

THE MAINE legionnaire

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF MAINE

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VA Increases In-Home, Community-Based Services Expenditure Cap for Veterans With Complex Conditions

VA's skilled home health care program will now cover costs of those services for veterans with spinal cord injuries, ALS and other complex medical conditions at 100% of the cost of similar care in a VA Community Living Center.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced an increase in the expenditure cap for [in-home](#)

and [community-based services](#) for veterans with certain complex medical conditions.

VA's [skilled home health care program](#) will now cover the costs of in-home and community-based services for Veterans with spinal cord injuries, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, and other complex medical conditions at 100% of

the cost of similar care in a [VA Community Living Center](#). This is an increase from the previous rate of 65%.

The rate increase will significantly reduce out-of-pocket costs for eligible veterans and their families for services like home health aide, home respite, community adult day health care, Veteran Directed Care, and skilled home health. This will make it easier for Veterans to continue residing in their homes.

VA estimates 200 veterans will take advantage of the higher expenditure cap in fiscal year 2026. The skilled home health care program has enrolled approximately 1,800 veterans since it was established in 2019.

"This important change will enable veterans with complex medical conditions to continue

receiving high quality care while remaining in their homes, surrounded by friends and family," VA Secretary Doug Collins said. "By matching the expenditure cap for home and community-based services with the cost of care in our Community Living Centers, we are enabling veterans to maintain their independence and home connections."

The rate increase is the result of [Section 120 of the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act of 2025](#). VA encourages veterans and their families to speak with their VA social worker to learn more about these changes.

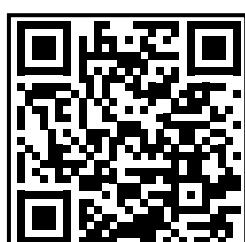
Legion.org
February 02, 2026

www.legion.org/information-center/news/veterans-healthcare/2026/february/va-increases-in-home-community-based-services-expenditure-cap-for-veterans-with-complex-conditions



Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary with Maine American Legion! Get Your Limited Edition Coin Today, While Supplies Last!

Coins can be purchased online by visiting www.mainellegation.org, by scanning the QR code with



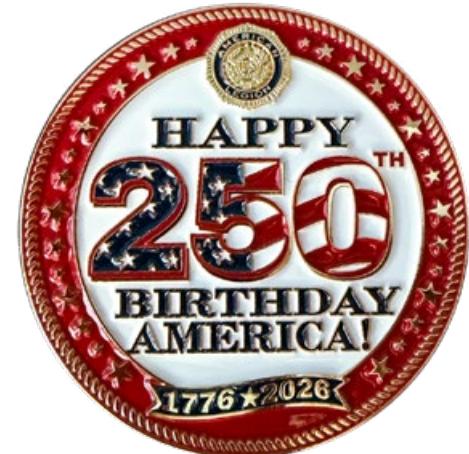
your phone, or by check/money order in the amount of \$20/coin + \$7 shipping & handling. Make check payable to The American Legion,

Department of Maine and mail to 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, ME 04901-0727.

Coins are also available for free pickup at \$20 each.

All proceeds go towards helping veterans in the state of Maine, their families, and various programs in The American Legion.

For any questions, please call the Department at 207-873-3229.



NEW! 250th Anniversary Coin
(front & back)



Commander's Comments

Hello, my fellow Legionnaires. Wow, we are already into February! It's so hard to believe that our State Convention is just a short 4-ish months away. I must say I knew this year would go by fast, but I had no clue it would go by this fast.

LEROY MCKENZIE



I want to start off by saying Happy New Year to all. I wish you all nothing but the best health and joy for 2026. After all, you deserve it. What we all do is often a thankless job, but that does NOT mean people don't see and notice. So, keep up the good work.

For those who attended Mid-Winter Conference at Jeff's, thank you for giving up your time to attend and helping

to make the conference so successful. A huge shout out to Department Adjutant Jason Hall and Vice Commander Ryan Coffin for all their work to put this together, and all those behind the scenes. There was a ton of great information given out. Many committees spoke about what they were all about, what they needed from everyone, and what they have been up to. Our amazing National Executive Committeeman Lloyd Woods once again did the "Do's and Don'ts," and it was well received. I mean seriously, how many people knew that the right side of our caps were not supposed to have any extras or pins on it? We look around at our posts and see it all the time. These are such great things to go over to serve as reminders and training. Speaking of training, I'm anxious to see how many attendees will be at Maine Legion College in March! You should all be so excited to attend that you just can't stop talking about it. I can tell you it's definitely worth your time. And of course, Shay appreciated

[More on "CMDR'S COMMENTS" Page 3](#)

Commander's Project 2025-2026

Ember's Paws of Hope

Ember's Paws of Hope: A nonprofit organization dedicated to providing emotional and mental support to veterans and first responders through the use of future certified therapy dog(s). Members of our

team have a diverse background which include being trained in critical incident stress management and peer support, and we visit fire stations, police stations, hospitals, and veterans facilities to offer comfort and companionship to those who serve our communities.

The Angel: Ember was 9 weeks old when she moved in with Tim Nickels, the goal was to have Ember become a therapy dog. It was discovered that Ember was too attached to Tim but no one knew that would save him later on. Anytime



Tim was having a hard day or a bad shift Ember would sit with Tim. Tim was diagnosed with PTSD in 2020, Ember wouldn't leave his side. Ember knew something was up. Tim became suicidal and made attempts to end his life. Ember stopped him at least three times. When the days were dark, Ember wouldn't let him leave without her.

The Project: National American Legion asks Departments to partner with local organizations to support BE THE ONE. Commander McKenzie has chosen to partner with Ember's Paws of Hope (EPOH), an organization committed to provide, comfort, support, and emotional healing to veterans and first responders through the unconditional love and companionship of therapy dog. EPOH is dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing of those who serve our communities and country, offering a source of solace in times of stress, trauma and hardship.

The PLAN: We are asking all American Legion Posts and/or members to financially contribute to Ember's Paws of Hope. This new 501-c-3 needs funding to provide more trained therapy dogs and make more appearances to provide physical, emotional and social well-being to others in need.

EASY WAYS TO DONATE:

Make checks payable to: The American Legion Department of Maine; **Memo line:** Ember's Paws of Hope/ Commander's Project; **Mail to:** 5 Verti Drive, Winslow ME 04901-0727

By Card: Visit: www.mainelegion.org and click on the DONATE button OR scan the QR Code! **Please make sure to type "Commander's Project" in the Note section.**



To donate over the phone, please call 207-873-3229.

A 'First' Look

He 11 o everyone, I want to thank everyone who attended Mid-Winter Conference in Brewer. We had a great number of motivational speakers who gave us a lot

of valuable information. I also want to thank National Vice Commander Ronald LaRose from Vermont for attending. It was nice seeing many familiar faces and several fresh faces as well.

Let us talk about membership. I am happy to report that Maine achieved our January goal of 80% by hitting 81.12%. Thank you to everyone who helped us reach this goal. Our next goal for Feb. 11 is 85%. We have several districts who have achieved this goal while others are struggling. If a neighboring district is having issues, please reach out and try to assist them reach that goal. Remember, membership not only includes getting new members, but it also includes current members. Make sure your current members feel wanted and needed, involve them in any function your post or district may hold. Do not forget Buddy Checks, members



JOSEPH "JOE" MICHAUD

who may not have renewed may do so after you call them and let them know you care. Remember, together we are stronger, more impactful, and ready to tackle whatever challenges come our way. Beyond that, memberships reflect the trust and belief that we all have a place in our mission. Every time we renew our own membership, we say we believe in what we are doing and want to be part of the journey ahead. A Legionnaire's renewal means we can dream bigger, we can achieve more, and we can continue to make a difference.

Take time to look at the Legion Plus App. It has a step-by-step PowerPoint tutorial to sign up new members, and it is the simplest and quickest way to sign up new members. As always, if you are a card-carrying member of The American Legion, membership is also your responsibility. So, let us work together and get those memberships turned in and more importantly, processed.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our Department Convention on June 12 and 13 at Jeff's Catering in Brewer.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me: 354pepere@gmail.com or 207 484-8142.

Keep up the great work you are doing for The American Legion and your communities.

Retention: While recruiting new

[More on "A 'FIRST' LOOK" Page 4](#)



2026 Mid-Winter Conference: Volunteers assist the merchandise and registration tables at Mid-Winter Conference, held on Jan. 11 at Jeff's Catering & Event Center, Brewer. Left photo, Heather McKenzie, left, and Department Finance Officer Mary "Tally" Brown, right, sell American Legion merchandise to benefit veterans in the state of Maine and pens to benefit the Department Commander's Project, Ember's Paws of Hope. Heather and Tally are accompanied by their dogs Shay and Nala. Right photo, Lux McKenzie, daughter of Department Commander Leroy McKenzie, sells pens to benefit Ember's Paws of Hope.

NEC Update

Here we are again – the start of campaigning for elective office within the department for the upcoming year of 2026-2027. I would like to wish all of



LLOYD
WOODS

the individuals who are seeking to be elected to an office the best of luck in your seeking to be elected. One thing I would like to remind you of is that you should enter the process knowing that there are going to be times your presence will be necessary and that travel around the state is, or will be, required. Also, each position has its own duties to be performed by the individual who is in that leadership role. In other words, do not seek the office just for the hat. Be committed to the department and the veterans of this state.

As we have done in the past, a letter will be forth coming to all legionnaires, posts, and districts to please donate to support the campaign of the leading candidate for national commander for the year 2026-2027. We have done so in the past and supported the candidates just as many other departments have supported our past national commander candidates. Any amount is sufficient

Donations for leading candidate for national commander should be sent to department earmarked "Jay Bowen

Campaign." I would like to thank you ahead of time for your assistance in the matter.

I would like to thank all of you who attended the Mid-Winter Conference this month. I believe there was a lot of information delivered and hopefully it will be relayed to the post membership. This is how the membership knows what is going on and learns. I would like to congratulate the Department Commander Leroy and Vice Commander Ryan on hosting the conference and the various speakers/presenters who attended. We also had the National Vice Commander for our region, Ron LaRose from the state of Vermont, attend for the weekend. He said he had a great time and enjoyed the visit to Maine.

I am looking forward to the upcoming May meeting for the National Executive Committee in Indianapolis. I consider it a great privilege to be your representative of this very important body. This body makes decisions on how the Legion operates. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this body.

Finally, I want you to please remember that it is up to you to decide who from the individuals seeking to be elected to the various officer positions in the Department of Maine. It is who will do the job in your mind and not someone else's.

May God bless you and yours and this great organization we all belong to. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me via email lloydwoods12@gmail.com or cell at 207-557-4971.

PROUD TO SERVE



Company At The Podium:
Department Commander Leroy McKenzie is accompanied by his support dog, Shay, at Mid-Winter Conference, held on Jan. 11 at Jeff's Catering & Event Center, Brewer.



On the Agenda

FEBRUARY 2026 MEETINGS

- District 2 – Cumberland:** Feb. 14, Westbrook Post 62, 2:00 p.m., Lunch at 1:00 p.m., Nomination & Election of Officers
- District 3 – Androscoggin:** Feb. 16, Lisbon Post 158, 6:30 p.m., Four Chaplains
- District 5 – Oxford:** Feb. 18, Buckfield Post 58, 6:00 p.m., 2026 Nominating Committee
- District 14 – Piscataquis:** Feb. 21, Dover-Foxcroft Post 29, 12:00 p.m.

MARCH 2026 MEETINGS

- District 2 – Cumberland:** Mar. 14, Westbrook Post 62, 2:00 p.m., Lunch at 1:00PM, Nominations & Election of Officers
- District 3 – Androscoggin:** Mar. 16, Sabattus Post 135, 6:30 p.m., Nominations
- District 5 – Oxford:** Mar. 18, Norway Post 82, 6:00 p.m., District 5 Election
- District 8 – Sagadahoc:** Mar. 1, Brunswick Post 20, 6:00 p.m.
- District 13 – Penobscot:** Mar. 1, Old Town Post 75, 2:00 p.m., Lunch at 1:00 p.m.
- District 14 – Piscataquis:** Mar. 21, Brownville Junction Post 92, 12:00 p.m., Nomination of Officers

APRIL 2026 MEETINGS

- District 1 – York:** Apr. 11, Location to be determined, Officer elections for 2026-2027
- District 3 – Androscoggin:** Apr. 20, Turner Post 111, 6:30 p.m. Elections
- District 5 – Oxford:** Apr. 15, Rumford Post 24, 6:00 p.m., District 5 Installation – Supper
- District 13 – Penobscot:** Apr. 12, Millinocket Post 80 (Tentatively) 2:00 p.m., Lunch at 1:00 p.m.
- District 14 – Piscataquis:** Apr. 18, Dexter Post 53, 12:00 p.m., Election of Officers
- District 17 – Aroostook:** Apr. 12, St. Francis Post 180, 12:00 p.m., Meal with meeting at 1:00 p.m., Nomination of Officers

MAY 2026 MEETINGS

- District 2 – Cumberland:** May 16, South Portland Post 35, 2:00 p.m., Lunch at 1:00 p.m., Post Everlasting & Officer Installation
- District 3 – Androscoggin:** TBD, 6:30 p.m., Installation
- District 5 – Oxford:** May 20, West Paris Post 151, 6:00 p.m., Supper before meeting
- District 14 – Piscataquis:** May 16, Greenville Post 94, 12:00 p.m., Installation of Officers
- District 16 – Aroostook:** May 2, Presque Isle Post 88, 12:00 p.m., Meal and election of District Officers
- District 17 – Aroostook:** May 3, Madawaska Post 147, 12:00 p.m., Meal with meeting at 1:00 p.m., Elections and Installation

■ "CMDR'S COMMENTS" (Continued from Page 2)

all the snuggles and belly scratches from all. Thank you all for being so receptive to her. Thank you Tally and Topsham Post 202 for making this happen. To all those who helped make this a reality, I have so much love for you all that it isn't measurable. I am lost for words.

I also want to take a moment to thank all those individuals, posts, districts, squadrons, and units who have donated to my Commander's Project, Ember's Paws of Hope. This remains a project that I wholeheartedly believe in. There is such a deep connection to myself and this project and it blows my mind to continue to see all the support. Please keep the donations coming as we all know they are for an amazing cause! Please remember checks should be made payable to: The American Legion Department of Maine earmarked Commander's Project and mailed to: The American Legion Department of Maine, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, Maine 04901-0727.

It's that time of year for elections to be held at posts and districts. Remember to elect people that are qualified to fill the

position. Once elections are held, and installation is completed, fill out the Post or District Officer's Form and send it to Department. These forms are very important to keep the Department's directory updated. You have elected these officers, now it is so important to support them by attending meetings. Remember, make your post something your members want to belong to.

As I sit here writing this article, I look back on my own journey to your Department Commander. I have had some of the greatest mentors imaginable. I have had folks stick by my side through it all. I was truly blessed to be elected and to serve as Department Commander, but I could not do it without each of you. I could not do it without all our committees, our office staff who work tirelessly to support us, and most importantly my wife and daughter, who have sacrificed so much for me to dedicate the time to advocate and lead the veterans of this great state.

Thank you for all that you do for the Legion and your community, state, and nation. Stay warm. Stay well. May God bless you all and may spring arrive soon! Here's looking forward to sunny and 75!

Department Commander Leroy McKenzie



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"A FIRST LOOK" **(Continued from Page 2)**

members is important, we must not forget our current members. Continue doing Buddy Checks, either by phone or in person. Please don't make Buddy Checks about membership. Take the time to check in on each other and find out what's going on in their lives. Make your membership calls separate. Let them know what events are coming up and offer to pick them up so they may attend. Ask them what they are looking for at your post. Some members don't attend because there may be a bar, or the meetings are late and run too long. Remember what works at one post may not work at another post.

Training: Take the time to train the new officers in your post, don't just hand over the reins and wish them luck. Mentor and help them with the position you hold, some of these members may be brand new and are unfamiliar with the way your post should run. They get discouraged and frustrated and walk away from a position.

This year, as part of the Membership Plan, I have asked each district and each post to make up a two-or-three-man membership team to assist the

membership chair. Each district will reach out to the posts in his/her district and assist with membership issues. If your district has not yet reached out to you, please contact the district commander. I will be in contact with all the district membership team to get updates on how each post in their district is doing. I am in hopes that many posts will reach 100% before Dec. 31.

This year, we will continue to have a District Membership Contest. The district with the highest membership percentage, will be awarded a check for \$500 and the bragging rights for the year, and the second will receive a check for \$250. Also, for the district with the highest renewal percentage, \$500 and bragging rights will be awarded to the first place and \$250 to the second place. The contest will go on until 30 days prior to the 2026 Nation Convention. Have fun and good luck.

I want to thank you again for your confidence in me as your Department 1st Vice Commander and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Mid-Winter Conference. I hope to announce that Maine is at 100%.

Department 1st Vice Commander Joe Michaud



The Adjutant Speaks



**JASON
HALL**

It's that time of year where we start ramping up for many important programs in the Department of Maine.

Highest School Oratorical Contest: State finals take place at Thomas College in Waterville on Feb. 14, promptly at 9:00 a.m. Come support your student and come support the program.

Legion Baseball: Jan. 1 registration opened for the 2026 season. It's shaping up to be a great year!

DIRIGO State: June 21-26 at Colby College. Packets have been sent to the posts and schools. We have already received many applications across the state.

As discussed at Mid-Winter Conference, many of the award application deadlines are approaching. Don't wait—get applications filled out and sent to headquarters. Deadlines are listed on www.mainelegion.org under Forms/Applications > Award/Report Submission Deadlines. Here are the big ones to get in:

- March 1: Eagle Scout of the Year
- May 1: Resolutions to HQ
- May 1: Scholarship applications
- May 1: Legionnaire of the Year, Adjutant of the Year, Humanitarian,

[More on "ADJUTANT SPEAKS"](#)
[Page 5](#)

Americansim Report

Greeting to all. This winter has been brutal for many. Do your buddy checks.

Thank you to so many members for having the faith in me to be your representative to a very important part of The American Legion.

At Mid-Winter Conference I presented what makes these programs work so well—that is: **you, the volunteer**. So, what is a volunteer?

You join an organization because you believe in the programs they represent.

A volunteer is a person who:

1. Freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

2. Does something especially helping others, willingly and without being forced or paid to do it.

3. Someone who spends time doing something to benefit others.

And we all know that spending time and helping others makes us feel good.

Volunteers are always needed in our youth programs. Contact the chairperson, visit an event if nothing else, support a program either personal, at the post and district level.

Here is a list of some of the upcoming event dates. I hope to see many of you there supporting each other. Remember to wear your Legion cap or shirt so folks know you are there for support.

