

VETERANS MEMORIAL POST 347
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Commander: Dave Musser
Auxiliary: Maureen Caswell
S.A.L: Danny Roe
Riders: Linda Haynes
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NEWSLETTER-JANUARY 2025

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: BJ ALLEN

Commander-Dave Musser

Legion family and friends as we wind down another awesome year at American Legion Post 347, I want to thank everyone for their continued support of our Veteran and community programs. Your patronage not only helps with that but is helping with expenses incurred with building a female veteran's transition home, food for the homeless and less fortunate members of our community and hurricane relief efforts throughout Florida.

We have increased our kitchen capacity by adding a new double convection oven, two new ranges with double ovens and repairing three of our five deep fryers which we anticipate replacing next year. The air Conditioning systems were updated with newer technology to help prevent shutdowns and additional maintenance calls. None of this is possible without your support.

Over a hundred people attended the Veteran's Day ceremony this year. I want to thank Tina

(1st Vice) for spearheading a program to get pictures of OUR veterans, then and now, to display as part of the presentation. Thank you to Rob (lounge manager) for helping with importing and displaying the photos.

Thanksgiving was once again an enormous success with Harriett (kitchen manager) ordering, cooking, and organizing a wonderful staff of volunteers to put out a feast for over 260 attendees in just over an hour. If you missed either of these events, put them on your must-do list for next year.

There are still a few events left on the agenda you can help support:

- New Years Eve tickets are on sale in the lounge - \$25/person. See Rob or Ruth in the lounge for tickets.
- Army/Navy Game - Saturday December 14th. pm. Drink specials during the game and FREE fried bologna sandwiches at half time.

- Wreaths Across America – Saturday December 14, noon at the Lady Lake Cemetery and Bushnell starting at 10am.

After the Queen of Hearts drawing on December 17, you must have a 2025 membership card to play for the drawing on January 7, 2025. There is no Queen of Hearts on Christmas or New Years Eve.

As we get ready to move into the New Year, please be mindful that it is one way traffic in front of the post. Please follow the arrows and signage for all our safety. Log onto the Post website, florida-legion.org for all the updated information and to see volunteer opportunities available.

Please join me in wishing a Happy Birthday to those celebrating in December. Stay safe and healthy this holiday season and remember those not able to be with their loved ones.

Aim High and Keep Up the Mach !!

Auxiliary-Maureen Caswell

Happy New Year! 2024 certainly flew by! I want to take this opportunity to thank the entire American Legion Family for supporting our Holiday Food Box Program. As a family, we were able to very generously supply significant food staples along with holiday meals to 100 families. Each family received enough food to last at least a week! I'd also like to thank all of you that donated food items, money and of course, your time! Well done and Thank you!

Our Angel Tree program generously provided gifts to more than 150 children/seniors and several families in need. We also hosted 60 local Toys for

Tots Volunteers with an appreciation dinner as a "thank you".

We will be busy over the next several weeks planning and finalizing our participation in the following Auxiliary Programs:

- Girls State
- Scholarships - fine tuning our plans under our Americanism, Education and Past President Parley (Nursing) programs
- Female Veteran Luncheon – host lunch/ ceremony
- May Poppy Drive
- Memorial Day & Veterans Day Lunch

Lots to talk about, lots to do! Come on out and join

us at our next Auxiliary General Meeting on **Wednesday, January 1, 2025 at Post 347 in the Hall. YES, THAT DATE IS CORRECT!** Membership voted to hold the monthly meeting on the scheduled date, even though that happened to be New Year's Day evening. Our social mix begins at 5:00pm and we will be hosting a potluck dinner. The Auxiliary will provide the Pork Roast. We are asking you to bring your favorite side or dessert to share. As usual, our General Meeting will begin promptly at 6pm.

Hope to see you there and wishing all of you a very happy, healthy New Year!

SAL COMMANDER-Danny Roe

First, I hope everyone's Holiday Celebrations were Great. My wife and I had a Great Holiday season and now it is time to get back to work doing what we do.

A Special Thanks to all those who came in to move kitchen furniture and utensils out /in the kitchen so the new stove and gas piping could be installed. It was very short notice and you stepped up and showed up like the great volunteers you are.

As we enter January our membership continues to increase. Doug White, our 1st Vice Commander, reports we have 901 members towards our baseline of 1061. This is 84.9% of our membership goal.

Thanks to the Legion Auxiliary unit 347 for their hard work in hosting our **Legion Family Early Bird Dinner** again this year. They always do a **Fantastic Job**, and this year was no exception.

