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Message from the Commander:

Developing Habits Versus Making Resolutions or Goals

Making resolutions or setting goals is a traditional practice, especially at times of transition such as the beginning of a new year, a milestone birthday, or a noteworthy life event. Resolutions and goals are typically outcome-focused: they articulate a future result you wish to reach, whether that means losing a specific amount of weight, writing a novel, saving a fixed sum of money, or gaining a new skill. These declarations often inspire initial motivation and enthusiasm, but their longevity is frequently undermined by a lack of actionable strategies and consistent follow-through. Many find themselves abandoning their resolutions within weeks, overwhelmed by obstacles, or discouraged by slow progress.



In contrast, developing habits shifts the approach from aiming at a distant target to embedding small, repeated behaviors into your daily routine. Habits function as the building blocks of personal transformation, shaping your actions almost unconsciously through repetition and context. For example, rather than resolving to “become healthier,” one might build the habit of preparing a balanced breakfast each morning or committing to a daily walk. These actions, though modest, accumulate and reinforce your desired change, making the process less dependent on bursts of motivation or willpower. Habits are shaped by cues in your environment, rewards that reinforce them, and the gradual adaptation of your routines.

There is a significant difference in how resolutions and habits address setbacks. Goals and resolutions can feel fragile; a single missed day or setback may seem like failure, leading to discouragement or abandonment. Habits, however, are resilient because they are process-oriented. A missed action does not invalidate the habit, as long as the routine is resumed. This fosters perseverance and builds self-efficacy over time. Research consistently shows that lasting change is more likely when behavior is repeated consistently and integrated into daily life, rather than pursued only intermittently or with tenuous commitment.

Ultimately, resolutions and goals define what you want to achieve — serving as a compass pointing toward your destination. Developing habits, on the other hand, is about building the road that reliably takes you there. By focusing on habits, you transform aspirations into concrete actions, make progress measurable, and cultivate the discipline necessary to sustain change beyond the initial spark of inspiration. In this way, habits become the quiet engines of achievement, steadily carrying you toward your goals and allowing success to become a natural part of your life.

Remember: I only ask for one phone call a day to help the legion or your community.

*Rich Huntley
Department Commander*



THE LEGION TIMES VOLUME 107, ISSUE 6 JANUARY 2026

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The Legion Times assumes no
responsibility for material
submitted and reserves the right to edit
any submissions.

Editorial deadline is the 20th of every
month for inclusion in the following
month's issue.

We typically publish on the First Friday
of each month, with few exceptions.

Subscription is included in the annual
American Legion, Department of Texas
dues. Contact the American Legion,
Department of Texas for extra copies, or
copies for non-legionnaires.

The Legion Times
is the official publication of the
American Legion
Department of Texas

Member of:
American Legion Press Association
Texas American Legion Press Assoc.
Texas Press Association.

The Legion Times is published online
12 times a year by the
American Legion,
Department of Texas

Membership Corner

by Rich Huntley, Department Commander

Over the past few months, many veterans have asked us about our membership plans.

The National HQ assigned a membership goal for the Department of Texas at 52,254 this past summer. That is about 3.3% of the veterans in our state. History has at one time had Texas well over 15% of the veterans population. It would be showing the rest of the Nation that Texas is working hard and set a target of one third that peak (5%). Proof that our impact on the veterans and the community in Texas is growing. For the past few years our membership has been increasing and so has the number of veterans. BUT, our number of veterans is growing at faster rate.

So, what does our membership action plan have for us? We set a goal of 90% retention because we know that members do move and a few each year go to Post Everlasting. Transfer as many members from the department at large post (Post 345) to local posts. Have them find the benefit of local members, local programs and local community activity and support.

Further questions from members are discussed below; From Legion.org FAQ section:

Q: When does my membership expire?

A: Your membership expires on Dec. 31 of the paid year shown on your card. It can be confusing because your annual dues are supposed to be paid by Jan. 1 each year, so National Headquarters starts accepting dues for the upcoming year on July 1. The goal is to have everyone renewed for the new year by Jan. 1. If dues are not paid by Jan. 1, the member becomes delinquent. On Feb. 1, the member is suspended, and on June 30, the member is dropped from the membership rolls.

Further info:

Current Membership: This status indicates that a member is in good standing, with all dues paid and privileges active. For example, in organizations such as The American Legion, current members can attend meetings, participate in programs, access member benefits, and vote on organizational matters.

Delinquent Membership: A suspended membership means that the individual's rights and privileges have been temporarily revoked, often due to non-payment of dues, violation of rules, or other disciplinary reasons. In The American Legion, suspended members are unable to participate in official events, access benefits, or exercise voting rights until the suspension is resolved or lifted.

Suspended Membership: An expired membership occurs when a member does not renew their membership by the required deadline. Expired members of The American Legion lose access to all privileges, including participation in events, benefits, and voting. To regain these privileges, the member must renew or reapply for membership.

As Butch Sparks, Membership Chairman always says in his updates:

If you need assistance, please let us know. RECRUIT ONE;
RENEW ONE; TRANSFER 345 AD MEMBER TO LOCAL POST.

