

Veterans Memorial Post 347
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Newsletter – February 2026

Commander: Dave Musser
Auxiliary: Maureen Caswell
S.A.L: Danny Roe
Riders: Linda Haynes
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Editor: Rob Burgess

Volunteer of the Month - February: Donna Mallory

Commander - Dave Musser

Beginning in February all Post Officer positions will be open for nominations. Nominations and elections are done in accordance with Post 347 Constitution and By-Laws. At the general membership meeting, nominations will be taken from the floor as well as the reading of names that have already turned in self-nomination forms.

We are in the mist of welcoming our seasonal members. Therefore, entry into the Post on Tuesday's will be open to Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Son's of the American Legion of ANY Post and those foreign military members authorized by our Constitution and Bylaws. However, only members of Post 347 are eligible to play the Queen of Hearts.

For Wednesday Bar Bingo, attendance is limited to Member and 2 Guest. Sunday Bingo is Member and 1 guest. However, if attendance is low, the lounge manager on duty has the option of allowing additional guests. This will be in effect until further notice. Please watch the website for updated information regarding entry into the Post. The Thursday Bingo in the Hall is open to the public.

February is the month we celebrate relationships, friends, family and especially those that cannot be with their loved ones. Take this opportunity to show your appreciation and support to a fellow veteran by offering to bring them to the Post, take them to lunch, for coffee, or even to an appointment.

Dates to mark on your calendar include: Super Bowl Party: Feb 8th, AYCE Breakfast: Feb. 14th, SAL Valentine Dinner/Dance: Feb 14th. There will be 2 benefits to raise funds for the Florida Bushnell National Cemetery Monuments. We will be raffling off a 1941 fully restored Packard. Tickets are 1 for \$25 or 5 for \$100. Tickets can be purchased from the Commander or Post Adjutant during normal business hours. The second benefit is a Silent Disco on February 26th. Tickets are \$20 and can also be purchased from the Commander or Post Adjutant or a Joint Veteran's Support Committee member.

Save the date, March 21st, for Purse Bingo. Tickets will be going on sale soon. More information will be available on the post website: florida-legion.org and for flyers will be posted throughout the Legion.

Please join me in wishing a "Happy Birthday" to those celebrating during the month of February.

Aim High and Keep up the Mach

1st Vice - Tina Burgess

Year 2026 is off to a great start!

Our 2026 post membership numbers are still going strong! We are at 88.21 of our goal, which means we crushed February's Membership goal of 85% by February 11th. Our next membership goal is to be at 90% by March 11th. Let's continue to do our Buddy Checks and remind our fellow members to renew as soon as possible!

Please congratulate our February Volunteer of the Month, Donna Mallory. Donna can be found in the kitchen expediting meals and calling out orders every Tuesday and Friday night. She also is quick to volunteer for catered Hall events. Donna brings a lot of fun and energy to any job she does and her fellow kitchen mates enjoy working with her. Congratulations Donna, you deserve this honor!

Please help me welcome our newest members to Veterans Memorial Post to include an Army 0-3 and eventual Navy 0-5 who served as a Dentist during the Gulf War and Operation Enduring Freedom; a Navy E-5 who served as a Submarine Nuclear Propulsion Plant Operator and Mechanic; an Air Force E-5 Missile Systems Analyst; a 20-year Air Force 0-4 who served as a Special Operations Navigator and Instructor and is the recipient of the Air Medal and Aerial Achievement medal; a Navy E-6 who served as an ASW Operations Center Acoustic Analyst Supervisor; an Army 0-6 Engineer and recipient of the bronze Star; and an Army E-9 Command Sergeant Major and Practical Nurse.

On Sunday, February 8th at 10:00am, we will be hosting the District 6 Oratorical Competition. Yes! We need Volunteers to assist. We need escorts, tabulators, timers, announcers, audience members, etc. If you are interested in helping, let me know. Thanks!