Very Important: Remember if you have not renewed your membership yet, you are delinquent and will not be admitted into the building until you renew your membership.

We had our **Culvers Dine to Donate** on **Thursday November 14th**. Ten percent of the proceeds were donated to Florida Children and Youth Programs. A big thank you to Culvers and those who supported this cause. Total money

raised was **\$837.21**.

We held our annual **Wreaths Across America**, that honors deceased veterans all over this great country. Our ceremony was at **Lady Lake Cemetery on Saturday, December 14th**. It was put on by our whole Legion Family and was an honor for me to emcee. Our speaker was **Lady Lake Mayor Ed Freeman**, and he spoke emphasizing that we are gathered today not to mourn for the veterans, but to celebrate their lives and remember what they sacrificed while serving our country. All the volunteers then placed wreaths on each of the 136 veteran headstones, saluted the veteran and thanked them for their service.

In closing, please be careful as we get more crowded with the seasonal residents back. Let us be patient and arrive safely.

Save the dates

Valentine's Party Saturday, February 8th **Entertainment Jersey Frank Ham Dinner**, see posted flyer for details (**Tickets on sale Tuesday January 7th at Queen of Hearts and office after) \$25 PP (Proceeds go to Special Olympics)**

Children and Youth Family Golf Tournament May 10th, 2025, **Broad Stripes CC, on sale Feb 1st 202(Patriotic Quilt and Golf Club raffles)**

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

POST SERVICE OFFICERS

J.B. & Maria Alexander

"The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our last gratitude" Jeff Miller

JB and Maria Alexander have recently been assigned as the Post Service Officers for Post 347. We are honored to be of service to the men and women of the post (and any veteran0 who wants to investigate their eligibility for possible disability compensation for a service related accident or injury. JB and Maria will be available on most Tuesday afternoons beginning in January (as this is the busiest time for our Post) to provide basic eligibility information or information. The time is tentatively set for 1500-1800 hours, More detailed appointments can be scheduled for later to take a deeper look into a specific situation. If you need to reach us, (other than on tuesdays0) please contact the Post and leave a message with your contact information and we will get back to you as soon as possible.. **Happy New Year!**

Date	Event	Time	Travel Miles	Location	Travel Hours	Total*
November						
21	Fall Conference PSO Training	8	65	Orlando	1 One Way	9.00
22	Fall Conference PSO Training	4	65	Orlando	1 OW	5.00
December						
10	Meet w/Dennis Storey	1	32	VA Clinic	1.10 RT	2.25
11	Assemble, print continuity book	4	none	home	none	4.00
11	TAL General membership meeting	1	28	TAL	1 round trip	2.00
12	Meet w/veteran Johnson	1.5	22	Sea Breeze RC	45 min RT	2.25
12	Announcement at club meeting	-	-	Canel Street RC		0.00
14	Copy and add to Resource Book	2	none	home	none	2.00
18	Meet w/ Jason Sumpter Co VSO	1	22	County Office	40 min RT	1.75
19	Meet w/veteran Les Robinson	1	16	Eisenhower RC	30 min RT	1.50
21	Tele-interview with grandson of Expired vet - Nelson	0.5	none	n/a	0	0.50
30	Telephone interview w/veteran Joe Comer	1	none	home	0	1.00
TOTAL			250			31.25
	Total contacts - 7					
	Total in person (including tele-meetings) - 4					
	* Hours have been rounded to the nearest quarter					
	Submitted By: J.B. & Maria Alexander, PSO					

1st Vice-Tina Burgess

It is hard to believe 2024 is ending and with that, our 2025 renewal season. Currently, Post 347 is at 74 percent of our goal, only 1,800 more membership renewals to go! If you haven't renewed yet, please do so by visiting our front office Monday-Friday, 9 am to 4 pm. If you know of someone who has not renewed their membership, please encourage them to do so.

So far this renewal season, we have gained 223 traditional new Legion Members. Allow me to explain the significance of this number. Post 347 is in District 6, which is comprised of 26 American Legion Posts. Our new member total is more than the total membership levels of 15 District 6 Posts. We have some extraordinary new members joining us, to include: an Air Force F-4 Weapon Systems Officer and F-16 Fighter Pilot during Operation Desert Storm; a Coast Guard E-7 Port Security Officer; a Marine E-7 Gulf War Veteran who is the recipient of the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Ribbon; a Coast Guard E-4 Search and Rescue Aircrewman; an Army Air Defense Artillery Officer who served from Vietnam to the Gulf War and is the recipient of the Bronze Star and Master Parachutist Badge; an Air Force E-4 Aircraft Armament Systems Specialist; and a Navy E-4 Underwater Demolition Team member. Please help me make all new members feel welcome. Encourage them to attend Post meetings and functions and encourage them to become involved through volunteering.

