



**AMERICAN  
LEGION**



## **American Legion Post 1995**

**August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - Defender Newsletter**

### **Monthly Military Quote**

"While I am in favor of very generous provisions for national defense, the weakest place in the line of national defense is at present the large debt of the country. [\*Calvin Coolidge, Press Conference, October 4, 1927.\*](#)

### **Military Photo of the Month**



The Air Force of Tomorrow?

**Auxiliary will resume meeting in August after their summer break.**

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## Commander's Corner

### Department Convention – Post 1995 Recognition

The American Legion Department of Virginia held its 107<sup>th</sup> Convention at the Hilton - Dulles Airport in Herndon last month from Thursday through Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup> through July 13<sup>th</sup>. This was a significant event for Post 1995 as some of our members were recognized with some major awards. Just to cover the highlights: 1) Our nominee was selected as the Department Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Patrolman First Class Jackson Russel was presented with a framed citation by Department Commander Gene Malinowski with his family standing by him. 2) Our Chaplain, Al Schenck was presented with the Chapel of the four Chaplains Legion of Honor Certificate and unique lapel pin by Department Chaplain Dennis Madtes. Al was one of only two in the entire state of Virginia to be so honored. And that was just the morning general session. 3) In the afternoon, due to the detailed reporting of our Adjutant Steve Hunter, Post 1995 was recognized with the Americanism award for posts of our size in Virginia. Hard work by Mike Reilly who prepares the nomination packages for Law Enforcement and Firefighter of the Year and several others plus having outstanding nominees made this a banner convention for Post 1995.



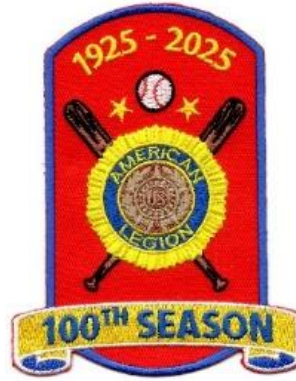
PFC Jackson Russel and family



Chaplain Al Schenck receiving the 4 Chaplains Award

### The 2025 Legion Baseball Season

Our Post 1995 sponsored Arlington baseball squad has completed their season. They earned the #2 seed in the tournament and were on a winning streak. However, the team lost its two final games and just a few runs cost the boys a trip to the Department Tournament. We presented certificates to all the boys at Tucker Field in Arlington to recognize their efforts. Coach Jason Moccia and Assistant Joe Trentin did a wonderful job inculcating both the skills and values that the American Legion emphasizes at the opening of all Legion Baseball Games. In the 100<sup>th</sup> season of Legion baseball we learned that 25% of all the honorees enshrined in Cooperstown had played 'Legion ball' as youth.



Each player was provided with an individualized appreciation certificate.



Post 1995 Team Photo - 17<sup>th</sup> District Tournament

### Department Sergeant at Arms

At the Department Convention our own Steve Hunter was elected by acclamation as the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Department of Virginia for the Legion year of 2025-2026. I had the privilege of placing his name in nomination at the afternoon general session and we had the additional honor of a second by former Department Vice Commander, Glen Yarborough. In addition to helping conduct ceremonies at Department gatherings, Steve organizes the layout of the large meeting spaces of the Department, performs POW/MIA ceremonies, escorts VIPs to the dais and keeps order among the rowdy. He will serve his first extended duty at the National Convention as a Department officer. One of us is a white hat!



## **National Convention**

The Legion will hold its 106<sup>th</sup> National Convention in Tampa, Florida from Thursday August 21<sup>st</sup> to Thursday August 28<sup>th</sup>. Our Post and the 17<sup>th</sup> District will be represented by me in my role as an Alternate Delegate. Steve Hunter, serving as Sergeant-at-Arms will be representing the Department of Virginia as a Delegate. Virginia will hold its Caucus on Monday morning and there will be General Sessions on Tuesday where the Scout of the Year, the oratorical champion, the national rifle champion, LEO and Firefighter of the Year all will be recognized. In the afternoon session the new national Commander and his staff will be elected. Tuesday evening will be the National Commander's banquet. Wednesday will be for passing national resolutions and for committee reports. Oh, and there may be sightseeing, sunset cruises, and seafood. I will present a report on the results of the convention in this article next month.