Shooting Sports:

Brunswick Post 20

Junior competitions start at 6:00 p.m.

Senior competitions start at 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 30 & 31, First Regional Jr. Shooting Competition

Feb. 6 & 7, First State Championships
David Watson

Oratorical:

Thomas College 180 West River Road, Waterville 04901

Feb. 14, Competition starts at 9:00 a.m.

Maureen Malley

Dirigo State:

Colby College, 4000 Mayflower Drive, Waterville 04901

Sunday, June 21 – Friday, June 26

Registration: Sunday, June 21 at noon; Graduation: Friday, June 26 at 3:00 pm

Matthew Leclair

Baseball:

Tournaments are back at Mansfield Stadium, 115 13th St, Bangor, ME 04401

Senior Tournament: July 24-29

Junior Tournament (approx. dates):
July 31 – Aug. 5

Scott Bishop

Blind Camp:

Camp Lawroweld, 288 West Side Road, Weld, 04285

Sunday, Jul. 26 – Aug. 2

Talent show: July 29, all are welcome to attend.

Brian Knowlton

Scouting:

All year-round programs

Peter Duston

Thank you for all you do in supporting the programs of The American Legion.

Judge Advocate

Consider Stepping Up: Your Legion Needs Your Leadership

The American Legion is the nation's premier veteran service organization,



JULIE
FLYNN

As election season approaches, we urge you to consider running for a leadership position within your post, district, or department.

Why Run for Office?

Running for a Legion office is more than just taking on a title; it is a direct way to ensure the future and effectiveness of our mission.

- Shape the Future: Leaders at every level make critical decisions about programs, finances, and priorities. By serving in an elected role, you have a direct voice in how your post impacts your local veteran community and influences statewide or national veteran affairs.

- Grow Your Post: Are you passionate about veteran outreach, membership growth, or community events? Holding an office like commander, vice commander, or adjutant gives you the platform and authority to implement innovative ideas and expand the post's reach.

- Develop New Skills: Leadership within the Legion is a fantastic opportunity for personal and professional growth. You will gain valuable experience in management, public speaking, budgeting, and team-building—skills that benefit you both inside and outside the organization.

- Fulfill the Commitment: Just as you answered the call to serve your country, the Legion needs you to answer the call to serve your fellow veterans. Fresh faces bring fresh perspectives and energy, ensuring the post remains relevant and dynamic for the next generation of veterans.

What Offices Can You Seek?

Whether you are new to the post or a seasoned member, there is a role for you:

- Post Commander: The top leader, responsible for presiding over meetings, overseeing all post activities, and representing the post in the community.

- Vice Commanders: Assist the commander and often oversee specific committees (e.g., membership, programs).

- Post Adjutant: The post's secretary and administrative officer, responsible for record-keeping and official correspondence.

- Finance Officer: Manages the post's funds, overseeing budgets and financial reports.

- Sergeant-at-Arms: Maintains order at meetings and is the custodian of the post colors.

Your post is unique, and its specific needs are always evolving. Talk to your current officers about their roles, what they have accomplished, and what challenges they face.

Not ready for a leadership role by you want to get involved?

You have answered the call to serve your nation, and you continue that service every time you walk into your American Legion post. But there is a place where your unique experience and passion can make an immediate, tangible difference right now: a post committee.

Joining a committee is not about taking on a lifetime commitment; it is about channeling your energy into a cause you care about and directly influencing your Post's mission.

Why Committees are the Heartbeat of the Legion

A post commander and the elected officers provide leadership, but committees do the work. They are the engines that drive our four pillars: Veteran Affairs, National Security, Americanism, and Youth Programs.

- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Do you have a knack for navigating bureaucracy or a deep desire to help a fellow veteran? Develop a Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee. This team ensures veterans and their families get the benefits they have earned, changing lives one application at a time.

- Youth Programs: If you believe in shaping the next generation, a committee focused on programs like Boys State, Oratorical Contest, DIRIGO State, or Scouting is your calling. You will be mentoring young people, instilling the values of citizenship, and securing our future.

- Americanism & Community: Are you a planner or a people-person? The Events Committee (Memorial Day, Veterans Day, post fundraisers) turns ideas into inspiring community events that put the Legion front and center.

- Membership: The lifeblood of the Legion. If you are passionate

[More on "JUDGE ADVOCATE" Page 7](#)

■ ADJUTANT SPEAKS

[\(Continued from Page 4\)](#)

Law Enforcement, Firefighter, EMT, Game Warden, Educator, and History Awards.

- June 1: DIRIGO State applications

Also, your post should be ramping up for Buddy Checks. During the week of The American Legion's Birthday (March 15) get a team of Legion Family together to check in on your veterans. Buddy Checks are a great way to communicate with members, check on their well-being, share stories, inform them of upcoming events, and explore resources that the veteran may need (stacking wood, lawncare, mental or physical care, etc.)

In late February, the Department of Maine sends a powerful group of Legionnaires to Washington, DC to advocate for Maine veterans. The Annual Washington Conference brings together Legionnaires nationwide for critical discussions with lawmakers, informative sessions with members of Congress and VA leadership, and insights on legislative priorities from the National Commander. The National

Commander will also address attendees on legislative priorities during the National Commander's Rally. The Legion's key priorities are focused on several issues that impact veterans, service members, and their families, VA oversight, suicide prevention and mental healthcare access, military quality of life, and more.

Some parting information: Maine Legion College is March 20-22. To reserve your spot email: jason@mainelegion.org.

Some quotes from Maine Legion College graduates of 2025:

"You learn valuable info every day"
"My new network of members helps answer issues at my post"

"41 year member, thought I knew how posts were supposed to operate, learned a new way to be successful"

You are never too old or too young to learn valuable information to help your post succeed. Sign up today!

Stay warm, get in touch with the schools and send in some DIRIGO State delegates. You will make a difference in their lives.

For God and Country,

Department Adjutant, Jason T. Hall

WINTER SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

Congratulations to the Following Sweepstakes Winners!

Winners of the Winter Sweepstakes Raffle drawn at Mid-Winter Conference on Jan. 10 at Jeff's Catering & Event Center, Brewer.

Grand Prize winner of \$1500 was awarded to Robert L Smith, Eliot Post 188, \$500 to Roger R Anctil, Auburn Post 153, \$300 to Hubert W Turner, Brunswick Post 20, and \$200 to Stephen F Pomakis, St. George Post 34.



Resources to Support Americanism Month

American Legion youth program videos, America's 250th birthday and more.

The American Legion recognizes February as Americanism Month – a time to reflect on the importance of upholding the Legion's third pillar of respect for the U.S. flag, patriotism, and roles and responsibilities as American citizens.

[Click Here or visit \[legion.org\]\(http://legion.org\) to continue reading and view resources.](#)



Service Office Update

Hello from the Service Office. The claim process can be very confusing. There are several different ways to try to get a condition or injury service connected. You can try direct, secondary, aggravation, legal presumptive, or even malpractice. That alone is a major reason why you should reach out to an accredited VSO to assist you through the claim process.

In my Post Service Officer Training I cover the steps of the claim process for each listed above. I do this because a Veteran going through the claim process can go weeks and in some cases months without hearing from the VA. That can cause a lot of stress in Veterans. The PSO is the one at post level that needs to reassure the Veteran. He cannot see where the claim is but if there is understanding of the process, he can explain this to the Veteran. I will go through the basic process of the 5 ways to get a condition service connected. If you want to know more information about the process, please attend one of my PSO trainings.

The first way is through direct service condition. The required elements for direct service connection are, an in-service injury, continuance of care over the years, and a current diagnosis. An example of this is: I hurt my left knee on a unit run and I went to sick call to see a medic. I was on profile to recover from the injury. Since I left the service, I have been in a doctor's care for about three years. Now I attend physical therapy every other week for the knee.

The second way is through secondary service connection. This is when a service-connected condition causes damage or an injury to another body part. An example of this is: I am service connected for my left knee that I hurt in service. The injury causes me to limp around most days. The limp caused my other knee to hurt and damage to the joint. The damage for my nonservice connected knee can become service connected.

The third way is the aggravation of a preexisting condition. The required elements are a little different. First you need to identify an injury that happened to the Veteran prior to enlistment. This injury must be listed on the enlistment physical. It also needs to be listed on the exit physical. The VA will have to determine if the injury was permanently aggravated beyond nature progression due to the physical demand of service. An example of this is: I hurt my right knee playing football in high school. When I took my physical to enlist in the military, I had to see a specialist to clear my knee to enlist. While in the military my knee hurt a few times, and I went to sick call. On my exit physical from the military the doctor looked at my knee and determined it was much worse than when I entered. If the damage to my knee is beyond the nature progression of the injury it can become service connected.

The fourth way is legal presumptive. To meet this requirement, you must have served in an area within the time requirement where exposure to a chemical is conceded by the VA. To meet this requirement, you must prove: you were there, and you have a current diagnosis for a presumptive condition. An example of this is that you were deployed to Vietnam, and you



**SERVICE OFFICER
CARL CURTIS**

have just received a diagnosis of prostate cancer from your doctor. Being that prostate cancer is a presumptive condition of agent orange exposure, the VA will service connect the cancer.

The fifth way is malpractice or 1151 claim. This is medical malpractice done by VA medical. It can be very difficult to prove. An example of this is you go in to have your right leg amputated but they remove the left leg instead.

PLEASE READ AND RESPOND TO YOUR MAIL FROM THE VA!

APPEALS OF CLAIMS.

The appeals process is no longer the strict structure it was. If your decision was after the 19th of February, you fall under the AMA. There are now five lanes you can choose from. The first two are at the regional level. They are called supplemental review and higher-level review. Then there are three ways to appeal directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals. They are direct, evidence only, and hearing. The time limit is now one year from each decision.

I can contact you, by phone or email, if we hear from a member in your post that needs assistance.

INTENT TO FILE. Some veterans are not ready to file a claim or are looking for additional information. In that case, you can execute an Intent to File with our office. That is NOT a claim for benefits. You have 1 year to file your claim; one year period! Failure to file in one year starts the clock on your claim from the day you file. **DO NOT FORGET TO FOLLOW UP AND FILE YOUR CLAIM!**

NEW AND MATERIAL EVIDENCE. VA claims that are denied and have not been appealed within the appropriate time frame require "New and Material Evidence" to be reopened. It is sometimes futile and frustrating to the veteran to keep resubmitting the same claim as it will most likely be denied.

NEW WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTHCARE

Sign up for VA Healthcare. Sign-up for VA Healthcare can now be done three ways! The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it has eliminated paper signature requirements for veterans wishing to enroll in VA health care. Effective immediately, VA has amended its enrollment regulations to allow veterans to complete enrollment applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a paper signature.

By adding this telephone application option to VA's regulations with this amendment, VA will now offer three ways to enroll. This option provides Veterans a convenient third enrollment option.

1. Paper - VA Form 10-10 EZ.
2. Call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Mon-Fri between 8 am and 8 pm, EST.
3. Online at www.vets.gov!

TOGUS VA WOMEN'S CLINIC. If you haven't already heard, there is a Women Veterans Clinic here at Togus. It specializes in women's health issues. Please keep in mind that there are medical conditions that may be claimable for the children of women veterans who served in certain areas and/or on certain ships that are presumptive for Agent Orange. If you are a woman veteran, it is a good idea to give us a call or look for more information on www.va.gov.

PLEASE USE THE DSO TO TRANSMIT YOUR CLAIMS/EVIDENCE TO THE VA THIS ENSURES A PAPER TRAIL AND EVIDENCE IT WAS SUBMITTED! You can either mail it or drop it off in the office!

DSO CONTACT INFORMATION. We are located at Togus VA Medical Center, Building 205, Room 318. You can contact us by telephone at 207-623-5726, Fax at 207-621-4821, or by email at carl.curtis2@va.gov, or julie.kern@va.gov. We are here to assist you Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., on Friday the hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We are closed on Federal Holidays and Patriot's Day. Just a reminder, it is always a good idea to make an appointment rather than drop in as we may be seeing other veterans and would hate to miss you. That said, you are always welcome to stop in the DSO Office.

REQUESTING A DSO PRESENTATION AT YOUR AREA/DISTRICT OR SPECIAL EVENT. If you are interested in having us speak at your area, district meeting or event, just contact us to set up a time and date! Requests are handled on a first come first serve status, subject to the availability of travel funds. Please set aside at least **30 minutes** of your agenda for the presentation.

**Attention
Post Service Officers**



We Want You...
at our next Post Service Officer's Training Seminar

For More Information
or to Sign up
Contact the Department Service Office
at
carl.curtis2@va.gov
or call: 207-623-5726
To make a seminar reservation!

Contacting the DSO for Assistance by Telephone - Please just leave your name, phone number, and who you are working with.

Financial Assistance. Keep in mind that requests for financial needs should be directed to your town/city for general assistance (GA), and either a local Legion post for a possible fundraiser or the American Legion Department Headquarters. In addition, we can make referrals to other service organizations, **but we do not have the funds to pay rent, mortgage, credit card bills or other ongoing bills. If you have children, mention TFA to the Department Adjutant when you call to see if you are eligible to apply.**

PSO Training Seminar. There are three PSO training planned for this year. The dates are Apr. 29, Sept. 20, and Oct 28. Please be on the lookout for its listing on the Department Facebook page or the Leadership Ledger.

PSO Contact Information. Post Service Officers, as a minimum, please send us your full name, Post, telephone number (your phone number will not be released) and email address. The purpose is so that members of your post can contact you for local assistance and also so that

"JUDGE ADVOCATE" (Continued from Page 5)

recruiting and retaining members, join the Membership Committee. You will be responsible for bringing in new energy and ensuring our ranks remain strong.

Find Your Fit, Fulfill Your Purpose

You do not need a formal title or years of experience. You just need a desire to contribute.

- If you have an hour a month: Committees need people to make calls, staff a table at an event, or proofread a document. Your time, no matter how limited, is valuable.

- If you have a skill: Whether it is accounting, carpentry, social media, or just being a good listener, there is

a committee that needs your specific talent.

- If you have an idea: Committees are where great ideas are tested and turned into action. Do not just sit on a brilliant plan—bring it to the committee and make it happen.

Do not wait for an assignment; volunteer your talent. Reach out to your post adjutant or commander today and ask, "Which committee can I join right now?"

The legacy of The American Legion is not built in meeting rooms—it is built by members like you, working together in committees to serve our veterans and our community. Step up, join a committee, and start making your mark.

Department Judge Advocate Julie Flynn

Honor Flight Maine



All Maine Veterans interested in going on a trip should go to HonorFlightMaine.org to apply. The site also contains applications for those wishing to be Guardian for a Veteran and for Volunteers.

Honor Flight Maine is an all volunteer organization. Over 300,000 veterans have participated in their Honor Flight, and not one of them has paid a penny for their seat.

2026 Honor Flight Dates:

Flights are all charter flights on Allegiant:

- April 10-12 Portland Jetport
- May 29-31 Bangor Int'l Airport
- Sept 18-20 Portland Jetport
- Oct 16-18 Bangor Int'l Airport

Join Sons of The American Legion

Eligibility Requirements: All male descendants adopted sons, and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male



descendants of veterans who died in service during the period of April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, or any time from December 7, 1941, to date, who served honorably, as set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their

honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

[Print an application](http://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/join-sons-of-the-american-legion) by visiting www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/join-sons-of-the-american-legion

* Membership applications can be delivered to an American Legion Post near you. There is a good chance that Post will have its own Squadron. If not, someone at the Post should be able to tell you where to find a Squadron near you. You can always contact SAL National Headquarters for information about finding a nearby Squadron.

The American Legion 2026 Membership Renewal Schedule

Cutoff Dates

October 15, 2025.....
December 10, 2025.....
February 11, 2026.....
April 8, 2026.....

Renewal Mail Dates

November 8-14, 2025
January 3-9, 2026
March 1-8, 2026
May 2-8, 2026

Legion Baseball Team Registration is Open

Registration for the 2026 American Legion Baseball season is open at baseball.legion.org.

Teams registered after May 15 may be subject to a department late fee through the final deadline of June 1. Please note that each American Legion department may set an earlier deadline for registration.

To learn more about your specific department's state fees and deadlines, contact your department chairmen at www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/baseball/contacts/scott-bishop.

As part of NEC Resolution No. 17 October 2023, and the education and training requirements of Public Law 115-126, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, all adult participants (coaches, managers, volunteers and players, 18 years of age or older)

must complete the Abuse Awareness course either through Protect Youth Sports or USA Baseball. All adult participants (coaches, managers, volunteers and players, 18 years of age or older) must also have a completed and passed background check. Visit www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/baseball/american-legion-baseball-resources to download the American Legion Baseball Risk Management Guidebook.

www.legion.org/information-center/calendar/legion-baseball-registration-opens

Jan. 1, 2026



The American Legion Baseball Scholarship

The American Legion awards between \$22,000 and \$25,000 in scholarships to deserving baseball players each year. Each Department Baseball Committee may select a player from its department to receive this scholarship. The American Legion will award several scholarships each year depending on the number of applicants and interest earned from the trust fund.

Award Amounts

Department Baseball Scholarship Winners receive \$500.

Each certified Department Baseball scholarship winner shall be considered for The American Legion All-Academic Team sponsored by Diamond Sports, annually.

Eight players selected by a scholarship selection committee at The American Legion World Series will receive an additional \$2,500 scholarship.



A ninth player, selected as the most outstanding member of the All-Academic Team, will be awarded an additional \$5,000 scholarship.

All-Academic Team winners will retain their \$500 scholarship from their department.

Scholarship recipients will be eligible to receive their scholarships immediately upon graduation from an accredited high school. Scholarship winners must utilize the total award within eight (8) years of their graduation date, excluding active military time.

Print the application by visiting www.legion.org/get-involved/scholarships/the-american-legion-baseball-scholarship

Learn more about American Legion Baseball, visit www.legion.org/baseball.

Membership Management in MyLegion.org: Register Today for a MyLegion.org Account

MyLegion.org is a one-stop-shop for managing your American Legion membership.

Within the [My Account](#) section, members can easily manage their subscriptions to e-newsletters and The American Legion Magazine. There are a variety of e-newsletters to subscribe to such as the Dispatch, American Legion Online Update, Flag Alert, Legion Riders

and more. Members also can renew their membership, print a current membership card, view member-only discounts, manage their personal profile and receive information on giving opportunities. Overall, MyLegion.org provides a hassle-free way for members to stay informed on matters related to their American Legion membership, with options tailored to their preferences and needs.

www.mylegion.org

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MAINE OFFICIAL CALL FOR ONE HUNDRED & SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

In accordance with Article IV of the Constitution and By-laws of the Department of Maine, The American Legion, the One Hundred and Seventh Annual State Convention is hereby called to convene in Brewer, Maine, June 12-13, 2026.