Speaking of volunteering, join me in congratulating BJ Allen as our Volunteer of the Month. BJ has become Harriet's most dependable volunteer in the kitchen. Most recently, he assisted in preparing our Thanksgiving meal, that served 250 guests. The Meal was DELICIOUS and took days to prepare! BJ also takes charge in the kitchen for every Tuesday Queen of Hearts meal and graciously substitutes when needed. BJ works quietly and confidently and

this recognition is well deserved.

On Friday, January 10, we will be hosting our second Veteran Outreach event, opening our doors to Veterans within our community, offering access to resources for VA benefits, health, networking, and much more. We will host Dr. Evans Pemba, Ocala Hears Audiology, the Blood Mobile, Lake Sumter Lions Club Glucose screening, Concierge Care, Florida National Cemetery, Charter Research, Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator (CEPC) for the Orlando Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, and the Mobile Vet Center. The Villages VA Outpatient Clinic will have experts present for the following areas: Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center, MyHealth Vet, Mental Health, Geriatric Evaluation Program, DAV/VSO, Whole Health, Women's Health, Blood Pressure Station/2-Day Discharge, Flu Shots, and Social Work w/ focus on the homeless Veteran population. We will also have the Director, Department of Veterans Affairs, Readjustment Counseling Service, Clermont Vet Center and the Visual Impairment Services Team, part of the Blind Rehabilitation Team for the VA.

On Monday, February 17, we will host a Vietnam War Commemoration Welcome Home Ceremony. We are inviting all veterans who served on active duty between November 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975 to celebrate their service. The Director of the Vietnam War Commemoration, Maj Gen Edward J. Chrystal, Jr., US Army, along with Col Patrick Cramer, US Army, Chief of the Director's Action Group, will be at our Post to honor your service with a commemorative pin and Presidential certificate. As part of this ceremony, we will present a slide show of our honored veterans, so see me if you want to participate and I'll make sure your pictures are included.

Rob and I enjoyed celebrating with many of you on New Year's Eve. It was awesome to see our Legion Family come together. We wish you a year filled with new hopes, new joys, and new beginnings!

Riders Director-Linda Haynes

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Here we are at the beginning of a brand-new opportunity January 2025! This is the time when we reflect on the past and look forward to the future. January is the month of fresh starts and resolutions. The Riders are looking forward to a positive productive year; a year in which we will continue to collaborate with all the American Legion Families to support and donate to veteran causes. We will continue to ride the roads of Florida proudly with our orange shirts and vests letting everyone who sees us know that we are Chapter 347 American Legion Riders.

Please remember that if you have not renewed your membership as of 1 January 25 you are no longer in good standing, contact the membership team. Other items of interest include: the ALR Summit Feb 12-15 in Orlando, our annual Poker Run on February 22 (please plan to volunteer, this is an all-hands-on deck endeavor), you will also begin hearing about the Unity and Legacy Rides which will be later in the year. Wednesday lunch rides will continue look for notices on Facebook and in your email, lastly kitchen duty continues the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays your assistance is very much appreciated.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR POST 347

Sun & Wed: Bar Bingo -Member and 1 Guest

Tue-Queen of Hearts: Member & 1 Guest

Mon, Thur, Fri & Sat: Member and 3 Guests

No Outside food, drinks or snacks allowed. You may bring Birthday cakes and cupcakes.

Volunteers are always welcomed. Please

stop by the office or see a Post officer for more information on the opportunities available.