**“Remember Membership is a Team Sport and Every
Legionnaire is a Team Member”**



2025-2026 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Richard Huntley, DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

John Hince, National Executive Committeeman
Bret Watson, Alternate National Executive Committeeman
Tom Marty, Immediate Past Department Commander
William West, Department Adjutant
Jimmy Mitchell, Department Chaplain
Gary Sanders, Department Treasurer
William Wallace, Department Judge Advocate
Shirley Platt, Department Historian
Jerry Tatman, Department Sergeant-at-Arms
Michael Wheeler, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Michael Simon, Director of Internal Affairs
Michael Lacy, Department Service Officer
Ron Peterson, Department Service Officer
Allen Sharp, Department Service Officer

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS

Andy Lowen, 1st Division
Steve Kim, 2nd Division
Jose Lopez, 3rd Division
Chris Holt, 4th Division

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Cheryl Williams, 2nd District Commander
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Ramon Montano, 16th District Commander
Chris Grantham, 17th District Commander
Reyna Ruiz, 18th District Commander
Kevin Bright, 19th District Commander
Eric Mayer, 20th District Commander
Don Gray, 21st District Commander
Robert Harvey, 22nd District Commander
Jose Gamez, 23rd District Commander

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Texas? If so, please follow these guidelines for submissions.

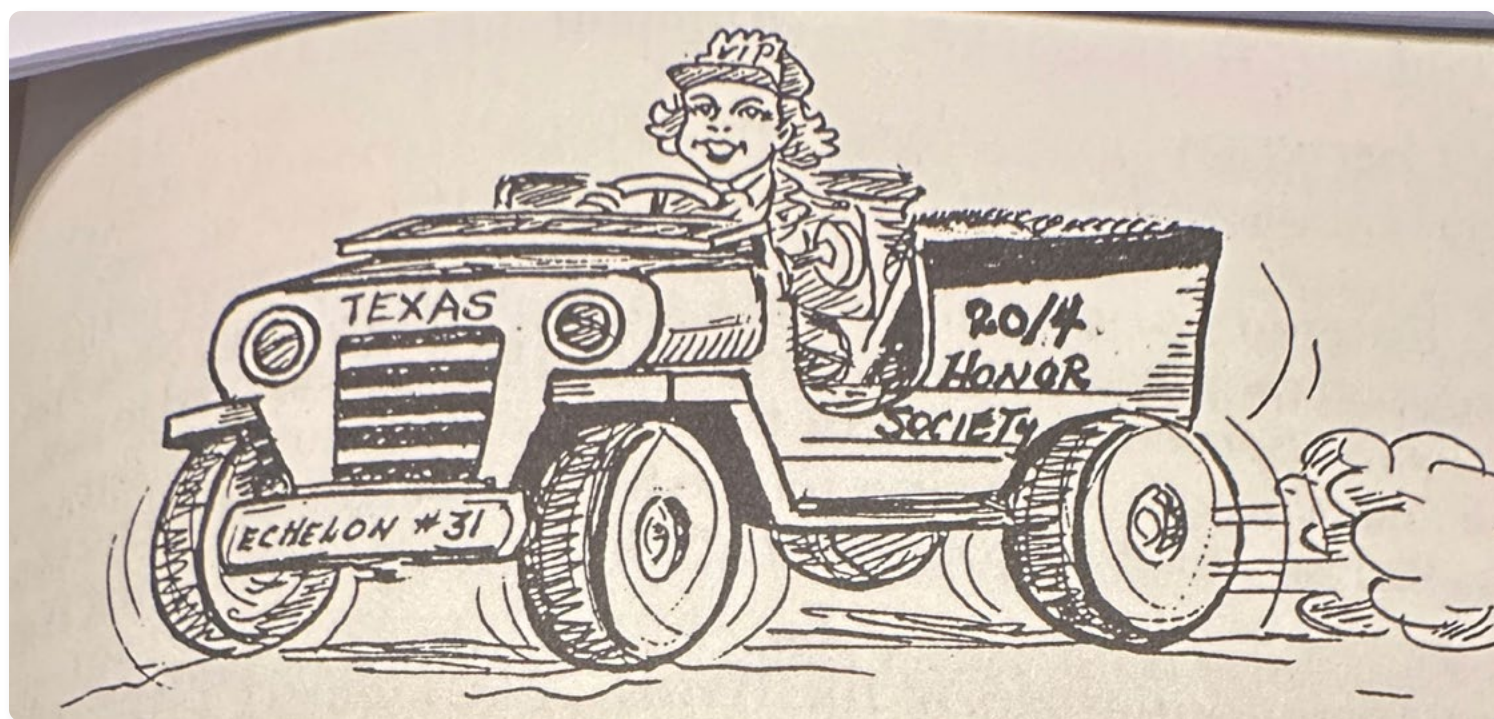
- Submit text in Word format (.doc, .docx) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf) or as a PDF. ONE ARTICLE PER EMAIL PLEASE.
- The ideal word count for our format is 200 - 500 words (maximum), with no double spacing.
- Give your article a TITLE! Create a HEADLINE and save with a proper file name so we can easily recognize it.
- Tell us who the author is, whether it's you or if you are just forwarding it to us.
- Attach any photos or artwork for your article separately in your email. DO NOT embed them in your Word or PDF file. Larger photos are best, and high resolution JPG files of 300 dpi or better are preferred. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article.

- Let us know in your e-mail or Word doc of any photo captions, the name of the photographer, etc. Please note that due to spacing and layout requirements, we may not be able to use every photo or caption submitted (preferably 2 - 3 photos per article).
- Please spell check everything! Especially people's names, web addresses, etc. We do our best to catch typos, and make corrections, but sometimes they still slip by. You can help us greatly by simply running the spell check function in your word processing software.
- We publish on our Website on the FIRST FRIDAY of the Month, with few exceptions. E-mail everything directly to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month, for it to appear in the *following* issue. Submissions received after the 20th will be considered, but may be held over or discarded due to space and layout restrictions.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and hope you continue to help us grow and improve The Legion Times!