The first business session will be called to order at 12:00 p.m. daylight savings time, on the afternoon of Friday, June 12, 2026, with the final business session scheduled for Saturday morning, June 13, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. All general business sessions of the convention will be held at Jeff's Catering & Event Center, Brewer, Maine.

PURPOSE

The convention is called for the purpose of electing department officers for the ensuing year; to elect delegates and alternates to the 2026 National Convention to be held in Louisville, KY; to receive reports of all department officers and standing committees; to consider the resolutions and actions of subordinate bodies and to transact any other business properly brought before the convention.

REPRESENTATION

Each post is entitled to one delegate and one alternate, and one additional delegate and alternate for each one hundred members or fractional part thereof paid up to May 13, 2026. A post with less than 15 members is not entitled to any delegates. All department officers, district commanders, and past department commanders, in good standing, shall be entitled to vote and have all the rights of delegates in the convention. These officers and past department commanders are delegates-at-large and must not be named as post delegates.

Alternate delegates are entitled to a seat in the convention but will have the right to vote only in the absence of the duly elected delegates. The decision of the selection of alternate delegates to represent absent delegates is a matter of decision within the respective delegations. All Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, Sons of the American Legion, and guests are invited to attend the convention as guests but have no voice or vote unless delegates.

RULES OF ORDER

The rules of procedure at the Department Convention shall be those set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised.

MEETINGS

The Resolutions Committee shall hold a public hearing on all resolutions submitted in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws at Jeff's

Catering & Event Center on Friday, June 12, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. All delegates and alternates and members of The American Legion are invited to attend the session. Following this public hearing, the Committee on Resolutions will go into an executive session to vote on resolutions to be brought before the body.

The Department Executive Committee will hold the first meeting at Jeff's Catering & Event Center on Sunday, June 14, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. All department officers, district commanders, and past department commanders are requested to attend.

CREDENTIALS

for each delegate and alternate may be paid by sending a check made payable to The American Legion, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, Maine 04901-0727 or by visiting www.mainellegation.org.

NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS

At the first session of the Department Convention on Friday, June 12, 2026, nominations shall be made for the offices of Department Commander, Department First Vice Commander, Department Second Vice Commander, Department Finance Officer, Department Historian, Department Americanism Officer, and Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

Nomination of officers shall be made by registered delegates elected to repre-

will cast ballots immediately. Delegate's card, badge, convention registration, and your 2026 membership card must be displayed during voting.

Ballot Boxes will close promptly at 9:15 a.m.

UNIFORM OF THE DAY

The uniform of the day during the convention sessions will be The American Legion cap. Only the official representative of another veterans group may wear the cap of that organization in the convention hall.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

The department chaplain of The American Legion will conduct a Memorial Service to be held just prior to the conclusion of the Saturday session, June 13, 2026. Posts wishing to have deceased members included in the Post Everlasting Ceremony are requested to submit a list of the honored dead to Department Headquarters. Lists must include the name of deceased comrades and conflicts served. If your post files a Post Everlasting list for The Maine Legionnaire and said list is up to date, a second list is not necessary.

LAW AND ORDER

Order will be maintained at all times in the convention hall under the direction of the department sergeant-at-arms and his/her assistants. Delegates, alternates, and members attending the convention are requested to be courteous to all speakers and visitors to the convention.

PRESS

The department adjutant's staff will maintain press facilities during Convention sessions. The department adjutant must approve all communications from the Department Convention.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

A formal installation ceremony will be held Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. All department officers and district commanders will be sworn into office at that time and will automatically become members of the Department Executive Committee.

RAFFLES OR SALES ITEMS

There will be NO sales items or raffles at the Department Convention without the specific permission of the department adjutant.

This call will be read in all posts and district organizations and posted up on the bulletin boards of all posts. This call is being sent to the officers on record. If new officers have been elected, please transmit this information to them.

Official: Jason Hall, Department Adjutant
Leroy McKenzie, Department Commander

THE AMERICAN LEGION 107TH ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

June 12-13, 2026

Jeff's Catering and Event Center, Brewer
PLAN NOW TO ATTEND!

Each post will fill out the credential blank submitted by the department adjutant and return same to the Department Headquarters listing the delegates and alternates elected to represent the post. All delegates' registration must be prepaid.

All credentials must be verified by the Credentials Committee, which will be in session at Jeff's Catering & Event Center, Brewer, Maine, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2026.

The department adjutant shall issue to each post, 30 days prior to the convention, a statement of the number of 2026 membership cards, accompanied by state and national dues, received at Department Headquarters on May 13, 2026. Listed with the membership report will appear the number of delegates allowed for each post.

Credential reports should be filed with the department adjutant as soon as possible to allow for inspection and checking, thus correcting any errors.

If there should be any changes in personnel on the list of delegates or alternates, corrections should be made with the Credentials Committee. Delegates must be registered with the convention in order to vote (1975 Convention Mandate). A registration fee of \$10

sent the posts of the Department or by delegates-at-large attending the convention. Nominating speeches are limited to three minutes. There will be no seconds to nominations authorized (DEC Mandate Jan. 20, 1991)

All candidates for elective department office must file with the department adjutant, prior to May 13, 2026, a letter of intent to seek office and furnish a copy of discharge papers, which makes them eligible for membership in The American Legion. The ballots for the Department Convention will be pre-printed indicating those candidates who have filed for office. Any candidate declaring after May 13, 2026, or nominated from the floor of the convention, will be a write-in candidate. Blank spaces will be left for write-in candidates. (DEC Mandate Jan. 27, 1985).

VOTING

Delegates may get ballots from the Credentials Committee at Jeff's Catering & Event Center on Saturday, June 13, 2026. The Credentials Committee will be in session for one hour on Saturday morning, June 13, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Each delegate will go to the convention hall during the hours specified and secure ballots. No ballots will be issued after 9:00 a.m. Delegates

Resolutions to Be Presented by May 1

All resolutions to be presented for action at any Convention shall be presented to the office of the Department Adjutant on or before May 1 of the subject year. Said resolutions shall be published and printed in the official organ of the Department of Maine, The American Legion in the next issue following said date of May 1. Resolutions

must be presented to the Department Adjutant's office in writing, dated and signed by the Commander and Adjutant of the sponsoring groups or Chairman and Secretary of sponsoring committee. Resolutions may be presented by two-thirds majority of the Resolutions Committee meeting at the convention.

Candidates Deadline: May 13

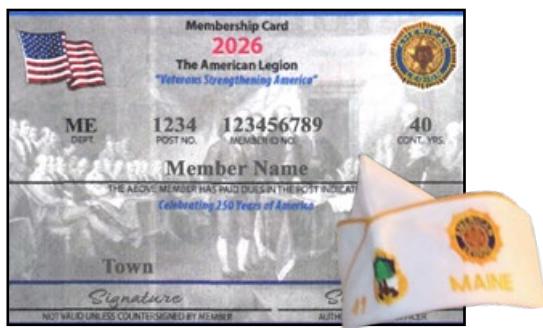
Anyone wishing to run for a Department Office must submit a letter of intent and a copy of his or her discharge papers making them eligible for The American Legion to the Department Adjutant's office on or before May 13, 2026 to be included on the official ballot at convention in June. If you wish to be included in The Maine Legionnaire, the above information, plus a photo of you must be at Department Headquarters by

April 17, 2026. Also be advised that the Department Constitution and By-Laws state: All current and future Department Officers elected at the Annual State Convention will within forty-five (45) days following the conclusion of the Annual Department Convention, take the "American Legion Extension Institute Course" and successfully complete said course. Previous graduates of the course upon providing confirmation would be exempted.

What a Delegate Should Bring to the Annual State Convention

This is a short reminder to all legionnaires attending the 107th Annual State Convention in Brewer, June 12th and 13th. If you are a delegate or alternate to this year's convention, please remember to bring your current American Legion membership card or PUFL card. Attendees should

go to the registration table immediately upon arrival to pick up your delegate or alternate name tag. Only registered delegates are allowed to vote or address the convention. The official uniform of The American Legion is the Legion cap.



How to Print 2026 Membership Cards in MyLegion

American Legion post and squadron group leadership can print a current membership card for Legion and Sons of The American Legion members.

To start:

1. Go to your My Account page in www.mylegion.org.
2. Enter My Groups to access



3. Click on "View Members."
4. Search the member and click on their name from the list to view Member Profile.
5. Click "Membership Cards" and click on the link to view and print card image.

Humanitarian Sought

The Humanitarian Award Committee is again seeking nominations for the annual Humanitarian Award. The Humanitarian Award, considered one of the most prestigious awards bestowed by The American Legion, is presented annually at our State Convention.

An American Legion Post must endorse applicants for the annual Humanitarian Award. Accomplishments of the individual must be over and above his or her usual vocation; in most cases his or her deeds would not be in their chosen field of endeavor; but consideration would be given to someone whose activities in their field of work was far in excess of what one would expect in that field.

Applicants may be male or female, veteran or non-veteran, legionnaire or non-legionnaire. A majority vote of the Humanitarian Award Committee will be final.

If an individual was previously submitted and not selected, please submit it again. We will consider anyone who has not received the award previously. Nominations should be received by May 1, 2026. Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting The American Legion, Department of Maine, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, Maine 04901-0727; Tel: 207-873-3229; e-mail: legionme@mainelegion.org or on the web at www.mainelegion.org under Forms/Applications.

Legionnaire of the Year Sought

Is that exceptional Legionnaire, the one with unquestionable leadership ability, a member of your post? Do you have that member within your post that seems to stand above the rest in all phases of your post activities? Does he or she aspire to higher positions within The American Legion?

If your post has that member who would qualify for the honor and prestige for the Past Department Commanders Award, why not submit their name and resume? Being chosen for this award is indeed a great honor. When in doubt, ask those who were previously chosen. It is a title you will be known for during

your entire Legion career.

Maybe your post has previously sent a candidate for this award who was not chosen. Why not submit the name again? There are no rules stating how many times you can apply. Your candidate could be this year's winner.

The deadline for applications is May 1, 2026. Applications can be obtained through Department Headquarters or online at www.mainelegion.org.

Send completed applications to The American Legion, State Headquarters, Attention: Past Department Commanders Award Chairman, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, Maine 04901-0727.

Scholarships Available

Applications are now available for the Department of Maine Children and Youth Scholarships, the Daniel E. Lambert Memorial Scholarship, and the James V. Day Scholarship. Any post, individual or school who would like to receive a copy may obtain one by visiting www.mainelegion.org located under Forms/Applications or by contacting us via email at legionme@mainelegion.org or by phone at 207-873-3229.



Attention District Commanders and Post Commanders & Adjutants

MyLegion.org training lessons are available at State Headquarters.

If you are interested in learning how to use the site, please call The American Legion, Department of Maine Headquarters at 207-873-3229 Ext. 2 or email rachael@mainelegion.org to set up an appointment.

Training lessons last between 1-2 hours.

Veterans Day Parade – South Portland Post 35

As usual, in November, the days are cooler and the crowds smaller, but South Portland American Legion is always able to put on a parade to honor our veterans. Each year the committee scans the many older veterans to find a grand marshall for our parade. This year it was First Sgt. Robert G Orff from Jefferson.

Robert was your typical Maine farm boy from Jefferson, where he grew up, attended, and graduated from Waldoboro High School. After high school, he worked at the Waldoboro Filling Station before moving to North Haven, Connecticut where he went to work for Pratt & Whitney as an engine polisher and buffer. However, he always made it home on the weekends back to Jefferson, where he enjoyed farming, fishing, and hunting with his friends.

On Dec. 6, 1956, Robert was drafted into the Army and was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia, and then overseas to France, Germany, and eventually Viet-

nam. While in Bordeaux, France, his unit helped build the airport base. Later in Karlsruhe, Germany he oversaw parts and supplies for heavy equipment. It was in Germany where Robert met Carola, a native German, while giving a friend a ride. The two were married in Karlsruhe in June of 1964.

Four years later, in 1968, Robert deployed to Vietnam, where he worked in ground and mobile communication at Nha Tran. His final six months were spent under daily gunfire—a stark reminder of the sacrifices made by those who serve. After 20 years, six months, and 24 days of service, Robert retired on June 30, 1977, as a First Sergeant (E8), responsible for up to 400 Army students at a time.

Returning to Jefferson with Carola and their three daughters, Soraya, Evelin, and Sonja, Robert inherited the family farmhouse and built a new home. He became

[More on "VETERANS DAY"](#)
[Page 36](#)

High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

Thomas College, 180 West River Rd., Waterville, ME 04901

February 14, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

All contestants should plan to arrive between 8 & 8:30 a.m.

Snow Date: February 21, 2026

The American Legion, Department of Maine High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest will once again be held at Thomas College in Waterville on Feb. 14, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. Snow Date: Feb. 21, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

The main purpose of The American Legion Oratorical Contest, "A Constitutional Speech Contest," is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators will have the opportunity to earn some of the most generous scholarships. At the post and district level, scholarships offered range from \$50 - \$100, and at the state level \$50 - \$1,500.

At the national level, each department (state) winner who is certified and participates in the National Oratorical Contest's 1st round receives a \$2,000 scholarship.

Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship to pursue education beyond high school. The overall national contest winner gets a \$25,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$22,500, and third gets \$20,000.

The members of the Oratorical Com-

mittee will be working with District Commanders to prepare posts and districts for their local contests. Post contests are to be completed by Mid-December 2025 and all district contests completed by the end of January 2026.

The 2026 National Finals will be May 15-17 in Hillsdale, Michigan at Hillsdale College on May 15-17, 2026, in Hillsdale, Michigan. Quarterfinal and semifinal rounds are scheduled to be held on May 16. The championship is scheduled for May 17.

All contestants and chaperones will arrive the Friday of the contest weekend. All contestants and chaperones will stay on campus at Hillsdale College.

A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will take place the Friday evening of the contest weekend. A banquet honoring all contestants will be Sunday afternoon, following the national championship contest.

For additional questions and/or information pertaining to the Oratorical Contest in Maine, please contact Oratorical Chairperson Maureen Malley at maureenmalley.66@gmail.com. More information can also be obtained by visiting www.mainelegion.org, your local American Legion post, or The American Legion, Dept. of Maine HQ at 207-873-3229. Please check out the state and local Oratorical contests by visiting national's website at www.legion.org/oratorical.

DIRIGO STATE PROGRAM



Colby College
4000 Mayflower Drive, Waterville, ME 04901
Sunday, June 21 2026 - Friday, June 26, 2026

Registration: Sunday, June 21 at Noon

Graduation: Friday, June 26 at 3:00 pm

Cost per student is \$400

_packets have been mailed and emailed to posts and high schools. The forms that need completion and mailed to The American Legion, Department of Maine along with a check in the amount of \$400/student are: [Dirigo State Application](#), [Parental Consent](#), [Medical Authorization](#), and [Performing Arts \(if participating.\)](#)

Checks should be made payable to The American Legion, Department of Maine and mailed to The American Legion, Department of Maine, Attn: Dirigo State, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, ME 04901-0727.

For more information, please contact 873-3229 Ext. 1 or 522-5471.
Email: jason@mainelegion.org

Volunteers Needed! If you're interested in volunteering for Dirigo State, please [Click Here](#).

Maine American Legion College

Mark Your Calendars!

March 20-22, 2026

Location: Department Headquarters Training Center,
5 Verti Drive, Winslow.

[Click Here](#) or visit www.mainelegion.org for more info

To register:

Contact Jason Hall at jason@mainelegion.org or 207-873-3229 Ext. 1

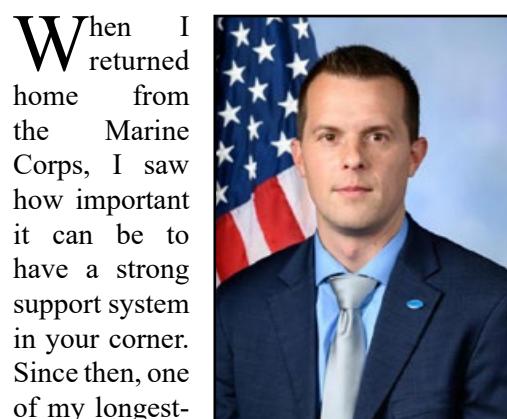
To all Legionnaires who may be attending Legion College at HQ in the near future, remember that the [Basic Training Course](#) must be taken online before you can attend. After completing the course, print off the certificate and email it to Department Headquarters or Jason Hall.

Is Your Post Utilizing Its' Sales Tax Exemption?

All Legion Posts in the state of Maine qualify for Sales Tax Exemption. If your Post currently does not have a Certificate for Sales Tax Exemption, please call Dept. Headquarters for assistance at 207-873-3229 so we can send you a packet containing detailed instructions on how to obtain this status.



Improving Veterans' Access to Mental Health Resources



**CONGRESSMAN
JARED GOLDEN**

When I returned home from the Marine Corps, I saw how important it can be to have a strong support system in your corner. Since then, one of my longest-

running priorities has been to

make mental health resources more

accessible for Maine veterans.

That mission is at the center of the latest bill I've been working on here in DC. In the coming weeks, I will submit legislation to launch a formal review into the effectiveness of the federal government's veteran mental health programs.

The VA is full of skilled public servants who are devoted to helping veterans get the help they need, when they need it. But those individual employees can only do so much about the fundamental gaps in service created by an imperfect system. For example, we all know that living in a rural community can require traveling unreasonable distances to get basic care.

Likewise, those transitioning to civilian life aren't always clearly told about all the resources available to them: A recent report from the Government Accountability Office found that the inTransition program was unable to actually connect with more than 70 percent of the servicemembers it enrolled in 2022.

We should address these challenges and so many more. I believe forcing the government to formally document those problems is the first step to fixing the system, because I've already seen it work in Maine.

As a state lawmaker in Augusta, the very first thing I got involved with was attempting to bring in-patient mental health and substance abuse services to Maine — health care that was somehow completely unavailable without traveling far out-of-state. It was an issue that everyone on the ground knew about for ages, but even with our advocacy it hadn't yet caught

the full attention of leaders at the VA.

So in my first year in Congress, I was able to convince the VA to conduct a real study into the lack of services in our state. It was that study which forced the agency to acknowledge the problem — and opened the door to eventually breaking ground on a new specialized treatment center at Togus.

The experience taught me that while it's frustrating that obvious problems can take so long to fix, often the fastest way to deliver progress is to force leaders to reckon with clear facts. My bill will ensure that policymakers get that information needed to inform improvements that get to the root causes of challenges with healthcare access at the VA, such as labor shortages, rural logistics, and inefficient outreach processes.

