

# Monthly Newsletter

AMERICAN LEGION POST 57

◆  
April 2026



## Post Info

American Legion  
Post 57

**Address:**

2602 SW Main Blvd  
Lake City FL 32025

**Phone:**

Post: (386) 752-7776  
Membership Office: (386) 243-8088

**Hours:**

Mon to Sun  
11:00am to 10:00pm

**Kitchen Hours:**

**- Lunch -**

Monday Thru Friday  
11:00am to 1:00pm

**- Dinner -**

Saturday Thru Thursday  
4:00pm to 8:00pm  
Fridays

5:30pm to 7:30pm

**Kitchen Phone:**

(386) 752-7260

**Email & Website:**

americanlegion57@comcast.net  
www.americanlegion57.org



## Post Officers

**-Commander-**

Bill Huggins

**-1st Vice Commander-**

Kelly Valliere

**-2nd Vice Commander-**

Terry Libbert

**-3rd Vice Commander-**

Harrison Ambrose

**-4th Vice Commander-**

Rick Harris

**-Finance Officer-**

Andrew Framer

**-Adjutant-**

Jason Massey

**-Chaplain-**

William Bell

**-Historian-**

Thomas Wilcutts

**-Sergeant at Arms-**

Matthew Fetzer

**-Executive Committeeman-**

George Wehrli

**-Executive Committeeman-**

Tony Nolan

**-Executive Committeeman-**

Ken Burkes

**-Executive Committeeman-**

Robert Preston

**-Judge Advocate-**

Dave Mangrum

**-Service Officer-**

Lisa Brown



## Commanders Corner

Progress is being made, thank you to our membership for your continued support in allowing us to continually improve our post for our Veterans, Members and Community. Our new sign is in and looks amazing. Thank you also to Jason Massey and Shawn Grady for your many hours in making it happen (as well as the new words you probably created during the process). The American Legion Family is amazing in the way all are coming together to help us continually grow.

And growing we are, thanks to Kelly Valliere and her membership crew we are well over our 100% goal, our ending Legion Count last year was 835 and as of this newsletter our Legion count has surpassed 900 and continues to grow.

There will be no Friday dinner on Friday, April 3rd as our post hosts the Columbia County JROTC ball as they approach the end of another year. So proud of the young men and women they are becoming through the mentorship of Lt. Col. Akers and 1st Sgt. Dettmer.

Saturday, April 4th will have no paddle auction and there will be no Bingo on Sunday April 5th due to it being Easter Weekend. Only the lounge will be open on Sunday regular hours.

First Responder's luncheon will be held on Wednesday, April 8th from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm in the hall, volunteers are needed to help prep, serve and clean up. Please reach out to Sharon to let her know your availability.

Bingo is every Sun, Mon and Thurs, afternoon begins at 3:00 and evening at 6:45.

Queen of Hearts every Saturday at 6:00 in the lounge.

Draft beer every Wednesday \$1.75 all day

Friday	April 3	JROTC Ball in the hall	5:00- 7:30 pm
Saturday	April 4	Sea Cadet Drill	8:00 - 3:30 pm
Saturday	April 4	Dist 3 meeting, Post 107	9:00 am
Tuesday	April 7	SAL/Marine Corp League	6:30 pm
Wednesday	April 8	First Responders luncheon	11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Wednesday	April 8	Auxiliary Bingo, Domiciliary	6:00 - 7:30 pm
Friday	April 10	Honor Guard Fish fry/karaoke	5:30- 7:30 pm
Saturday	April 11	SAL Roadkill	5:00-7:00 pm
Saturday	April 11	Gold Star Ride in	6:00 pm til 7:00 am
Tuesday	April 14	Legion/Auxiliary Board meeting	6:30 pm
Wednesday	April 15	Honor Guard practice	11:00 am
Friday	April 17	Auxiliary Friday dinner	5:30-7:30 pm
Saturday	April 18	Sea Cadet Drill	8:00 - 3:30 pm

