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Do you have an article or announcement for The Legion Times?

If so, please send all submissions to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month to appear in the following issue.

Message from the Commander

As we begin 2026, I want to ask our membership in the Texas Department of the American Legion to focus on one key New Year's resolution to help us grow and expand our mission this year.

Simply, I am asking everyone who serves in the Legion as a member to effectively work at listening to each other.

Throughout my travels as the Department Commander, I have seen some good examples of how post leadership is listening to their members. I have, however, seen some other examples where some simple changes in communications strategy could really help us retain our current members. I also believe listening plays a key role in welcoming new members to an organization.



Let me start when new members arrive for their first post meeting or an event such as a volunteer activity

A Legion officer or his membership representatives can welcome new members by taking time to learn a few things about their military experience and their desire to help a Legion post.

A simple observation from that "So tell me more about yourself" query should make the other communication participant ask a follow-up question. The new member, for example, responds that she served in the Air Force for 20 years. The next question is to ask about which location was their favorite assignment.

At a post meeting, the commander or their membership chair should make an effort to welcome new members. They should allow that person to introduce themselves with a time limit of 30 to 45 seconds.

Some new arrivals will not become challenged by that 30 second rule, but others will need to have a follow-up question about military service and their interest in joining one's post.

I have seen some of my posts' leadership not allow new members, as well as their longtime members, to complete a thought before jumping in without fully listening.

I encourage our leadership, especially those in the commander's role as well as in other key roles, to try two things to improve meetings and other community-based events.

First, please focus on listening fully to the other person.

Next, wait one to two seconds before responding.

Another key thought? It's to clarify something when holding a conversation.

Let's take that 20-year Air Force veteran we discussed in our example. When she responds that her favorite assignment was Thule Air Base Greenland, the other person in this two-way communication process should ask: "What was the best thing about your service there?"

By listening to that person with their response about serving in Greenland, the Legion executive can use this as a means to introduce that person to others with a comment such as "I just learned that Tammy served as the chief engineer for AFN Greenland where she met celebrities such as Wolfman Jack and Toby Keith."

Great listeners learn more about others when they take the time to listen to others in their group. When others believe that their leadership truly cares about what they bring to an organization, it can only help us grow our American Legion membership.

*Rich Huntley
Department Commander*

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American Legion History

I hope everyone has taken time to gather and start compiling a History Book for your post. I'm sure you have all been busy with activities since the 2025 Department Convention, and took tons of pictures. Please take the time to put those together for your history and as I have always said, "Use your History Book as a recruiting tool."

OVERVIEW FOR PRESENTATION OF HISTORY BOOK INFORMATION FOR 2025 – 2026

The History Book competition is alive and well in Texas and we will have the competition at the Department Convention. The best part is, according to the National Historian, we can do our own thing to get more participation. I'm encouraging posts to use the same guidelines we did for 2025, but allow the books to be in 3 ring binders. Hard copy books need to be turned in at Department NLT 4:00PM, Friday July 10, 2026.

We WILL be judging digital and hard copy histories at the Department Convention for 2026. The 2025 Historian's Guide is available online. Also available on the website, for you to view, are the results of the digital history book competition at National. The digital history books need to be sent to the Department Historian by June 22, 2026 as the winner will be announced at the Department Convention. You may view the Guide and the showcase on the website noted here – <https://legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net>

History is easily changed or forgotten if it is not written down. We may forget all of the great activities we accomplished throughout the year. Pictures never taken are never seen. Pictures not identified become useless. We need to show our pride in what we do by recording and organizing our history or it will disappear. There was an individual that looked at a picture on the wall at his post and wondered who was in the picture. If the individuals had not been identified on the picture, he would not have known he was one of the people in the picture taken many years before.

You are the one who will make sure our history is not lost. We have so much to be proud of. We help our community, state, and nation. We make a difference. That difference we make will be forgotten if we do not share what we do with the local newspapers. We will never know how we influenced the children, but they will be affected and changed by what we do.

As a reminder, we are the ones that will make sure our history is not lost. We have so much to be proud of. No history book is perfect, but if we do not document our history, it will be forgotten.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or call me.