My office continues to help Maine veterans overcome challenges with federal agencies, whether that's expediting or recovering delayed or wrongfully denied benefits, accessing personal military records and documents, and much more.

I'm proud of the team I've hired to take on these issues, and I hope you'll reach out if you have your own problem I can help you with, whether it is service-related or not. You can send my office an email at golden.house.gov/contact/email-me, or call or visit me at any of our locations:

Bangor Office: 6 State Street, Suite 101, Bangor ME 04401. Phone: (207) 249-7400

Caribou Office: 7 Hatch Drive, Suite 230, Caribou ME 04736. Phone: (207) 492-6009

Lewiston Office: 179 Lisbon Street, Lewiston ME 04240. Phone: (207) 241-6767

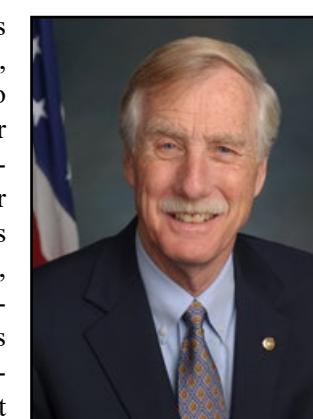
Washington Office: 1107 Longworth HOB, Washington DC 20515. Phone: (202) 225-2943

Thanks as always to everyone at the Legion for all you do to fight on behalf of our veterans, including by keeping me informed of your work and how I can help. Your mission is near and dear to my heart, and my staff and I hope you'll continue reaching out on the issues that matter most.



No Veteran should go through a crisis alone. Save the Veterans Crisis Line number—Dial 988 then Press 1—in your phone in case you or a Veteran loved one needs support.

Ensuring Veterans are Treated With the Respect They Deserve



**SENATOR
ANGUS KING**

Across Maine, veterans who served our country continue to serve their communities as our neighbors, friends, educators, business owners, volunteers, and first responders. Serving on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee is a privilege, and I am proud to work every day to make sure Maine veterans are treated with the respect they deserve.

Recently, I led bipartisan, bicameral legislation with Representative Chris Deluzio to improve awareness of veterans' benefits in the workplace. Far too often, veterans miss out on the benefits they have earned simply because they do not know what resources are available to them—or where to find them. Our bill would require employers to post information about federal and state veterans' benefits in any workplace that has more than 50 employees. Maine already understands the value of this approach—this has been law in our state since 2024—so this legislation would bring our common-sense policy nationwide. Ensuring veterans have clear, understandable access to information is a basic responsibility, and this bill is a straightforward way to better serve those who have served our country.

I've also joined my Republican Senate colleague Mike Crapo in introducing bipartisan legislation to streamline redundant inspection requirements for State Veterans Homes. Under current law, these homes must undergo nearly identical annual surveys from both the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, diverting critical time and

resources away from caring for our veterans. Our State Veterans Home Inspection Simplification Act would allow a facility that meets the VA's rigorous inspection standards to forgo the duplicate CMS survey—freeing up staff to focus on what matters most: providing high-quality care to those who served. This commonsense reform will improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary costs, and ensure State Veterans Homes—in Maine and across the country—can dedicate more attention to the brave men and women who depend on them.

And in case you didn't know, I released a new episode of my series Answering the Call: Maine's Veteran Voices, featuring Colonel Jen Fullmer of Biddeford, a former U.S. Air Force bomber pilot who flew 90 combat missions after the September 11th attacks. During our conversation, Jen shared not only her remarkable service defending our nation, but also how she has continued to serve Maine's veteran community in retirement—helping veterans transition to civilian life and even aiding an Afghan family at great personal risk. Stories like hers deserve to be preserved for future generations, which is why this interview will be contributed to the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. Her service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. If you or anyone you know would be a fitting candidate for this series, please reach out to my office — we would love to hear from you.

From World War II veterans to those just signing up for military service, Maine people from all walks of life answer the call to defend our nation. Every person who serves deserves our full support, and I will continue fighting to make sure you receive it. If you ever need help or have questions, my offices across Maine and in Washington, D.C. are always here for you.



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Your Department of
The American Legion

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X
SIGNATURE

DATE

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*For Purposes of the Legionnaire Insurance Trust, a member of The Legion Family, with current year's dues paid, could be eligible for the \$5,000 Accidental Death benefit if he/she is traveling to, attending, or returning from an official function at which the Legionnaire represents his/her Post, District, Department, or National Organization in an official capacity.

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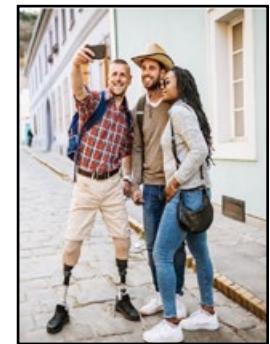
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Your Letters

Excellent Article Re: Henry Knox (Maine Legionnaire, November 2025 Issue)

Excellent article by Harry Orcutt in the November issue on Henry Knox, one of his ancestors. I'm an avid reader of Civil War and Revolutionary War material and am well-aware of Henry Knox, his leadership and self-taught artillery skills. The article was a good synopsis of General Knox's activities before, during and after the War of Independence, including his service as Secretary of War (under several titles) and in development of the U.S. Navy.

Like Rhode Island's Nathaniel Greene, Henry Knox is one of the less well-known military leaders of the revolutionary war, but one who played a critical part in the war itself and in the development of what became the United States. The people of Maine, his home state, need to know and appreciate the man and his contribution to what we are today.

Joseph Wannemacher, South Portland Post 35

National Commander Thanks Department of Maine for Hospitality

Dear Department of Maine, Thank you so much for the LL Bean gift card, and the tote for my wife during my recent visit. I really appreciate you thinking of us in this special way. Thank you, too, for the hospitality extended to me during my recent visit to the Department of Maine.

My theme for the year is "Be the One" the Legion's veteran suicide prevention initiative. While the Legion continues to celebrate its past, it does so while also marching toward an evolving future, discovering ways to stay relevant and add even greater value to the lives of

younger veterans.

For God and Country,
Dan K. Wiley
National Commander
2025-2026

Gifts to National Commander's Aide Appreciated

Dear Department of Maine, Thank you so much for the cribbage board for my Aide during my recent visit. I really appreciate you thinking of him in this special way. Thank you, too, for the hospitality extended to me during my recent visit to the Department of Maine.

My theme for the year is "Be the One" the Legion's veteran suicide prevention initiative. While the Legion continues to celebrate its past, it does so while also marching toward an evolving future, discovering ways to stay relevant and add even greater value to the lives of younger veterans.

For God and Country,
Dan K. Wiley
National Commander
2025-2026

Grateful Scholarship Recipient

Dear American Legion, Thank you so much for awarding me the Children & Youth Scholarship again! Your continued generosity has been instrumental in helping me achieve my goal to get an accounting degree. I'm excited to share that I've secured an internship at a local accounting firm this summer, and I couldn't have done it without your support. My grandfather (Navy) and brother (Air Force) would be so touched to know that The American Legion continues to make college dreams come true.

Thanks again!

Abigail Paulding



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 1

Sanford Post 19; Biddeford Post 26; Limerick Post 55; York Post 56; Old Orchard Post 57; Kennebunk Post 74; Berwick Post 79; North Berwick Post 87; Saco Post 96; Kezar Falls Post 123; Bar Mills Post 120; Alfred Post 134; Wells Post 143; Kennebunkport Post 159; Dayton Post 177; Eliot Post 188; Lebanon Post 214; Wilton Post 117; Rangeley Post 120

District 1 Holds Oratorical Contest

District 1 Oratorical contestant Paige Harvill came to Kezar Falls Post 123 on Saturday, Jan. 17 and had a wonderful constitution-related speech on her selection about the Fourth Amendment. She was especially shining with her knowledge of the subject matter.

Auxiliary Unit 123 always supports us and always provides an incredible feast for all. The storm did contribute to the low attendance from District 1, however one of our Auxiliary members drove up from Rhode Island to visit her mom and dad and attend this contest. The district had five judges for the contest.



District 1 Oratorical Competition: York County District 1 held its Oratorical Contest at the West-Day Post 123 in Kezar Falls, on Sat., Jan. 17. Top photo, winner Paige Harvill, spoke on the Fourth Amendment and was especially shining with her knowledge of the subject matter. Bottom photo, left to right, Kezar Falls Post 123 members: Chief Instructor for JROTC Daniel Bartlett, George Anderson, Clifton Whitney, Jamie Marshall, Post Chaplain Barry Hadlock, Oratorical contestant Paige Harvill, Post Adjutant Roger Berube, Harold Gillman, and Post Commander Lee Wadsworth.

District 1 Receives Membership Goal Appreciation Certificates

York County District 1 has been presented with certificates: second place in recognition and appreciation for achieving both 100% membership, highest overall membership percentage, and for achieving the highest membership renewal rate thirty days before the National Convention on Jul.

24, 2025.

The recognition certificates were signed and distributed by Department Commander Leroy McKenzie in response to the hard work achieved by all posts in District 1 to acquire new members and retain existing members.

[More on "D1 MEMBERSHIP" Page 16](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 1 continued**"D1 MEMBERSHIP"**
(Continued from Page 15)

District 1 Membership Certificates: District 1 Commander Gordon Kendall displays the membership certificates presented to York County District 1 by Department Commander Leroy McKenzie.

Post 26 Gifts Biddeford High School a Little Bit of History

Biddeford Post 26 Adjutant Ted Sirois presented to Biddeford High School Library a hard copy book and CD set on the Vietnam War after a panel discussion with students, moderated by Lt. Colonel, USAF Ret. Jen Fullmer, BMCM, USN Ret., Gene Foster, USMC Don Chretien, and Ted Sirois.

American Legion Post 26 donated the book and CDs so students can continue to read up on this tragic time in America's history.

**West-Day Post 123 Helps Place Marker for Unmarked Grave**

Members of Parsonsfield Post 123 were approached some time ago by Liam Opie, a fellow veteran and military history researcher, who has been locating graves and placing headstones for veterans throughout western Maine. Over the seven-year course of his journey, he had placed some 12 stones, with another half dozen in the works to be placed.

Through his research, Mr. Opie discovered that there was an unmarked grave of Civil War Corporal Isaac Pearl (1821-1902). Once the grave had been confirmed in the Sargent Cemetery on

Bickford Road in Porter, Opie asked Post 123 if they would be willing and able to lend a hand in obtaining and placing a marker for this gravesite.

The post received the headstone and organized a plan for its installment.

"It is quite an honor for [our] post to help with this," said Parsonsfield Post 123 Adjutant Roger Berube.

And an honor it truly is, to be able to lay out a proper memorial stone for a Civil War veteran, otherwise virtually unrecognized. Hats off to West-Day Post 123.



Parsonsfield Post 123 Places Grave Marker: Left photo, the new headstone for Civil War soldier Isaac Pearl is installed. Right photo, left to right, Comrade Clifton Whitney, Post Commander Lee Wadsworth, and Post Adjutant Roger Berube.

A Welcome Warming Greets Post 188 on a Cold Veterans Day

On a very cold Veteran's Day, members of the Eliot-Kittery Memorial Post 188 were greeted with students from Marshwood High School's Interact Club. The club focuses on finding ways to give back to the community in meaningful ways.

Club members brought hot coffee and donuts to serve to grateful post members and community volunteers

who attended the Veteran's Day service and then traversed the cemetery grounds collecting flags that were posted on veteran's graves at the beginning of the summer.

Post 188 always looks forward to and enjoys the fellowship as friends in the community chip in, many hands making for light work.



Veterans Day Visit At Eliot Post 188: Eliot Post 188 Adjutant Kimberly Richards stands with Marshwood High School Interact Club members Julia Lytle, Fiona Williams, Caebre Sullivan, and Nellie Young at the post on Veterans Day.

Eliot-Kittery Schools to Receive Assistance to Thwart Food Insecurity

It seems that in current times, food insecurity is an ever-present and growing threat to the health and well-being of many communities that The American Legion lives in and serves. Food pantries that have not been shuttered due to a lack of funds are overwhelmed. Many programs such as End 68 Hours of Hunger, which worked to provide school children with enough food to get them through the 68 hours of a weekend until they could get back to school for hot meals, has also

shut down in many areas, including the school districts in Eliot and Kittery.

In response, Eliot Post 188 has allocated a sizable portion of their funds to fight food security among school-aged children. \$50 gift cards to Market Basket have been purchased and are to be given to schools in Eliot and Kittery, to be distributed as deemed most efficient to students in need.

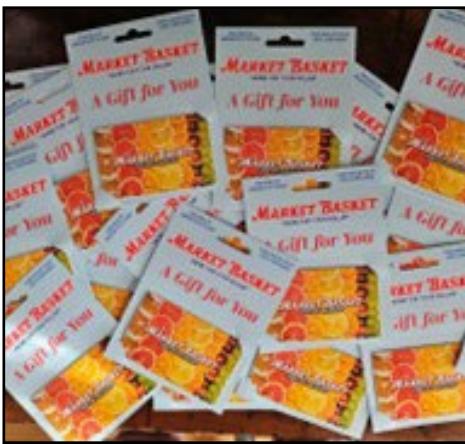
[More on "FOOD ASSISTANCE"](#)
[Page 17](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 1 continued

■ "FOOD ASSISTANCE" (Continued from Page 16)

Eliot Post 188 Fights Food Insecurity: Post 188 allocates funds to purchasing \$50 grocery gift cards for distribution at local schools in Eliot and Kittery to help keep children fed outside of school.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 2

Portland Post 17; So. Portland Post 35; Gorham Post 60; Westbrook Post 62; Bridgton Post 67; Scarborough Post 76; Freeport Post 83; Gray Post 86; Yarmouth Post 91; Standish Post 128; Harrison Post 139; Peaks Island Post 142; Windham Post 148; Naples Post 155; Portland Post 161; Falmouth Post 164; Portland Post 168; Westbrook Post 197



District 2 Oratorical Competition: On Jan. 23, District 1 Americanism Officer Dennis Marrotte, in conjunction with the Americanism Committee at So. Portland Post 35, held its annual Oratorical Contest in accordance with Department guidelines. Contestants were Gideon Straw, representing Post 35, and Corey Brackett, representing Windham Post 148. After the required rounds of Oratory, the panel of 3 judges declared Corey the winner. Left to right, District 2 Commander Eugene Connolly, contestant Corey Brackett, and District 2 Americanism Officer Dennis Marrotte.

Trica Spinney Installed as New Member of Stephen W. Manchester American Legion Post 62

Westbrook's American Legion Post 62 started the New Year on Wed., Jan. 7 on an upbeat evening.

Our newest Member Trica Spinney is installed by Post 62 Commander Philip Spiller, Jr. To Post Commander Spiller's right is Post Chaplain Philip LeClerc. He described The American Legion's mission and the description and meanings of each of the Legion's parts on its symbol.

To Trica's right is an empty chair draped with the black MIA / POW symbol. The chair is draped with the

MIA / POW symbol at the start of every American Legion post business meeting.

Post 62 welcomed three officials from the Red Cross as guest speakers at the business meeting. They described preparing and organizing a Red Cross Blood Drive, which Post 62 will hold on Fri., Feb. 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Post 62, located at 17 Dunn Street, off Main Street, across from the Casa Novello Restaurant and next to the west side of Riverbank Park.

Westbrook Post 62 New Member Installation: Post 62 Commander Philip Spiller, Jr., center, and Post Chaplain Philip LeClerc, right, install the post's newest member, Trica Spinney, left, at a post business meeting on Jan. 7.

Photos by Westbrook Post 62 Historian Dennis Marrotte



Thank You Veterans Poster:
Post Historian and Board of Directors Chair for the Stephen W. Manchester American Legion Post 62 of Westbrook Dennis Marrotte received this "Thank You Veterans!" poster from his grandnephew Theo Ruby, age seven and a half, of Windham.

Photos by Westbrook Post 62 Historian Dennis Marrotte



Westbrook 2025 Veterans Day Ceremony: Top photo, Boy Scout Troop 87 member Joseph Bradford and Girl Scout Troop 1142 Cadette Evie Porreco present floral wreaths to Westbrook Post 62 Commander Philip Spiller Jr. and Westbrook Post 197 Commander Steve Girard at the Westbrook Veterans Day Ceremony on Nov. 11. Left to right, Post 62 member Charles Spinney (U.S. Navy), Troop 87 Boy Scout Joseph Bradford, Post 62 Commander Philip Spiller Jr. (U.S. Navy, ret.), Post 62 Sgt.-at-Arms Michael Thomas (U.S. Coast Guard, ret.), Girl Scout Troop 1142 Cadette Evie Porreco, and Post 197 Commander Steve Girard (U.S. Army, ret.) Bottom photo, left to right, Westbrook Post 62 Sgt.-at-Arms Michael Thomas, Girl Scouts Troop 1142 Cadette and floral wreath presenter Evie Porreco, Westbrook Post 62 Commander Philip Spiller Jr., and Westbrook Post 197 Commander Steve Girard all salute while Westbrook High School senior Gracelyn Gauvin, right foreground, performs Taps after wreaths are placed at the Veterans Rest Granite Memorial.



Photos by Westbrook Post 62 Historian Dennis Marrotte

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 2 continued**Standish Post 128 Past Members Widows Dinner**

Kenison-Hooper Post 128 in Standish held their annual Widows Dinner at the Standish Town Hall. In attendance were Chris Bartlett, Pat Curtis, Bertha Day, Linda Fernald, Joan Graham, Glenna Jamison, Dianna Jenkins, Donna Kennie, Margwe McCloughlin, Linda Newbegin, Bea Osterberg, Diane Red, Dee Saffery, Cheryl Spiller, Betty Swett, and Sue Whitney. Members presented each widow with an arrangement of flowers and a coin commemorating the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion. Those unable to attend were Doris Deschaine, Jolene Webber, Martha Hendrikson, Gail Poiria, Lynn Roy, and Janice.

Commander Bryan McManus told the widows that tonight we focus on honoring you, the widows of our past members. Although this is only a few hours of one night in the year that we can enjoy dinner together, please know throughout the year when we think of the good times we had with our past comrades, and you are also in our hearts and minds. We hope you enjoy the flowers and the commemorative coin, and they remind you that we are here for you. These are just a small token of remembrance of this night. We are so glad you all could join us this year and look forward to seeing you all next year. Ramsdell.

**Standish Post 128 Widows Dinner:**

Kenison-Hooper Post 128 in Standish holds its annual Widows Dinner at the Standish Town Hall to honor the widows of past post members.