## Commanders Corner (Cont.)

Saturday	April 18	Boys/Girls State Orientation	10:00- 2:00 pm
Saturday	April 18	Bunko	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Saturday	April 18	Rider's Roadkill	6:00- 8:00 pm
Monday	April 20	Unity Ride	11:00-1:00 pm est.
Monday	April 20	DAV meeting	4:45-5:45 pm
Tuesday	April 21	Legion/Auxiliary General meeting	6:30
Wednesday	April 22	Legion Domiciliary Bingo	6:00-7:30 pm
Thursday	April 23	Domiciliary Volunteer Social	1:00 pm
Friday	April 24	SAL Friday Dinner	5:30-7:30 pm
Saturday	April 25	Family Day open house	11:00 am-3:00 pm
Tuesday	April 28	Rider's meeting	6:30 pm
Friday	May 1	Auxiliary Friday Dinner	5:30-7:30 pm



Post 57

Online  
Calendar

SCAN HERE





## Chaplain

Dear Legion Family,

As we enter the month of April, we are reminded of renewal, hope, and the promise of new life. This season brings us to Easter, a sacred time when we reflect on the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is through His sacrifice and love that we are given grace, strength, and the assurance that even in our darkest moments, light will prevail.

Let us take this time to draw closer in faith, to give thanks for our many blessings, and to remember the true meaning of Easter—not just as a day, but as a message of hope that lives within us all.

It was truly uplifting to see our Legion family come together on March 28th to assist a fellow Vietnam veteran with fixing up the outside of his home. Acts of service like this reflect the very heart of what we stand for—looking out for one another and living our commitment to service beyond words.

We also continue to lift up our military men and women who stand watch around the world. May God protect them, guide them, and bring them safely home. We pray as well for the families of our fallen heroes, that they may find comfort, strength, and peace in the knowledge that their loved ones' sacrifices will never be forgotten.

As members of the American Legion family, we are called not only to remember—but to act. Let us look after one another, especially our fellow veterans who may be struggling. A kind word, a phone call, or simply taking the time to listen can make a profound difference. Together, we can ensure that no veteran feels alone.

May this season of Easter fill your hearts with peace, your homes with joy, and your lives with renewed purpose.

For God and Country,

William Bell  
Chaplain

## Membership



Happy Spring Post 57!!

Post goal: 840

Percentage of goal Achieved: 107.02

Total Paid Memberships: 899

New Members: 190

Renewals: 632

Transfers from 400 and 400\_AD (cyber posts): 9

Transfers in: 52

Transfers out: 39

Let's all welcome our new members and our transfers voted in on February 17th, 2026:

Jerry Erickson USN	William Dean USN
Michael Williams USA	David Dunne USN
Richard Johnson USA	Frank Matthews USA
Dennis Boyd USMC	Luke McCarrol USA AD
Johnny Dix USA	Brian Green USMC
Dessie White USMC	James Coan USA
Jay Nash USN	Gary O'Neil USMC
Kenneth Gilbert USN	John Sorrentino USAF
Allen Hartopp USA	Michael Lingo USA
	Michael McMahon USCG

In just a few months, we get to start this process all over again!! The American Legion will open renewals for 2027 On July 1st, 2026. You will start receiving Renewal Notices either in July or August. For those members who joined after January 1st, 2026 your dues are due by December 31st, 2026.

This has been such an amazing Membership Year, with over 190 new members, our post is number #4 in Florida currently for new members. The only 3 posts ahead of us are in the Villages in Ocala with over 6,000 members, Madeira Beach with over 4000 members and Port Tampa City with 1500 members.

### **Volunteer/Employee Appreciation and Continuous Service Award Dinner:**

The following members are invited to the Continuous Membership Awards to be held May 30th 2026 in the bingo hall, at 530 PM Invitations will be out in the mail shortly!