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 AMERICAN
LEGION

 BE THE ONE

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

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

Johnny Norris, 1st District Commander
Cheryl Williams, 2nd District Commander
Kim McCarthy, 3rd District Commander
Michael Olivarez, 4th District Commander
Tynetta Runnels, 5th District Commander
Russ Foster, 6th District Commander
Terry Batson, 7th District Commander
Irene Infante, 8th District Commander
Deborah Waldrop, 9th District Commander
Phillip Kelly, 10th District Commander
John Potts, 11th District Commander
Chad Page, 12th District Commander
Chris Garcia, 13th District Commander
Gea Clausier, 14th District Commander
Edward Villafranca, 15th District Commander
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!

Fred Brock Post 828, Others Honor MLK's Legacy During Wreath-laying Ceremony

Story and photos by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, Texas American Legion Press Association

SAN ANTONIO – (Jan. 18, 2026) – Legionnaires of Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828, joined by Sons of the American Legion Squadron No. 828, city officials, clergy, businesses leaders, and community organizations, gathered at Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on the East Side to present a wreath during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Wreath-laying Ceremony.

The event, hosted by the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Commission, is held annually to honor the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Dr. King. The 2026 theme was “Diversity Unites Us: Love Leads Us & Action Propels Us.”

After presentation of the colors by the Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers Association and singing of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” attendees heard welcoming remarks from State Senator José Menéndez followed by Bexar County officials, City of San Antonio District 2 Council Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, MLK Commission Chair Dr. Doshie Piper and others.

“Diversity unites us. Yet there are folks, many in the state capital, many in the national capital, that believe that diversity divides us. And they are trying to do away with diversity, equity and inclusion, many of us know this as DEI,” said Menéndez. “As we come together today to remember the work of Dr. King, and to prepare for the march tomorrow, we must realize that the work has just begun. We are nowhere near from being finished. It is incumbent upon all of us to unite and come together in our diversity.”

The keynote speaker was former seven-term Mayor of Prairie View, Texas, the Honorable Frank Jackson, the grand senior warden of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free & Accepted Masons of Texas.

(continued)



Members of the Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers Association present colors at the beginning of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Wreath-laying Ceremony held at Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on the city's East Side



Commander Amanda Parham, joined by Service Officer Marcellus Hutchinson, Sons of The American Legion Squadron Commander Wendell Nance and S.A.L. Terrance Houston, presented a wreath during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Wreath-laying Ceremony held at Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on the city's East Side

He spoke briefly about Dr. King’s book, “Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community,” and how it relates to the current state of America.

“In the last chapter of the book, Dr. King talked about the World House, and it spoke about a man who built a house for his children to live in,” said Jackson, a retired U.S. Navy captain. “He told them that they had to move into this house and that they had to get along regardless of differences and learn how to live together.”

He further gave an oration on the building of wealth in America by the slave trade and lifting the veil to knowledge.

“With the spirit of Ubuntu, I am because we are, we have to move forward. We must commit ourselves to recovering our knowledge because the ancient Africans told us to know yourself and know who you are as a person,” Jackson said. “We also need to commit to service and that’s what we do as Masons, as a fraternity, along with the Divine 9, we commit to service and that is what we do.”

Fred Brock Post 828 thanks Wreath-laying Ceremony co-chairs, Harold Moore and Mary Fulton-Moore for inviting the Post to participate and honor Dr. King.

“It was important for members of the Post 828 family to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., because his life’s work speaks directly to the core values of service, justice, unity, and freedom,” said Post Commander Amanda Parham. “Honoring Dr. King is a way to reaffirm Post 828’s commitment to equality and civil rights; principles that many Legionnaires defended in uniform but were often denied at home. Participation also connects military service to the ongoing struggle for democracy, reminding the community that freedom requires both sacrifice and civic action.”

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.