American Legion History — The Twenty and Four

Submitted by Shirley Platt, Department Historian



The Twenty and Four, sometimes written 20&4 and sometimes 20/4, is the honor society for women members of The American Legion. Its purposes are: to be of service to ex-service women; to promote membership in The American Legion; and to support, maintain, and defend The American Legion, its principles, programs, and mandates. It is also the intent of the society to foster a closer friendship and understanding among the members of The American Legion.

The ruling body of the National Organization of Twenty and Four is called the Cadre. Its conventions are known as Bivouacs. Each local group, usually associated with a Department, is called an Echelon. All members of the Society are called Jeepettes. The emblem of the Twenty and Four is the famous World War II Jeep.

There were twenty women present at the first meeting of Echelon No. 1 in California, and that number was chosen as one element of the name with which the society chose to be identified. Because twenty women could “fairly comfortably” be seated in four jeeps, that number completed the name. Hence, became the Twenty (women) and Four (jeeps).

The official beginnings of the society are traced from 1954 when the American Legion, Department of Massachusetts, passed a resolution which stated, “Resolved that The American Legion authorize the affiliation of the Twenty and Four honor organizations for Women Legionnaires upon such terms and conditions as the National Organization may prescribe.” This resolution was adopted at the National Convention of The American Legion in Washington, D.C., in 1954.

Echelon No, 31 of Texas was founded on 26 August 1967.

Extracted from “The American Legion Department of Texas 1919-1986” By Harold M. Banton Copyright 1987

Fred Brock Post 828 Project Shoes Continues to Help East Side Students

Story by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, Texas American Legion Press Association

SAN ANTONIO – (Dec. 13, 2025) – The American Legion is a strong supporter of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program across the country.

In support of one of its pillar programs, Children and Youth, Fred Brock Post 828, in cooperation with WSS, provided new shoes to JROTC cadets and students from eastside-area high schools during Project Shoes held at WSS' Walzem Road location.

Students, accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian, were provided with a \$100 budget to purchase new shoes along with any other item in the store. More than \$10,000 was available for students to purchase new shoes and apparel.

According to Post Commander Amanda Parham, it's important for Post 828 to continue Project Shoes each year because the program reflects the very heart of the post's mission – service to veterans, families, and the community.

(continued)



Pictured L-R: Third Division Vice Commander Burrell Parmer, Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 Commander Amanda Parham, Sam Houston High School social worker Nicole Smith, Sam Houston High School JROTC senior instructor U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Sensley, and Post 828 Service Officer Marcellus Hutchinson at the semi-annual Project Shoes Program held at WSS (Walzem Road location)



Post 828 Commander Amanda Parham speaks with a family during the post's semi-annual Project Shoes Program held at WSS (Walzem Road location). In support of one of its pillar programs, Children and Youth, Post 828, in cooperation with WSS, provided new shoes to Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and students from Highlands, Sam Houston and Breckenridge High Schools during Project Shoes held at WSS' Walzem Road location



In support of one of its pillar programs, Children and Youth, Fred Brock Post 828, in cooperation with WSS, provided new shoes to Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and students from Highlands, Sam Houston and Breckenridge High Schools during Project Shoes held at WSS' Walzem Road location

“Project Shoes directly addresses a basic but critical need for children in our community. When a child has proper footwear, it impacts far more than comfort – it affects their health, confidence, school attendance, and self-esteem,” said Parham, a retired U.S. Army nurse. “By providing new shoes, Post 828 helps remove a barrier that many families quietly face and shows our youth that their community cares about their well-being and success.”

Special thanks to Wyatt Law Firm, this year’s presenting sponsor. Additional sponsors included Meadowlawn and Lewis Funeral Homes, Randolph Federal Credit Union, and individual donors.

“Seeing the smiles, the excitement, and the confidence that comes from something as simple as a new pair of shoes is a powerful reminder that small acts of service can have a lasting impact,” said Parham. “Being a part of this project is deeply rewarding and brings a sense of pride knowing that our efforts are making a real and immediate difference in the lives of children and families in our community.”

The mission of Fred Brock Post 828 is to enhance the well-being of San Antonio’s veterans, their families, the military, and the community by its devotion to mutual helpfulness.



Fred Brock Post 828, in cooperation with WSS, provided new shoes to Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and students from Highlands, Sam Houston and Breckenridge High Schools during Project Shoes held at WSS’ Walzem Road location. Students, accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian, were provided with a \$100 budget to purchase new shoes along with any other item in the store



A Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet attending Sam Houston High School shows a pair of sneakers to U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Sensley, Sam Houston High School’s JROTC senior instructor at the semi-annual Project Shoes Program



Legionnaire Vonetta Beale (right) of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 speaks with a family during the post’s semi-annual Project Shoes Program held at WSS (Walzem Road location)

Post 174 and Auxiliary Unit 174 Celebrate Christmas

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174

On December 11, Post and Auxiliary members gathered to celebrate Christmas. Everyone had a grand time. Our resident self-appointed photographer made a video of our years activities which played while we had refreshments.

The White Elephant game was the main attraction! Three or four presents were stolen back and forth. Everyone won a door prize! It was an enjoyable time of fellowship and fun.



Troop & Pack 1096 Enjoy a Christmas Party

Troop and Pack 1096, chartered by Post 174, enjoyed their last meeting of the year with a Christmas Party. After posting the colors and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the Scout Oath and Law, and a blessing, they feasted on pizza, fruit, and veggies plus all kinds of desserts.

There were games and crafts that kept them busy. Every Scout received a grab bag full of goodies, from flashlights to small toys, stickers, candy, and winter camp supplies. Everyone had a grand time.



Post 21 Closes Out the Year With Dedicated Service to Veterans and Local Families

Story by Patricia A. Zuczek, Adjutant, Post 21

Members of Holley-Riddle Post 21 closed out December with a strong show of community service, participating in several local volunteer events throughout the month.

On December 6, Post 21 and SAL Squadron 21 decorated their float and joined the City Parade of Lights. Glow-stick bracelets tossed along the mile-long route brought smiles to children whose faces lit up as the float passed by.

Later in the month, the Post Honor Guard assisted with the Wreaths Across America ceremony at a small cemetery in Pilot Point. The team presented the Colors, performed Taps and a rifle volley, and shared a reflective message from Commander Garcia—adding a solemn and respectful tone for the more than 100 veterans and family members in attendance.

The Warrior Ukulele Team made its debut at the Post Christmas Party, performing a selection of festive holiday songs. The group is made up of Post family members—some beginners, others more experienced—who come together for camaraderie, encouragement, and the chance to try something outside their comfort zone. Their performance was a highlight of the event, made even more memorable by the warm and enthusiastic support of their fellow veterans in the audience.

On December 14, Post 21 volunteers supported The Colony's annual Christmas Shopping Party for families in need. Wearing festive holiday hats and shirts, members helped hundreds of parents select toys, clothing, and games, ensuring their children would enjoy a joyful holiday season without the worry of burdensome post-Christmas expenses.

To round out their efforts, Post 21 members spent the Saturday before Christmas assisting at the city's monthly Food Blessing. Volunteers unloaded and sorted an 18-wheeler packed with meat, fresh vegetables, and fruit, then distributed the food to families as they drove through the lot.

Holley-Riddle Post 21's commitment to giving from the heart, bringing veterans together, and demonstrating that veterans continue to serve made a meaningful impact throughout the community during the holiday season.



Post 490 Holiday Highlights - Community Spirit and Giving

Submitted by Rene Sanchez, Commander, Post 490

DJ Arnold's Annual Christmas Toy Drive

On December 13th, DJ Arnold filled the season with hope and happiness at his Annual Christmas Toy Drive, delivering toys and smiles to local Women's Family Shelters. The American Legion Post 490 Family, together with generous neighbors, came together to lift spirits and make a real difference. Mr. Arnold, our cherished Post 490 member and favorite DJ, showed us the true meaning of giving—and inspired everyone to join in the celebration of kindness.

Want to experience the joy firsthand? Be a part of next year's Toy Drive! Whether you are donating a toy, volunteering, or simply coming out in support, you will leave with lasting memories and a heart full of holiday spirit.



District 22 American Legion Auxiliary Wreaths Across America

On December 13, members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 490 joined District 22's Wreaths Across America Event at Soldier's Rest Section of Forest Park Lawndale Cemetery. With the Department of Texas American Legion Commander as keynote speaker, veterans and guests came together in a moving tribute to honor our nation's fallen heroes by laying beautiful wreaths on their graves. The ceremony was filled with warmth, remembrance, and gratitude, a touching reminder of the enduring power of community and the importance of keeping our heroes' memories alive during the holiday season. Special recognition to Joann Mata for organizing the event.

If you are looking for a way to truly honor our heroes, connect with your community, and make a meaningful impact, consider joining us at next year's Wreaths Across America event.



Holiday Workshop and Christmas Party

On December 14, the American Legion Post 490 Family embraced the spirit of the season at their heartwarming Holiday Workshop and Christmas Party. Volunteers assembled 128 care bags brimming with essentials, showing compassion and generosity through their annual Holiday Giving Campaign. The festive celebration continued with a joyful Potluck, a lively White Elephant Gift Exchange, and watching the Texans Game together. It was a wonderful kickoff to the holidays—lifting spirits, strengthening community bonds, and spreading holiday cheer to all.



Holiday Giving Campaign

On December 15, braving the freezing temperatures, the American Legion Post 490 Family partnered with Harris County Constable Precinct 2 (Jerry Garcia, his Deputies, and staff) to deliver care packages to residents at Nueva Vista Apartments and South Houston Vista Apartment. Their dedication and resilience in the face of the cold truly embodied the spirit of giving, showing that together, we can overcome any obstacle to spread kindness in our community.

The apartment managers welcomed us warmly and offered wonderful support, helping us reach as many residents as possible. The joy and gratitude on the faces of those we visited were profoundly moving, they greeted us with open arms, their hearts full of thanks and warm holiday wishes. A powerful reminder of why we come together each year. If you want to experience the true magic of the holidays, make a difference, and create unforgettable memories, we invite you to join us in the next Holiday Giving Campaign.



Post 59 RED Christmas Celebration

Submitted by Jose Gamez, 23rd District Commander

American Legion, Arturo T. Benavides Memorial Post 59 gathered to celebrate Christmas, Friday, December 19.

Post member Jesus “Guero” Segovia came up with the idea of coming together every Friday, in observance of “Remember Everyone Deployed.” “We have met for over seven years at, Las Flores Restaurant,” post member Segovia stated.

During the celebration our Webb County Clerk Margie Ibarra presented us with a 2026 calendar with pictures of local area veterans. “Ms. Ibarra is the Widow of the late Vietnam Veteran, Juan ‘Teco’ Ibarra. For many years our County Clerk has gathered veterans pictures to have them included in her yearly calendar,” 23rd District Commander states.

A local veterans chapter known as the, “Black Widows” which consists of over ten female veterans assisted that night. “This group is very active in our community and assist our post with the placing of flags on veteran’s graves during our Memorial Day observance,” Commander Gamez stated.

The event was well attended. Thanks to post members Richard Rendon, James Roycroft and First Sergeant Castillo, who organized it to include the meal and the Mariachi group.



Fred Brock Post 828 Sponsors Holiday Gift Giveaway on San Antonio's East Side

Story and Photos by Burrell Parmer, Texas American Legion Press Association



The Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation hosted the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway at the center. The event provided 226 low-income families with joy for the Christmas Holiday

SAN ANTONIO – (Dec. 22, 2025) – To assist in placing smiles on the faces of children, Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 served as one of the sponsors of the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway held at the community center.

The giveaway, hosted by the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation, provided 226 low-income families with joy for the Christmas Holiday.

“This event placed smiles on the faces of 479 children,” said Legionnaire Tavarus Glover, advisory board president. “Additionally, the event allowed business, civic, and social organizations to combine forces to help our families in the area who are struggling this holiday season.”

For Darlene Diaz, mother of six, this was her first time attending the event.

“It has been a rough time for my family, and this giveaway provided a little extra for my children,” said Diaz, who traveled from Atkins, Texas. “It’s good to know that there are people out there who care.”

Cynthia Melendez, a widow, brought two of her three children to the gift giveaway.

(continued)



H-E-B Buddy visited with the children during the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway hosted by the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation. The giveaway was presented by H-E-B and supported by numerous sponsors



H-E-B volunteers assisted children with selection of toys during the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway hosted by the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation



Four hundred and seventy-nine children were recipients of toys during the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway hosted by the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation

“The event put huge smiles on my kids’ faces as we have been struggling,” said Melendez.

The giveaway was presented by H-E-B and supported by the following sponsors: Mack Injury Attorneys, Superior Health Plan, Frost Bank, 19th Masonic District (Prince Hall Masons), San Antonio Lodge No. 1 (Prince Hall Masons), Star Tom Lodge No. 100 (Prince Hall Masons), Moussa Temple No. 106 (Prince Hall Shriners), Noble Gentlemen of San Antonio, Alpha Pi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828, Family Service Financial Center, City of San Antonio Human Services, and the San Antonio Observer.

The Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board was established to support programming at the Claude W. Black Community Center and to serve as a resource for coordinating community services and fostering partnerships that promote economic self-sufficiency, family strengthening, and enhance the quality of life for children, families and seniors living on the East Side.



Resource vendors were on hand at the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway hosted by the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board in partnership with the Dreambuilders of Texas Charitable Foundation



Legionnaire Tavarus Glover, president of the Claude W. Black Center Advisory Board, is interviewed by KSAT-12 News regarding the 47th Annual Claude W. Black Community Center Holiday Gift Giveaway

Post 164 Gets Ready for Wreaths Across America

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164



On December 7th, The Jonathan D. Rozier American Legion Post 164 joined by members of the Young Men's Service League and Katy area FFA members. Small American Flags were placed on each veterans grave in the Magnolia Cemetery in Katy. The flags were used to indicate which graves are veterans and where to place the wreaths. Our community wide ceremony took place on December 13th, at 10am.

Post 164 Breakfast with a Veteran

Our December "Breakfast with a Veteran" was a great success! We had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Clause. The kids of all ages enjoyed seeing them. The turnout was very nice. Over 120 people came out and had breakfast with us.

Members of our Honor Guard, Dennis Wells Post 164 1st Vice Commander and Jim Scoggin Honor Guard Team Captain had the opportunity to refold the flag of a deceased veteran. His son approached us and asked us to help since it had come undone during a recent move. The entire hall was quiet as it was refolded. It was an honor to be able to do this.



Pack & Troop 1096 Sponsor All Things Wild Visit

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174

Pack and Troop 1096, chartered by Post 174, sponsored a visit by All Things Wild Animal Rescue at their December 11, unit meeting.

All Things Wild is a wild animal rescue located in Georgetown, Texas. They save wild animals and provide educational services to teach how to care for and save wild animals so they can be returned to nature.

The instructors brought two animal ambassadors, a possum, and an Owl. Both animals were injured to the extent that they cannot be returned to nature. They will live their lives at the rescue teaching people all about their species.

All the Scouts were excited to meet the animals and learn about them. It was an informative and fun meeting.



Pack 151 Visits Senior Center

Pack 151, chartered by Post 174, spent an afternoon at the Delaney Place Senior Living Center in Georgetown on December 14th. They gathered at the facility about 12:30 pm. The Cub Scouts introduced themselves and sang Christmas Caroles to the residents for about twenty minutes. The residents enjoyed the music and talking with the Cub Scouts. The Cub Scouts were very excited to perform for the group, wishing them all a Merry Christmas!

Pack 151 Conducts Awards Ceremony

On December 16, Pack 151 chartered by Post 174, conducted their final meeting of the year. They handed out awards to each cub level, Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and Arrow of Light.

The Chartered Organization Representative, BJ MacMillan, handed out three adult leader awards. Michael Nix received the Den Leader's Training Award and Trevor Keele received the Cub Scouter's Training Award and the Cub Masters Key Award.

Once all the awards were presented, the Pack celebrated December birthdays with the special Cub Scout version of the Happy Birthday song.

It was a wonderful final meeting for the year.



Post 460 December Activities

Submitted by Abigail Figueroa, Commander, Post 460

It was an eventful month for the Weiss-Wurzbach American Legion Post 460 in Castroville. On Thursday, December 4th at 7pm, the Post held their Annual Oratorical contest. Of the two participants, Mikaela Trejo was selected as the winner earning a \$500 Scholarship award. She will advance to the District Oratorical contest to be held on January 10, 2026 in Laredo. Post 460 has held the annual Oratorical contest for over twenty years providing approximately \$10,000 in scholarships to local high school students. By conducting the Oratorical contest, the Post helped foster and perpetuate a 100-percent Americanism, which is one of the pillars of the American Legion. (Pictured from left to right, Marley Mata, runner up, Mikaela Trejo, winner and Post 460 Commander Abigail Figueroa.)