Scan to go to  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

## Membership (Cont.)

### 50 Years

Jim R Martin  
Carolyn Dorch (AUX)

### 40 Years

Chester Blaisdell  
Carl T. Miller  
Edward Szuchyt

### 30 Years

Clifford Brown  
Jackman Parr  
Lainie Paul (AUX)  
Judy Thomas (AUX)  
Thomas Ryan (SAL)

### 25 years

John Dennis  
Pamela Johnson  
David Mangrum  
Jan Davis (AUX)  
Claudia (Jill) Parnell (AUX)  
Henry King III (SAL)

### 45 Years

William Swain

### 35 Years

Geoffrey Bonebrake  
Samuel Johnson  
Terry Libbert  
Dennis Murphy Sr  
Dale Pulkrabek  
Mary Rouleau  
Robert Sweatt  
Hilda Pulkrabek (AUX)  
Judy Lawry (AUX))

### 20 years

Marion Blanks  
Joseph Chancey  
James Eddy  
Larry Hedgepath  
Vincent Mancusi  
Ernest Pasquot  
Diedri Young (AUX)  
Micheal Deloach (SAL)  
Kevin Wilkinson Jr. (SAL)

**Please RSVP to [Post57membership@gmail.com](mailto:Post57membership@gmail.com) or to (904) 563-0618 by text or phone.**

We are grateful for your mentorship and for your continued service to Veterans! The American Legion is the Largest Veteran Service Organization in the world and the ladies and gentleman listed above have continued in keeping this organization moving so that you and I could enjoy the benefits of being a member!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to grow in the American Legion. I am so grateful to those of you who have supported me through the last two years and I hope to have your support again in 2027. Don't forget elections are May 19th 630 PM in the Bingo hall. Nominations have already started, and we will continue with nominations from the floor on April 21st, and again on May 19th. Please come and be a part of the process in electing your 2027 officers! You will need to have your membership card at the meetings.

For God and Country  
Kelly Valliere, First Vice Commander, Membership Chair

*American Legion Post 57*  
*2602 SW Main Blvd Lake City 32025*



*Volunteer/Employee*  
*and*  
*Continuous Membership*  
**AWARD DINNER**

Dinner will be catered  
Casual Attire

*May 30th, 2026 at*  
*5:30PM*

***RSVP by May 15th, 2026***

*preferred method Email*  
*Post57membership@gmail.com*  
*text or call 904-563-0618*



# American Legion

POST 57

# MENU

LAKE CITY, FL



## Burgers

Classic Burger	\$6.00
Cheeseburger	\$6.50
Bacon Cheeseburger	\$7.00

## Sandwiches

Patty Melt	\$6.50
Hot Dog	\$4.75
Grilled Cheese	\$4.25
Fried Chicken Sandwich	\$5.75
BLT	\$5.75
Chicken Salad Sandwich	\$5.25
Fried Fish Sandwich	\$5.50
Grilled Chicken Sandwich	\$6.75

## Salads

Chef Salad with Ham	\$7.25
Chef Salad with Chicken Salad	\$7.25
Chef Salad with Grilled Chicken	\$8.25
Chef Salad with Fried Chicken	\$8.25
Small Salad	\$2.25
Scoop Chicken Salad	\$4.00

## Extras

Extra Ham	\$2.50
Extra Bacon	\$2.50
Extra Burger Patty	\$3.50
Extra Dressing	\$.50
Extra Crackers	\$.25
To Go Boxes	\$.50

## Appetizers

Egg Rolls (2)	\$4.25
Chicken Strips	\$7.00
French Fries	\$3.75
Onion Rings	\$4.25
Fried Mushrooms	\$4.75
Fried Green Beans	\$4.25
Corn Nuggets	\$5.25
Jalapeno Peppers	\$4.75
Mozzarella Sticks	\$5.75
Shrimp	\$5.25
Potato Skins	\$7.75
Sampler (any 3 above)	\$5.00
Corn Dogs (2)	\$4.25
Curly Fries	\$4.25

## Wings & Pizza

6 Wings	\$6.50
10 Wings	\$10.25
10 Wings with Fries	\$11.75
Whole Pizza	\$8.25

## Drinks & Candy

Soda	\$1.50
Water	\$1.50
Candy	\$2.50
Cookies	\$1.00
Chips	\$.75

LUNCH  
MONDAY THUR FRIDAY  
11:00AM TO 1:00PM



Place an online order by  
scanning this QR code

DINNER  
SATURDAY THRU THURSDAY  
4:00PM TO 8:00PM  
FRIDAYS ARE FAMILY DINNERS  
5:30PM TO 7:30PM

AMERICAN LEGION POST 57 - PHONE: (386) 752-7260 - ADDRESS: 2602 SW MAIN BLVD, LAKE CITY, FL 32025  
PRICES EFFECTIVE 3/1/2026



## Kitchen Hours:

- Lunch -

**Monday Thru Friday**

11:00am to 1:00pm

- Dinner -

**Saturday Thru Thursday**

4:00pm to 8:00pm

**Fridays**

5:30pm to 7:30pm

**Kitchen Phone:**

(386) 752-7260



Now you can order online  
on our website or scan the  
QR code on the menu!