Texas State Senator José Menéndez (SD-26) delivered opening remarks during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Wreath-laying Ceremony held at Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on the city’s East Side



Former seven-term Mayor of Prairie View, Texas, the Honorable Frank Jackson, the grand senior warden of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free & Accepted Masons of Texas, was the keynote speaker of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Wreath-laying Ceremony held at Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on the city’s East Side

Post 174 Conducts Quarterly Breakfast

Story and photos by Cathy Kohn, Chaplain, Post 174



The American Legion Post 174 held our first quarterly coffee and conversations breakfast for the new year on Jan 17, 2026, at the Legion. Everyone brought a potluck breakfast dish to share. We continued last year's tradition to bring a coffee cup from home with a meaningful memory and talk about it so we can continue to learn more about each other in a fun way. Everyone got a chance to tell their coffee cup story: some tales were funny, some about travel, some about the military, and others about family memories. Russ and Joann Miller shared stories about both their mothers who were part of the generation of women that served our nation in WWII by taking on traditional male jobs to keep the country running as the men went off to war. Joan shared her story as she proudly showed us her Rosie the Riveter coffee mug and shirt that exemplified her mother. Our commander, Amery Vasso, proudly and reverently talked about his Dad's service to our nation as he displayed a mug with a photo of his father. Our resident world traveler/finance officer Bill Catron raised his mug as a "cheer" to memories from one of his recent cruises. We then moved to our guest speaker from the VA, Sarah Fanucci who is the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Austin and Central Texas. Sarah gave us training on S.A.V.E. which teaches how to recognize a Veteran in crisis and help connect them to support, focusing on spotting warning signs, asking directly about suicide, validating their feelings, and getting them immediate help. The training was very informative with sobering statistics, and our Legion members had a lot of great questions for Sarah. S.A.V.E. stands for:

- Signs: Learn to identify signs of suicidal thinking, such as hopelessness, increased substance use, withdrawing, or talking about death.
- Ask: Ask the direct question.
- Validate: Show understanding and compassion for their experience without judgment.
- Encourage & Expedite: Help connect them to immediate support, like the Veterans Crisis Line (988, Press 1), and stay with them until help arrives.

If you or anyone you know needs help, please assist them in calling the Veterans Crisis Line (dial 988 then press 1) to reach an intervention specialist or text 838255.

We thanked Sarah for spending her Saturday morning with us by presenting her with a certificate and one of our custom Post 174 challenge coins. We also continued to thank sponsors of our mini golf tournament that funds our local youth scholarship program by presenting them with a certificate of appreciation. We look forward to our next quarterly breakfast and encourage everyone to bring a different coffee mug so we can continue to build fellowship and camaraderie by learning more about each other.



Fred Brock Post 828 Hosts 3rd Annual MLK Day Veterans Coffee Social

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

SAN ANTONIO – (Jan. 19, 2026) – Prior to the start of the 39th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. March at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 hosted its 3rd Annual MLK Day Veterans Coffee Social at the post.

According to Post Commander Amanda Parham, the purpose of the event was to enhance communication and foster bonds among veterans, active-duty service members, and Guard/Reserve personnel within the city.

“Dr. King consistently emphasized service, sacrifice, and unity,” said Parham. “For Post 828, the coffee social is a living expression of those ideals. It creates a welcoming space where active-duty personnel, veterans, and their families can connect across generations, branches of service, and life experiences.”

Special guests included Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Commander U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Randy Oakland, JBSA Command Chief Master Sgt. Lance Power, and JBSA Military Ambassadors.

“These activities are a reminder of a call to action for the work that remains to be done,” said the mayor, who is a U.S. Air Force veteran.

She thanked Post 828 for all the work that has been done to continue talking about the importance of public service and the importance of service in uniform.

“We highly value our community, and we depend upon our community to be successful in the various missions that we perform each and every day,” said Oakland, who attended the coffee social in 2025. “For those who have served in the military, we want to recognize you for the amazing work that you have done on behalf of your nation.”

After the coffee social, attendees walked to the start of the MLK March which kicked off at 10 a.m. and ended at Pittman-Sullivan Park.

Special thanks to event sponsors, retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Eric Young, TJ Caters & Events, H-E-B, and Bonafide Smoke Brewing.

This year, the coffee social became an official event under the city’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission. The commission organizes the annual MLK March and leads community efforts through various events that pay tribute to Dr. King.

The mission of Fred Brock Post No. 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 welcomes Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Commander U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Randy Oakland and JBSA Command Chief Master Sgt. Lance Power to the post’s 3rd Annual MLK Day Veterans Coffee Social



In support of the 39th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. March, Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 hosted its 3rd Annual MLK Day Veterans Coffee Social at the post located on the East Side



The Honorable Gina Ortiz Jones, mayor of San Antonio, speaks with Joint Base San Antonio Military Ambassadors during the MLK Day Veterans Coffee Social hosted by Fred Brock American Legion Post 828

District 22 Oratorical Contest

Submitted by Sandy Krum, Commander, Post 164

Post 164 hosted the 22nd District Oratorical Contest on January 11, 2026.