Many of you may have noticed we are revamping the "Walls in the Hall"! This has been an ongoing project and for me, a labor of love. I would like to thank 3rd Vice Dan Martin and his partner Maribeth Tinnin for their expert assistance in hanging our artwork and war memorabilia. The new displays are meant to be handled, just kindly put the items back where you found them. If anyone has any unique items they would like to donate/loan to us for our display, please reach out to me. I am especially interested in Korean War items.

Finally, there is no escaping it! February is the month of LOVE! Let's take care of what we love, to include ourselves, our family, fellow Veterans, or our community.

Post Service Officers: JB & Maria Alexander
PENSION POACHING



The American Legion, particularly the Department of Florida, actively campaigns against **pension poaching**— a scam where "advisors" charge fees to help veterans artificially qualify for VA benefits. Their regulations and advocacy center on the principle that **legitimate assistance for VA pension claims must be provided free of charge.**

Recognizing a "Poaching" Scam

According to the American Legion and the VA, you should be wary of any organization that:

1. **Charges Upfront Fees:** It is illegal for anyone to charge a fee to help a veteran prepare or file an initial claim.
2. **Suggests Asset Shifting:** Scammers may advise hiding assets in trusts or annuities to meet income limits, which can lead to benefit disqualification or the requirement to repay the government.

3. **Requests Benefit Redirection:** No advisor or caregiver should ever have a veteran's benefits deposited into their own bank account.

Veterans should seek assistance from accredited representatives who provide services free of charge for initial disability claims.

In the State of Florida, each county has accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSO). Typically, you should seek assistance from the county in which you reside. The following is contact information for the counties which serve this area:

Sumter County: 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood
– 352-689-4400 (call for appointment)

Lake County: 1996 Classicue Lane, Tavares
– 352-742- 6585

Marion County: 2730 E. Silver Springs Blvd, Unit 100, Ocala – 352-671-8422

Or stop in and visit one of the Post Service Officers on Tuesday or Thursday.

ATTENTION – PSO'S ARE AVAILABLE MORE HOURS TO SERVE YOU! Post Service Officers are **TYPICALLY** available on Tuesdays, in the lobby of the American Legion Post from 1400-1800 hours, **AND THURSDAYS FROM 1400-1700 HOURS**, or you can leave your contact information with the front office staff and we will contact you. Additionally, Dennis Storey is a VSO with the DAV and can be contacted at 352-674-6097 for an appointment.

Auxiliary President - Maureen Caswell

During the very busy month of February, The Auxiliary will be conducting all the behind the scenes work in order to implement our participation in the 2026 Girls State Program, our annual Scholarship Program, and our annual Women Veterans Luncheon. In addition to these programs, an Auxiliary Initiation ceremony will be conducted on February 7, 2026 at 1pm in the Post Hall.

We are in the process of visiting our local high schools to introduce The Auxiliary's Girl State Program to our high school juniors. Girls State is basically good citizenship training and is held on the campus of Florida State University over the course of a week. The Auxiliary pays 100% of the cost. We will be interviewing those juniors that fill out an application with an essay attached in the early part of the month. The 2026 session is scheduled for June. We are planning to send 5 girls this year.

Our 2026 Senior Scholarship packets have been delivered to the Leesburg and Villages High Schools. We plan on awarding 6 students with a \$5,000. scholarship. That \$30,000! We are very proud to be able to offer these high schools seniors this opportunity. Students are required to fill out an application and write an essay. Applications are due back in March. We will be looking for help next month to review/score the essays. Later this spring, we will be kicking off our Nursing Scholarship program.

Planning for our annual Women Veterans Luncheon is well underway. The date has been set for Monday, March 9, 12 noon-3pm, Post 347 Hall. Post 347 has just over 300 female Veterans and we are hoping a good number will come out and meet us for lunch. Invitations will be mailed in mid February.

Come on out and join us for our monthly meetings. We discuss all of our events and programs at these meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 4. We start with a social hour that begins at 5pm and our meetings start promptly at 6pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

Notice:

Post 347 is in the process of looking for a **NEW** Kitchen Manager as we look toward Harriett's Retirement. If you have the skill, experience and desire we would love to talk with you. Please see Commander Dave Musser or 1st Vice Tina Burgess

S.A.L. Commander - Danny Roe

Welcome to February. What a cold winter we have had. Hopefully we are looking at warmer weather coming this month.