## **Video Productions Skills Needed**

Legionnaire Bob Barrs brought to our attention that Fairfax County runs both a TV and radio station. This public access TV and radio is available to us as a county-based non-profit to get our message of our activities out to the public. This could also be a valuable and low-cost recruiting outlet for us. However, we need someone with TV production skills to lead this effort. We would mostly use professionally prepared content produced by the National headquarters and we can add very simple and brief content about Post 1995. Fairfax Public Access would provide most of the help to get us on the air. We just need someone to be our point of contact for two hours per quarter to get us on the air. If you have video productions experience, please write to me at [rsyoung47@gmail.com](mailto:rsyoung47@gmail.com) so I can provide you more information.

## **BE the ONE**

Our District 17 Chaplain, Paul McComb, makes it a habit to carry a small wallet sized trifold (see below) with the title of "What you can do to help prevent veteran suicide." There are sections about warning signs, what you should say and not say, and asks what else you should know. There is the admonition to not ignore the warning signs. I know how important that is from personal family experience. ASK a Veteran in your life how they are doing. Remember: dial 988 then #1 to ask for help for yourself or another Vet.



#### BE THE ONE

The mission of The American Legion's Be the One Initiative is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. It aims to lessen the stigma associated with mental health treatment and empower everyone to take appropriate action when a veteran or servicemember may be at risk.

Visit the web page to learn more, download resources and read success stories.



To learn more, visit [betheone.org](http://betheone.org).

#### FOR IMMEDIATE HELP



Online: [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net)  
Text: 838255

#### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Call: 800-662-4357

Online: [samhsa.gov/find-help](http://samhsa.gov/find-help)

#### National Alliance on Mental Illness

Call: 800-950-6264

Online: [nami.org/findsupport](http://nami.org/findsupport)



**What you can do to help prevent veteran suicide**

#### What are warning signs?

A veteran or servicemember in crisis might talk about wanting to die, express guilt or shame, or mention being a burden to others.

They also might feel like they have no reason to live or show feelings of emptiness, hopelessness or being trapped. They might appear extremely sad, anxious, agitated, or full or rage.

Behaviors to look for include: isolating, giving away belongings, indulging in risky behavior and using drugs and/or alcohol more often.

#### What should I say?

Ask them what's going on.

Let them know they aren't alone.

Ask the direct question: Are you having thoughts of suicide?

Encourage them to keep sharing.

Offer to connect them to someone who can help.

#### What should I not say?

DO NOT tell them you know how they feel.

DO NOT condemn or minimize their thoughts or feelings.

DO NOT tell them to be thankful for what they have.

#### What else should I know?

In these cases, remember your mission is not to act as a mental health professional. Your mission is to connect them to the professionals.

It is best to listen carefully, take any comments about suicide seriously, and look for cues in their words and behavior.

Reassure them that it is OK to ask for help and offer to connect them with resources.

DO NOT ignore warning signs.

DO NOT keep it a secret.

## National Night Out (NNO)

National Night Out is a nationwide program to encourage law enforcement community outreach; this year's events took place on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Fairfax County police officers visited communities who registered with the county hosting an event. Adjutant Hunter organized NNO for his Home Owners Association (HOA) in Centreville. This was not a Legion recruiting event but did promote the Fairfax County's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and the HOA's Neighborhood Watch program. Officers handed out gift cards for treats at Chick-fil-A and 7-11s to youth. Adjutant Hunter



Adjutant Hunter with a FCPD translator and a Sully Station officer

## Presentation to the Chantilly-Centreville Rotary Club

The Post Adjutant and Commander Young attended a weekly Rotary luncheon meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup> at a local restaurant. We were invited to provide a briefing on what the Legion, and specifically what our Post does serving our local community and the youth. We highlighted all our programs and community outreach we are engaged in from flag retirement and education to Boys/Girls State, oratorical, youth law enforcement program to fire and police recognition. The meeting also provided us an opportunity to better understand the Rotary's mission and vision locally and internationally.

## **Military Challenge Question of the Month**

Which branch of the U.S. military is the most represented in Congress compared to its share of the overall veteran population?

- A) Air Force
- B) Navy
- C) Marine Corps
- D) Coast Guard

Please send your best guess to David Benson at [warren.d.benson@gmail.com](mailto:warren.d.benson@gmail.com). The first correct response received will receive a military-themed challenge coin.