The positions of judges, timekeepers and score tabulators were filled with members of the local community and several area post members.

Those in attendance were able to listen to three contestants. All the speeches were very well presented. The eventual winner was Adelie Rock representing James E. Taylor High School of the Katy Independent School District and Post 164. She will advance to the 2nd Division Contest to be held on January 18th.

Congratulations Adelie!



2nd Division Oratorical Contest

On January 18, 2026 the 2nd Division held its annual Oratorical Contest. The contest was held at the Jersey Village Civic Center, thanks to Post 324. There were three young ladies competing.

Adelie Rock from James E. Taylor High School and representing Post 164 of Katy was declared the winner. She is now on her way to competing at the Department level.

Wreaths Across America

On December 13th, 2025 The American Legion Post 164 Family conducted the annual wreath laying ceremony at Magnolia Cemetery in Katy. Many area VIPs were in attendance to include State Representatives Mike Schofield and Matt Morgan, and Katy Mayor Dusty Theil. The keynote speaker was American Legion Department Commander Rich Huntley. The Sea Cadets presented the colors and the combined honor guard from American Legion Post 164 and VFW Post 9182 conducted the rifle salute, with Steve Walker from Bugles Across America presenting taps. American Legion Post 164 also recognized our oldest member, 101-year-old WWII Veteran Aaron Mendoza. The community was out in force and 575 wreaths were placed.



Troop 1096 Spent Holiday Time at Winter Camp

Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Adjutant, Post 174

Troop 1096, chartered by Post 174, spent four nights at Winter Camp. The Troop headed out to Camp Sol Mayer near Menard, TX, on December 27th. Twelve Scouts and five adults attended. The weather was great the first two days, warm during the day and cool at night. The Scouts had merit badge classes throughout the day and fun activities at night like rifle shooting, gaga ball, and sport competitions. Several adults took courses as well, including Angler, BB gun, and archery certification courses. The third night is when the cold front came in hard. Most classes were moved inside the dining facility. Hand and toe warmers were passed out and used! The Troop entered the Scoutmaster cooking contest with "trash can chicken." They cooked two chickens on the ground lined with foil, covered with a trash can. Charcoal was put on top of the can and around the bottom. They had two pans of sliced vegetables cooking in pans on top of the trash can. They served the chicken in the trash can lid lined with foil. They even made gravy as a last-minute touch. It was excellent! Everyone enjoyed it! The Troop packed up and headed home on New Year's Eve. They all earned the Polar Bear Patch for camping in 32 degree or below weather.



At the Troop Court of Honor on January 15th, after an amazing potluck dinner, the Scouts received their awards. A total of eighty-four patches, seventy-four merit badges, ten other awards, plus thirteen polar bear patches and three eagle palms were presented. In addition, the Scout of the Year, Joaquin Diaz, was announced along with the Troop Leadership Award which went to Brady Mauk. The Scoutmaster, Thomas Diaz, presented special certificates describing each Scout's growth over the past year. The Chartered Organization Representative, BJ MacMillan, presented the adults with an American Legion Certificate of Appreciation and two special awards to the Scoutmaster, Thomas Diaz, and Advancement Chair, Melissa Sharpe-Diaz. It was a magnificent event to bring in the New Year.



Post 828 Bids Farewell to Past Commander William E. Woods

Story and photos by Past Commander Burrell Parmer



Post Commander Amanda Parham reads the Post Proclamation during funeral service of Past Commander William E. Woods at Calvary Baptist Church, Jan. 21



Post Commander Amanda Parham presents a proclamation to the family on the passing of Past Commander William E. Woods at Calvary Baptist Church, Jan. 21

SAN ANTONIO – (Jan. 21, 2026) – Members of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828, joined by the 19th Masonic District, attended funeral services for the late William E. Woods at Calvary Baptist Church.

Woods, a past commander of Post 828, was a retired U.S. Air Force technical sergeant and Vietnam veteran. He peacefully entered Post Everlasting on Dec. 24, 2025, at the age of 92.