I would like to remind you it is not too late to renew, just **Mail to PO Box 1534, Lady Lake, FL, 32158**. Just drop it off or mail it in and we will get your card to you as soon as we can. Per Doug White, our renewal numbers are **936 for 83.6%**. Please get your renewal in to help us to get to 100%.

I encourage our membership to come and participate in what your Squadron does for our veterans and the community. **Meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM with pizza at 5:30**. I hope to see you there. Thank you to those that are attending and supporting your Squadron.

Be sure to get your tickets for our Valentines party on Feb 14th. Tickets are on sale now on Tuesday nights in the Lobby and office from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Friday. We sold 90 tickets on the first night, be sure to get your tickets before we sell out. The cost is \$25 per person, Ham Dinner with Suzie Costa performing. Watch website and video screens for details. Proceeds go to Special Olympics.

Our Family Golf Tournament for Children and Youth Charities date is **Saturday, May 16th**. Location is same as last year, Broad Stripes in Stonecrest. Signups will start Tuesday Feb 3rd in the lobby and office after that. **Scoring will be two flights this year giving a better chance to win**. Cost is \$100 per person. We will also be raffling a patriotic quilt again this year. Quilt is being created by Broad Stripe's own Dee Pelletier. If you remember, last year's quilt was very beautiful. Quilt tickets are \$5 per ticket and will be available Feb 3rd and after on Tuesday nights in the Lobby.

We will also be heading up to the Gainesville Fisher House on March 31st to cook Hamburgers and Brats for the residents and guests of the house. We will be celebrating Vietnam War Veterans Day. Anyone is welcome to join us for the visit, just let me know so we have a good count of attendees for the food.

You can always contact me with your comments or concerns at dannyroe@prodigy.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

Be sure to check our website: Florida-Legion.org for the latest news and information.

Rider's Director - Linda Haynes

Welcome to February, the month we celebrate Four Chaplains Day, the Coast Guard Reserve Birthday, American Heart Month, Black History Month and Valentine's Day. February is also the shortest month of the year, so we must pack a lot into 28 days!

The riders will be busy this month attending the American Legion Rider Summit in Daytona Beach, FL the 18th-21st. This annual Summit offers classes on duties and responsibilities for elected offices and safety issues specific to Riders. Additionally, we will welcome other ALR chapters to our Post during our annual Poker Run on the 28th. This ride will raise funds for the Veteran and Children Foundation.

Other items of interest include the In State Unity ride April 19-25. We are looking forward to hosting approximately 50 Riders for dinner during that ride. Officer elections will take place in May, and the Legacy Run will take place in August. Riders continue to participate in weekly lunch rides even on these frigid days, and work in the kitchen on the 1st 3rd and 5th Sundays.

Observances: Groundhog's Day (2nd) Valentine's Day (14th) President's Day (16th)



Post Everlasting and Sick Call

Post Everlasting: John F Roberts, Everett Allen, Richard Parks, James Bascom, Bruce Botticelli, Thomas Farrell, Billy McCormick, David Barone

Sick Call: Mary Seidel, Jan Akins, Ron Monet, Ky Rauzi, Jim Arnold, Nayana Flipsey, Cecilia Handley, Sherry Silcox, Josephine Olson

Please go to our website: florida-legion.org for the names of the sick and deceased members.