**Order Online**



## Riders

Happy Spring!

My Name is Eric "BossDogg" Daniels I am your new Riders Director, I come from 50 years of riding experience. I am excited about being a part of this awesome Program! Now onto the Good stuff!

Last month, (March) some of us went to Post 83 to support their Chili Cookoff, their cookoff was a great event and it was a success.

Chapter 57's Chili Cookoff was a blockbuster event, with 19 entrants, our biggest event in recent memory. We had 6 vendors come out. The Car and Bike Show was very successful. We had 35 cars and 10 bikes.

**First Place** went to Columbia County Sheriff's Department

**Second Place** went Sons of the American Legion

**Third Place** went to American Legion Post 57 and American Legion Riders

**Peoples Choice** Went to Patty Marrero

### **Bike Show**

David Croenne took 1st

Robert Charles got 2nd

James Gruber took 3rd

With the Riders Dinner and Chili Cook off and Roadkill Bingo we raised over \$3,000 for Riders Charity programs.

Upcoming Events:

**April 4** District Meeting is at Post 107 in McAlpin (Live Oak) starts at 10AM and the Riders Meeting will be directly after.

**April 11th** Gold Star Ride in is an event by David McElroy who is also the Founder of Flags of Honor, they will be at the post at approximately 6 PM the Riders will be serving the group dinner then they will stay overnight and leave for the Robert H. Jenkins Domicile here in Lake City at 7 Am Sunday the 5th, and then Ride to Cecil Field and hold a Ceremony for Gold Star Families at the POW/MIA Monument. Riders will then return to Post 57. Gold Star will proceed St Augustine.

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## Riders (Cont.)

**April 18th** Rider's Road Kill Bingo

**April 20th In State Unity Ride**, American Legion Riders from across the State will be arriving at our post at approximately 1200 PM and our Chapter has the honor of providing lunch to these riders. This motorcycle ride is in support of PROJECT: VetRelief's Suicide Prevention Initiative. Please feel free to come out and donate to this amazing project. Our Chapter will be riding to Tallahassee with the In-State Unity Riders.

**April 28** Rider's Meeting. Please come out and support your riders Chapter and have a voice in what we are doing.

I wish to Thank all those who came out to our Various events this month for your amazing contributions and support! E are in our second round of nominations for all positions in the Chapter, If interested in holding a position on the board, please contact Gabby Mixon, Robert Charles, Thomas Wilcutts.

**"RIDERS LEAD THE WAY"**

Eric "BossDogg" Daniels  
Director





## Auxiliary News

The highlight of the month of February for our wonderful auxiliary members was a Garden Party in the hall on February 28th. This was our annual luncheon with an attendance of 76 members and guests. The theme of the Garden Party was evident with a beautiful array of live flower centerpieces as door prizes, ladies in hats and a photo booth. The food was scrumptious thanks to Sharon Huggins. We plan to have these luncheons yearly going forward as a way to build relationships within the auxiliary and as a celebration of all of our accomplishments throughout the year.

The Auxiliary room continues to be a work in progress, now looking toward the aesthetics of hanging pictures etc. It is being used and we now have enough chairs for a proper meeting. The community computer has also been placed in the room for all Legion entities to use.

The restart of our junior program kicked off with participation in the Riders Chili Cookoff with their own booth designed and decorated by our juniors. If you have a child under 18 that you would like to have participate, please let us know, we are trying to get as many members as possible for this youth group to be successful.

A special thanks goes out to the Auxiliary members who helped to make the Chili Cookoff a great success. Also, we would like to thank those members who assisted with the Living Hope Community Uplift event and the Boggy Bear stuffing.