## **Legislative News:**

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

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

## **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 row. 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 May 1 2025 to 31 April 2026.

To assist you in keeping a record of what you do during the coming year I have also added an updated spreadsheet. Keeping this on your desktop allows you to quickly access it for updating as you go throughout the year.

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

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

## **American's 250 Anniversary – Guide to State and Territory Commissions Events**

This website provides links to each state's commission on celebrating our Nations 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. Since we have a number of our membership throughout the country this site provides everyone with access to events in your local areas. If you would like to get directly involved with a commission's planning/activities, there are sign-ups to volunteer. [Link](#)

## The Veterans Connect Program

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.

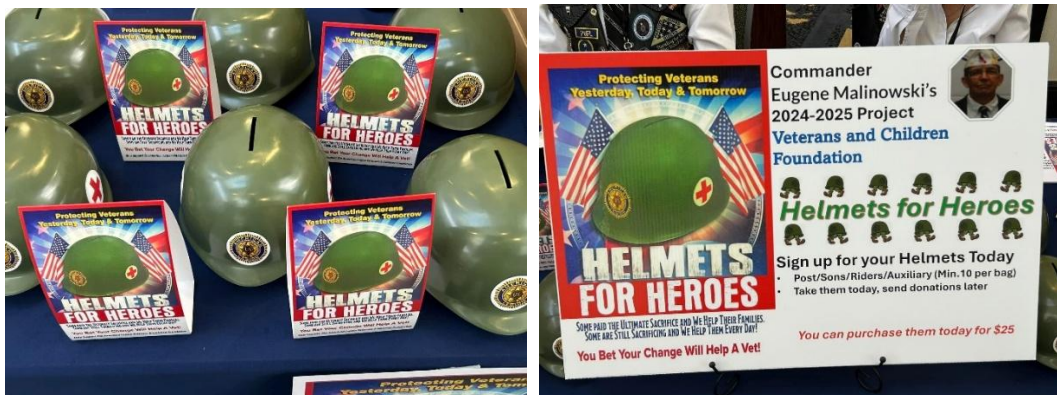
Thank you for your support helping to promote this program, and for sharing our critical need for volunteer drivers.

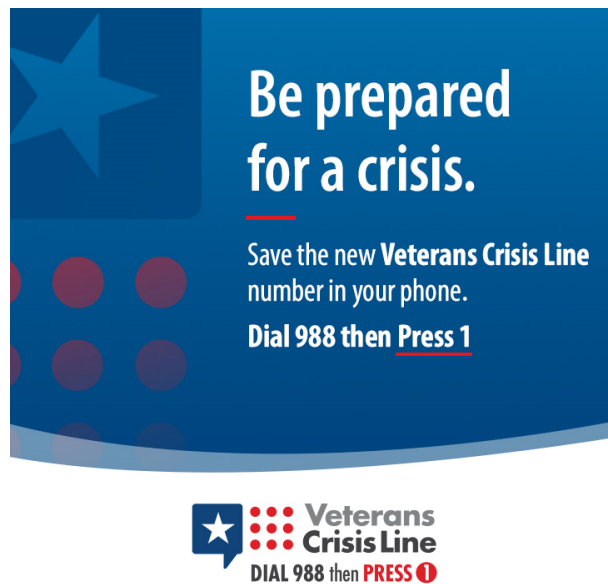
To learn more, please contact: **Luke Frazza** - Program Outreach Manager [lfrazza@datatrans.org](mailto:lfrazza@datatrans.org) or **703-819-3459**.



## Helmets for Heroes

The Department of Virginia's Commander will continue the Helmets for Heroes project from last year. It raises 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. 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.





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

## News You Can Use:

### Five tips on how to help homeless Veterans

Practical advice so you can be part of the solution.

<https://news.va.gov/141377/five-tips-on-how-to-help-homeless-veterans/>

Source: VA News, 31 July 2025, Shawn Liu, National Homeless Program Manager

### This website provides a wealth of statistical data about Veterans

For example, in 2022 there were 16.2 million Veterans in the United States or about 5% of the total population. That percentage is expected to drop to about 3.27% in 2045. In 2023, Veterans aged 75 or more make up 42% of all Veterans. This is a commercial website and for full reports it does want fairly large fees, but you can view quite a bit at no cost.