Hours of Operation

9-4 pm: M-F (Staffed by Volunteers)

Phones:

Post: 352-750-2099

FAX: 352-750-2202

Lounge: 352-750-0639



POST EVERLASTING



Harry W. Carr-USA Jalmer W. Larson-USA (WW II) David J. Murphy-USN

JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 HONOR GUARD MTG Kitchen 12-2 Bar Bingo-2-4 AUX MTG-6:00	2 PUBLIC BINGO SAL Italian Night Team Trivia 6:30	3 Kitchen 5-6:45 DENNIE & THE JETS	4 Lounge opens at Noon
5 Kitchen 12-2-RIDERS Bar Bingo-2-4 KARAOKE-SUZY D	6 Line Dance Class-3 pm SAL Burger Night TONE RANGERS	7 Queen of Hearts 12-7 PETRINA Kitchen 5-6:45 pm	8 Kitchen 12-2 Bar Bingo-2-4 Legion Mtg-5:30	9 PUBLIC BINGO SAL Italian Night Team Trivia 6:30	10 Kitchen 5-6:45 DEL PHIS	11 Lounge opens at Noon
12 Kitchen 12-2 SAL Bar Bingo-2-4 KARAOKE-SUZY D	13 Line Dance Class-3 pm SAL Burger Night TONE RANGERS	14 Queen of Hearts 12-7 BILL D WILLIAMS Kitchen 5-6:45 pm	15 Kitchen 12-2 Bar Bingo-2-4 SAL Mtg 6:00	16 PUBLIC BINGO SAL Italian Night Team Trivia 6:30	17 Kitchen 5-6:45 TIM HARGIS	18 Lounge opens at Noon
19 Kitchen 12-2-RIDERS Bar Bingo-2-4 KARAOKE-SUZY D	20 Line Dance Class-3 pm SAL Burger Night TONE RANGERS	21 Queen of Hearts 12-7 ACTION JACKSON Kitchen 5-6:45 pm	22 Kitchen 12-2 Bar Bingo-2-4 ALR Mtg 6:00	23 PUBLIC BINGO SAL Italian Night Team Trivia 6:30	24 Kitchen 5-6:45 DEL PHIS	25 Lounge opens at Noon
26 Kitchen 12-2 SAL Bar Bingo-2-4 KARAOKE-SUZY D	27 Line Dance Class-3 pm SAL Burger Night TONE RANGERS	28 Queen of Hearts 12-7 TIGHT GENES Kitchen 5-6:45 pm	29 Kitchen 12-2 Bar Bingo-2-4	30 PUBLIC BINGO SAL Italian Night Team Trivia 6:30	31 Kitchen 5-6:45 JONNELL & THE G MAN	

Tuesday, January 7th CHICKEN CORDON BLEU, MASHED POTATOES, ROLL & BUTTER-\$11.00	Tuesday, January 14th POT ROAST, MASHED POTATOES, GREEN BEANS, ROLL & BUTTER-\$11.00	Tuesday, January 21st RIB NIGHT, FRENCH FRIES & COLE SLAW-\$13.00	Tuesday, January 28th SALISBURY STEAK, MASHED POTATOES, VEGETABLES, ROLL & BUTTER-\$11.00
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HOT DOGS, FRIES, ONION RINGS & NACHOS AVAILABLE EVERY WEEK

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	Ruth Sovern	1st Vice	Doug White	Asst. Director	Sherri Ward
2nd Vice	John Gorsuch	2nd Vice	Carol Pirone-Udell	2nd Vice	Bud Bowyer	Adjutant	Richard Lees
3rd Vice	Dan Martin	Treasurer	Kathy Allen	Finance	Bill Grieco	Finance	Jim Dollins
Chaplain	Lisa Johnson	Secretary	Barbara Kyle	Chaplain	Ben Kisielica	Sgt at Arms	Bob Stepnowski
Historian	Phil Crouthamel	Historian	Lois Bass	Historian	Gary Blanchard	Chaplain	Robert Stanzola
Adjutant	Phil Crouthamel	Sgt at Arms	Patricia Morrow	Sgt at Arms	Tony Watkins	Ride Captain	Larry Pekoe
Finance	Bob Irvine	Chaplain	Maureen Merlette	M.A.L.	Dave Callies		
Service Officer	Dennis Storey	M.A.L.	Lynn Allen	M.A.L.	Bob Girou		
Sgt at Arms	Jim Dollins	M.A.L.	Elaine French	Judge Advocate	Vic Prezioso		
Judge Advocate	Heath Davenport	M.A.L.	Denise Hallisey	Adjutant	Bob O'Neal		
M.A.L.	Mike Haynes	M.A.L.	Mary Seidel				
M.A.L.	George Ries	M.A.L.	Jo Linda Spear				
M.A.L.	Wayne Rodgers	M.A.L.	Joan Yackel				
M.A.L.	Jim Stasse	I.P.P.	Ruth Sovern				
Past Commander	Joan Suelter						

The Post is looking for a new Historian. Please contact the Adjutant for more info on this elected position.