



# AMERICAN LEGION



## American Legion Post 1995 February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - Defender Newsletter

### Monthly Military Quote

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

### Military Photo of the Month



The Second Battle of Bull Run August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1862 Credit: Library of Congress  
See page 13 for information on a 1913 movie of the battle.

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## Commander's Corner

**Recruiting Achieves 100% of Goal:** Our Post has achieved our recruiting and retention annual membership goal in January; way ahead of schedule! Most of the credit belongs to the diligent efforts of our Adjutant and Membership Chair Steve Hunter. This is an every-week effort by Steve to mine the membership rolls in Richmond and to induce those at-large members to join Post 1995. We also run two recruiting efforts throughout the year to bring in brand new members and thanks go out to our Trusty Ten who come to the Coast Guard Exchange to convince Veterans to become Legionnaires.



The usual Post gang recruiting at the Coast Guard Exchange

**Legion Day on the Hill** — On January 15<sup>th</sup> Adjutant Steve Hunter and I traveled to Department Headquarter in Richmond to join with 50 other Legionnaires and Auxiliary for a briefing on the primary legislative issues of this session of the General Assembly. We had office calls with Senator Stella Pekarsky and Delegate Dan Helmer. We briefed each on the key pieces of legislation the Joint Leadership Council was emphasizing for Veterans and asked for their support. Both our legislators were interested and supportive of those goals. After the office calls, we moved to the House chamber balcony to observe the opening of the House session, and all Veterans received a standing ovation from the 100 Delegates on the floor. It was an effective lobbying effort, and we hope to see legislation that will benefit Veterans become law in Virginia this year.



State Senator Perarsky with Randy Young and Steve Hunter



State Delegate Dan Helmer

**Four Chaplains Memorial Service** – After a last-minute change of venue to Springfield Post 176, the 17<sup>th</sup> District held their annual commemoration of the sacrifice of the Four Chaplains on the transport ship Dorchester in 1943. The annual commemoration was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> where our Chaplain, Al Schenck, read the biography of Chaplain Alexander Goode and I read the story of Chaplain George Fox. Under the able direction of District Chaplain Paul Macomb, this annual service pays moving tribute to the four chaplains’ devotion to their flock when their troop transport ship was torpedoed and sank in World War II. I recommend you make room in your calendar on the first Sunday in February 2027 to attend this inspirational service. You will be glad you did.



83<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary  
**Four Chaplains  
 Memorial Service**  
 1943-2026  
 The American Legion  
 17<sup>th</sup> District  
 Department of Virginia  
 Hosted by  
 SPRINGFIELD POST 176  
 6520 Amherst St., Springfield VA

Randy Young, Al Schenck, Marty Pfeifer, Henry Dorton, and chaplain LTC Kevin Trimble

**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! Yes, this is the second time I posted this invitation. There are still slots available to

attend so please make the most of this opportunity to learn more about the Legion and how it works at the Post level.

**State of Centreville Presentation** – On February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Dulles Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual “State of Centreville” forum at the Chantilly National Golf Club. A very successful event, there were over 80 local business and community leaders in attendance. A dozen organizations presented their reports about how they help the Centreville community. Keynote speakers were County Supervisor Kathy Smith and Congressman James Walkinshaw. I represented Post 1995 and had two whole minutes on the agenda to list all the stuff we do in the area. I talked about flag disposal, food collection, Boys State, oratorical contest, JROTC, and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year recognition. This is a great way to get the Legion out into the community by talking to an audience we usually do not have a chance to meet.



Commander Young presented a short brief on what Post 1995 does in Centreville and nearby communities.

**BE the ONE** – Our guide when speaking with a Veteran who has demonstrated suicidal ideation is the Columbia Lighthouse Project questionnaire. A key instruction is to never ask permission to ask the six mental triage questions. So, just ASK Veterans in your life how they are doing. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help yourself or another Veteran.



## **Legion College – Northern Region**

We are one month out from our Northern Regional Legion College on March 14. If you have NOT done so yet you need to register with your District POC. The Department Vice Commanders are rolling up the District names / numbers to ensure the hosting Post will know how many are

attending and how many are requesting lunch. This is a great opportunity for a one-day training on Post operations. **The Registration Form and Curriculum are attached to this newsletter email.**

Slots are still available for this training held at Springfield Post 176 . Send your registration forms to Vice Commander Marty Pfifer ASAP. He will be finalizing the attendee list soon for the Department Vice Commander and College Director. Vice Commander Pfeifer's email address is [martydc1f@aol.com](mailto:martydc1f@aol.com). Note: that is the number one/1 between the "c" and "f"

### **Post 1995 - Centreville, VA baseball hats are now available.**

Purchase your distinctive Post 1995 hat in either blue or black. Twelve each are available for \$25.00, which is a savings of \$4.99 off the catalog price before shipping. Hats will be available at our monthly meetings until they are all gone. We also have a few plastic (translucent) zippered cap covers for your uniform hat at \$4.00.