Photo by Leslie McManus

Windham Post 148 Awards Night

The Field-Allen Post 148 held its 12th annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 3, 2025 at the Windham Veterans Center. The Legion family presented recognition and awards to 40 individuals covering a range of programs under the four pillars including: Red Cross Blood Drive support, Poppy Program, Wreath Program, Longevity Awards, Certificates of Appreciation, Meritorious Service recognitions, a Humanitarian Award to David Scamman, a Lifetime Achievement Award to Leon Davies, a Past

Commander Don Rogers Service Award to Gerald Beaulieu, and the Post Legionnaire of the Year to Post 2nd Vice Commander Yvonne Johnson for her programs in support and recognition of Korean War veterans, implementation of the Four Chaplains Ceremony, her work with the Red Cross Blood Drives, coordination of the post wreath program, and general support for the monthly post dinners. She has made the 2nd Vice Commander position her own!

Submitted by Windham Post 148
Adjutant David Tanguay

**Windham Post 148 Post Legionnaire Of The Year Award:**

Department of Maine Legionnaire of the Year Larry DeHof, left, presents the Post 148 Legionnaire of the Year award to Post 148 2nd Vice Commander Yvonne Johnson, center, with Post Commander Tom Theriault, right, at the post's 12th annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 3, 2025. Post Adjutant David Tanguay looks on in the back.



Pearl Harbor Day Remembered: The Windham Post 148 Honor Guard conducted a brief ceremony in memory of Pearl Harbor Day at the two Veterans Memorials in the town of Windham. At 9:00 a.m., the HG OIC Larry DeHof read a brief dedication: *"On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service attacked the neutral United States at Naval Station Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii, killing 2,403 Americans and injuring 1,178 others. The attack sank four U.S. Navy battleships and damaged four others. It also damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, and one minelayer. Aircraft losses were 188 destroyed and 159 damaged. May we not forget."* and then placed an evergreen wreath on the Veterans Memorial in the Windham Veterans Center Memorial Garden, followed by a second ceremony and placement of a wreath at the town of Windham Veterans Memorial in front of Windham High School. Addition Honor Guard support was provided by Linwood Bailey and Dick Drapeau.



Naples Post 155 Certificate: Naples Post 155 Commander Dave Woolley, left, receives a 46-year Continuous Member Certificate from Post 155 Adjutant Cathy Merrill on Dec. 16, 2025, during an e-board meeting.

Photo by Post 155 Historian Ross Graham

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 3

Livermore Falls Post 10; Lewiston Post 22; Auburn Post 31; Lisbon Falls Post 66; Turner Post 111; Sabattus Post 135; Mechanic Falls Post 150; Auburn Post 153; Lisbon Post 158; Lewiston Post 210



Lewiston Post 22 Celebrates November Birthdays: Left photo, left to right, Gold Star mother Joyce Richmond, Jerry Dewitt, Unit 22 Auxiliary member Doris Bergoin, and Dani Begert.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 3 continued



Lisbon Post 158 Family/Member Appreciation Day: The old "kids" enjoyed the Post 158 Family/Member Appreciation Day as much as the youngsters! On a lovely Sunday afternoon on Aug. 3, 2025, Post 158 had a large turnout of members who enjoyed a variety of games, a dunking booth, and a bouncy obstacle course. Many thanks to the Topsham 99 Restaurant for providing delicious entrees and to many members who contributed a variety of tasty side dishes. Once the young children wore themselves out on the obstacle course, the older (ages 55-82) kids decided to try their luck. We're happy to report there were no injuries, although a few observers might have been crying from laughing so hard.

Submitted by Lisbon Post 158 Historian Eric Cooper, Photos by Kim Tucker



Pausing To Remember The 9/11/01 Terrorist Attacks:
Lisbon Post 158 Auxiliary hosts a reverent 9/11 prayer and tribute ceremony, followed by a spaghetti dinner for all attendees at the post home on Sept. 11. Never forget!

Lisbon Post 158 Hosts Lobsterfeast During Annual Moxie Festival: On Saturday, July 12, for the third consecutive year, Post 158 was honored to be a sponsor of and participant in the Moxie Festival held in Lisbon. Blessed with wonderful weather, Post 158 once again hosted the New England Moxie Congress for dinner under its lovely pavilion. The post served about 100 meals of delicious lobsters, clams, steak, chicken, hot dogs, corn on the cob, potato & broccoli salads, desserts, and ice-cold Moxie. We're looking forward to another successful feast next year!

Submitted by Lisbon Post 158 Historian Eric Cooper, Photos by Kim Tucker

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 5

Rumford Post 24; Buckfield Post 58; Lockemills Post 68; So. Paris Post 72; Bethel Post 81; Norway Post 82; Dixfield Post 100; Oxford Post 112; Fryeburg Post 137; West Paris Post 151; Peru Post 199

Locke Mills Post 68 Hosts District 5 Christmas Party

At 18:00 hours (6:00 pm), before District 5 held its regular monthly meeting, Jackson-Silver Post 68 hosted its annual Christmas Party Buffet Supper in celebration of Christmas and the impending New Year. A number of attendees brought salads and desserts, or their own favorite entree. The District meeting following was only an

hour and five minutes in duration, yet much business was conducted. While Auxiliary Unit 68 put the post right, the Post Executive Committee conducted an abbreviated general meeting afterwards in the Executive Committee office following goodbyes and thanks for coming.



District 5 Christmas Party: Left photo, Unit 68 Secretary Susan Vacca, left, and Kitchen Manager Marleen Twitchell, right, set out the buffet table for the annual District 5 Christmas Party held at Locke Mills Post 68. Right photo, conversations are conducted in the minutes before the meal.



District 5 Meeting: The District 5 meeting commenced at 18:40 hours (6:40 pm) following the annual District 5 Christmas Party Buffet Supper.

6th Annual FEZtival of Trees at Locke Mills Post 68

Post 68 co-sponsored, with the Kora Oxford County Shrine Club, the 6th Annual FEZtival of Trees on the weekend of Dec. 12-14, 2025. Twenty-six lavishly decorated trees, donated by local businesses, fraternal, and other community groups, filled the Post 68 Great Hall. Some trees were bedecked with valuable coupons, others with products, a few with items for children, and others for adults. Roll after roll of raffle tickets were purchased by the public, which came in substantial numbers, at one point lined up from the entrance to the hall, back to the entrance of the post, for a chance to go home with a tree. There was also a 50/50 raffle, which a past officer of Rumford Post 24 won, taking home a check for \$595.

The Shrine Club reported that once again, being at Post 68, each year is better than the last in total proceeds. Likewise, the Unit 68 Canteen, preparing more cookies than a bakery, with hot dogs and soups, and signature whoopi pies, enjoyed final sales totaling twice those of the 5th annual event. The post extends a well-earned commendation to its post and unit members who participated through and at intervals throughout the weekend. Also, because of an anonymous donation, the children's craft table which was supervised by a Shrine Lady who is also a Unit 68 member, was free to the hundreds of children who colored Christmas images, assembled ornaments, and wrote letters to Santa, all of which will be answered by the

Jolly Old Fellow. In a recreated North Pole greeting room of his North Pole house, Santa and Mrs. Claus were available throughout the event for photos, and on Saturday morning, the reading of season-themed stories.

The importance of Post 68's FEZtival of Trees to the Shrine is best expressed by noting that the presiding Potentate

and two past Potentates were all working as volunteers at the event. A memorable moment occurred when a young women approached the post 1st vice commander stating, "The decorated trees are spectacular," to which he replied, "Yes, those old German pagan customs really put you in the spirit of the season."



Ticket Tables: Left photo, one of the Tree Raffle ticket tables at the entrance of the Locke Mills Post 68 hall. Post 68 member and Noble Ron Deegan, left, conversing with Kora Noble Gary Richardson and his Lady Tiffany Fellows. Right photo, Kora 2025-26 Potentate Michael J. Zubiate and Lady Susan at the second Tree Raffle ticket table inside the post's great hall.



Canteen Kitchen Volunteers: Left photo, Locke Mills Unit 68 Secretary Susan Vacca, left, and unit member Patricia Bell, right, re-package red hot dogs (a.k.a. Lewiston Lobster) to keep up with the weekend demand. Right photo, Unit 68 member Heather Hodsdon, left, and Kitchen Chef Clemma Nichols, right, lead the team that produced the myriad of meals and tasty snacks at the Unit 68 Canteen for the FEZtival of Trees event.



Locke Mills Post 68 Hosts Santa And Mrs. Claus: Top photo, left to right, Post 68 Sgt.-at-Arms Al Lake, Post 1st Vice and Aleppo Shrine Noble Harry Orcutt, and Post Chaplain Tim Twitchell take a picture with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at the post's FEZtival of Trees event. Bottom photo, Santa may be the recipient of milk and cookies in homes on his annual trek across the planet, but nothing compares to the Unit 68 Canteen Whoopie Pies, which Past Potentate Robbie gifted him and Mrs. Claus.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 5 continued

■ "FEZTIVAL"

(Continued from Page 20)



FEZtival Of Trees Canteen Volunteers: Left photo, left to right, Unit Secretary Susan Vacca, Unit President Paige Crockett, and her daughter, Junior Unit member Jocelyn Crockett volunteer at the canteen during the FEZtival of Trees. Right photo, left to right, Locke Mills Unit 68 Kitchen Manager Marleen Twitchell, Unit Secretary Susan Vacca, Unit Vice President Deb Brown, and Post 68 Chaplain Tim Twitchell.



Locke Mills Post 68

Dedication: The box seen at Santa's North Pole Greeting Room during the Locke Milles Post 68 FEZtival of Trees event is dedicated to Santa of Christmas Past, Noble Rodney Withey, who entered the Post Everlasting this year.



FEZtival Tree Raffle: Top photo, a few of the 26 trees raffled at the FEZtival. Bottom photo, a young couple took home the Grinch, which was an animated figure. It was fun to watch it unexpectedly move and speak as event guests set it off by approaching too closely. It will make a great home security feature if it is placed in the foyer.



Conversing as the FEZtival of Trees begins, left to right, Locke Mills Unit 68 Secretary Susan Vacca (standing), 2024-25 Kora Past Potentate Paul D. Gardner, Lady Debra and 2022-23 Kora Past Potentate Robbie McKinley. With backs to camera, Frank P. Welch, Jr. 2025-26 Grand Rabban,

right, and Lorraine Tanguay, left, who along with her husband Gene and son Adam, are the principal organizers of the Oxford County Shrine Club annual event.



FEZtival Of Trees Activities: Left photo, Kora's 50/50 raffle table. Left to right, Noble Dick and Lady Joan Deans, and Secretary of the Kora Oxford County Shrine Club Noble Arlan Saunders. Right photo, the children's craft table. Left to right, Lady Adele Charity, Noble and Locke Mills Post 68 member Ron Deegan (behind his granddaughter), and Unit 68 member and Lady Alice Deegan.

Christmas Shop at South Paris Veterans Home

On Dec. 7, 2025, Locke Mills Unit 68 members joined with Auxiliary volunteers from near and far, bearing gifts that were piled high atop three tables in the multipurpose room of the South Paris Veterans Home. The 80 residents "shopped" through the

gifts, choosing items for their families. The gifts were wrapped by members of Richmond Unit 132, readying them at no cost for the residents. Some of the surplus gifts were prepared for delivery to Legion shut ins; the rest are being stored for next year's shop.



Christmas Shop Gift Wrapping is provided by Richmond Auxiliary Unit 132 (District 4). Left to right, Lois Jandik, Michelle Colby, Lauren Curtis, Lisbon Unit 158 (District 2) member Linda Giles, and Unit 132 member Marie Perry. Unit 132 is the epitome of dedication; their post is located 46 miles from the South Paris Veterans Home. Ruth.



Volunteers: Left to right, South Paris Unit 72 member Sylvia Michaud-Kessel, Department Auxiliary President Linda Jack, District 5 Commander Randall Jack, and Locke Mills Unit 68 President Paige Crockett. Paige's daughter Joclyn, son Foster, and friend Aimee Coombs also participated in the Christmas Shop at the South Paris Veterans Home.



Gifts for all ages are piled on tables for residents to select for their families at the South Paris Veterans Home. Purchasing and storing the gifts commenced weeks before the event. More than a few gifts were bought with the \$150 District 5 donation sent to Department Auxiliary.

[More on "CHRISTMAS SHOP" Page 22](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 5 continued

"CHRISTMAS SHOP" (Continued from Page 21)



Admiring Gift Options: Both from Lisbon Unit 158, Gail Marcouillier and Auxiliary District 2 President Terri Hall admire the "merch" as other South Paris Veterans Home residents choose gifts for their families.



Christmas Shop Volunteer Group Photo: An incredible group of dedicated Legion Auxiliary volunteers pose for a photo. Not previously identified, in front kneeling, left to right, Foster Crockett, Aimee Coombs, Auxiliary Department Public Relations Chair and Rumford Unit 24 member Carol Roach, and Locke Mills Unit 68 Junior Member Jocelyn Crockett. Also not previously identified is Richmond Unit 132 member Emily Watson (sitting at the table in the ball cap and wearing glasses).

Wreaths Across Hick's Cemetery in Greenwood

On Nov. 19, 2025 the Locke Mills Post 68 1st Vice Commander and Unit 68 Secretary placed four Christmas wreaths they had fabricated at the Hicks Cemetery graves of four veterans they had known at the post. At 83 years old, and with one much younger, one does what one can. The flags that were placed by the children, organized by Unit 68 President Paige Crockett, were still in the US Veteran Flag Holders provided by Jackson-Silver Post.

The wreaths are formed from wire coat hangers, with evergreen boughs attached with wire strips. Red, white, and blue Christmas bulbs, and other



Maine Veterans Home Coordination: Locke Mills Unit 68 Secretary Susan Vacca, left, and Treasurer Jamie Miller, right. Sue, as department representative to the Maine Veterans Home in South Paris, was responsible for coordinating the event with Auxiliary units and home staff.

are buried in the post's operational and adjunctive areas. The idea is for student volunteers to fabricate the wreaths and posts on which they are hung and then place them on their relatives' graves in the first week of November, before the cemeteries are inaccessible because of snow. The students will be encouraged to learn about their relative(s) and the time in which they served to spark their

interest in the history of the US, and the reasons their relatives were willing to defend it. If a student does not have a relative in a local cemetery, they may choose a veteran who is locally interred. They would then research the life of that veteran.

If the program is successful, other American Legion posts will be encouraged to replicate the program.



Locke Mills Post 68 Wreath Placements: Top left photo, the grave site of Past Post 68 and District 5 Commander Wayne E. Hakala. Top right photo, the gravesite of 53-year Post 68 member Stanley Sobocinski. Bottom left photo, the gravesite of Past Post 68 Commander Richard Melville. Bottom right photo, the gravesite of 53-year Post 68 member Irving Cole.

This and That at Locke Mills Post 68

In mid-October, 2025 Locke Mills Post 68 installed a 48 KW Generac propane emergency generator. Two weeks later, on Nov. 4, 2025 the town utilized the post for Election Day. Providence smiled broadly, as during a two hour plus power failure in Greenwood, the business of the republic continued, thanks to the generator, as citizens continued uninterrupted to cast their ballots.

On Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025 from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the Post 68 Legion Family held a community

Hunters Breakfast in honor of recently deceased Post 68 2nd Vice Les Bell. The following day, the post held a cornhole tournament which Les was instrumental in establishing at the post. A plaque and a Tournament Board, commemorating Les's founding of Cornhole at the post will be dedicated at a time convenient to his family.

Texas Hold'em Tournaments continue once a month to contribute their share in post community outreach fundraising activities.



Power Outage Mitigation At Post 68: Locke Mills Post 68 installed a new propane generator at the post that was utilized on the town's election day, held at the post when an outage occurred. The generator kept voting operations up and running during the outage.

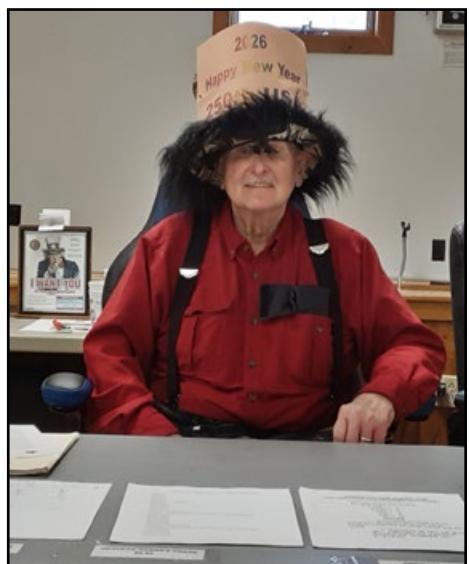
[More on "THIS AND THAT" Page 23](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 5 continued

"THIS AND THAT" (Continued from Page 22)

Hunters Breakfast: Top photo, the buffet bonanza included bacon, sausage, pancakes, biscuits, eggs, and beans with juice and coffee, by donation only, and the guests were quite appreciative and generous. Bottom photo, guest hunters arrive throughout the morning during another successful Hunters Breakfast event on Nov. 8, 2025.



Happy New Year: Each first Saturday in January, the Locke Mills Post 68 1st Vice Commander Harry Orcutt sports his Happy New Year bonnet with self-produced signage. The 2026 version acknowledges the 250th Anniversary of the USA.



Hunters Breakfast Master Chef Clemma Nichols, left, who created the magnificent meal with a wee bit of assistance from Unit 68 Secretary Susan Vacca, Kitchen Manager Marleen Twitchell, Unit members Heather Nichols and Betty Christenson, Post 68 1st Vice Harry Orcutt, Chaplain Tim Twitchell, and Sgt.-at-Arms Al Lake.

Texas Hold'em Tournament: Locke Mills Unit 68 Kitchen Manager Marleen Twitchell is ready to take meal and various treat orders at the Post Canteen dispensing table. Tournament guests report that Post 68 has the best food at the most reasonable price on the local area's gaming circuit.

Locke Mills Post 68 Hosts District 2 Auxiliary Meeting

Department Auxiliary President Linda Jack, accompanied by her husband, District 5 Commander Randall Jack, attended the District 2 Auxiliary meeting, held at Locke Mills Post 68, on Sat., Oct. 25, 2025. The meeting was preceded by a light lunch. Representatives of Auxiliary units in the three counties comprising the District attended.

Blessed are the Legion posts that have viable, dedicated Auxiliary units. Since their inception over one

hundred years ago, the Auxiliary have been faithful partners in support of Legion goals, community outreach, and youth programs. As it has evolved, the Auxiliary and individual units have instituted their own programs, including scholarships, Christmas gift shops, celebrating birthdays and other celebrations for residents of Maine Veterans Homes, reaching out to Legion family shut-ins and those in need, and engaging in a multitude of community service activities.



District 2 Auxiliary Meets At Locke Mills Post 68: Top photo, the Jacks converse with Legion member chauffeurs before lunch. Middle photo, opening ceremonies at the District 2 Auxiliary meeting. Bottom photo, Auxiliary representatives of attending units participate in the meeting.