<https://www.statista.com/topics/1279/veterans/#editorsPicks>

### Preventing and Treating Alcohol Use Disorder Among Veterans

Veterans have an increased risk of adverse alcohol use, and excessive drinking is a leading factor in preventable deaths among veterans. A new RAND paper explores this issue, providing an overview of veterans' alcohol use, its consequences, and recommendations for addressing the problem. The authors highlight important actions, such as focusing on prevention efforts, providing treatment for PTSD and other co-occurring mental health disorders, and improving access to alcohol use disorder medication. [Link](#)

Source: Rand, June 10, 2025, J Davis, W. Livingston, R. Landis, and R. Ramchand



**Purple Heart Resource Center** Learn more here: [Link](#)

### **Protecting your personal information: Which documents to keep and which to shred**

When it comes to protecting your identity, you might think about keeping usernames to yourself, using strong passwords, and reviewing your statements. That is all great. But it is also important to think about what you do with documents or digital files that contain your financial information. So, let us look at what you should keep and lock up, and what you should shred or delete. [Link](#) (Source: Military Consumer, June 10, 2025)

### **Did you know Fairfax County offers a Community Police Academy? Do you wonder what really happens behind the badge?**

Applications are NOW OPEN for the FCPD Fall Community Police Academy! You will learn more about:

- ☒ Crime-scene investigations
- ☒ Visit Helicopter Division
- ☒ Meet SWAT and explore their gear ...and so much more.

Spots fill fast—claim yours today and see Fairfax County through an officer's eyes!

👉 Apply here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/ServicesAH/CommunityPoliceAcademy>



### **Membership Update**

We currently are at 65% of our 2026 membership goal of 204 members with 133 countable members. These numbers as of now are unofficial. The Department's leadership travelled to Indianapolis this past week to plan out the 2026 membership year to include each Department's and Post's membership goals for next year. I am estimating an increase of five members. The September newsletters should include the new goal.

I am happy to report that at least 18 members of Post 141 (administrative) in Richmond have agreed to transfer to our Post. Some have already renewed their Legion memberships for 2026 so they while members of our Post cannot be counted toward our 2026 membership goal. All new members of the Legion who join online are automatically assigned to the Department (state) they live in administrative Post. As a Post membership Chairperson, I am granted access to 141's roster to encourage transfers within our area (selected zip codes).

I wish to welcome the following Legionnaires who have transferred to Post 1995 within the past month: David Park, Walter Dobarzynski, John Snyder, David Wellington, James Buchanan, Steve Gilmore, Roger Whiles, John Pyzdrowski, Tim Saltsman, Linda Noguchi-Regan, Frank Hinton, Jeremy Putman, James Monroe, Clifton Cole, Susan Brennan, Vincent Knapp, Patrick Sharon and Andrew Delfavero. I hope to add to this list in the September newsletter.

I thank all those who have renewed for 2026 already as we are off to a good start. 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 chairperson.

**Multi-Year Memberships Are Now Available** - As some are aware, 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:**

Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and Senators and Congressmen and Government officials but the voters of this country. **Franklin D. Roosevelt** Please Vote! (October 2020)

**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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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:**

**Star Spangled Banner as You've Never Heard It - The Story behind it:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaxGNQE5ZLA>

*We identify the flag with almost everything we hold dear on earth, peace, security, liberty, our family, our friends, our home. . . But when we look at our flag and behold it emblazoned with all our rights we must remember that it is equally a symbol of our duties. Every glory that we associate with it is the result of duty done.* Calvin Coolidge (October 2020)

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

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

**Post Calendars for August and September are on the next pages.**



## August 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 <a href="#">USCG Birthday</a>	5	6	7 <a href="#">Purple Heart Day</a>	8	9
10	11	12  Post Meeting	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 <a href="#">Marine Reserves Birthday</a>	30

# September 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 <a href="#">Labor Day</a>	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Post Meeting	10	11 <a href="#">Patriot Day</a>	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 <a href="#">Air Force Birthday</a>	19 <a href="#">POW/MIA DAY</a>	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 <a href="#">VFW Birthday</a>	30	NATIONAL	<a href="#">SUICIDE</a>	PREVENTION	MONTH

Link Source: Veteran.com