### **Post Everlasting**

I sadly report that Post member Frederick E. Parker III passed away on October 25, 2025. He was a 28 -year member of the Legion and Post 1995 with a long distinguished military career. [Frederick Eugene Parker III Obituary \(2025\) - Chantilly, VA - Direct Cremation Services of Virginia - Chantilly](#) He passed this past October, but we were just notified by his daughter this past month.

### **Legislative News:**

Often, we talk about how your Legion membership is important relative to the National and State organizations' advocacy on veterans/military behave with Congress and the Virginia State House. Here is where you can learn more about the impact the Legion has and what you can do to further support our collective effort to promote Veterans issues.

Legion website for Legislative: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative>

## Grassroots Weekly Newsletter

This newsletter is sent out via email each week. A copy of December 5, 2025, is attached to this month's Post newsletter email distro. The newsletter covers what your American Legion is doing each week advocating for veterans with Congress. You may sign up for the Legion's family of e-newsletters. Once signed in, click "edit" to make your selections of which newsletters you want to get...grassroots being one of them. Click on this link: <https://www.legion.org/information-center/in-the-media/e-newsletters>

Auxiliary Grassroots Action Center: <https://www.legion-aux.org/grassroots-action-center>

## Fire Hydrant Adoption Program - Snow Removal

This recent snow storm and the plowing afterwards in many cases overwhelmed roadside fire hydrants in neighborhoods. Fairfax County has a program to promote fire hydrant stewardship by residents living near a hydrant. The task is simple, keep vegetation and/or snow away from the hydrant to make them clearly visible in case of a fire in the area. If fire fighters have a hard time locating the nearest hydrant, they waste critical time in starting to extinguish fires at residences or vehicles. If you live near a hydrant, volunteer to adopt it...it is a reportable community service project for hours. The fire department even sends you a certificate recognizing your contribution to fire safety.



Adjutant Hunter by his assigned fire hydrant

## Flag Retirement/Recycling

Earth911 is an environmental organization that promotes recycling. This link is to an article it posted on January 30, 1926, concerning the need to update the U.S. flag code. The Legion can lead this update to develop more environmentally friendly ways to retire U.S. flags in a respectful manner other than burning nylon and polyester flags burn barrels.

<https://earth911.com/how-to-recycle/how-to-recycle-your-american-flag/>

## 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 January 2026

<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/>

## News You Can Use:

### Scam Alert:

Should you get an email such as the text below...please DO NOT reply....it is a scam. Here are some of the indicators. Virginia does not have a Post 701, the commander did not ID him/herself, and the urgency of the message without any context. The latter by itself is a

classic scam technique. There is a Post 701 in White Oak, Pennsylvania and it was notified of the phishing attempt using its Post number.

Sender: AMERICANLEGION701@ (the rest of the address has been removed)

“I need you to get back to me as soon as you receive this message. Please prioritize this and reach out immediately. I will be in meetings the rest of the day, so I will not have my phone on me. But if you email me back, will be able to reply from my laptop without disrupting the meeting.

In the Spirit of Service Not self for Veteran, God, and Country!  
Together we can make a difference—together we are “*STILL SERVING AMERICA.*” ....  
Commander “

### **VA’s Live Whole Health Podcasts:**

Looking for online help to improve your diet, physical and mental health? If so, check out the VA’s “#liveWholeHealth” website at:

<https://news.va.gov/category/health/livewholehealth/>

### **VA Benefits Do and Do not Count as Income, for Taxes and Otherwise**

[https://www.military.com/money/personal-finance/taxes/heres-when-va-benefits-do-and-dont-count-income-taxes-and-otherwise.html?ESRC=mr\\_260126.nl&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=mr&utm\\_campaign=20260126](https://www.military.com/money/personal-finance/taxes/heres-when-va-benefits-do-and-dont-count-income-taxes-and-otherwise.html?ESRC=mr_260126.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=mr&utm_campaign=20260126)

I welcome and encourage other service Legionnaires to forward information like this to the editor to share in future newsletters.

**U.S. Army Retired Soldier Handbook:** [G-1](#) (hover over the link to see the full link.)

### **Army Echoes – February-April 2026 edition**

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Documents/echoes/latest.pdf>

This edition has lots of useful information for Army retirees and other services, the following are the high points you may be interested in looking at:

Military Retiree: Taxes: Page 3 covers 2026 federal tax filing.

Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) information is found on page 4.

Tricare pharmacy costs are on pages 6 and 7 (sic) 8.

Retiree Account Statement information is on page 6

Casualty Assistance Checklist is on page 7 (sic) 8.