Lastly, on behalf of the Auxiliary I would like to wish Bill Huggins a speedy recovery from his recent accident. It is really nice to see him getting around and his presence at the post is greatly appreciated as he recovers.

### **Ongoing projects and opportunities to be involved:**

We continue to collect soda can pop tops for the Ronald McDonald House. When you have a small (or large) plastic bag filled you can turn these into the bar, into a large container in the bingo hall or at any of the Auxiliary meetings. These tops do not need to come exclusively from soda cans. Soup and vegetable cans are acceptable.

The Auxiliary continues to be enthusiastic about the making and stuffing of bears for the Boggy Creek children. For the knitters and crocheters we also make afagans. The March stuffing party was held on March 28. The next party will appear on future calendars. If interested, please contact Weegie Garcia.

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## Auxiliary News (Cont.)

We continue to collect new cosmetic bags to be stuffed with hygiene products. These go to homeless teens and adult women through various organizations and to school nurses in Columbia County schools for distribution as needed.

For our upcoming Family Day in April, we are asking the members to bring in empty baskets and any new, unused, unopened items that can be used for the Chinese Auction for this event. No item is excluded as we will be making up a variety of themed baskets for both children and adults. For example, last year we had a children's basket with toys, puzzles and games, a cat basket, and a dog basket. We had adult baskets with wine and liquor and snacks. Anything that can be included in a Chinese auction is appreciated and of course, if you would like to make up a whole basket on your own, we encourage you to do so.

### **Dates to remember in April and beyond:**

April 4th – District Meeting in Live Oak. These meetings are open to any Auxiliary member who would like to attend. This is a great way to meet members from other posts, collect new ideas and build camaraderie in our district. If you would like to attend, please let Donna know. Registration for the meeting is at 9:00 Am with the meeting starting at 10:00.

April - 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM First Responder Luncheon. We sponsor these luncheons in order to thank our community's first responders for their dedication to the residents of Lake City. Lunch is served and prizes are awarded. If you wish to help serve at this event, please see Sharon Huggins.

April 17 – Auxiliary Dinner – 5:30-7:30

April 18 – Bunko in the lounge

April 21 – 1:00 PM Domiciliary Volunteer Appreciation Social at the Robert Jenkins Domiciliary

April 25 - Family Day at the Post

Look for emails from the Auxiliary if there is more information on the happenings.

Donna Sessa

President Unit 57 Auxiliary

For Spirit of Service, Not Self



## Sons of the American Legion News

Hello, SAL Squadron, 57

Last month was a busy Month. The SAL team received a second place award for our chili in the Riders Chili Cook- Off. We definitely should have received first place for best decorated tent. Thank you to all who helped out and a big thank you to our cooks. Before the chili even got cold, we had to put on a great SAL Roadkill night. This event was very successful and appeared to be enjoyed by all in attendance. Thank you to Gerald Canavan for his generous donation of the Basket for the raffle. Our Dinner night was less attended than expected, but April will be an improvement for sure. Thank you to all who volunteered their time.

We have our Squadron meeting on April 7th at 1830 and our SAL Friday night dinner on April 24th at 1730. Our Roadkill Bingo is on April 11th 1700-1900.

If you are a member of the Sons, please try to attend our meetings and participate in the events. We would love to have more help.

Looking forward to a good month

Stay safe,

Eric Gibson

SAL Commander

**Join us on  
Facebook!**



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH IS

**PATTY KOON**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU AND ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS DO!





## Honor Guard

### Next meeting:

April 15 @ 11:00.

### Location:

Bingo Hall

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Kelly Luker distributed new members' shirts and pants with Post 57 patches on shirts, and pants to be returned for larger sizes.

B. OP ORDER/Funeral procession- DATE TO BE DETERMINED **Elijah Price** (Army) passed 12/28/26. Wife Danyeale Price wants full Military Honors at her Ft White home, need 2 Flag holders, as many rifles as possible, no service, needs bugler.