Veterans Day 2025 at Jackson-Silver Post 68

Locke Mills Post 68 held its Veterans Day Ceremony. As it was one day after the 250th anniversary of the Marine Corps, Order #47, issued by the Commandant in 1921, designating the 10th of November as the day on which the Corps was founded, was read. Following the ceremonial format of the Four Chaplains, a Service of Remembrance was held for three post

members who entered into the post everlasting between Aug. 29 -Step. 29, 2025. Before these ceremonies were conducted, Miss Emma Chapman, an Oxford County High School Senior, presented an oration on her life struggles and accomplishments to date, as she prepares to enter the US Navy upon graduation in June.

The Mahoosuc Community Band began the Veterans Day program at Locke Mills Post 68 with the *National Anthem*, after some ceremony, they



played the *Armed Forces Medley*, with post members of each service standing as their service song was played, and ending with *God Bless America*.



Unit 68 Auxiliary Members attend the Veterans Day Ceremony at Locke Mills Post 68. Left to right, Patricia Bell, Marie Bartlett, and Marleen Twitchell.

Oration: Guest speaker, High School Senior Emma Chapman, introduced by Post Commander William Bickford (standing), gives an oration on her aspirations of becoming a US Navy enlistee upon graduation.

More on "VETERANS DAY"
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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 5 continued**"VETERANS DAY"**

(Continued from Page 23)



Post 68 Post Everlasting Ceremony: Left photo, Post 68 1st Vice Harry Orcutt, left, and Chaplain Timothy Twitchell, right, conduct a Ceremony of Remembrance for three Post 68 members who entered the Post Everlasting between Aug. 29 – Sept. 29, 2025. Right photo, Post 68 1st Vice Orcutt behind the photos of the three Post 68 members who had recently entered the Post Everlasting. After the ceremony, Orcutt presented the Post Oration celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps. The ceremony included the reading of General Order 47, issued in 1921 by Commandant John A. LeJeune, which set the day of the Corps founding as Nov. 10, on which date in 1775, the Continental Congress authorized the formation of that service. It should also be noted that The American Legion Auxiliary also was founded on that day in 1919.



Veterans Day Ceremonies: Top photo, The Locke Mills Post 68 Veterans Day firing detail salute is commanded by Post 1st Vice Harry Orcutt. Left to right, Don Pruyne, Post Sgt.-at-Arms Al Lake, Leroy Patten, and Post Finance Officer Raymond Hakala. Bottom photo, echoing Taps is played by the Mahoosuc Trumpeters Julie Schubert DVM, left, and Brian Dunham, right.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 6

Rockland Post 1; Vinalhaven Post 18; Camden Post 30; North Haven Post 33; St. George Post 34; Thomaston Post 37; Warren Post 218

St. George Post 34 Participates in Wreaths Across America Day 2025

On Dec. 13, 2025 Kinney-Melquist American Legion Post 34 in Tenants Harbor, along with hundreds of St. George and South Thomaston volunteers, united to honor the fallen, remember those who served in uniform and let families know that a veteran will never be forgotten. Post members placed wreaths on every veteran's grave

in St. George—over 800 wreaths were placed at five St. George and one South Thomaston Cemetery. According to Wreaths Across America, (WAA) we are the only community to cover every veteran's grave in the community. It was a day that reverently honored our veterans and solemnly celebrated lives of selfless devotion.

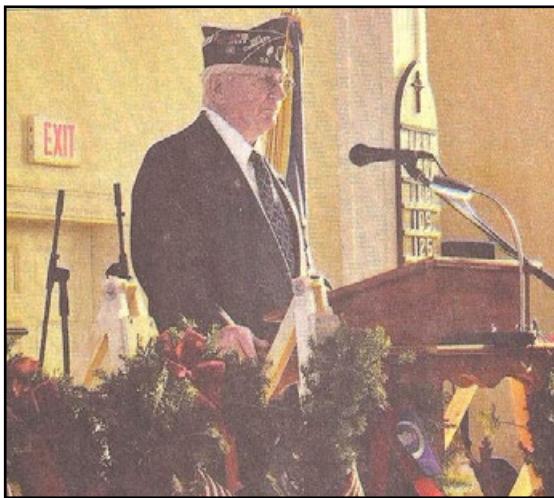
Post 34 Commander Thornton Batty Jr. served as Master of Ceremonies for three separate WAA ceremonies in the community.

Hundreds of volunteers attended ceremonies at the Peoples United Methodist Church in South Thomaston, First Baptist Church of St George, and the Tenants Harbor Baptist Church. The Maine Army National Guard provided the color guard, whose participation added a level of military pageantry and precision drill to the

ceremonies.

This was a real community celebration with Legionnaires and volunteers presenting the ceremonial service wreaths, hundreds of volunteers attending the ceremonies, and many more that braved the cold to place wreaths on all 800 veterans' graves.

The post is already fundraising and planning for next year with the goal of having a wreath on every veteran's grave in St. George and South Thomaston.



Post 34 Wreaths Across America: St. George Post 34 Commander Thornton Batty Jr. at the Wreaths Across America program event in St George on Dec. 13, 2025.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 8

Brunswick Post 20; Bath Post 21; Harpswell Post 171; Topsham Post 202; Phippsburg Post 216

Brunswick Post 20 Holiday Visits

Brunswick Post 20 held holiday recognition events on Dec. 11 and 12, 2025 for those who have served at various retirement homes in the area. The post started with Sunnybrook Senior Living in Brunswick on Thursday, and then visited Horizons Living & Rehab Center and the Dionne Commons

Residence, also in Brunswick, on Friday. What a great day conversing with these veterans that once served. They were truly appreciative of the gift bags provided. Special thank you to Post 20 member Sean Crean for taking the lead and making this all happen.

Submitted by Richard Barter



Brunswick Post 20 Visits Sunnybrook Senior Living Center: Top left photo, Post 20 members converse with veterans. Top right photo, gift bags are presented to residents. Bottom left photo, the Heroes Wall at the living center is dedicated to current residents. Bottom right photo, service flags are displayed.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 8 continued**Post 20 Wreaths Across America State House Event 2025**

On Monday, Dec. 8, 2025, at 12:00 noon, Maine residents and American Legion Post 20 of Brunswick held Wreaths Across America ceremonies at the state house. Once again, this was truly a great day for our Maine veterans and families. This event takes place in all 50 U.S. states at noon local time on the Monday of Wreaths Across America week. This is the 5th year Brunswick Post 20 has

conducted this event, with Post 20 Commander W. David Watson leading the way. A big thank you to all that worked to make this happen, especially the members from Harpswell Post 171 Honor Guard. Thank you to VFW of Maine Commander Amy H. Meuchel, keynote speaker, and American Legion Department of Maine National Executive Committeeman Alternate (NECA) Kirk Thurston.



Ceremony Speakers: Left photo, Brunswick Post 20 Commander W. David Watson delivers opening comments at the Wreaths Across America State House ceremonies on Dec. 8, 2025. Right photo, VFW of Maine Commander Amy H. Meuchel delivers keynote speaker remarks.



Wreath Presentation: Left photo, American Legion Department of Maine National Executive Committeeman Alternate (NECA) Kirk Thurston speaks at the ceremonies. Right photo, VFW Commander Amy H. Meuchel and American Legion Department of Maine NECA Kirk Thurston present the Veterans Wreath at the Wreaths Across America State House Ceremonies.



Honor Guard:
Harpswell Post 171 Honor Guard at the Wreaths Across America State House Ceremonies on Dec. 8, 2025.

Brunswick Post 20 Wreaths Across America Day Event

George C. Files Post 20 in Brunswick once again places veterans' wreaths at memorials in town. This veterans wreath was presented in Augusta at the State House Hall of Flags on Wreaths Across America Day, which is the Monday of Wreaths Across America week. This event is conducted in all fifty states on that day.

The wreath cannot be left at the Hall of Flags, so Post 20 annually transfers it to the town's memorial plaza along with twelve or so other, smaller wreaths, honoring all our armed forces and also remembering conflicts of the past. Post 20 Commander W. David Watson heads the effort up with other members of Post 20 helping out.



Wreath Placement: Left photo, the veterans' wreath at the memorial plaza in Brunswick. Right photo, Brunswick Post 20 members pose for a photo with the veterans' wreath, left to right, Sean Crean, Richard Barter, Post 20 Commander W. David Watson, Jef White, and Marty Diller

Harpswell Man Celebrates His 101st Birthday

Richard Parks reflects on his life, dedicating 30 years to wildlife biology in Maine as he turns 101, becoming oldest ever member of his family.

Harpswell's eldest resident, Richard Parks, celebrated his 101st birthday a day early last Friday, reflecting on his family and long career as a biologist with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Parks, who was born and raised in Plymouth, Massachusetts, is, to his knowledge, is the only person in his family to reach his centennial. Parks graduated from two high schools, with the first one being Plymouth High School in 1942. To avoid the draft, Parks' parents sent him to Gould Academy in Bethel, Maine, a prep school where Parks completed his postgraduate studies.

Parks would volunteer for the service anyway in 1943, and spent nearly three years in the Navy as a quartermaster on a large landing ship. Parks left for overseas on March 10, 1945, for the last six months of the war during the Pacific Theater. The only action Parks saw was in Okinawa, where his ship landed several Army signal corps companies unloading trucks along with big rolls of wire for communication.

Toward the end of World War II, Parks was heading back to Guam and Pearl Harbor to pick up amphibious tractors (amtracs) and assault troops for

the invasion of Japan. However, it never happened, as the Japanese surrendered and WWII ended on Sept 2, 1945.

After Parks left the Navy, he attended Massachusetts State College, which would become the University of Massachusetts while Parks was attending. During his university time, Parks became fascinated by the water surveys done in ponds for Springfield College.

After graduating from the university, Parks moved north to Maine in 1950 to work for the state as a wildlife biologist, primarily focusing on land acquisition and real estate.

Parks met his wife, Annie Haskell, through his job in the wildlife research division of Maine.

Parks moved to Ellsworth to manage the wildlife district covering Hancock and Washington counties. However, the district would later split, and Parks would primarily work in Hancock County.

When Parks began at the Inland Fisheries and Game Department, he met Raymond Moss, the Ellsworth warden supervisor, who had a reputation for being a hardworking warden dedicated to land conservation and ran the Warden School at Camp Keyes in Augusta. At the time Parks met Moss, he had eight to 10 wardens working for him.

"I like the contacts of people and

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 8 continued**"HARPSWELL 101ST"**
(Continued from Page 27)

hunters that I had, and also I liked the contact of the state employees that I worked with," Parks said.

A realty division was established within the Inland Fisheries and Game Department in 1970, with Parks placed in charge of all the real estate, operating as a section of the department. Parks dealt with the sale of land for public use.

"We tried four experimental stockings of game while I was working for the department; two were successful and two were not successful," Parks said.

The two successful species of game were turkeys and geese, with the unsuccessful species being caribou and sharp-tailed grouse. They attempted to release the sharp-tailed grouse in Washington County, but there were so few birds, approximately 20 to 30,

In Memory of Richard Parks
(July 19, 1924 - December 13, 2025)**Harpswell's Boston Post Cane Recipient:**

Richard Parks, 99 at the time, holds Harpswell's Boston Post Cane during a ceremony at the Town Office on Jan. 25, 2024. The Harpswell Neck resident turned 101 on July 18, 2025.

Photo Courtesy of J.W. Oliver/Harpswell Anchor
www.pressherald.com/2025/07/21/harpswell-man-celebrates-101st-birthday

Reflecting With Family:

Richard Parks sits with his son Tom and reflects on his long life and 30 years of service to Maine's wildlife.

Photo by Paul Bagnall/Staff Writer, Times Record
www.pressherald.com/2025/07/21/harpswell-man-celebrates-101st-birthday



Harpswell Post 171 Veterans Day: Top photo, Cdr. Mike Doyle pays tribute to all who served or are serving in the U.S. military during the Post 171 Veterans Day Ceremony at Harpswell Center last Nov. 11. Left to right, Cdr. Doyle, John Ott, Bob Webber, Amy Farrell. At the rear: Tom Guerra (with bugle), John Hill, and Bill O'Connell. Bottom photo, Tom Guerra played Taps as members of the Post 171 Color Guard stand by after firing a salute. Left to right, John Hill, Bob Webber, Bill O'Connell. Saluting in front are Cdr. Doyle, John Ott, and Amy Ferrell.

Photos by Donna Frisoli

Topsham Post 202 is Going to the Dogs!

Everyone knows that dogs bring comfort to those in need, whether its service dogs, therapy dogs, emotional support dogs, or just a much-needed companion. When I think about my post, the Corey E. Garver American Legion Post 202, I think what dogs mean to all of us there. Our last three Commander's Projects have been centered around dogs.

In 2023, then Post Commander Sheryl Moore raised money for Mission Working Dogs. We were able to name our dog Corey, after the soldier who our post is named after. Corey was the head of his class and is in training to be a service dog to a veteran.

In 2024, Post Commander Jim Burak saw the need for a therapy dog in MSAD 75. He was able to raise the \$10,000 needed to donate a black lab named Garver to the Resource Officer, Belle Mathieu. Garver, now a member of the Topsham Police Department, has brought comfort to many students in and out of school.

Jim Burak, still Topsham Post 202 commander, raised \$3,000 needed to help pay for the training of a service dog for a fire fighter in the Topsham

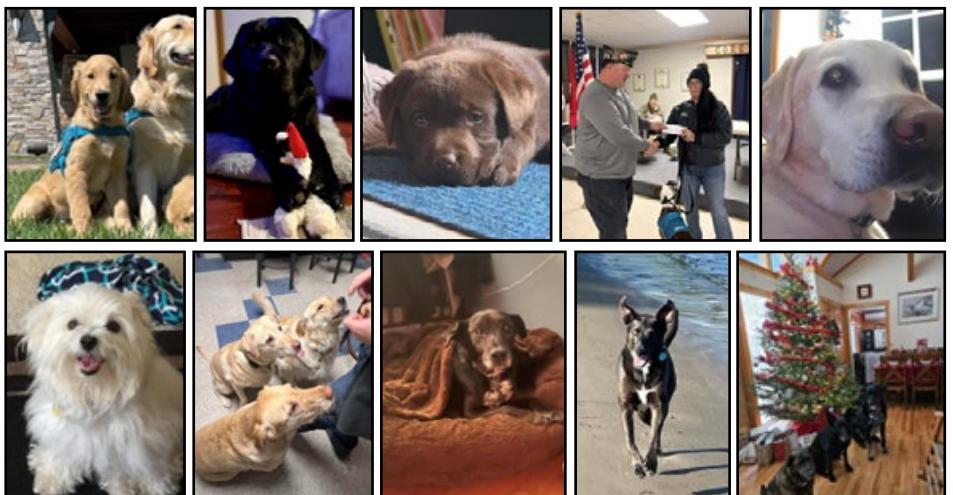
Fire Department. This gentle Boxer will provide comfort and support, not just to its handler, but to all the first responders in Topsham—comfort that is desperately needed after witnessing the devastation that can be caused by fires, or accidents.

Last year, Department Commander Leroy McKenzie lost his beloved therapy dog. After a year, it was clear that he needed to get a new dog to help through the stressful times. Within weeks, enough money was raised, and Shay, a cuddly chocolate lab, came home to Leroy with puppy kisses and tail wags.

But our love of our canine companions doesn't stop there. If you visit Post 202 you might be greeted by some of our companions. They will greet you with a doggy smile and wagging tales. Their presence in our building brings smiles and comfort to all our members.

Anytime you are able to support a veteran with the comfort only a dog can bring—that unconditional love—you should do so. Meet some of our dogs that we have been able to benefit others, or just bring comfort to our local family.

Submitted by Department. & Post 202 Finance Officer Mary "Tally" Brown



The Dogs Of Topsham Post 202: Top row, left to right, Corey, Garver, Shay, and Dakota with mom and Fire Fighter Monica, and Magnum Burak. Bottom row, left to right, Coqui Larios, Maggie Eastman, Honey Hareck, Nala Brown, Bodie Smith-Wallentine, Tully Croteau, and Luna, Sorcha, and Loki Yamala-Jabaut.

Phippsburg Post 216 Happenings & Events

As fall arrived and the holiday season started, Phippsburg American Legion Memorial Post 216 continued to stay busy.

This was the second year that Post 216 participated in the town's annual Halloween "Trunk or Treat" at the Town Hall parking lot. This year, they decorated Post Commander Kellogg's truck and donned full costumes to hand out candy to the kids. Next year, we intend to have two vehicles decorated as the competition heats up between Post Adjutant Young and Post Commander Kellogg for the best dressed truck.

On Nov. 15, 2025, Post 216 members

gathered at the Tax Bracket Fundraiser and the Veteran's Memorial Park to prepare the grounds and gardens for the long winter.

Members gathered on Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025 to decorate the inside and outside of Phippsburg Town Hall, the Veterans Memorial Park, and in addition, this year we decorated the Phippsburg Sportsmen's Association, which is the home of Phippsburg Legion Post 216 and Bath VFW Post 7738. We partnered with the Association, VFW, Phippsburg Town Office, Phippsburg Recreation

More on "POST 216 HAPPENINGS"

Page 27

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 8 continued

■ "POST 216 HAPPENINGS" (Continued from Page 26)

Commission, and other organizations to host the town's Christmas Open House on Dec. 19, 2025 where Santa (Post 216 Comrade Chris Mixon) arrived by fire truck to visit and hand out a gift to each child (about 40 attended). This was a very challenging evening because the whole area had lost power, but post members supplied portable generators and water to keep the event on track. Thankfully, power was restored just as the event began.

On the evening of Dec. 13, 2025 the post held its annual Christmas Dinner for members and their families at the Small Point Baptist Church. Donations were made to Brunswick Post 20 to help provide Christmas boxes to active-duty members serving abroad, and to the Bath Senior Citizens' "Willy Knitters" who knit afghans for veterans at Togus.

In January, post members removed the Christmas decorations at all of the locations and placed them in storage until next year.

Now on to a quiet winter and preparations for a busy 2026.

Halloween

Post 216

Halloween: Post Comrade Jim Wallace, far right, sets up for the town's "Trunk or Treat."

Post Commander Ken Kellogg's (aka "The Farmer") decorated truck is the background with the "Scary Night" display.