(<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Resources/Retirement-QuickLinks>)

Is your DS login not working?....here's why: After 30 September 2025, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) requires uses of an id.me or login.gov account to access their websites. Go to <https://www.va.gov/resources/creating-an-accountfor-vagov/> for more information. Over the next 12 months, other sites will be transitioned to myAuth as well. If you do not receive an email letting you know of the change, the next time you attempt to login to a site that has transitioned to myAuth you will be prompted to create an account ([https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/help/topics/creating\\_a\\_new\\_myauth\\_account.htm](https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/help/topics/creating_a_new_myauth_account.htm)). No need to worry about losing access. You will still be able to use your DS Logon until myAuth is implemented on all DOW sites.

Maintaining your records and files information is found on page 12.

How to file claims with TRICARE for Life information is on page 13.

When you need to sign up for Medicare is on page 14.

Installation Retirement Services Officers (RSOs) contacts are on page 15.

myPay: If you need to update your email address instructions are on page 16.

**How to handle unexpected calls that claim your money is at risk**

**Purple Heart Foundation**

Learn more here: [PHF Veteran Resource Center](#)



**Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**

Get the latest information on frauds/scams here: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/>

If you are not signed up for the associated FTC's Military Consumer's blog emails you can find the sign up link here: <https://www.militaryconsumer.gov/blog>. You will also find other useful information on their website.

## **Fairfax County: Veterans and military Families Survey**

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. **The survey will close on Feb. 16, 2026.** The feedback will be used to help inform county policy and practices for this community.

The commission was created by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2024 with the direction to explore and represent issues and challenges faced by veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families in Fairfax County.

Visit the [Fairfax County Veterans and Military Families Commission](#) page to learn more and see the associated flyer attached to this month's newsletter.

Looking for ways you can support the Sully District community...check these potential volunteer committees/boards\_opportunities (Source: Sully District Newsletter, 30 January 2026)

### **Sully District Seeking Volunteers for Boards, Authorities & Commissions (BACs)**

Are you, or someone you know, interested in volunteering as a Sully District appointee? The Sully District currently has vacancies on several [Boards, Authorities & Commissions](#) (BACs), for which we are considering candidates. If you are interested in serving on a committee, contact the Sully District office at [sully@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:sully@fairfaxcounty.gov), or by phone at 703-814-7100. Please provide a current resume. We currently have vacancies for the [Architectural Review Board](#), the [Barbara Varon Volunteer Award Selection Committee](#), the [Board of Building and Fire Prevention Code Appeals](#), the [Board of Equalization](#), the [Community Action Advisory Board \(CAAB\)](#), the [Continuum of Care Board \(CoC\) Board](#), the [Fairfax Area Disability Services Board](#), and the [Human Services Council](#).

## **Membership Update**

We currently are at 101.02% of our 2026 membership goal of 196 members with 198 countable members.

The latest renewal reminder letter was sent out by National between the 9-14<sup>th</sup> of January. So, if you have not yet renewed for 2026, now would be a great time as by . I thank all those who have renewed for 2026 already. If you have not renewed, you may renew by mailing the renewal letter 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.

The American Legion Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies (2025 Edition, page 39) states the following:

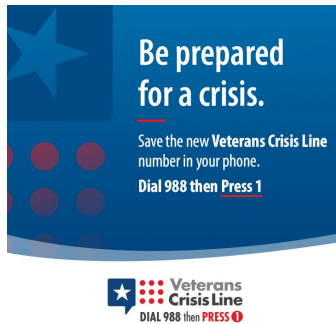
“American Legion membership is annual, the Legion year being from January 1 to December 31. Dues are payable October 20 in advance. If dues are not paid by January 1 of each calendar year, the member becomes delinquent. **If dues have not been paid by February 1, the member is suspended**, but nevertheless a member **with no privilege except that of reinstatement by post vote and payment of dues**. Dues not being paid, such membership continues for five months, to **June 30**, at which time the **member is dropped from the roll by constitutional mandate and membership forfeited.**”

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**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:**

The highest of distinctions is service to others....*King Georg VI*

**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/>

**Post 1995's Facebook Page:** Currently down

**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.

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## Military History:

### Battle of Bull Run: The 1913 Civil War Epic That Helped Invent War Movies

This 1913 movie is one of the first “feature-length” films directed by Francis Ford to dramatize war. Unfortunately no copies of the movie have survived, but you can learn more about it from this [article](#). (Source: Military.com, January 29, 2026)

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

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

**Post Calendars for February and March 2026 are on the next pages.**

### February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Post 1995 Boys State Interviews
8	9	10 Post Meeting	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Dept	<b>28</b> Conference
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Link Source: <https://veteran.com/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>

## March 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> Dept Conference	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Post Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Northern Region Legion College
<b>15</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> District Spring Meeting	<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>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

Link Source: <https://veteran.com/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>

## Auxiliary News

### National ALA Mission Training in Atlanta, Georgia – 7-8 February



Attending from Virginia Patty Caggiano (Unit 1995), Carol Harlow (17<sup>th</sup> District President), Pamela Elam-Lipscombe (Unit 190-Norfolk), Margaret Delling (Unit 180-Vienna), and Sue Razic (Unit 17-Livingston)