered data. **Registration deadline for the Northern Region is 12 February 2026**, so we have enough time to collate the data and forward to our College Director by his stated Regional deadline.

### **Four Chaplains Ceremony**

The 17<sup>th</sup> District Four Chaplains Ceremony will be held at Post 177, Fairfax on February 1<sup>st</sup> (Sunday) beginning at 10:30. All Legion Family members are encouraged to attend, particularly if you have never attended one before. Each ceremony features a senior ranking chaplain in the DMV.

## Annual Post Reports

Requesting all Post members keep a running tally document recording your daily volunteering in your community. We combine all input into our annual reports each Spring that are submitted to the Department of Virginia who in turn combines all submitted Post reports within Virginia to National who uses the reports in its advocacy with Congress. These help to tell the story of how American Legion members are contributing to making our country better and how we support fellow Veterans. Reports are broken out in three areas: (Americanism, Children and Youth, and Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation. A fourth report is a numbers tally from the three form/narrative reports. Post 1995 have won the Department's Americanism Report three years in a roll. I would like to continue that effort, but we need more members to report. I will request your volunteer hours and charitable contributions next April (2026) covering the period from May1, 2025 to 31 April 2026.

### National Membership Impact Report for December 2025

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

## The Veterans Connect Program

Looking for a way to volunteer to help fellow veterans...then consider this organization.

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 rivers, 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**.



**Learn more here:** <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/military-crisis-line/>

## Membership Update

We currently are at 96.42% of our 2026 membership goal of 196 members with 189 countable members.

I thank all those who have renewed for 2026 already. If you have not renewed, you may renew by mailing one of the renewal letters National sent you or preferably 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 chairperson.

**Multi-Year Memberships Are Now Available** - The Legion now has a three-year renewal option. The benefit of renewing for three years and paying in advance is that you avoid any dues increase 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 you are interested in a PUFL membership, call 1-800-433-3318.

### **Final Thought:**

*“Intelligent individuals learn from everything and everyone; average people, from their experiences. The stupid already have all the answers.” — Socrates*

**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. The editor encourages submissions by Post members for consideration in upcoming newsletters.

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/>

**Post 1995's Facebook Page:** Currently down (**Coordinator Needed**)

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

**17<sup>th</sup> District (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 January and February 2026 are on the next pages, followed by America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events**

# January 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 New Years Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Post Meeting	14	15 Day on the Hill - Richmond	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> <b>4</b> <b>Chaplains Ceremony</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>Boys State Interviews</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Post Meeting</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Dept Conference</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Dept Conference</b>

### America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events

Here is a compilation of websites containing America 250 reference material and events planned for the celebration of America 250.

**Freedom 250:** <https://freedom250.org>

Freedom 250 is the national, non-partisan organization leading the celebration of our nation's 250th birthday.

- Sponsored Events: [Events Calendar](#)

17 May; One Nation Under God: National Prayer Gathering; National Mall, Washington, DC

May 25; Memorial Day Observance, memorial Amphitheater Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA

June 25 – July 10; Great American State Fair, National Mall, Washington, DC

July 4; Salute to America: The Nation's 250th Birthday Fireworks Celebration, National Mall, Washington, DC

August 3 – August 8; Great American Farmers Market, USDA Headquarters, Washington, DC

- The Story of America: [America's Story](#)

A video history series that tells the story of American independence.

- Freedom 250 Toolkits: [Toolkits](#)

Downloadable kits with activity ideas and templates, including a Teacher Toolkit.

**Fairfax County 250:** [Your Guide to America's 250th Events & Activities in Fairfax County, VA](#)

A listing of America 250 events in Fairfax County, VA.

**Mount Vernon:** [America 250 | George Washington's Mount Vernon](#)

George Washing: A Revolutionary Life exhibit

Lives Bound Together: Slavery at Mount Vernon exhibit

Patriots Path: A Revolutionary War Encampment exhibit

**National Museum of the U.S. Army:** [National Museum of the United States Army](#)

Call To Arms: The Soldier and the Revolutionary War exhibit, daily

The First Oval Office Project, a reproduction of George Washington's Revolutionary war marquee tent, from April 29-30

**George Mason's Gunston Hall:** [George Mason's Gunston Hall](#)

Special weekend event to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, June 12-14