Photo by Phippsburg Post 216 Commander Kellogg



Awards



Post 216 Continuous Service Awards: Top left photo, Comrade Bill Nicholson, left, receives his 5-Year Continuous Service

certificate and pin from Post Commander Ken Kellogg, right. Top right photo, Comrade Rob Martinez, left, receives his 5-Year Continuous Service Certificate and Pin from Post Commander Ken Kellogg, right. Bottom photo, Comrade Reggie Read, left, receives his 30-Year Continuous Service Certificate and Pin from Commander Ken Kellogg, right.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young



Veteran's Park Cleanup



Veteran's Park Cleanup: Left photo, Comrade Bob Belben blows leaves during the fall cleanup of the Phippsburg Veterans Memorial Park. Right photo, Post 216 First Vice Commander Jimmy Wallace rakes leaves.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young

Decorating Town Hall, Veterans Memorial Site, and Sportsmen's Association for Christmas

Post 216 Wreath Hanging:
Comrade Bob Belben hangs a wreath and lights on the WWI/WII Stone at the Veteran's Memorial Park, which lists those from Phippsburg who served.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young



Christmas Lights: Top left photo, Comrade Chuck Mainville hangs lights on the walkway bushes at the Phippsburg Town Hall. Top right photo, Post 216 Commander Ken Kellogg, left, and Comrade Phil Chan, right, hang lights on the trees along the side of Town Hall. Bottom photo, Post Chaplain Richard Spear, left, and Comrade Keith Sikora, right, hang lights on the flagpole bushes along the walkway into Town Hall.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young



The Post 216 Christmas Decorating Group at the Veterans Memorial Park in Phippsburg (including the sons of Comrade Phil Chan in front.)

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young

Christmas Open House



Christmas Open House:
Santa/Post 216 Comrade Chris Mixon visits with the local kids at the Phippsburg Christmas Open House.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young

More on "POST 216 HAPPENINGS"
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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 8 continued

"POST 216 HAPPENINGS" (Continued from Page 27)

Christmas Dinner



Christmas Dinner Group Photo: Members of Phippsburg Post 216 and their families enjoy fellowship at the Christmas dinner held at the Small Point Baptist Church.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young

Quilt Donation:

Phippsburg Post 216 Sergeant-At-Arms Larry Swizdor (Marine Corps Veteran), center, is presented with a Marine Corps quilt made and donated by Shyla Spear, right, at the Christmas dinner. Chilloa Young, left, helps hold the quilt.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young



Phippsburg Post 216's Newest Members Attend Dinner: Comrades Nick, left, and Nancy Hamlin, right, Phippsburg Post 216's newest members, attend their first post function at the Christmas dinner. Nick has been a member of the Legion for 14 years and Nancy for 19 years.

Photos by Phippsburg Post 216 Adjutant Mike Young



Hallowell Cemetery Ceremony: Left to right, Timothy McGuire, Carroll Whitman, John Mosher, Gerald Stuart, Phillip Lindley, Maureen Malley, ceremonial host speaker William Meehan, and State Representative Daniel Shagoury.



Wreath Laying: Post Chaplain Daniel West, left, and 50 year member Robert Stubbs, right, commence to lay the wreath in honor of Veterans Day, for all those who served.



250th Birthday Cake: Following the Veterans Day Ceremonies in Hallowell, Post 6 presents a celebratory 250th birthday cake for the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines. Left to right, John Mosher, William Meehan, veteran guest Jim Nichols, Robert Stubbs, Lewis Gipson, Gerald Stuart, Maureen Malley, Daniel West, Timothy McGuire, Phillip Lindley, and Carroll Whitman.



Hallowell Post 6 Annual Raffle Drawing: Post 6 holds its annual raffle at the post home. Barabara Gipson has the honor of drawing the first raffle winner, with Maureen Malley standing by.



Hallowell Post 6 Certificates: Goodrich Caldwell Post 6 in Hallowell awarded continuous membership certificates to Carroll Whitman for 10 years and to Lewis Gipson for 31 years of dedication and service on Oct. 27, 2025. Left photo, Acting Post 6 Commander and 1st Vice Commander William Meehan, left, and 10-year member, Carroll Whitman, right. Right photo, William Meehan, left, and 31-year member, Lewis Gipson, right.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 9

Augusta Post 2; Gardiner Post 4; Waterville Post 5; Hallowell Post 6; Winthrop Post 40; Oakland Post 51; Togus Post 90; Vassalboro Post 126; Richmond Post 132; So. China Post 179; Litchfield Post 181; Clinton Post 186; China Post 195; Monmouth Post 204; Augusta Post 205

Hallowell Post 6 Veterans Day Events

Goodrich-Caldwell Post 6 in Hallowell hosted their annual Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11, 2025. The day started with a light breakfast of coffee, donuts, and assorted pastries at the post, followed by a ceremony in Legion Park at the Hallowell Cemetery with guest speakers, event appropriate songs, and a

Following the cemetery ceremony, everyone was invited back to the post for a celebratory birthday cake in honor of the 250th birthday of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines. Afterwards, Post 6 accommodated historical talks and music. It was a memorable time for all.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 9 continued

Post 6 Awards Belated Warranted Officer Certificates: The Goodrich-Caldwell Post 6 in Hallowell awards the Officer of Finance Certificate to Phillip Lindley on Oct. 13, 2025 and the Officer of Americanism Certificate to Glen Glidden on Dec. 8, 2025. Top photo, left to right, Past Post 6 Commander Maureen Malley, Post Finance Officer Phillip Lindley, and Post 1st Vice Commander and acting Post Commander William Meehan. Bottom photo, Acting Post Commander and 1st Vice Commander William Meehan, left, with Post Americanism Officer Glen Glidden, right.

Wreaths Across America at Augusta, Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Members from the Goodrich-Caldwell Post 6 in Hallowell had the honor of volunteering for the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery on Dec. 13, 2025. David Dodge,

William Meehan, Lewis Gipson and his wife Barbara Gipson, and John Mosher attended. They participated in the opening ceremonies and finished the day laying wreaths at assigned gravestones for our fallen heroes.



Wreath Laying: Hallowell Post 6 member David Dodge prepares to lay a wreath at the main flagpole in honor of the different branches of service at the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony. David represented the U.S. Space Force.

Photo by Jennifer Bechard Photography

Wreath Laying At Family Grave Site: Wife of Hallowell Post 6 member Lewis Gipson, Barbara, prepares to lay a wreath at her family members grave site.

Photo by Jennifer Bechard Photography



Paying Respect: Hallowell Post 6 member John Mosher pays respect to a fallen veteran after laying a wreath at their gravestone.

Photo by Jennifer Bechard Photography



Oakland Post 51 Food Pantry Donation: Decker-Simmons Post 51 in Oakland, along with the Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, Legion Riders, and fundraiser Marsha Flye, all helped in raising a donation of \$1,600 for the Oakland Food Pantry. Oakland Post 51 Vice Commander Jhon Palmer, left, presents a check to Cate Mulvey of the Oakland Food Pantry to help the pantry this season.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 10

Fairfield Post 14; Skowhegan Post 16; Pittsfield Post 32; Madison Post 39; Bingham Post 99; Jackman Post 122; Hartland Post 141; Athens Post 192



Skowhegan Post 16 Christmas Spirit: Commander and Historian of Post 16 Tina Richard gets in the Christmas spirit.

Christmas Party: Skowhegan Post 16 held its Christmas Party with the Auxiliary on Dec. 13, 2025. Post 16 Chaplain Ira Stoddard sits in Santa's lap.



Post 16 Veterans Day: Skowhegan Post 16 celebrated Veterans Day on Nov. 11, 2025 with a flag burning ceremony. Girl Scout Troops #1380 and #393, as well as Boy Scout Troop #485, were involved in the ceremony and did a great job.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 10 continued



Winter Wonderland:
Skowhegan Post 16 Commander Tina Richard makes a patriotic snowwoman.



Skowhegan Post 16 Scarf Raffle: At the Legion meeting on Jan. 5, Post 16 Commander Tina Richard raffled off a patriotic scarf that she crocheted to start off the new year. Diane Culleton won the scarf, which she loves, and said she knew it was done with lots of love.



Post 16 Appreciation:
Skowhegan Post 16 Commander Tina Richard gives a coin to three members for their hard work at the post and to show her appreciation on Jan. 5. Left to right, Dan Richardson, Bob Salisbury, Gary Holmes, and Post 16 Commander Tina Richard.



Athens Post 192 Quilts Of Valor:

A Quilts of Valor presentation ceremony was held at Athens Fair Grounds on Sept. 14, 2025. Quilts were presented to four local veterans. Standing, left to right, Post 192 Commander Robert Doiron, Dana Martin, Nancy Martin, David Mercier Sr. Seated is Garwood Howell.

Photo by Gerald Boulette

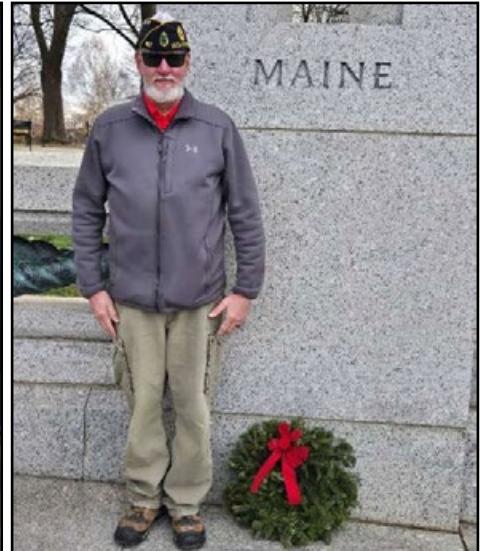
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 13

Bangor Post 12; E Millinocket Post 13; Corinna Post 73; Old Town Post 75; Lincoln Post 77; Millinocket Post 80; Orono Post 84; Howland Post 97; Brewer Post 98; Newport Post 105; Etna-Carmel Post 107; Corinth Post 115; Lee Post 160; Herman Post 200; Dixmont Post 201; Glenburn Post 211; Hampden Post 213

District 13 Seeks American Legion Family Honor Guard Members

Up here in District 13, we are asking and SAL members. We are calling it for participants to join in our honor guard. We are including Legion post members, Riders, Auxiliary, and SAL members. We are calling it the American Legion Family Honor Guard. Contact District 13 Adjutant Steve Luzzi for more information.



District 13 Wreaths Across America: The District 13 American Legion Family Honor Guard attends the Wreaths Across America event. Top photo, the caravan of vehicles in Hermon Maine Honor Guard Team for Wreaths Across America. Top right photo, Honor Guard, left to right, Team Lead and Etna-Carmel Post 107 Commander Ryan Simpson, Newport Post 105 Commander Tom Kuesport, Post 107 member Steve Luzzi, Post 107 member Jim Fraser, Post 107 member Justin Kent, and Post 105 member Sonny Buxton. Bottom left photo, Post 107 member Jim Thorne, an event guest speaker. Bottom right photo, Post 107 Commander Ryan Simpson follows Wreaths Across America and is honored to be asked to place the wreath on the WWII memorial by the State of Maine location.

Shared History Leads to Heartfelt Gift for Maine Veterans Home Resident

A simple conversation at the Tedd-Alait Post 75 (Old Town) Hunter's Breakfast turned into a touching story of connection and gratitude between two members of the American Legion Family. Maine Veterans Home resident Seaman William Isbister, who served aboard the USS Seattle, met Sons of the American Legion (SAL) member Chad Dufflemeyer, who was a pipefitter that worked on the USS Seattle during a retrofitting in Dry Dock.

During their discussion, Seaman Isbister recalled a cherished Zippo lighter bearing the ship's name that he had lost years ago. Moved by the story, Dufflemeyer shared that he once owned the same style of lighter. Inspired by this bond, Dufflemeyer brought the idea to the next Tedd-Lait Squadron meeting, where members unanimously agreed to replace the lighter as a gesture of respect

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 13 continued**"SHARED HISTORY"**
(Continued from Page 30)

and remembrance.

On Dec. 6, during the annual Christmas shopping and wrapping party at the Maine Veterans Home in Bangor, squadron members Chad Dufflemeyer, Isaiah Buxton, Detachment

Americanism Officer Llew Buxton, and District 13 1st Vice Commander Roger Gray presented Seaman Isbister with a replacement Zippo lighter. The presentation was met with smiles and heartfelt appreciation, underscoring the enduring mission of the American Legion Family: honoring service and building bonds that span generations.



A Thoughtful Gift: Old Town Squadron 75 member Chad Dufflemeyer, along with Isaiah Buxton, Detachment Americanism Officer Llew Buxton, and District 13 1st Vice Commander Roger Gray present Maine Veterans Home resident Seaman Isbister with a replacement USS Seattle Zippo lighter at the annual Christmas shopping and wrapping party on Dec. 6.



within an hour's notice, help started to arrive. This is Tiess' ninth year using his company assets, Heart of Maine Construction, for making deliveries. Tiess would like to thank Post 98 for the assistance.

Submitted by Dexter Post 53 Adjutant Timothy Tiess



Dexter Post 53 Visits Dexter Nursing Home: Members from Post 53 go into the Dexter Nursing Home once a month and visit with veterans. On their Dec. 23, 2025 visit, members presented filled stockings as a Christmas gift from Dexter Post 53. Left to right, Post Commander Fred Miller, Post 2nd Vice Commander Gary Burke, Post Adjutant Tim Tiess, Post Service Officer Stephen Gudroe, and several resident veterans from the Dexter Nursing Home.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 14

Dover-Foxcroft Post 29; Milo Post 41; Dexter Post 53; Brownville-Jct. Post 92; Greenville Post 94; Monson Post 116; Guilford Post 119; Sangerville Post 165



Dexter Post 53 holds its annual Christmas dinner and gift sharing at the post home.

Dexter Post 53 Wreaths Across America: When Wreaths Across America Honor Fleet volunteer and Dexter Post 53 Adjutant Timothy Tiess had Brewer added to his route at the last minute, the city of Brewer was worried about Tiess having help to unload his truck. Tiess reached out to the Brewer Post 98 Commander, and

District 16

Caribou Post 15; Fort Fairfield Post 27; Houlton Post 47; Washburn Post 48; Oakfield Post 52; Presque Isle Post 88; Mars Hill Post 118; Limestone Post 127; Easton Post 187; Masardis Post 208

Wreaths Across America Ceremony Held in Houlton

Wreaths Across America began in 1992 when Morrill Worcester,

owner of Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine, found himself with a surplus of holiday wreaths. Remembering a childhood visit to Arlington National Cemetery, he arranged for the extra wreaths to be placed on veterans' graves. What started as a small gesture grew steadily over the years, eventually becoming a national non-profit organization in 2007. Today, Wreaths Across America coordinates ceremonies at thousands of cemeteries across the United States and abroad, all held on the same December weekend with one mission: Remember,

Honor, Teach. On Dec. 13, 2025, Chester L. Briggs American Legion Post 47 led a heartfelt Wreaths Across America ceremony at Evergreen Cemetery in Houlton. Veterans, families, and community members gathered to honor the men and women who served our nation, ensuring their names and sacrifices are never forgotten.

This year's ceremony at Evergreen Cemetery reflected that mission with honor and community spirit. Post 47 members led the observance, placing wreaths and offering words of

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 16 continued**■ "WREATHS - HOULTON"**
(Continued from Page 31)

remembrance for those who served. Volunteers of all ages participated, demonstrating the shared commitment to honoring veterans from every generation.



Wreath Laying: Left photo, Houlton Post 47 Commander Charlie Clark lays a wreath for a veteran at Evergreen Cemetery in Houlton on Dec. 13, 2025 during the Wreaths Across America ceremony. Right photo, Post 47 Honor Guard places a wreath at the grave of Chester L. Briggs, whom the post was named after. He lost his life in WWI. Left to right, Jerry Riley, Randy Farrar, Marlo Farrar, Percy Buck Carmichael, and Dean Mitchell.



Post 47 Wreaths Across America Ceremony: Houlton Post 47 members gather to honor the brave who have served our nation. Front row, left to right, Percy Buck Carmichael, Marlo Farrar, Randy Farrar, Ted Gates, and Dean Mitchell. Back row, Jerry Riley.

Chester L. Briggs Post 47 Leads Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony at Gateway Bridge

On Dec. 7, 2025 Chester L. Briggs American Legion Post 47 led a solemn Pearl Harbor remembrance ceremony at the Gateway Bridge in Houlton. Community members, veterans, and local students gathered to honor the lives lost during the attack on Pearl Harbor, a defining moment in American history.

Pearl Harbor was attacked on Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese forces launched a surprise strike against the U.S. naval base in Hawaii. The assault destroyed or damaged numerous ships and aircraft and resulted in the loss of more than 2,400 American lives. The following day, the United States formally entered World War II, marking a turning point that changed the course of American history.

This year's ceremony at the Gateway Bridge reflected the deep respect

our community holds for those who served and sacrificed. The Post 47 Honor Guard led the observance, joined by the color guard, made up of criminal justice students who proudly participated in the tribute. The presence of eight Canadian veterans highlighted the strong bond shared between our two nations, underscoring the shared history and enduring partnership between our nations.

The event served as a reminder of the bravery shown on that fateful day in 1941 and the importance of continuing to honor the legacy of the Greatest Generation. Through gatherings like this, Post 47 remains committed to preserving history, fostering community involvement, and ensuring that the sacrifices of our veterans are never forgotten.



Houlton Post 47 Pearl Harbor Remembrance: Post 47 members gather with community members, veterans, and students for a ceremony at Gateway Bridge in Houlton to remember the lives lost during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Left to right, Ted Gates, Dean

Mitchell, Randy Farrar, Marlo Farrar, Percy Buck Carmichael, Fred Anderson, Criminal Justice student, and Post 47 Commander Charles Clark.

Chester L. Briggs Post 47 Hosts Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for Seniors

Each year, Chester L. Briggs American Legion Post 47 in Houlton hosts a Thanksgiving dinner for local senior citizens—an event open to veterans, their families, friends, and the public. This tradition has continued to grow, and we typically serve more than 300 meals. This year was no exception.

On Nov. 23, 2025, Post 47 volunteers served 340 Thanksgiving meals! The dining hall was open to all guests who wished to share a warm meal, enjoy fellowship, and give thanks together.

What made this year's dinner especially meaningful was the journey that brought us here. Last year, on the evening following our Thanksgiving event, Post 47 suffered a devastating fire that severely damaged our kitchen. Thankfully, no one was present at the time, but the loss was significant—both financially and for the community that relies on our post as a gathering place. The post is a cornerstone of local support.

Over the past year, our members and supporters have worked tirelessly—raising funds, seeking new opportunities, and pushing forward despite every challenge—to ensure we could continue serving our community.

Thanks to that effort, construction on our new kitchen is scheduled to begin this spring, marking an important step forward. While we are still fundraising to support the rebuild effort, our post will persevere.

A major part of our resilience comes from the strength of all Post 47 family—the Legionnaires, the Sons of the American Legion squadron, and the Auxiliary unit. These groups work together with a level of cooperation and camaraderie rarely seen in volunteer organizations. Their shared commitment to service is the backbone of everything we accomplish.

