

Monthly Newsletter

AMERICAN LEGION POST 57

January 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

WOW! Happy 2026 to all..

December was a very busy and successful month for our American Legion Family.

The kitchen catered 235 dinners for the City of Lake City's Christmas party and all went well, a reflection of our members and staff.

The Riders with help from Kelly and other members outdid themselves on the Wreaths across America with both the JROTC and Honor Guard stepping up and stepping out making this one of the best Wreath's events we've hosted.

The member's Christmas party was amazing, there wasn't a seat in the house with some having to sit on the stage or in the hall to eat. Our membership, like our Legion Family, truly comes together as one big family.

Christmas dinner was amazing with over 24 volunteers coming out to help set up, serve and clean up. We fed over 250 members and guests that day and even with that the volunteer stuck around to clean and even though we served till 5:00 the hall and kitchen were cleaned and everyone was gone before 6:00.

By the time this comes out we will have had our New Year's Eve party and I expect no less than another fun event for all.

After an abundance of interest it has been decided that there WILL be Bingo on New Year's day, so come out for a great time.

January's calendar won't be complete upon this coming out as we have a calendar planning meeting on the 3rd to take us through June. An updated calendar will be sent as soon as it's finalized.

Commanders Corner (Cont.)

Otherwise we have Bingo every Sunday, Monday and Thursday, afternoon at 3:00 pm and evening at 6:45.

Texas Holdem poker every Monday and Friday night at 7:00.

Girl Scout troop 21000 meets every Wednesday from 4-6 pm

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

Draft beer every Wednesday \$1.75 all day

Thursday	Jan 1	Bingo per normal schedule.
Friday	Jan 2	Rider's Friday Dinner 5:30-7:30 with karaoke at 6:30
Saturday	Jan 3	College Game day in the lounge with paddle auction from 5-7
Sunday	Jan 4	NFL Sunday Ticket, kitchen opens at 1:00
Tuesday	Jan 6	SAL/Marine Corps meetings at 6:30
Saturday	Jan 10	SAL Roadkill from 5-7 pm
Sunday	Jan 11	NFL Sunday Ticket, kitchen opens at 1:00
Monday	Jan 12	DAV meeting at 4:45
Tuesday	Jan 13	Legion/Auxiliary Board meetings at 6:30
Saturday	Jan 17	College Game Day with paddle auction from 5-7
Sunday	Jan 18	NFL Sunday Ticket, kitchen opens at 1:00
Tuesday	Jan 20	Legion/Auxiliary General meetings at 6:30
Saturday	Jan 24	Rider's Roadkill from 5-7 (Lounge)
Saturday	Jan 24	Americanism from 6-10 in the hall
Tuesday	Jan 27	Rider's meeting 6:30 pm
Saturday	Jan 31	Paddle auction from 5-7



Post 57

Online
Calendar

SCAN HERE





Chaplain

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”

— *Lamentations 3:22–23*

As we enter a new year, January invites us into a season of renewal—not only of calendars and routines, but of hearts, minds, and spirits. God’s mercies do not carry expiration dates. They are made new each morning, just as this year is a new gift placed before us.

Many of us carry memories from the past year—some joyful, some heavy. As veterans and families, we understand sacrifice, endurance, and perseverance. We have learned to keep moving forward even when the road is uncertain. In the same way, Scripture reminds us that we are never asked to walk alone. God goes before us, walks beside us, and strengthens us when we feel weary.

This new year is not about forgetting the past, but about trusting God with what comes next. Let us recommit ourselves to faith, fellowship, and service—serving one another with humility, patience, and compassion. May our Post continue to be a place of encouragement, support, and brotherhood for all who walk through its doors.

If you are struggling, grieving, or in need of prayer, please know that your Post family stands with you. It is my honor to pray with you and for you.

May God bless you and keep you throughout this new year.

In faith and service,

William Bell
Chaplain

Happy New Year!!

First and Foremost, lets welcome our New members from November 16th to December 18th 2025.

