

VETERANS MEMORIAL POST 347
P.O. Box 1534
Lady Lake FL 32158-1534
Physical Address
699 W. Lady Lake Blvd
Lady Lake FL 32159
Phone: 352-750-2099
FAX: 352-750-2022



Newsletter – July 2025

Commander: Dave Musser
Auxiliary: Maureen Caswell
S.A.L: Danny Roe
Riders: Linda Haynes
Website: florida-legion.org
Email: alpost347@comcast.net
Editor: Rob Burgess

Volunteer of the Month – July: Walter ‘Bud’ Bowyer

Commander – Dave Musser

The new fiscal year (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) has arrived and with that comes a new membership year. As you already know, National raised the membership dues last year and this year The Department of Florida increased dues by \$3. Not to worry, we are not going to raise ours this year! The Post will absorb the difference.

To kick start the 2026 membership season we are offering **Early Bird discounts. Legionnaires renewing in person at the post or by mail between July 1 and August 31st** will receive a \$10 savings. **Renew** between September 1 and Veterans Day (November 11th) and receive a \$5 savings. After that the dues goes back to \$50. Only cash, check or money order **NO CREDIT CARDS** will be accepted for **early bird renewal. Mail to: American Legion Post 347, PO Box 1534, Lady Lake, FL 32158.**

This decision reflects our commitment to ensuring membership remains accessible and meaningful for all, despite external changes. The Post's dedication to supporting its members goes beyond financial considerations, aiming to foster a sense of community and purpose that resonates deeply with all who enter its doors. By absorbing the increase this year, we reaffirm our belief that the strength of Post 347 lies in its unwavering unity and the shared mission that drives its members forward.

As we step into another year filled with opportunities for growth and unity, it's essential to reflect on the values and traditions that have shaped Post 347 into the cornerstone of camaraderie and commitment it is today. Each member contributes not only to our shared mission but also to the vibrant spirit of connection that defines us. With renewed energy, we're looking ahead to build upon past achievements while embracing the future of our community. We can only do this with your help. Please volunteer for one of the many opportunities available at the Post and Driving Range.

The past year has been a testament to our collective commitment of the Legion Family. We shall continue to strive for another productive year as well as seek new and younger members to carry on the legacy of Post 347. It is not just a place to come and have a beverage and a meal, it is also a place for you to get involved and support your fellow military comrades in a time of need.

There are many things taking place at the Post on the 4th of July. Food, music, games, apple pie baking contest, chili cookoff, and much more!!!! Please check our website: **florida-legion.org** to stay up to date on the latest happenings at **your** post.

Please stay safe and watch the weather, this is hurricane season!! I would like you to join me in wishing a “Happy Birthday” to those celebrating during the month of July.

Aim High and Keep Up The Mach

Auxiliary President – Maureen Caswell

It's Summer again and welcome to our 2025-2026 Fiscal Year!

The kick-off to our fiscal year over the last few years has been our annual American Legion Family Food Drive. This is our sixth annual! The **American Legion Family Food Drive** is scheduled for **Sunday, July 13 & 14, 2025**. We hold this event in July to ensure that the food banks are well stocked and ready for our local children's return to school. We have done extremely well with donations over the past four years. Details are as follows:

The food drive will be a drop-off event again this year, meaning that donations will be received at the front door of the Post on Sunday during the hours of 10am-2pm. The items are brought into the Post by volunteers and sorted and divided up amongst the food banks that are participating. On Monday morning, between the hours of 9am to early

afternoon, the food gets delivered to their designated food bank during their donation calling hours.

Volunteers Needed:

On Sunday, we need volunteers to unload the cars, bring the items into the Post, sort the items and organize the items for delivery. On Monday, we will need volunteers to help load up the volunteer cars and make the delivery. The delivery times will vary.

If you are interested in volunteering, we will have sign-up sheets at the front office and on Tuesday evenings and Sunday and Wednesday Bar Bingo. If you would like more information or would like to sign up electronically, please email Carol Pirone-Udell at nycarol2u@aol.com.

As always, we thank you for your support and appreciate how truly blessed we are to belong to this American Legion Family!

1st Vice – Tina Burgess

I am writing this at the beginning of my second full year as your 1st Vice Commander. I remain honored and eager to continue this journey with you! I want to thank you for your continued support!

This month begins our 2025-2026 renewal season. Our membership dues this year will be \$50. To encourage early renewal, the Commander has agreed to charge the 2024 renewal rate of \$40 through August 31, 2025! To receive this rate, you must renew in person at the front office or mail a check to Veterans Memorial Post 347, PO Box 1534, Lady Lake, FL postmarked by August 3, 2025. From September 1 through November 11, the dues will be \$45 and thereafter, \$50. Please note that there is no Early Bird Dinner this year. Your reward for paying early is the membership discount. If you opt to renew online, you will be charged \$50. We did not make our 100% membership goal this year. That said, we set our goal at 100 % membership by January 2026! We can only reach this goal with your support!