Our Post Commander and his leadership team embody that spirit. Their dedication, guidance, and steady hand have helped Post 47 continue its mission despite adversity, ensuring we remain a reliable source of support for our veterans and our community.

Hosting this year's Thanksgiving dinner was more than a tradition; it was a testament to resilience, teamwork, and the unwavering spirit of Post 47. This Thanksgiving meant a little more to all of us—our members, our volunteers, and the seniors who look forward to this gathering each year.



Houlton Post 47 Honor Guard: Randy Farrar, left, and Ted Gates, right, at the post's Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 23, 2025.



Serving Line for the prepared meal and pies at Houlton Post 47 Thanksgiving dinner.

More on "THANKSGIVING" Page 33

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 16 continued

■ "THANKSGIVING" (Continued from Page 32)



Post 47 Thanksgiving Dinner: Houlton Post and Auxiliary Unit 47 members enjoy Thanksgiving at the post home on Nov. 23, 2025. Top photo, left to right, Houlton Post 47 2nd Vice Matt Quint, Auxiliary Unit 47 member Lynn Swimm, and Post 47 Commander Charles Clark. Bottom photo, Auxiliary members Marlo Farrar, left, and Nancy Smith, right.



Chester L. Briggs Post 47 Honors Veterans Day with Community Ceremony in Houlton

Members of the Chester L. Briggs American Legion Post 47 in Houlton gathered with local residents, veterans, families, and community members on Veterans Day for a heartfelt ceremony held at the town's historic park. The event, rooted in tradition and deep respect, served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by generations of service members from the Houlton area and beyond.

The ceremony opened with the posting of colors by the Post 47 Honor Guard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence to honor those who served and those who never returned home. The crisp November air and the quiet stillness of the park created a fitting atmosphere for reflection.

Post 47 Commander Charles Clark offered welcoming remarks, emphasizing the importance of remembering not only the veterans of past conflicts but also the men and women currently serving around the world. He spoke of the enduring values of duty, honor, and community—principles that continue to guide the mission of Post 47.

Post 47 members of The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, and Auxiliary participated by reading selections in honor of our veterans and their families. Community members

also participated in the ceremony as guest speakers, including Department 1st Vice Commander Joe Michaud and Sue Tortello of the Houlton Town Council. They each offered words of remembrance, honoring the sacrifices made by generations of service members with words of pride and encouragement. The solemn sound of Taps, played by Post 47 bugler and Adjutant Jerry Riley, echoed across the park and brought the crowd to a reflective silence.

The ceremony concluded with expressions of gratitude to all who attended and to the volunteers who helped organize the event. For Post 47, Veterans Day remains not just a date on the calendar but a living commitment to honoring service, supporting veterans, and strengthening the bonds of the Houlton community.

As residents dispersed from the park, the sense of unity and appreciation lingered—an enduring reminder of the sacrifices made by those who have worn the nation's uniform and the responsibility we all share in preserving their legacy.

Additionally, later in the day Post 47 provided support during the Native American Veterans Day service at the Maliseet band's historic veterans cemetery, the only Native American veterans burial site of its kind east of the Mississippi River.

Houlton Post 47 Honors Veterans Day:

Top photo, left to right, Post 47 2nd Vice Commander Matthew Quint, Post 1st Vice Commander Dennis Geiger, Post Service Officer Scott Brewer, Department 1st Vice Commander Joe Michaud, Post Chaplain Tom Connors, Post Commander Charles Clark, Auxiliary Unit 1st Vice Nancy Smith, and Auxiliary Unit Treasurer Bobbi Jo Woods. Middle photo, left to right, Post 2nd Vice Commander Matthew Quint, Post 1st Vice Commander Dennis Geiger, Department 1st Vice Commander Joe Michaud, Post Service Officer Scott Brewer, Post Chaplain Tom Connors, Post Commander Charles Clark, Auxiliary Unit 1st Vice Nancy Smith, and Auxiliary Unit Treasurer Bobbi Jo Woods. Bottom photo, Post 47 Honor Guard members, left to right, Post Adjutant and bugler Jerry Riley, Chaplain Dean Mitchell, Ted Gates, Marlo Farrar, and Percy Carmichael.



Honoring Canadian Indigenous Veterans Day at Woodstock First Nations

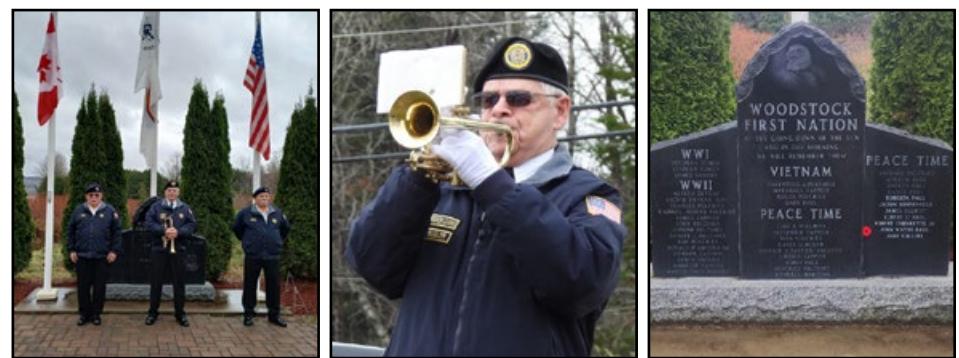
On Canadian Indigenous Veterans Day, Nov. 8, 2025, members of Houlton Post 47 Honor Guard were honored to attend and participate in the ceremony at Woodstock First Nations.

Post 47 Bugler Jerry Riley performed "Last Post," a solemn tribute to the fallen. Ted Gates laid a wreath on behalf of Chester L. Briggs Post 47, symbolizing our deep respect and remembrance.

The ceremony had a strong turnout

with representation from both countries, reflecting the community's commitment to honoring Indigenous veterans and their sacrifices.

We are truly thankful for the invitation to join this important day of remembrance. It was a privilege to stand alongside the Woodstock First Nations community in paying tribute to the courage and service of Indigenous veterans.



Houlton Post 47 Honors Indigenous Veterans: Left photo, left to right, Post 47 Honor Guard members Percy "Buck" Carmichael, Jerry Riley, and Ted Gates attend the Woodstock First Nations Veterans Day Ceremony on Nov. 8. Middle photo, Post 47 Bugler Jerry Riley performs "Last Post." Right photo, Woodstock First Nations War Memorial.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DISTRICT...

District 17

Van Buren Post 49; Fort Kent Post 133; Stockholm Post 136; Frenchville Post 145;
Madawaska Post 147; Eagle Lake 176; St. Francis Post 180



Frenchville Unit 145 Update: We are not a very big unit, but we are alive and active in our communities of Frenchville, St. Agatha, and Sinclair. Recently, we donated 14 beautiful blankets to the Caribou Veterans' Home. We also donated towards their Christmas, with many Christmas wrappings, bows, and bags. Top photos, the donated Christmas supplies and blankets. Middle photo, receiving the blankets at a Unit 145 meeting is District 7 President Erica Gray, right, Unit 145 Secretary Denise Sinclair, left, and Unit Treasurer/Membership Chair Claudette Thibeault, center. Bottom photos, Unit 145 President Rena Daigle and Unit Secretary Denise Sinclair present Tammy Lothrop, the Guidance Counselor at Wisdom High School, a donation of several school bags containing many school supplies for the children in need.

Photos by Unit 145 Secretary Denise and Unit Treasurer/Membership Chair Claudette Thibeault

Celebrate the Nation's Semi-Quincentennial by Taking Part in The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge.

Visit: www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge to learn more and register.

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE:

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities. The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

The year-long initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness and community service — in order to engage more American Legion Family members and others to participate.

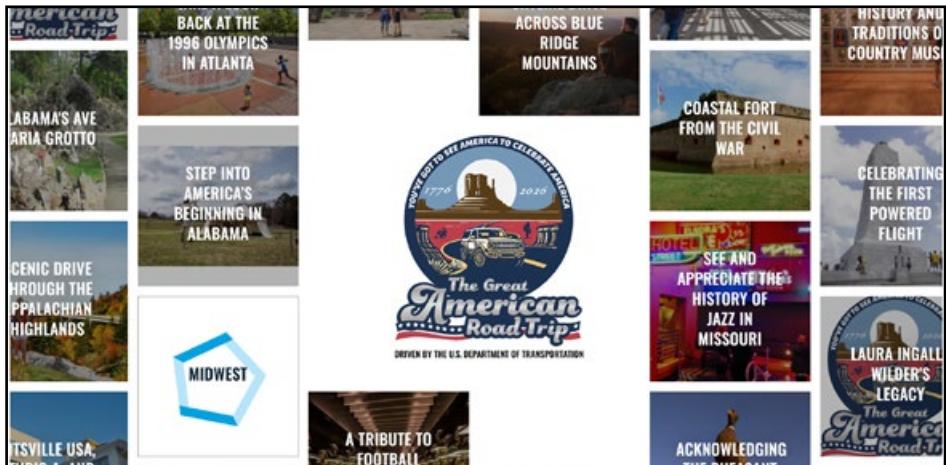
Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American



Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

America250 Presents Great American Road Trip



The campaign highlights iconic travel routes, historic and widely varied landmarks, and scenic destinations across all 50 states

The U.S. Department of Transportation's [Great American Road Trip](#) invites Americans to explore the nation's highways and byways in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The campaign highlights iconic travel routes, historic and widely varied landmarks, and scenic destinations across all 50 states, encouraging families to rediscover the beauty of the country. Visit the Great American Road Trip [website](#) for curated itineraries by region, or pick

a destination at random to help plan your journey as part of this once-in-a-generation milestone. The campaign's [social media accounts](#) will be updated.

By [National Executive Committee resolution](#), American Legion departments and posts are encouraged to connect with their state and local America250 commissions. An online directory is available to contact these commissions at america250.org/our-partners/state-and-territory-commissions. Share your stories of involvement on [Legiontown](#).

January 27, 2026
<https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/usa250/2026/january/america250-presents-great-american-road-trip>

T a p s C o l u m n

<u>POST</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>	<u>POST</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>
Post 3 – Calais	John M Damon	Vietnam	Post 126 – Vassalboro	Douglas W Grosso	Lebanon/Grenada
Post 3 – Calais	Jerald N Garriott	Vietnam	Post 126 – Vassalboro	David L Singer	Vietnam
Post 3 – Calais	Dennis L McIntyre	Vietnam	Post 128 – Standish	Ralph M Brooks	Vietnam
Post 5 – Waterville	Alfred V Bourget	Vietnam	Post 128 – Standish	Calvin C Lewis	Vietnam
Post 5 – Waterville	George Peter	Korea	Post 133 – Fort Kent	Lionel Bernier	Vietnam
Post 6 – Hallowell	Paul G Watson	Persian Gulf	Post 136 – Stockholm	Ronald Bouchard	Lebanon/Grenada
Post 20 – Brunswick	Francis M Taylor	Korea	Post 136 – Stockholm	Malachi F Anderson	Korea
Post 20 – Brunswick	Armand J Larochele	Vietnam	Post 136 – Stockholm	Silas Gustafson	Korea
Post 23 – Baileyville	Russell F Bergin	Korea	Post 136 – Stockholm	Dana H Dixon	Vietnam
Post 24 – Rumford	Rapheno E Thibeault	Vietnam	Post 148 – Windham	Kevin Ronan	Persian Gulf
Post 24 – Rumford	Vincent Sassi	WWII	Post 149 – Waldoboro	Anthony Tozier	Persian Gulf
Post 24 – Rumford	Robert E Dupill Sr	WWII	Post 150 – Mechanic Falls	Thomas Harrison Sr	Vietnam
Post 24 – Rumford	Raymond J Martin	WWII	Post 150 – Mechanic Falls	Kenneth C Carlin	Korea
Post 26 – Biddeford	Ronald Palmitessa	Vietnam	Post 153 – Auburn	William G King	Korea
Post 27 – Ft. Fairfield	Louis R McLaughlin	Korea	Post 153 – Auburn	George Gagnon	Vietnam
Post 28 – Farmington	Horace A Labree	Korea	Post 158 – Lisbon	Charles T Avery	Vietnam
Post 28 – Farmington	Bernal E Allen	Korea	Post 158 – Lisbon	Gene C White	Vietnam
Post 34 – St. George	Kenneth Grey	Vietnam	Post 158 – Lisbon	Marcel Lajoie	WWII
Post 39 – Madison	Cecil O Dow	Vietnam	Post 159 – Kennebunkport	Charles H Hayes	Vietnam
Post 39 – Madison	Richard E Parker	Vietnam	Post 163 – Palermo	Charles L McDonald	Vietnam
Post 47 – Houlton	Sidney Sherwood	Vietnam	Post 164 – Falmouth	Edward L Gaudreau	Vietnam
Post 49 – Van Buren	Manley B Lyons	Vietnam	Post 164 – Falmouth	Lyndon McAllister	Vietnam
Post 49 – Van Buren	Donald W Gagnon	Vietnam	Post 171 – Harpswell	Richard Parks	WWII
Post 50 – Unity	Edwin W Knight	Vietnam	Post 178 – Winslow	Eric Warnquist	Vietnam
Post 53 – Dexter	James E McDaniel	Korea/Vietnam	Post 178 – Winslow	Robert A Clark	WWII
Post 55 – Limerick	George C Fowler	Vietnam	Post 178 – Winslow	Dale L Clifford	Vietnam
Post 57 – Old Orchard	Daniel Barbano	Korea	Post 178 – Winslow	Paul J Cloutier	Korea
Post 57 – Old Orchard	Earle R Jordan III	Korea	Post 178 – Winslow	Louis J Coluni III	Vietnam
Post 62 – Westbrook	Philip R Moreau	Korea	Post 178 – Winslow	Robert Nelson	Vietnam
Post 65 – Lubec	Hovey Hall	Unknown	Post 178 – Winslow	Lawrence L Blake	Vietnam
Post 68 – Locke Mills	Floyd Sumner	Vietnam	Post 178 – Winslow	Dale Smart	Korea
Post 72 – South Paris	Jack D Higgins	Unknown	Post 178 – Winslow	Dwight Lanning	Vietnam
Post 72 – South Paris	Brian A Bean	Vietnam	Post 178 – Winslow	Roger H Farren	Vietnam
Post 76 – Scarborough	Donald H Silke	Korea	Post 181 – Litchfield	Lee C Kimberling	Vietnam
Post 76 – Scarborough	Harry F West	Vietnam	Post 181 – Litchfield	Robert D King	Vietnam
Post 82 – Norway	Walter L Geddry Jr	Vietnam	Post 181 – Litchfield	Dan W Soiett	Vietnam
Post 94 – Greenville	Richard A Gould	Korea	Post 188 – Eliot	William D Tappan	Vietnam
Post 96 – Saco	Bob Keithley	Vietnam	Post 192 – Athens	Garwood Howell	Korea
Post 98 – Brewer	William J Gibson	Vietnam	Post 197 – Westbrook	James Brown	Lebanon/Grenada
Post 98 – Brewer	Winfield F Murray	Vietnam	Post 200 – Hermon	Francis M Taylor	Korea
Post 99 – Bingham	Lionel C Clark	Vietnam	Post 207 – Trenton	James Day	Vietnam
Post 111 – Turner	Fred L Leadbetter	Vietnam	Post 213 – Hampden	Anthony J Melacrino	Vietnam
Post 112 – Oxford	Philip T Smith	Vietnam	CN09 – Canada	John H Walther	Vietnam
Post 112 – Oxford	Carroll W Parsons	Vietnam	CN09 – Canada	Daniel H McConnell	Korea
Post 126 – Vassalboro	Michael C Poulin	Vietnam			



Attention: Next Deadline is Apr. 17

The deadline for material, stories and/or pictures to be submitted for consideration for use in the **May 2026** issue of The Maine Legionnaire will be **April 17, 2026**.

Please be reminded that only those articles and/or pictures which are sent in proper form will be considered for publication.

Illegible stories or pictures that cannot be reproduced will be returned to you. A reminder that stories must be in story format; we are unable to compose your information for you.

As always, the editorial staff may edit all submissions at its discretion.

We are once again asking for input from all posts, auxiliary units, S.A.L. squadrons, individuals, etc. To make this

paper informative to you, it is imperative that we receive submissions from the membership.

Photo(s) should include the following: who is in the photo (left to right), what the photo is about, where the event took place, and who took the picture (optional). All photos will be returned for clarification and submission of the required information if the above mentioned is not provided. *Please note: blurry or pixelated photos will not be accepted.*

Anyone interested in submitting a guest editorial should contact The Maine Legionnaire business office at:

(207) 873-3229 or via email at: legionme@mainelegion.org or rachael@mainelegion.org

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"VETERANS DAY" (Continued from Page 10)

a certified tax accountant, preparing taxes for more than 800 clients annually for 35 years, often making house calls to elderly clients. When not working, Robert could be found cutting wood, haying with family, volunteering for the Jefferson Fire Department, fishing, hunting, or attending fairs with his steers.

Today, Roberts only farm companion is Tiger, a 17-year-old black cat, rescued from the Windsor Fair. At 91, Robert remains active—recently joining Lions Club International as its oldest, new member and continuing his long-standing involvement with The American Legion at Waldoboro Post 149. In 2026, he will celebrate 50 years as a Legion member.

Submitted by South Portland Post 35 Adjutant, Michael R. Pock



South Portland Veterans Day Parade: Left to right, Sonja Orff-Ney, Claudene Orff-Northrup, and Claudia Orff-Reed accompany First Sgt. Robert G Orff who was selected as the grand marshall by South Portland Post 35 in the local Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11, 2025.

NEW!

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Deadline for Submission May 15, 2026

DONATE \$25

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DONATE \$50

Receive a Be The One Challenge Coin, Lobster Lapel Pin, & Name in Yearbook

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Honor a veteran's legacy by with your phone. You may also visit www.mainelegion.org and click on the Maine American Legion Convention Yearbook Donations Welcomed button. If donating by check, please make payable to The American Legion, Department of Maine earmarked "Yearbook Program" and mail to: The American Legion, Department of Maine, 5 Verti Drive, Winslow, ME 04901-0727.

For more information, please call 207-873-3229 Ext. 2 or email rachael@mainelegion.org.  Please provide the name and town of the veteran honoree in the notes section at checkout.

To donate with Debit/Credit Card, Paypal, or Venmo click the button below, or simply scan the QR code



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Due to time constraints and staff limitations to fact check all material sent in, we depend on the honesty and integrity of those who submit material for publication and on the expertise of our members and readers to correct misstatements or misinformation whether intentional or not.