New Members:

Shawn Hysell	USAF
Johnny York	USA
Felix Ortiz	USA
Casey Ryan	USA
Frank Voigt	USN
Michael Tedesco	USMC
Mark Reifschneider	USA/USN
Ashley Nobles	USCG
Paula Washington	USAF
Mark Czerwinski	USAF
Herbert Hamblen III	USA/USMC
Aires Hofman	USA
John Larner	USA
John Noble	USN
Jason Rodriguez	USA
Jesse Neal	USN
Jerrica West	USA AD

Transfers:

Daniel Girard USA NY 912
Dale Herban USMC FL0400
Jonnie Cordeiro USA NC0010
Jeffrey Cole USA FL0107
Nicole Kelsch USN FL0107
Howard Shepardson USA FL0400_AD
Robert Davis USA IN 0158
Henry "Curt" Bellinger USA FL0400_AD

Membership (Cont.)

What a year it has been! I want to congratulate our Membership Team...

Who is on the Membership Team? Every single one of you!! Congratulations on a job well done!!! We are currently and unofficially at 95% of our membership goal of 840 paid members as set by the Department of Florida. You guys made this happen! The things we do at the Post and your volunteerism made this happen. We have now exceeded our December, January, February, March, and April target dates! We need 42 more renewals to be at 100%!! You can renew online at Legion.org, click the red Renew button at the top right of the page, you will need your membership number which you can find on your membership card. If you don't have your membership number please reach out to me and I will provide it for you!

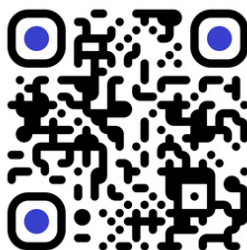
If you wish to renew your membership at the Post, I have some goodies that I can't put in the mail to give you! I want you to come see me!!!

Veterans renewing at the post is even easier than before because we have installed Square and we can take your card, cash or check payments.

Auxiliary can renew at Legion-AUX.org and Sons can renew online at Legion.org. Sons and Auxiliary renewing at the post can renew using cash or check options.

Please renew and be a part of the awesome things we are doing in our community!!

Whether you are a member of the Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion Riders, or American Legion Post 57 Honor Guard, you represent the American Legion as a national organization. We are not just a bar or a Bingo Hall, we are Legion, and what we can do to improve the lives of our veterans and their families in our community is enormous, but we need you all on board so we can do even more this year! If you have ideas, if you have resources, if you have the drive to impact the lives of your neighbors, and friends, let's get these ideas on the table. Don't be afraid to start something! If you are passionate about a community project, please come to the General Assembly meetings that are scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday of every month. January 20th, 2026 is the next General Assembly meeting for both the Auxiliary and the Legionnaires (Veterans). I hope to see you there!!!



Scan to go to
www.legion.org

Membership (Cont.)

Official Membership numbers as of December 18:

Due to the Holidays we have not received a Department Membership report since December 18th. Membership reports usually are received every Thursday.

Post Goal: 840 paid members

118 New Members

561 Renewals

754 Total Paid

Unofficially, end of year totals in other words, according to our Post reports on Mylegion.org we currently stand at:

798 total Paid members

68 Paid Up for Life members

136 New members

40 Transfers in

136 Online Renewals

27 2027 renewals (3yr online option)

11 2028 renewals (3yr online option)

We are also welcoming 14 new Active Duty Army members on Jan 20th, 2026. These Active Duty members are attached to the Recruiting Battalion based in Gainesville, FL and stationed in and near Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Gainesville, Lake City, and Ocala! We are so honored to have these young men and women as members of our Post!!

Thank you for all your support and encouragement throughout the 2025 year and we'll see you in 2026! Stay tuned because there is so much more to come!!!

For God and Country,

Kelly Valliere,

First Vice Commander,

US Navy Veteran,

904-563-0618

Post57membership@gmail.com



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

Pick Up or Dine In

Kitchen Volunteers & Cooks Needed

All Shifts

Benefits include: Tips and half price kitchen

Interested?

Contact Sharon Huggins (386) 984-9568



Riders

Hello and Welcome Chapter 57 Riders' to the New Year!

Board Members:

Director Dakota Linder		Assistant Director Vacant	
Road Captain James Gruber	Sgt-At-Arms Rob Charles	Safety Officer Cason Adams	Finance Elaine Lagasse A/G Shirley Gruber
Membership Shirley Gruber	Adjutant Samanthia Reid	Historian Thomas Wilcutts	Chaplain Maryann Dennis

New Members:

James Gruber

Thank you for joining the ALR Chapter 57 Riders!

