



 **AMERICAN
LEGION**



American Legion Post

DEFENDER NEWSLETTER

May 12th, 2026

Monthly Military Quote

The best military quotes about peacekeeping emphasize restraint, discipline, moral courage, and the idea that peace is something you *protect* as fiercely as victory. The following quote is a reminder that peacekeeping is an intellectual and moral mission, not just a tactical one. **“The most important six inches on the battlefield is between your ears.”** *General James Mattis*

Military Photo of the Month



America at its best: USNS Mercy on a multi-month humanitarian medical mission to the Philippines

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Commander's Corner



My article this month is a little different since I will be away for the days prior to our May membership meeting. These are a few things I want you to think about prior to May 12th.

Post Elections – Every May we elect our slate of officers for the next Legion year and swear them in during the June membership meeting. The slate of Post 1995 officers for the Legion year 2026-27 was discussed at the April membership meeting. The sample ballot will appear later in the newsletter. Anyone wishing to run for office in our Post can attend the May meeting and stand for election. So please attend the May 12th membership meeting and cast your vote for who will lead our Post this coming year.



2025-2026 Post 1995 Officer Installation Ceremony

Female Veterans Wine Tasting Social — Again this year we will have a wine tasting event at the Winery at Bull Run on Wednesday afternoon June 3rd from 4 to 7 PM. This event is just for our female Vets and ladies who may be prospective members of Post 1995. More on this from 1st Vice Commander Chris Torelli soon.



First Women Post social at Bull Run Winery

Honor Flight at Post 177 – On Saturday April 11th, I had the privilege of attending the reception and dinner of an Honor Flight of Veterans at Post 177 in Fairfax. This group was from southwestern Virginia and West Virginia. We greeted them after a day of visiting memorials in the Capital and sat down to a fine meal prepared by the Post 177 kitchen staff. I had a chance to speak to the Vets at my table and to also chat with two Virginia Military Institute cadets serving as EMTs for the tour. This is a wonderful opportunity to support our Vets at low cost in time and effort and pays you back with interest. Post 177 conducts these Honor Flight dinners almost every month and I encourage you to attend one. You will want to come back again.

Semi quincentennial / America 250 – I have mentioned the America and Virginia 250 celebrations that have been going on since April of 2025 and encouraged you all to participate on an individual level. Well, it is now official that the American Legion is a partner at all levels with the America 250 committee. National President Dan Wiley and the America 250 Executive Vice President Jennifer Condon signed an agreement formalizing the alliance. EVP Condon said, “We need your help to better tell the stories of military and Veteran service that are so essential to America’s story.” You can learn more on how to get involved at america250.org.



BE the ONE – In the American Legion magazine this month I saw a new term – “solo agers.” This refers to senior citizens who are living alone with no nearby family to care for them. There are 22 million of these Seniors and there are many Veterans in this population. The guidance from the Legion is to help these Vets prepare an end-of-life package that expresses their desires for when they transfer to Post Everlasting. Help them assemble documents and make special notes of what military funeral honors they desire. So, ASK a Veteran in your life how they are doing and what their plans for their future are. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help for yourself or another Veteran.



Post 1995 Elections – As I wrote here last month, you are invited to serve in an elected officer position in Post 1995. We will hold elections at the membership meeting on May 13th at the Sully Government Center. The slate of officers who have served you this past year have agreed to continue to serve in their same positions for Legion year 2026-2027. Please come out to cast your vote for your leadership or bring your own nomination to the floor.

This table lists the Post officers nominated for 2026-2027

POSITION	NOMINEE	WRITE IN	YES	NO
COMMANDER	Randy Young			
ADJUTANT	Steve Hunter			
1 ST VICE COMMANDER	Jim Robison			
2 ND VICE COMMANDER	Greg Hinton			
3 RD VICE COMMANDER	?			
FINANCE OFFICER	Tom Joplin			
SERVICE OFFICER	Yamin Norwood			
JUDGE ADVOCATE	Mike Reilly			
CHAPLAIN	Al Schenck			
SGT-AT-ARMS	Mark Miller			

**You must attend the May General Membership Meeting to vote in person.
Ballots will be available at the meeting.**

Chaplains Corner

During an Operational briefing to our Infantry Commander a few years back, the Artillery Officer stated to the Commander, “Sir, we will have weather tomorrow”. He didn’t state in what form the weather would appear, but as I thought back to my days on the farm in North Carolina what he said was enough! Because we were going to conduct the mission regardless of the weather and likewise on the farm, we had chores to do; feed the livestock, repair fencing, and gather crops regardless of the weather.