Join me in congratulating July's Volunteer of the Month Walter "Bud" Bowyer. Bud is a reliable Sons of the American Legion member who is the Squadron's

elected 2nd Vice Commander. Bud donates many hours as Kitchen Leader to ensure Thursday's Italian nights run smoothly. He is also Kitchen Leader one Monday a month for Burger Night. As the Squadron's 2nd Vice, Bud is in charge of events. With the support of his wife Peg, Bud ensures the success of many Squadron sponsored events, such as dances and Golf Tournaments. Bud is always willing to Volunteer and help out and is very deserving of this award. As a reminder, keep those nominations coming, we have so many dedicated and deserving volunteers!

So far this month, we have 14 new members to welcome to our Post. Please help me welcome a 99-year old World War II Army Veteran joining the American Legion for the first time; an Army CW-2 who was a Helicopter Pilot during Vietnam; an Army E-7 and Bronze Star recipient transferring in from Post 179, West Charleston, SC with 52-years of continuous American Legion membership; and an Air Force O-6 who was a Developmental Engineer and Rocket Scientist.

I hope to see many of you as we Celebrate our Nation's Independence on July 4th! There are sure to be lots of fun happenings at the Post! Don't forget about the Best Apple Pie and Best Chilli Contests!

S.A.L. Commander – Danny Roe

As we begin our new fiscal year, I would just like to say what a privilege it has been to represent this Squadron as your Commander and thank you for your trust in me to serve another year. I am excited to see what we will accomplish in the coming year.

As we enter July, we finished our fiscal year 1116 renewed, new and transferred members towards our baseline of 1061. This is **105%** of our membership goal. What a great job Doug White has done, and thanks to all of you that have renewed and continue to support our program.

Our Year End Reports reflect \$112,163 dollars donated and 14,172 total volunteer hours. That is a job well done and I look forward to even more in the coming fiscal year. We were represented well in local news and an article or two in the American Legion National news. Also at Detachment Convention we received several awards, 1st Place for Children and Youth Report, 1st Place for VA&R Report, and 2nd Runner up for Americanism Report and Special

Olympics. That tells me we are doing something right. Great job Squadron 347.

Don't forget to come out and support us on July 4th at Eaton's Beach. They will sell wristbands to watch the fireworks on the beach for \$10 each. Sales start at 5:00 PM. They give us half the profits for our programs.

Also remember our Halloween Dance is coming up on Nov 1st with Bill D Williams performing. Help us sell it out this year. Save the Date, more info to come.

Please remember the Family Food Drive hosted by the Auxiliary. Sunday, July 13th from 9:30 to finish at the Post. Just drive by and we will unload your donations.

Your 2025-26 officers are: **1st Vice Doug White, 2nd Vice Bud Bowyer, Sgt at Arms Tony Watkins, Chaplain Ben Kiselica, Finance Officer Bill Greico, Members at Large Dave (DAC) Callies and Bob Girou.** The appointed officers will be **Adjutant Bob O'Neal and Judge Advocate Vic Prezioso. Also a big welcome to Keven Kinney as our new Historian.**

Chaplain – Lisa Johnson

Welcome to Florida summer. It will be hot and humid until November. If you are not used to the heat, keep cool, hydrated and take an electrolyte drink to replace lost electrolytes. If you know someone who could use a visit, please reach out to the office and they will contact me. For safety and kindness please drive cautiously especially in a golf cart. So many people share the multimodal trails, walkers, runners, bikers all need to share the road and be kind. Wait a minute to pass safely. Next up July 4th. Let's let freedom ring together!

Post Service Officers: JB & Maria Alexander

As we approach the Fourth of July, a day that symbolizes the birth of a Nation and celebrate the values of freedom and independence, it is essential to take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices and unwavering commitment of our nation's Veterans.

Every year Independence Day is celebrated with fireworks across the country. As beautiful as there are, for some of America's veterans, **fireworks can be a traumatic experience**. The loud noise, explosions, crowds, and even the smell of fireworks can evoke memories of combat and trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, including anxiety, stress, and nightmares.

June was the National PTSD Awareness Month and since it's estimated that over 15,000 veterans call this area home, many of our veterans still struggle with the effects of combat trauma. Being sensitive to the use of fireworks in and around your neighborhood is critical and compassionate.

For those for which this is a trigger, it's important for veterans to create a **safe space during fireworks events**. Options such as using noise-canceling headphones, finding a quieter location away from the fireworks, or staying indoors during the celebration can help veterans manage fireworks with their PTSD.



Post Traumatic Stress is not a weakness, it's a reality.

If you or someone you know wants more information on resources available for veterans still struggling with PTSD, please contact one of our Post Service Officers (PSO's), J.B. or Maria Alexander.