Past Events:

December 13th Wreaths Across America

Thank you to the community for allowing us the honor to participate in this event. We had an amazing turnout of 13 motorcycles and 3 vehicles for a total of 17 participants from the riders'.

December 19th American Legion Post 107 Christmas Dinner

Thank you Post 107 for the amazing food and the wonderful time we had. We had a total of 8 riders, family, and friends participate.

December 12th American Legion Post 422 Santa Escort

Thank you Post 422 for having us. We had a total of 11 motorcycles and passengers. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Riders (Cont.)

Upcoming Events:

January 1st Polar Bear Ride

Everybody dress warm for this anticipated cold ride. We will be meeting at American Legion Post 57 at 10:30 AM. KSU at 11 AM. The destination is Treasure Camp in Chiefland, FL.

January 2nd Friday Dinner

Come out and support the Riders' for our Friday Dinner. The current menu is; Parmesan crusted chicken, Marinara pasta, side salad, and banana pudding. \$12 a plate. 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

January 24th Roadkill Bingo

Due to requests, Roadkill will go back to 6 PM to 8 PM. Early bird tickets go on sale at 5 PM to 5:30 PM for 2 cards for \$15, after 5:30 PM its 1 card for \$10.

Riders' Dues are \$20. If you haven't already, please pay your dues!

Please make sure to update your contact info to stay up-to-date on future events.

Please refer to our Riders' Facebook page for any new events or changes.



SCAN HERE



Honor Guard Volunteers Needed



Practice:

Every Third Wednesday at 6:00pm at the Post

Interested?

Contact Kelly Luker (386) 213-2369





Auxiliary News

Our Auxiliary president, Donna Sessa, would like to remind everyone that dues are needing to be paid. If you do not receive your new or initial membership card within one month of paying your dues or joining, please let Donna or Cathy Bell know. Dues can be paid by mail, leaving them at the bar, or online. We had ten new members join in December and are very encouraged with the growth of our Auxiliary.

The Auxiliary continues to be enthusiastic about the making and stuffing of bears for the Boggy Creek children. We will begin making more after the holidays as an ongoing project.

We had a delicious and successful Friday Auxiliary dinner, and the proceeds are going to a new program, Legionnaire dogs, who provides companion dogs for veterans free of charge. With the dinner, raffles and donations we brought in over \$1000 for this program. The money will help in training dogs as personal companion dogs.

We joined the ladies at the Domiciliary for Christmas Tea on December 18th. The Auxiliary team put together blankets for the Ladies as gifts. This was a dress-up affair with vintage hats, furs, and clothing. The ladies enjoyed this and the props helped provide some great pictures of the event. The food was yummy and the opportunity for companionship even better.

Both the Boys Ranch residents and the Domiciliary residents received a gift card from the Auxiliary to spend as they wished for the holiday season. This has been done for several years now, and we hope to continue the tradition.

We also signed and sent several Christmas cards to be sent to veterans who are currently in-patients at Walter Reed Hospital. We donated a money gift to the middle school in Lake City for their reading program. The money is used to reward the children who read the most books.

We are continuing to collect coats, sweatshirts, and jackets (gently used please) for the Domiciliary and for homeless children of Columbia County through the month of January. Many of these were delivered in November and December, they were greatly needed.

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. Other can tops, including those from soup and vegetable cans are acceptable.

Auxiliary News (Cont.)

Dates to remember in January and beyond:

January 17th: ABC School to be held in Monticello. Registration at 9:00AM, meeting starting at 10:00AM. These meetings are open to all Auxiliary members and are a terrific way to learn more about the Auxiliary.

January 3rd: 9:00AM Meet at the Post to take down Christmas decorations.

January 20: General meeting

January 24th: Americanism essay presentations. All members are encouraged to attend to have a good showing for our local youth.

February 28th: Members luncheon to celebrate us! 11:30 -2:00

March 14th: Chili Cookoff sponsored by the Riders. We are looking for participants for our booth at this event to make the best chili and claim first place for the Auxiliary.

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

Volunteer Spotlight

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH IS

Patty Koon

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU AND ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS DO!

*thank
you*



Honor Guard

The Honor Guard participated in the Wreaths Across America on 13 Dec, alongside the CHS ROTC team.

It was an honor and a pleasure to have the ROTC team participate.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, 21 January at 11:00 AM at the post.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a member is welcome to attend & meet our team.