As we consider our mission to support our veterans and their families, let us do so without regards to what may be happening around us. Don’t let the “fog” of life’s challenges distract or deter us from keeping each other and those we serve in our hearts and minds.

Let us find joy and comfort in each day; knowing that we have yet another opportunity to serve. We should strive to reach out to a veteran each day, even if it’s the same vet! A

simple “hello” and “how are you doing” will suffice. Or if you feel stumped, just say, “what do you think about this weather”!

Chaplain Al

Post 1995 - Centreville, VA baseball style 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.



Status of the Post's 2026 Team Baseball Season

The Post will not be able to field a Legion baseball team this year due to disappointing news area high school baseball coaches will not support any of their players playing Legion baseball. Therefore, due to this and the age of the team uniforms, the decision has been made to make jackets and shirts available for members of the Post to purchase as a fundraiser for the Post. More details will be forthcoming in a future newsletter.

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>

Find a veteran with our Military Buddy Finder

[Reconnect With Your Military Community](#)

Grassroots Weekly Newsletter

National Membership Impact Report for April 2026

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

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

AARPs Scam Jam

The AARP held its 9th annual “Scam Jam” at the Fairfax County Government Center on Friday, May 8th. Representatives from the FBI, SEC, Postal Inspection Service, Secret Service, and Fairfax County Police Department attended. Sessions included a round table question and answer session and a presentation by the Security and Exchange Commission rep. Numerous Fairfax County offices had information tables set up to discuss their mission support county residences. The AARP provided a box lunch for all attendees. It provided the following resources to help you avoid scams and frauds.

If you would like to learn more about AARP's resources on Fraud and Scam awareness, [please click here](#).

Silver Shield Anti-Scam Campaign | silvershield@fairfaxcounty.gov

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-county-silver-shield-anti-scam-campaign

[Call Our Helpline If You Suspect a Scam](#) - 877-908-3360. This toll-free service is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Kow that you are not alone - To help alleviate the emotional damage caused by the prevalence and growth of fraud & scams, the AARP Fraud Watch NetworkTM offers a free peer support program for victims of fraud and their loved ones. The program is designed to address the emotional impact of your experience. We offer free, facilitated peer discussion groups that seek to provide emotional support for you and others in similar situations. Family members are invited to participate at your discretion. aarp.org/VictimSupport

Annual Post Reports

As the Post's adjutant I am working on compiling the Post's annual reports due to the Department NLT May 22, 2026. Your individual reports are added to one of three reports: Americanism, Children and Youth, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. These reports are consolidated at the Department level from all Posts in Virginia and then sent to National where it compiles all the reports from all 57 Departments into the reports to Congress on what the American Legion is doing in support of our nation, its veterans, and our children/youth.

The reports are still in DRAFT form, and I would be happy to include additional individual reports you may have. It can be one thing you did this past year to support another veteran, donations to your church, scouting, or other charitable organization, or volunteer to clean up a park. It all counts, every little bit. The reports will be included in the Post's June newsletter.

National Membership Impact Report for April 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 or **703-819-3459**.



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

News You Can Use:

VA Mobile Apps Designed for Women Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has designed two apps for women veterans that meet their specific needs. The apps are free and secure, and no personal information is required or shared with VA. And women veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA to download and use the apps, or have to be a veteran.

WellWithin Coach. "Because women veterans face a distinct set of challenges, this app was built to reflect that reality," said Dr. Christine Armstrong, clinical psychologist at the VA's Office of Connected Care, during a recent VSO communicator's call.

Beyond MST. "This app addresses the most sensitive and important areas of women veterans health," Armstrong said. "The app was created specifically for MST (military

sexual trauma) survivors to help them find new sources of support and takes steps toward healing at their own pace.” (Source: Legion.org/information Center, website, May 8, 2026). Learn more about these apps on the Legion’s website [LINK](#) and/or click on the app links above.

The American Legion’s YouTube channel

The Legion’s YouTube channel can be found at this [LINK](#). See episode 10 of “To Strengthen a Nation” about how the Legion and U.S. honors the fallen at this [LINK](#). Other episodes in this 13-part series traces the American Legion’s history from 1919 to the present. This [LINK](#) is to all the episodes.