Post Service Officers (PSOs) are typically available at the American Legion Post on Tuesday afternoons from 1530 – 1800 hours in the front lobby, or you can leave your contact information with the office and we will contact you to follow up on your question, concern or inquiry. As well, **VSO Dennis Storey** with the **DAV** is typically available at the Post Lounge on Mondays from 0900 – 1100 hours.

The mission of the Post Service Officers (PSO) is to be a local resource for all veterans and their dependents, providing information or referral to local services. This includes (but not limited to) disability claims, homelessness, education, hospitalization and medical care.

Rider's Director – Linda Haynes

Welcome to July! The ALR elections are over, the officers are in place and the Riders are looking forward to a very productive year. This month we celebrate the 249th birthday of our Country! Other important dates are National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, and National Hire a Veteran Day. The Women's Army Corps, the Cadet Nurses Corp, the US Army Air Corps, and the Navy Women's Reserves (WAVES) are observed in July. President Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month and lastly, July is known as the Dog Days of Summer.

During the heat of the brutal summer, Chapter 347 Riders continue to participate in summer breakfast rides, escorts, and ceremonies. Additionally, eight Riders and two passengers (for a total of 10) are preparing to

participate in the American Legion Legacy Run. This year the ride will start in Virginia and conclude at the National Convention in Tampa. The weather will be extremely hot and humid. In addition to watching traffic and riding with approximately three hundred motorcycles, Riders will have to ensure hydrated.

Since its inception in 2006, The Legacy Run has raised \$16 million dollars for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. Please say a prayer for each of them as they prepare to participate in a ride that will have them riding 1,500 to 1,800 miles; they will stop at various Posts along the way to fund raise and bring community awareness to this important endeavor.

Other items of interest include a fund-raising lottery board, (drawing will be July 4th). Riders continue to work in the kitchen on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays, and as always, we welcome all volunteers.

Observances: July 4th – Independence Day



Sick Call and Post Everlasting



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

July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Bill D Williams 5:30 – 8:30	2 Honor Guard Mtg – 10:30 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm NO AUX Mtg	3 Public Bingo Doors open 8 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	4 Suzy D 12 – 3pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Jonnell & the Gman 5:30 – 8:30	5 Lounge opens at Noon Attendance Drawing 6:30 pm
6 Kitchen 12-2 pm Riders Bar Bingo 2 - 4pm Summer Hours 12 – 5pm	7 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night The Tone Rangers 5 – 8	8 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Petrina 5:30 – 8:30	9 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Legion Mtg 5:30	10 Public Bingo Doors open 8 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	11 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Del Phi's 5:30 – 8:30	12 Lounge opens at Noon Attendance Drawing 6:30 pm
13 Kitchen 12-2 pm SAL Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Summer Hours 12 – 5pm	14 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night The Tone Rangers 5 – 8	15 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Tight Genes 5:30 – 8:30	16 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm SAL Mtg 6:00	17 Public Bingo Doors open 8 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	18 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Bill D Williams 5:30 – 8:30	19 Lounge opens at Noon Attendance Drawing 6:30 pm
20 Kitchen 12-2 pm Riders Bar Bingo 2 - 4pm Summer Hours 12 – 5pm	21 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night The Tone Rangers 5 – 8	22 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Action Jackson 5:30 – 8:30	23 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm AL Riders Mtg 6:00	24 Public Bingo Doors open 8 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm	25 Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Del Phi's 5:30 – 8:30	26 Lounge opens at Noon Attendance Drawing 6:30 pm
27 Kitchen 12-2 pm SAL Bar Bingo 2 -4pm Summer Hours 12 – 5pm	28 Line Dance Class – 3pm SAL Burger Night The Tone Rangers 5 – 8	29 Queen of Hearts – 7pm Kitchen 5 – 6:45 pm Bill D Williams 5:30 – 8:30	30 Kitchen 12-2 pm Bar Bingo 2 -4pm	31 Public Bingo Doors open 8 am SAL Italian Night Team Trivia – 6:30pm		

July 1: 347 Salad w/ Grill Chicken \$11.00	July 8: Shrimp fry \$9.00 Chicken Tend, \$8.00	July 15: Meatball Sub \$9.00	July 22: Taco Salad \$11.00	July 29: French Dip \$9.00
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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			
July 3: Meatball Sub July 10: Chicken Parmesan Sub July 17: Sausage & Peppers Sub July 24: Meatball Sub July 31: Chicken Parmesan Sub (with salad & dessert – \$8:00) 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 Kiselica	Sgt at Arms Roger Stepnowski
Historian Bobby Wince	Historian Lois Bass	Historian Keven Kinney	Chaplain Robert Stanzola
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. Jo Linda Spear		
M.A.L. Jim Stasse	I.P.P. Ruth Sovern		
Past Commander Joan Suelter			