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Kitchen 12-2 pm Riders Bingo 2 -4pm Lounge Closes @ 5pm	2 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night Tone Rangers 5 – 8 pm	3 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Tim Hargis 5:30 – 8:30	4 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Aux Mtg 6:00 pm	5 Public Bingo 8:30 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	6 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Jenni Piergrossi 5:30 – 8:30 pm	7 12pm Lounge opens Attend Draw 6:30 pm
8 Bingo 2 -4pm Kitchen 12-2 pm SAL Dist. Oratorical 10am Super Bowl Party 5:30 – 10 pm	9 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night Tone Rangers 5 – 8 pm	10 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Clark Barrios 5:30 – 8:30	11 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Legion Mtg 5:30 pm	12 Public Bingo 8:30 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	13 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Kat & the Kidd 5:30 – 8:30 pm	14 AYCE Breakfast 7-11am SAL Valentine Party 4-8:30 pm Attend Draw 6:30 pm
15 Kitchen 12-2 pm Riders Bingo 2 -4pm Lounge Closes @ 5pm	16 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night Tone Rangers 5 – 8 pm	17 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Tight Genes 5:30 – 8:30	18 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Submariner Mtg 12pm SAL Mtg 6:00 pm	19 Public Bingo 8:30 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	20 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Del Phi's 5:30 – 8:30 pm	21 12pm Lounge opens Attend Draw 6:30 pm
22 Kitchen 12-2 pm SAL Bingo 2 -4pm Lounge Closes @ 5pm	23 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night Tone Rangers 5 – 8 pm	24 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Bill D Williams 5:30 – 8:30	25 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm ALR Mtg 5:30 pm	26 Trivia – 6:30pm Public Bingo 8:30 am SAL Italian Night Team Silent Disco 5:30 – 8:30 pm	27 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Clark Barrios 5:30 – 8:30 pm	28 12pm Lounge opens Attend Draw 6:30 pm
New Lounge Hours: Mon – Sat 12 – 9 pm; Sun 12 – 5 pm						
Silent Disco Feb 26th		Valentine Dance Feb 14th			District Oratorical Feb 8th	

Tuesday Menu

Feb 3: Taco Salad \$11.00	Feb 10: Fettuccini Alfredo w/Shrimp \$11.00	Feb 17: Ribs, Fries & Coleslaw \$13.00	Feb 24: Ham Steak, Roasted Potatoes \$11.00
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Hot dogs, Fries, Nachos and Onion Rings available except Thursdays. Meals & Pricing subject to change at any time.

SAL Thursday Italian Night Menu

Feb 5: Spaghetti & Meatballs **Feb 12:** Lasagna **Feb 19:** Stuffed Shells **Feb 26:** Chichen Parm w/ spaghetti
(with salad, Roll, & dessert – \$11:00) Pizza Slices – \$2.50 Whole Pies: \$12 – \$15

American Legion Officers	Auxiliary Officers	S.A.L. Officers	Legion Riders Officers
Commander Dave Musser	President Maureen Caswell	Commander Danny Roe	Director Linda Haynes
1st Vice Tina Burgess	1st Vice Patricia Morrow	1st Vice Doug White	Asst. Director Tom Hill
2nd Vice John Gorsuch	2nd Vice Barbara Kyle	2nd Vice Bud Bowyer	Adjutant Richard Lees
3rd Vice Dan Martin	Treasurer Kathy Allen	Finance Bill Grieco	Finance Jim Dollins
Chaplain Lisa Johnson	Secretary Lois Bass	Chaplain Ben Kisielica	Sgt at Arms Robert Stepnowski
Historian Bobby Wince	Historian Lois Bass	Historian Keven Kinney	Chaplain Robert Stanziola
Adjutant Rob Burgess	Sgt at Arms Pat Skeel	Sgt at Arms Tony Watkins	Ride Captain Larry Pekoe
Finance Bob Irvine	Chaplain Maureen Merlette	M.A.L. Dave Callies	
Service Officer JB & Maria Alexander	M.A.L. Sue Carlson	M.A.L. Bob Girou	
Sgt at Arms Jim Dollins	M.A.L. Denise Hallisey	Judge Advocate Vic Prezioso	
Judge Advocate Heath Davenport	M.A.L. Jo Richmond	Adjutant Bob O'Neal	
M.A.L. Mike Haynes	M.A.L. Deb Stanley		
M.A.L. George Ries	M.A.L. Jo Linda Spear		
M.A.L. Tony Gibson	M.A.L. Joan Yackel		
M.A.L. Jim Stasse	I.P.P. Ruth Sovern		
Past Commander Joan Suelter			