He was born on June 1, 1933, in Glasgow, Mo., and lived a life defined by service, faith, and commitment to those he loved. A man of strong faith, Woods was a devoted member of Calvary Baptist Church, where he faithfully served as a senior deacon. His spiritual leadership and steady presence were a blessing to his church family and community.

Woods, a 33rd Degree Mason, was also a proud member of San Antonio Lodge No. 1, Lone Star Consistory No. 113, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Prince Hall Affiliated, Southern Jurisdiction; Shiloh Royal Arch Chapter No. 16; William H. Craig Royal & Select Masters Council No. 4; and Alamo Commandery No. 7 (Knights Templar Masons).

He leaves to cherish his memory his son, James L. Williams; granddaughter: Tracy Evette Jackson (Christopher), great-granddaughter: Nya Marie Jackson; his nieces and nephews: Larry, Donald, Lorenzo, Patricia, Ava, James, Valerie, Larry, Rodney, Michael, and Brian, as well as many close friends whose lives were touched by his kindness, wisdom, and steadfast character.

“The services for my grandfather were absolutely phenomenal,” said Tracy Jackson. “The brothers, in their official capacity and loving commitment, honored their brother with a beautiful sendoff and homegoing. The turnout from across Texas was amazing! It was a beautiful sight to see so many men come together and remembrance of their fallen brother.”

Woods’ son, James, thanks Legionnaires Burnell White Jr. and Kenneth Bankston for being his family’s eyes, ears, and hands during the transition of his father.

“Brothers White and Bankston were a team, and they handled the situation as if I, his son in Maryland, was right there with them,” said Williams. “Even before my father passed, those two godly gentlemen were by his side to care for him in every way that they could in our absence. For that we will be forever grateful.”

“Their love and concern for their brother were shown also in the way that they handled every detail of the services, to include the beautiful slideshow and pictures that Bro. Parmer put together, which was amazing,” Williams continued. “Their work allowed my family and I to focus on getting there from out of town. We so appreciate their dedication, commitment, service and support to our family.”



A member of the Joint Base San Antonio Funeral Honor Guard presents the American Flag to the son of Past Commander William E. Woods at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Jan. 21

What a Pentagon-Scouting Split Could Mean for Texas Legionnaires

Submitted by Vincent A. Lazaro, Post 485 Legionnaire

Recent national reporting indicates that the Department of Defense is considering changes to its long-standing relationship with Scouting America, including restricting Scout activities on military installations and ending Pentagon support for major Scouting events. While these discussions are occurring in Washington, their potential consequences would be felt most acutely at the local level— including here in Texas, where Legion posts and military families are deeply intertwined with Scouting.

For more than a century, Scouting and the U.S. military have maintained a productive partnership built around shared values: service, leadership, and responsibility. That relationship was formally recognized by the Department of Defense in 1937 and has endured through wars, social change, and generational shifts. Its strength has never been symbolic. It has been practical.

Texas has one of the largest military footprints in the nation, with major Army, Air Force, Navy, and Guard installations spread across the state. Many of those installations host Scout troops that serve military families who move frequently, experience repeated deployments, and often rely on base-based youth programs for continuity. For these families, Scouting is not a pastime—it is a stabilizing force that helps children integrate quickly into new communities.

Legionnaires understand this firsthand. Posts across Texas sponsor Scout units, recognize Eagle Scouts, and support youth programs that teach citizenship and service. These efforts are not nostalgic traditions; they are investments in leadership development. The advanced-rank enlistment benefit long afforded to Eagle Scouts reflects the military's own recognition that Scouting produces young people who arrive prepared to lead and serve.

Critics of Scouting have argued that the program no longer maintains rigorous standards. Scouting America has rejected that claim, emphasizing that advancement remains earned through established requirements, that Scouts continue to swear a duty to God and country, and that young men and young women alike are held to the same expectations of accountability. Those who have served as Scout leaders, board members, or award sponsors know that earning the Eagle Scout rank still requires years of effort, leadership, and perseverance.

Any move to sever ties between the Pentagon and Scouting would also affect Legion posts directly. Restrictions on Scout access to military installations would disrupt sponsored units, weaken support networks for military families, and diminish a leadership pipeline that has quietly benefited the armed forces for generations. At a time when military recruiting remains challenging, dismantling proven pathways deserves careful scrutiny.