Post Service Officer

Jan 2026 VSO

Happy New! In Dec 2025 we helped 7 Veterans. 5 were families, we helped with Christmas! Thanks to everyone, who donates to the VSO funding!

What's New at the VA for 2026

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2026, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to build on its commitment to serving America's Veterans with expanded care, benefits, and efficiencies. Here's a look at the key updates and changes taking effect this year.

Increased Disability Compensation with 2.8% COLA Adjustment

One of the most direct impacts for many Veterans will be the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). For 2026, VA disability compensation rates increase by 2.8%, aligned with the Social Security Administration's announcement. This adjustment, effective December 1, 2025, ensures benefits keep pace with inflation.

- The new rates apply automatically—no action is needed from Veterans.
- Payments reflecting the increase appear in January 2026 deposits.
- This boost affects disability compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Special Monthly Compensation (SMC), and other related benefits.

This modest but important raise helps offset rising costs for essentials like housing, food, and healthcare.

Post Service Officer (Cont.)

Ongoing Implementation of the PACT Act

The Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act remains a cornerstone of VA expansions. In 2026, Veterans continue to benefit from:

- Presumptive conditions for over 20 illnesses linked to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures.
- Easier access to health care and disability benefits without needing to prove direct causation in many cases.
- Dedicated funding through the Toxic Exposures Fund (TEF), with significant allocations supporting care for exposed Veterans.

The VA encourages all eligible Veterans to undergo toxic exposure screenings, now a standard part of care.

Thanks again, for allowing me to assist Veterans at Post 57!


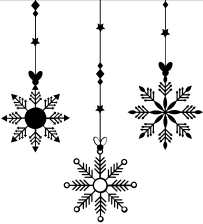



Lisa G. Brown, VSO

Post 57



January



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Polar Bear Ride 10:30am Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	2 Red Shirt Friday Rider's Friday Dinner 5:30pm- 7:30pm Karaoke 6:30pm-9:30pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	3 College Game Day Christmas Take Down 9:00am- 2:00pm Calendar Planning Meeting 3:30pm- 4:30pm Paddle Auction 5:00pm-7:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
4 NFL Sunday Ticket Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	5 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	6 SAL Squadron 57 Meeting 6:30pm- 7:30pm Marine Corps League Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	7 \$1.75 Draft 11:00am Girl Scout Meeting 4:00pm-6:30pm	8 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	9 Red Shirt Friday Army Recruiters Luncheon 9:00am- 1:00pm Sea Cadet Friday Night Dinner 5:30pm-7:30pm Karaoke 6:30pm-9:30pm Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	10 Sea Cadet Drill 8:00am-3:30pm SAL Roadkill Bingo 3:00pm-5:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
11 NFL Sunday Ticket CVMA Meeting 2:00pm-4:00pm Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	12 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm DAV Meeting 4:30pm-6:00pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	13 Legion & Auxiliary Executive Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	14 Living Hope Meeting 11:00am- 2:00pm \$1.75 Draft 11:00am Girl Scout Meeting 4:00pm-6:30pm Auxiliary Bingo (Domiciliary) 6:00pm-7:00pm	15 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm 	16 Red Shirt Friday Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	17 College Game Day Auxiliary ABC School 9:00am Paddle Auction 5:00pm-7:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm
18 NFL Sunday Ticket Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm 	19 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm DAV Meeting 4:30pm-6:00pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	20 Legion & Auxiliary General Membership Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm	21 \$1.75 Draft 11:00 am Honor Guard Practice 11:00am Girl Scout Meeting 4:00pm-6:30pm	22 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	23 Red Shirt Friday Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM 	24 Sea Cadet Drill 8:00am-3:30pm Ray Decant 102 Birthday 12:00pm- 3:00pm Americanism 6:00pm-10:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm Riders Roadkill Bingo 6:00pm- 8:00pm
25 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	26 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm Texas Hold'em 7:00pm	27 Rider's Meeting 6:30pm-7:30pm 	28 \$1.75 Draft 11:00 am Girl Scout Meeting 4:00pm-6:30pm Auxiliary Bingo (Domiciliary) 6:00pm-7:00pm	29 Bingo 3pm & 6:45pm	30 Red Shirt Friday Texas Hold'em 7:00 PM	31 Warner Enterprises Holiday Party 8:00am-10:00pm Paddle Auction 5:00pm-7:00pm Queen of Hearts 6:00pm