C. New OP Order for Saturday, March 7th for **Navy Veteran Bruce Boarders** in Mayo 3:00 at Paran Baptist Church

D. New OP Order for Wednesday, March 11th for **Army SSG Charles Coppock** Gateway Forest Lawn Lake City 1:00pm

E. New OP Order for Saturday, 21 St for Army Vet David Edward Rogers Guerry Forbes Funeral Home @2:00 at Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church, they do flag, we provide Rifles, TAPS (played by Wayne Hons) Jackson, Wayne, Mark, Sami, Kelly, Bill to attend

### DISCUSSION

A. Fish Fry for April 10 all hands-on deck, Johnny agreed to cook the fish, Janet, Jackson & Patty, (pending pathology results from biopsy) Kelly& Cheryl, Wayne & Melissa, Mark agreed to attend and show up at 4:00

B. Suwannee River Fish Festival Saturday 4/11/26 in Branford, need 2 members to hold flag, Wayne and Bill will be in full uniform

C. Patty or Melissa to take pictures



# Honor Guard

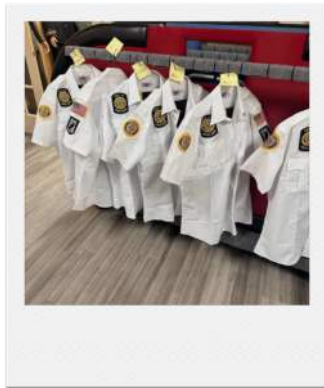
## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

March 2nd Honor Guard moved a disabled veteran from Ft. White to his new residence North of Lake City.

March 14 th Honor Guard participated in the Riders Chili Cook-off with Jackson Koon cooking the chili and the Honor Guard raffled off an Army Basket which was re-donated back to the Honor Guard by Patricia with Legionnaire Dogs with the understanding we spilt 50/50 proceeds, after speaking with Kelly Luker it's too complicated to keep the earnings from the other Military baskets separate and has agreed to pay out what was made at the Chili cook off, she will be expected to sign upon receiving her payout and receipt will be given to Kelly Luker for accounting purposes.

As always Thank you for your service and all that you do

Patty Koon/Public Relations Officer



## Honor Guard Volunteers Needed



**Practice:**

**Every Third Wednesday at 11:00am at the Post**

**Interested?**

**Contact Kelly Luker (386) 213-2369**





## Post Service Officer

As April unfolds, nature bursts into vibrant life with Spring, bringing longer days, blooming flowers, and a profound sense of renewal. This season of rebirth perfectly aligns with Easter, the Christian celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection, which falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25. Easter blends ancient spring symbols of new life—eggs and bunnies—with deep spiritual reflection on hope and resurrection.

For the veteran community, April holds special meaning as the **Month of the Military Child**, honoring the resilience of children who have grown up with the sacrifices of military service, including those of veterans. Purple Up Day encourages everyone to wear purple in solidarity. Easter traditions like egg hunts and family meals help veteran families strengthen bonds built through years of service and transition.

Many veterans find inspiration in **Easter sunrise services**, especially the historic one at Arlington National Cemetery. The message of victory over hardship echoes their own journeys of resilience and renewal.

Just as spring triumphs over winter and Easter celebrates new life, veterans embody strength and fresh beginnings. This April, as flowers bloom and Easter baskets fill, let us remember and support our veterans and their families.

Thank you to everyone who donates to the VSO fund! We are helping 6-8 Veterans on average each month. Your support makes this possible!

Lisa G. Brown

Veterans Service Officer

Post 57

Lake City, Florida



## Youth

April is here, and that means it's time to shine a spotlight on our amazing military kids! Since 1986, the Month of the Military Child has been a chance to honor the strength, courage, and can-do attitude of over 1.6 million children who serve alongside their families. Whether they're packing up for another adventure, meeting new friends at a new school, or cheering on their parents from afar, these kids are true heroes. Swing by our colorful Military Childs table in the front lobby—there's something special waiting for you!

Don't miss out—April 15th is Purple Up! Day. Grab your brightest, boldest purple shirt, socks, or even a funky hat and show off your support for military kids everywhere. Let's turn our community into a sea of purple pride!