Medals & Citations

How to Request military service medals and decorations. Open this [link](#) to access the **National Personnel Records Center**

Memorials & Monuments

Search the American Legion’s database of veteran memorials and monuments at this [LINK](#). You may also contribute new locations with photos and descriptions you have discovered in your area or on your travels.

See episode 10 of “To Strengthen a Nation” about how the Legion and U.S. honors the fallen at this [LINK](#). Other episodes in this 13-part series traces the American Legion’s history from 1919 to the present. This [LINK](#) is to all the episodes.

Remember Us

The May edition of The American Legion magazine has a story (pages 18-26) on Robert Edsel’s latest book honoring veterans “Remember US”. He is also the author of “The Monuments Men” which was tuned into the movie about soldiers saving art works in Europe during WWII. Both were mentioned in the Post’s September newsletter as well. A video of his presentation at the 2025 National Legion Convention in Tampa is available at this [LINK](#).

Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS):

Looking for a job or know a veteran who is, if so, check out VDVS’s current Transition Connection newsletter at this [LINK](#). Stay on top of new opportunities by subscribing to their weekly updates by subscribing.

Membership Update

We currently are at 104.59% of our 2026 membership goal of 196 members with 205 countable members.

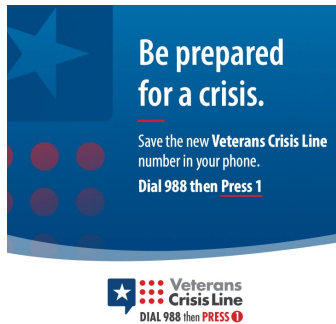
National has sent out the last renewal reminder for 2026. So, if you have not yet renewed for 2026, now would still be a great time . I thank all those who have renewed for 2026. If you have not renewed, you may renew by mailing the renewal letter or preferably going online at [Renew \(mylegion.org\)](https://mylegion.org) 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.**”

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 secret of life isn't what happens to you, but what you do with what happens to you"
Norman Vincent Peale (minister and author (1898-1993)

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>

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

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

Military History:

RADM Robert Shumaker – Vietnam POW

Shumaker was the guest speaker at the Puller Veteran Care Center's monthly "Combat Coffee" on April 24th. He was held captive at a number North Vietnamese prisons to include the [Hỏa Lò Prison](#) aka "Hanoi Hilton" which he coined for eight years and one day. He also developed the tap code used by the POWs to communicate with one another between the 4 x 8 concrete cells. Learn more about his captivity and career following his repatriation on this Wikipedia page. [Robert H. Shumaker - Wikipedia](#)



Captured February 11, 1965 - RADM (RET) Robert Shumaker - PVCC Quest Speaker April 24, 2026

The Puller Veteran Care Center hosts monthly Combat Coffee Club meetings. The next is on May 29th at 2:30pm in Unity Hall. The guest speaker is Ret. Maj Scott Whitney who will be speaking on his experiences from his time in the United States Marine Corps. Please RSVP to Kayla.Smith@dvs.virginia.gov by May 22nd.

In addition to the Combat Coffee Club, PVCC is also offering Veteran Round Tables. These are opportunities for veterans from the community to come in and

visit with resident veterans and share stories. Residents really enjoy seeing pictures from your service! If you are interested in attending a Veteran Round Table, please reach out to Kayla.Smith@dvs.virginia.gov. A 15-20 minute orientation briefing is required before attending these sessions and needs to be coordinated in advance. The schedule for the June round tables will be included in the June newsletter.

Calendars - To view the **National Legion calendar**, visit this website:
<https://www.legion.org/information-center/calendar>

Post Calendars for May and June 2026 are on the next pages.

May 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 National Day of Prayer	8 Military Spouse Appreciation Day	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12 Post Meeting	13	14	15	16 Armed Forces Day
17 Armed Forces Day	18	19	20	21	22 National Poppy Day	23 Recruiting at the CGX

24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
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Link Source: <https://veteran.com/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>

June 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 17th District Convention/ D-Day	8	9 Post Meeting	10	11	12 Women's Veteran Day	13
14 U.S. Army Birthday/ Flag Day	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 National PTSD Awareness Day
28	29					

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