Two days later on Saturday, December 6th, during the city of Castroville Christmas Fair, an annual two-day event that brings in thousands of visitors to the area, Post 460 was open for the public to enjoy our facility and feast on the cheeseburgers, chips, and drink that they sold, making it a very successful fundraiser. During that time Commander Figueroa signed up three new members. By participating in this annual local event, Post 460 demonstrates their commitment to supporting the community.

Also on hand that same day, parked in front of the Post building from 10am to 3pm, was the South Texas Blood and Tissue vehicle. Post Commander Abigail Figueroa and State Vice Commander 3rd Division Tony Lopez who was visiting, both led the way and set the example by donating blood. Donating blood fulfills an item in another American Legion pillar which is National Security. Pictured on the left is Commander Abigail Figueroa holding Mushu and to the right State Vice Commander 3rd Division Tony Lopez.

On Wednesday, December 17th from 6 pm to 8 pm, members of the Post and Santa Claus were on hand ready to welcome eager children from the community. During this event, over 60 children and their families took the opportunity to take free pictures with Santa Claus. Every child also walked away with a toy of their choosing from the tables at hand and a gift bag filled with extra goodies. By holding this annual event we show commitment and support to the local children and fulfill our duty in another American Legion pillar which is Children and Youth.



Post 59 Salvation Army Assistance

Submitted by Jose Gamez, 23rd District Commander

American Legion Post 59 recently joined up with Majors Gabriel and Candee Elias, who were assigned to head the local Salvation Army. For many years this organization has assisted families in need and their commitment is to keep that legacy alive. "We are excited to partner with them," 23rd District Commander Jose Gamez stated.

"I committed to give two presents which we delivered ahead of time to have them gift wrapped for the children," he said. "This past Sunday the gifts were distributed at a post where the children were provided a meal and their gift. This Tuesday I did some bell ringing at the Sam's Club where I came across Pepe Galvan, Natalia Post 371 member, who I had not communicated with for many years. It's important for all posts to try and attend meetings; many of us go back many years and reminisce of past activities."

Monica, one of the newest members and Oratorical Committee Chairperson, also volunteered many hours to generate funds for the local Salvation Army.



Post 311 Participates in Christmas Parade

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander

Thomas William Lea Post 311 had the Honor and Privilege of participating in our First Christmas Parade in Henderson, TX on December 4. Being a new Post it's great to be able to participate in community activities to show our community that we are here and ready to move forward.



Celina, TX Post 145 - "Season of Serving"

Submitted by Philip F. Shortino, Adjutant Post 145

As the membership of Celina Post #145 continues to increase, additional initiatives to support the community and its residents are considered for their impact on the community, and the extent of participation to afford every member an opportunity to contribute. Limited resources dictate that cost effectiveness of any new initiative must also be considered.

With those factors at the forefront, members of Celina Post #145 recently completed its newest project, 'Season of Serving'. Beginning on November 18th at the Post's Membership Meeting and concluding in mid-December, members were encouraged to voluntarily donate non-perishable food commodities. Considering the short time frame for completing this project, the response from Post #145 members was overwhelming, and the donations exceeded the projected target, which was set at 50 lbs of non-perishables.

The final inventory of all donated goods exceeded 90 lbs, and included a wide variety of foods, among which was canned corn, ramen, pinto and black beans, bags of cereal, and jars of peanut butter. The donation was made to Celina's local food bank, Grace Bridge.

The Grace Bridge Food Bank is serving families in Collin, Denton, and Grayson counties and in partnership with several churches is serving an average of 400 families monthly in their respective times of need. The dedicated staff at Grace Bridge accepted the Post's donation; in many instances, items are distributed to needy families as soon as they have been received by Grace Bridge.

This initial activity was coordinated by Philip F. Shortino, Post Adjutant. He stated that next year the project will run from October through mid-November, so that the donation can be made to Grace Bridge before Thanksgiving, when the need for assistance from community residents becomes significantly greater.

This initiative supports the local communities and its residents, one of the Post's missions.

American Legion Riders Post 12, Tyler

Submitted by Kim McCarthy, ALR Director, Post 12

On October 11, 2025, American Legion Riders from Tyler, Post 12 held their Annual Bras On Fire Event for Breast Cancer Awareness in our community. This year, we managed to raise \$4000.00 and were proud to present the check to Doods for Boobs, a local 501c3 non profit that assists with food, gas, medical bills, free mammograms and other day to day expenses that may occur while going through treatment.



Turnbow–Higgs Post 240 Veterans Emergency Assistance Fund

Submitted by Roger Easter, Post 240 Historian



From the Agent Orange jungles of Vietnam to Middle Eastern burn pits, Post 240 honors veterans who lost their lives or continue to suffer due to toxic chemical exposure

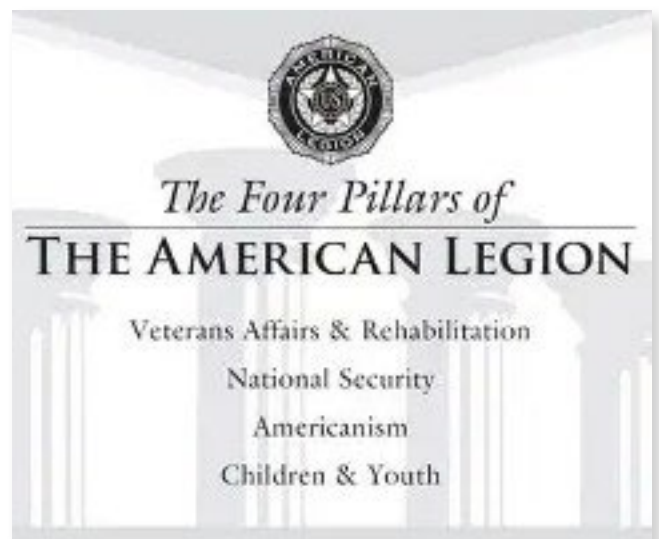
Since 1919, The American Legion has carried out a singular and enduring mission: to serve those who have served, strengthen the nation, and uphold the principles that define American democracy. This mission is guided by four foundational pillars—Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth, which shape the organization’s advocacy, outreach, and service across thousands of local posts and millions of members.

In the fall of 2025, a dedicated twenty four year member of Turnbow–Higgs Post 240 presented a proposal that would significantly expand the Post’s ability to support veterans in need. This Legionnaire offered a \$10,000 donation with two conditions:

1. *That Post 240 will establish a Veterans Emergency Assistance Fund to provide timely help to veterans facing urgent hardship.*
2. *That a permanent wall memorial (plaque) be installed in the Legion Hall to honor his B 52 crew and to commemorate all veterans who have suffered from exposure to harmful chemicals.*

The donor, a former U.S. Air Force Captain, served as the Navigator/Bombardier aboard a B 52 during the Vietnam War. During their service, he and his entire crew were inadvertently exposed to Agent Orange. Every member of that crew has since passed away from illnesses directly linked to that exposure. The Captain, the sole surviving member, continues to endure the lasting effects of Agent Orange.

His gift, offered in memory of his fallen crew and in solidarity with all veterans affected by toxic exposure, reflects the highest traditions of service, loyalty, and remembrance. Through the creation of this fund, Post 240 honors their sacrifice by ensuring that veterans in crisis receive the support they deserve.



Legion Commander Selected as Citizen of the Year

Story by Nalani Nuylan, The Williamson County Sun

Citizen of the Year Ed Riley received the Citizen of the Year Award for his service and dedication to the Florence community.

Mr. Riley was born in Pampa, Texas, and graduated from High School in Borger, Texas. Entering the U.S. Navy in 1970 during the Vietnam War, he served in various roles as an enlisted aircrewman and rescue swimmer. He received his bachelor's degree in physics/oceanography from the University of Washington, where he was then commissioned as an Ensign and went on to flight school. He became a carrier pilot operational in the F-14 Tomcat and is a graduate of Naval Fighter Weapons School "Top Gun," retiring as a commander in 1994.



Mr. Riley and his wife, Lisa, discovered the community of Florence 10 years ago and moved to the city in retirement. Not long after relocating, Mr. Riley saw a need for an American Legion in Florence. He has been responsible for the formation and leadership of ALF Post No. 354, which received its charter in 2023 and has grown to over 45 members. The Post has established an Auxiliary with over 20 members and a Sons of the American Legion with 10 members.

As post commander, Mr. Riley has led Legion activities such as a blood drive in Florence, sponsoring the circus coming to town, presentation of flags to new school facilities, and a flag program, resulting in the American flag making many appearances around town on National Holidays. The Legion members are also voluntary caretakers of the Veterans Memorial in downtown Florence.

American Legion Post 354 Names Winner in Speech Contest

Submitted by Ed Riley, Commander, Post 354

Florence High School, Florence, TX, 9 December 2025 – A Florence Texan won the local American Legion Post 354 Oratorical Contest.

Samuel Miles Kanetzky won the contest held at the Florence High School. Miles, a Florence High School Senior, earned the Post 354 \$1,000 scholarship and will now compete at the American Legion Texas District 10 Oratorical Contest against winners of contests in other communities.

Each contestant delivered a prepared oration as well as an oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. Miles impressed the judges with a speech titled The Fourth Amendment in the Modern Era and the way that Miles presented his speech.

After graduation, Miles will be attending Texas A&M in the Fall of 2026.

Since 1938, The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program has encouraged the nation's high school students to study the U.S. Constitution and to hone their public speaking skills.

For more information, please visit legion.org/oratorical.



Stepping Stones to Grief Recovery

By Chaplain Robert A. Crutchfield, Chaplain, Post 164

Grief is an unavoidable part of life. In fact it can be said that the only way to avoid grief is to have nothing in your life you care about. For some a better understanding of grief can help. So lets look at some key points.

GRIEF IS A JOURNEY - grief is not an isolated, brief encounter. It is a journey. It travels along a twisted, hilly road. It will be hard, but you can get there. Grief can also come and go. Just as you think you are there, the journey may continue.

GRIEF VARIES - Grief is different from one person to another, and no one person's way is better than another. Even in the same person, grief can be different from one time to the other. Grieving as a child can be dramatically different from grieving as an adult for example. Grieving the loss of a loved one is different from grieving the loss of your health would be another.

THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO FEEL - When a person grieves, what they feel, whatever they feel is the right way to feel. Which is not to say there aren't destructive and non-destructive ways of dealing with what you feel, but your feelings themselves are valid.

GRIEF IS A WHOLE OF BEING EXPERIENCE - Grief hits you hard! It comes at you physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and any other way it can find. Worse yet at times at least it comes at you all these ways at once!

YOU ARE NORMAL! - Grieving does not mean there is anything wrong with you. In grief, you are a normal person, having a normal reaction to very abnormal circumstances. Given that many people in grief just want to feel normal again, this concept can be helpful.

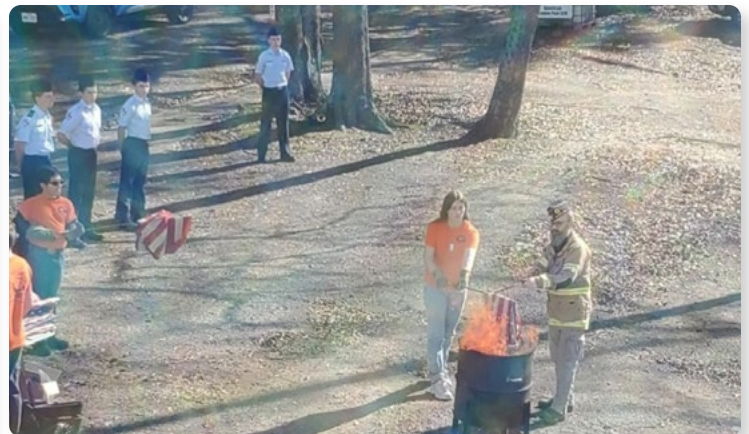
GRIEF IS ABOUT MORE THAN LOSING A LOVED ONE - When someone mentions grief, we immediately think of the loss of a loved one. However any loss can result in grief. Other life events that can result in grief include divorce, loss of a job, or loss of physical ability. Grief can result from the loss of anything you care about. Grief is just a manifestation of the fact you care about something.

Entire volumes could and have been written about grief. However I pray these key points help soothe your current grief journey or a future one.

Peppy Blount Post 320, Gilmer Flag Retirement Ceremony

Submitted by Shirley Parnell, Adjutant, Post 320

Peppy Blount Post 320 held a flag retirement ceremony on November 22, 2025 at the Post. Commander Thad Barr conducted the ceremony with assistance from other Legion Officers and the Gilmer High School JROTC cadets. Members of the community attended the ceremony, including members of the local Girl Scouts. The Burnmaster was Legionnaire Jason Rigsby who safely assisted the cadets in putting the flags in the burn barrel. Fifty flags were retired during the ceremony. Other Legionnaires attending the ceremony were 1st Vice Commander Mike Mellenthine, Chaplain Wally Clark, Sergeant at Arms Jerry Bryant, Prior Commander Patrick Taylor and Adjutant Shirley Parnell. Major Stowers from the Gilmer High School mentored the JROTC cadets for the ceremony.



Fred Brock Post 828 Sponsors 10th Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner

Story by Fred Brock Post 828 Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO – (Nov. 24, 2025) – To continue supporting children and youth, Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 supported the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie's Event Hall.

The event, sponsored by WORLD LOLEI Incorporation, SA Rising Stars and the Prince Hall Masonic Affiliates, partnering with Anne Marie Catering and Events, feed more than 180 guests with a pre-Thanksgiving meal consisting of turkey and ham with all the fixings.

In addition to providing monetary support for the event, members volunteered to set-up the venue and deliver entrées to guests.

“Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 was proud to be one of the sponsors for the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner. It was an inspiring evening where veterans, volunteers, and community partners came together to support and uplift youth and families,” said Post Commander Amanda Parham. “We are grateful for everyone who helped make the event meaningful, and we remain committed to empowering young people and strengthening the community we serve.”

According to Past Commander Burrell Parmer, who serves on the executive committee of WORLD LOLEI, the Thanksgiving Dinner was designed as a heartwarming gathering where empowerment meets tradition.

(continued)



Past Commander Burrell Parmer (left) and Legionnaire James Houston Sr. of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, with Executive Chef Milas Williams (center), president/CEO of World LOLEI Incorporation at the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie's Event Hall (Photo by Fred Brock Post 828 Public Affairs)



Legionnaire Shevin Ravenel of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 carves a smoked turkey for guests during the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie's Event Hall (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/828)



Legionnaire James Houston Sr. of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 volunteers at the during the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie's Event Hall (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/828)

“Youth participants were invited to share their stories, connect with mentors, and enjoy a festive meal with others in a supportive, multicultural and inclusive setting that fosters growth, unity, and inspiration, Parmer said.”

The Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner aimed to strengthen the bonds within the San Antonio community by promoting understanding, collaboration, and mutual respect. Through this event, World LOLEI Incorporation continues its mission to empower young people, nurture their talents, and help them become change-makers in their communities.

Additionally, the event provided opportunities for volunteers, community members, and organizations to interact with those who are often marginalized.

“This act of kindness helps to break down social barriers, reduce stigma, and foster a greater sense of empathy and understanding within the community,” said Parmer. “This Thanksgiving Dinner is more than a meal—it’s an opportunity to inspire and be inspired, and to give thanks for the bright future our youth are shaping.”

The mission of Fred Brock Post 828 is to enhance the well-being of San Antonio’s veterans, their families, the military, and the community by its devotion to mutual helpfulness.



Post Commander Amanda Parham of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 volunteered during the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie’s Event Hall. The dinner was hosted by WORLD LOLEI Incorporation, SA Rising Stars and the Prince Hall Masonic Affiliates, partnering with Anne Marie Catering and Events (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/828)



Auxiliary Unit 828 member Donna Jackson volunteered during the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie’s Event Hall (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/828)



Legionnaires and Auxiliary members of Fred Brock American Legion Post and Unit 828 volunteered during the 10th Annual Youth Empowerment Thanksgiving Dinner held at the Anne Marie’s Event Hall (Photo by Past Commander Burrell Parmer/828)



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