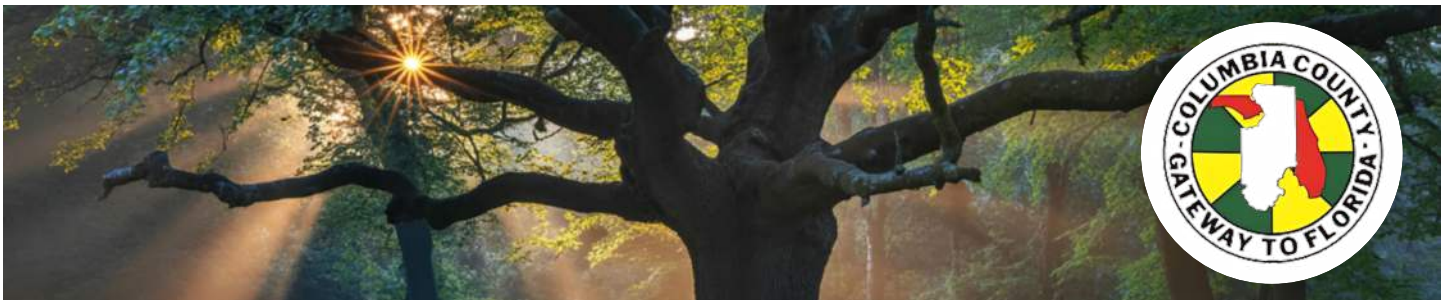
Mark your calendars for April 26th because Family Day is bringing the fun! Our spirited Youth group will be hosting a booth packed with excitement and cheer. Looking for a one-of-a-kind keepsake? Check out our beautiful, handcrafted poppy flowers—made with love by the talented women of Unit 57. There are just 100, so hurry before they're gone! Don't forget to visit our Envelope donation board to help us build an awesome new outdoor family area. And get ready to join in on team games at our tent—laughter and high-fives guaranteed!

While you're here, take a break and explore our game box in the lounge. Challenge your friends and family, or make new ones over a friendly match. Just remember to put all the pieces back, so the fun keeps rolling for everyone.

Our next general meeting is coming up on April 18th at 2:00pm in the Family Room. Come join us for some great conversation and maybe a surprise or two. We can't wait to see you there!

**join our**  
**FACEBOOK**  
PAGE





## Columbia County Veteran Service Officer

### Monthly Newsletter – April 2026

Good afternoon,

As we move into April, I want to take a moment to update everyone on what's going on in the Columbia County Veteran Services Office, highlight a few important reminders, and address some ongoing concerns we've been seeing.

#### Office Updates

Our office continues to stay busy with a high volume of calls, walk-ins, and scheduled appointments. We are working hard to make sure every veteran gets the time and attention they deserve.

We currently operate by appointment Monday through Friday, with outreach services continuing at **American Legion Post 57 on Mondays from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**. Walk-ins are welcome there.

We are also pleased to announce that we have hired a receptionist who will be starting within the next couple of weeks once onboarding is complete. This will help improve call response times, scheduling, and overall office efficiency so we can better serve our veterans.

#### Major Outreach Breakthrough

We have recently made significant progress working with the **Columbia County Correctional Facility**.

For the first time, we were approved to bring a laptop inside the facility, allowing us to directly assist incarcerated veterans. During our initial visit, we were able to meet with and assist over 25 veterans at one time.

This is a major breakthrough, as access like this is typically very difficult due to security restrictions. Being able to work claims and review records on-site dramatically improves our ability to serve this population.

As a result of this outreach, we are also seeing increased interest from correctional staff, including officers, who are now seeking assistance with their own VA benefits. This expansion of trust and visibility reflects positively on the work being done and opens the door for continued support inside the facility.

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## Columbia County Veteran Service Officer (Cont.)

### Common Issues We Are Seeing

We want to make sure veterans are aware of a few recurring problems that have been causing delays or denials:

#### 1. Missed VA Exams (C&P Exams)

We are seeing an increase in claims being denied because veterans miss their scheduled exams.

- If you cannot attend, notify the VA or the contractor immediately to reschedule.

#### 2. Incomplete Claims / Lack of Evidence

Submitting a claim without medical evidence or a clear connection to service will slow things down or lead to denial.