Texas Legionnaires need not take sides in a political debate to recognize what is at stake. Staying informed, supporting sponsored Scout units, and reinforcing the Legion's long-standing commitment to youth development are practical steps every post can take. National defense begins long before enlistment, and it is built in our communities through programs that instill responsibility, service, and leadership.

Scouting has played that role in Texas for generations. It remains worthy of thoughtful consideration and continued support.

Vincent A. Lazaro is a San Antonio native, former U.S. Army officer, Eagle Scout, and member of the American Legion. He is affiliated with John F. Kennedy Post 485 in San Antonio, Texas, and has long been involved in Scouting and Legion youth programs. His son was the first-place winner of the American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year award for the Department of Texas in 2024.

2026 American Legion Media & Communications Contest

Submitted by Legionnaire Burrell Parmer, Department Marketing, Media & Communications Chair

SAN ANTONIO – (Jan. 29, 2026) – The American Legion Media & Communications Contest is an annual event designed to recognize and honor outstanding achievements in media, public relations, and communications by American Legion posts, districts, departments, and Legion family organizations across the United States.

This contest encourages creativity and excellence in sharing the Legion's mission, values, and community service through various media platforms.

The primary goal of the contest is to promote high standards of journalism, effective communication, and innovative public outreach within The American Legion.

By highlighting the best examples of media and communications work, the contest aims to inspire all Legionnaires to engage in their communities, support veterans, and advance the interests of the organization through dynamic and impactful storytelling.

The contest is open to all American Legion posts, units, squadrons, districts, and departments, as well as affiliated organizations such as the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

There are six categories for submissions: websites, publications, visual media, social media, editorial/news writing, and public relations/community outreach. Entries are broken into four divisions to select – departments/districts, posts over 750 members, posts 250-749 members, and posts up to 249 members.

Entries for the 2026 contest must have been published between Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025, and participants are required to submit their entries by April 15, 2026. Each entry will require a submission fee of \$5.

Taking part in The American Legion Media & Communications Contest offers the Department of Texas several benefits, such as:

- Enhanced visibility for local posts and their initiatives
- Motivation to maintain high standards in communications
- Recognition of dedicated volunteers and staff members
- Opportunities for networking and sharing best practices
- Elevating the public image of The American Legion

Past Department winners of the contest included:

- 2025 Chairman's Award: Sandra Dunn, American Legion Post 54, Amarillo, Texas
- 2025 Public Relations: Posts up to 249: Sandra Dunn, American Legion Post 54, Amarillo, Texas (a monthly television segment with a local news channel's morning show called 2 CUP where post members discuss programs, activities, etc.)
- 2025 The Fourth Estate Award: Broadcast - Josh Hinkle, KXAN, Austin, Texas
- 2024 Publications: Posts 250-749: Honorable mention to Larry Wilhelm, Terry Meyering and David Grandfield, Post 178, McKinney, Texas
- 2023 Website: Posts up to 249: Michael Hayes, Chris Kyle Post 388, Midlothian, Texas
- 2023 Editorial/News: Posts 250-749: Burrell Parmer, Fred Brock Post 828, San Antonio, Texas
- 2023 Public Relations: Posts 250-749: Catherine Mondy Boyce, Post 560, Houston, Texas

To participate, interested Legion organizations should consult the official contest rules and entry forms, which are available on The American Legion's national website: <https://www.legion.org/information-center/media-communications-contest>

The American Legion Media & Communications Contest celebrates the power of effective communication to unite, inspire, and serve America's veterans and their communities. By recognizing exemplary work, the contest supports the Legion's enduring commitment to service and outreach.



Legionnaire Sandra Dunn (left) accepts the award for the Texas Television Station of the Year on behalf of KFDA Channel 10 of Amarillo, Texas, from Legionnaire Glen Moody, president of the Texas American Legion Press Association (Photo by Burrell Parmer, TEXALPA)



Legionnaire Burrell Parmer (left) of Fred Brock American Legion Post 828 receives an award for Editorial/News (Posts 250-749) from Commission Chairman David Wallace during The American Legion Media Alliance (TALMA) Awards Luncheon (Photo by Tesha Leggett/Auxiliary Unit 828)



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