- Before filing, let us help you strengthen your claim.

#### 3. Proposed Reductions

We are seeing more veterans receiving letters proposing to reduce their ratings.

- These are time-sensitive. If you receive one, contact our office immediately—we can help you fight it.

#### 4. Old Debt Issues Reappearing

Some veterans are being contacted about VA debts they believed were already paid.

- Do not ignore these notices. Bring them to us so we can review and respond properly.

### Important Reminders

- Always keep your contact information updated with VA
- Check your mail regularly—VA deadlines matter
- Don't file claims blindly—strategy matters
- If something doesn't look right, it probably isn't—come see us

### What We're Working On

Our office is continuing to:

- Assist with **new claims, increases, and appeals**
- Help veterans avoid **unnecessary denials**
- Push for **faster processing and stronger submissions**
- Expand outreach to reach more veterans in the community

We are also actively improving office operations and accessibility, especially with the addition of front desk support to better manage incoming calls and veteran traffic.

### Final Word

If you're thinking about filing a claim, appealing a decision, or just don't understand what VA is telling you—don't try to figure it out alone. That's what we're here for.

Columbia County Veteran Services Office  
1486 SW McFarlane Ave, Lake City, FL  
(386) 758-3350  
rbeasley@columbiacountyfla.com



## Sea Cadets

Sea Cadets are young men and women aged 10 to 18. We are supported by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard, and our Cadets train on naval bases and other military installations. Sea Cadets gain unique and valuable experiences that incorporate hands on learning and teamwork. We meet at the American Legion in Lake City twice a month for drill. The cadets have many opportunities to go to training over the summer and winter. If you are interested and would like more information you can contact Niki Patterson 303-725-3889. You can also click the link to get more information America's Sea Cadets - The US Navy's youth development program.

Our Sea Cadet drills are scheduled for 2025 -2026, These are the drills for the first part of the year.

April 4th, 2026, April 18th, 2026, April 25th, 2026 (Family Day at the American Legion), May 2nd, 2026.

Sea Cadet fundraiser dinners are schedule as followed for until the end of this year:

May 1st, 2026, July 31st, 2026.





# April



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> \$1.75 Draft	<b>2</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>3</b> Red Shirt Friday JROTC Ball Texas Hold'em 7:00pm 	<b>4</b> Sea Cadet Drill 8:00am-3:30pm District 3 Meeting at Post 107 9:00am Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
<b>5</b> Easter 	<b>6</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	<b>7</b> SAL Squadron 57 Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm Marine Corps League Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	<b>8</b> First Responders Lunch 11:00am-2:00pm \$1.75 Draft Auxiliary Bingo (Domiciliary) 6:00pm-7:00pm	<b>9</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>10</b> Red Shirt Friday Honor Guard Friday Night Dinner 5:30pm-7:30pm Karaoke w/ Tom Daniels 6:30pm-9:30pm Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	<b>11</b> SAL Roadkill Bingo 5:00pm-7:00pm Gold Star Ride In 6:00pm-7:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
<b>12</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>13</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	<b>14</b> Legion & Auxiliary Executive Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	<b>15</b> Honor Guard Practice 11:00am \$1.75 Draft	<b>16</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>17</b> Red Shirt Friday Auxiliary Friday Night Dinner 5:30pm-7:30pm Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	<b>18</b> Sea Cadet Drill 8:00am-3:30pm Boys and Girls State 10:00am-2:00pm Bunko 2:00pm-4:00pm Rider's Roadkill Bingo 6:00pm-8:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
<b>19</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>20</b> Unity Ride Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm DAV Meeting 4:45pm-5:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	<b>21</b> Legion & Auxiliary General Membership Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	<b>22</b> Veteran Stand Down 9:00am-3:00pm \$1.75 Draft Legion Bingo (Domiciliary) 6:00pm-7:30pm	<b>23</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>24</b> Red Shirt Friday SAL Friday Night Dinner 5:30pm-7:30pm Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	<b>25</b> Family Day Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
<b>26</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	<b>27</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	<b>28</b> Rider's Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	<b>29</b> \$1.75 Draft	<b>30</b> Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm		