



The Ranger Way

February 2026



Commanders Corner

Greetings Fellow Legionnaires,

I hope that everyone had a good New Year's Eve celebration and continuing January. We do have some good news from the VA which is in the Service Officer Section of the Newsletter like a COLA increase for VA pension and disability payments, My HealtheVet info on phone app, copay rates for 2026 and free Flu shots along with other good VA benefits and Cal Legion information. The VA did do a shout out the American Legion in their latest newsletter as well. For the younger Vets, there is job and entrepreneur assistance. There is also Buddy Check information on the VA links. We also have Cancer, Heart awareness months along with The Four Chaplains Day, The Marine landing on the shores of Tripoli and the USS Jupiter, the first US aircraft carrier that was originally a collier, that was sunk in the Battle of the Java Sea in WWII all in the History Officer Section.

All are invited to our Post meeting which is on February 2nd where we have a social hour prior to the meeting with meals served, so please plan on attending. There are also the usual District-wide events like Monday chess at Post 858, Vet to Vet Café at Post 419 on Thursdays. Post 419 also hosts a First Sunday Breakfast on the 1st. [Check the District 13 Calendar](#) for information. On February 7th we have the Four Chaplains Ceremony at 1000-hour in St. Frances Cabrini Church.

Remember that we generally meet at [the Odd Fellows Lodge #70 on Homestead Road](#) on the first Monday of the Month at 1800 for socializing and a light meal and refreshments then check out the meeting at 1900.

We really want to get more people attending the Post meetings and events and to be more social, so let us know your ideas by coming to our meetings. **I would like the current attending members/officers to use the roster to call and invite members to our meeting which is also a form of Buddy Check.** Newly attending members do give us a heads-up, so that we can request extra rations versus our regular contingent. The next person on the meals roster ([on the Adjutant's Corner](#)) will take the cooler with drinks, etc. for the next meeting. If additional

beverages are required, it will be reimbursed above the normal meal amount. I have the cooler and will bring it to the meeting for the meal.

We need a Finance Officer to step up as our long time Finance Officer Mike O'Meara needs to step down for personal reasons. If you have questions about the position, please reach out to Mike O'Meara at (408) 691-8277 or momeara47@yahoo.com. In our Post ByLaws Section 5. Duties of the Finance Officer. The Finance Officer shall be charged with custody of the funds of the Post. He shall keep its accounts and report thereon at regular meeting of the Post. They shall receive all funds of the Post and pay all bills approved by the Post. The office of Finance Officer and any other officer and/or positions charged by the Post Constitution and/or Bylaws, with the responsibility of handling Post funds, should be bonded and must pass a credit check. This position is very important for maintaining the Post Charter and eligibility in the District.

Please remember that if you have Post or Veterans events that you would like on the calendar get them to Arturo. Please include pertinent information like event information, contacts, address, where to meet, etc.

<https://www.americanlegionpost642.com/site/eventscalendar.php?y=2023&m=3>

If you know of deceased members during the past few months either bring their name and share with our District Chaplain, (currently vacant) so contact the Adjutant at wheimsoth@aol.com with information or if you would like to volunteer for the District 13 Chaplain position.

To Comradeship!

Vincent Guinnane, MSME, P.E.

CW4, 881A2, USAR (Retired)

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Cell: +1 (408) 219-0191

First Vice Commanders Notes

None

2026 Membership Report (As of 23 January 2026)

2026 Membership Goal: 65

Paid Up for Life (PUFL): 13

Online Annual Renewals: 11

Multi-Annual Renewals: 4

Mail Renewals: 15

Post 1000 Transfers: 0

Total Members: 43/66.2%

Newly renewed Members: 0

New Members: 0

Renewals Pending Submittal: 0

Members not yet renewed: 24

District Rank: 11th out of 11

Renewed Members Since Last Report: **5**

Mary Anne Salvatierra USAF 15 yrs.

Randy Jones USA 31 yrs.

George Dill USA 24 yrs.

Delmar Wensch USA 8 yrs.

Donald Prosceno USCG 17 yrs.

[Membership Repot URL](#)

Adjutant Update

Fellow Legionnaires,

Greetings everyone-As we move into February, I just wanted to point out that we will be holding the 83rd Anniversary of the Four Chaplains Memorial Inter-Faith Service on Saturday 7 February at 1000 hrs. at St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church allocated at 15333 Woodard Rd, San Jose. Our American Legion District 13 are the hosts and sponsors of the event. [Here](#) is the history of the Four Chaplains, and I invite all of you to this special ceremony honoring the 4 Army Chaplains who gave up their lives to save others!

As part of the new year, now is a good time to participate in the [American Legion Family 250 Challenge](#) which is a great way to celebrate our country's 250th anniversary and to assist your community and improve your physical condition/fitness.

In case you are unaware, our current Finance Officer Mike O'Meara will step down at the end of January after 10 years as Finance Officer. He has done a superb during this time in one of the less glamorous but critical positions. We are looking for a new Finance Officer for our Post. They do not have to belong to our Post but must be an active member in good standing of the American Legion. If you know of anyone

interested in this position, please contact me directly. In the meantime, I will be taking over the position on a temporary basis, until we can fill the position.

“Duty First”!

Arturo Thiele-Sardina

Upcoming events for February 2026-April 2026

2 Feb	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA
7 Feb	1000 hrs.	Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Service, St. Francis Cabrini Church 15333 Woodard Dr., San Jose
2 Mar	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA
24 Mar	1900 hrs.	District 13 Meeting, Zoom Mtg. Call in info TBP
6 Apr	1900 hrs.	Post 642 Monthly Meeting in Person (Dinner served at 1800 hrs.) Oddfellows. Cupertino Lodge #70, 20589 Homestead Ave. Cupertino, CA

For more events and detailed event information please visit our [website events page](#).

Historian Report

<https://americanlegionpost642.com/index.php?id=102>

National Days and Months:

There is a neat description of February here with regard to the National Days where the rest of these links can be found. <https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/february> Texas, Iowa Wisconsin and California were all admitted to the Union in February. There are also several culinary days like “National Drink Wine Day” on the 18th, which I am sure some of our members will be a fan.

NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH - February

[VA talks 'cutting-edge' approach to preventing, treating cancer](#)

<https://youtu.be/hojtBhrIITU?si=1h61yPDHokqrjHWu>

[Cancer Prevention & Screening](#) https://youtu.be/uC8h9b_5xJE?si=WNp3dfppn7LxCA0c

NATIONAL HEART MONTH – February

[VA Benefits: Heart Conditions Guide for Veterans](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/S18hDvqL9uU>

NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH – February [https://youtu.be/Bi1JRXKXU-](https://youtu.be/Bi1JRXKXU-c?si=dVwW4NNi6uFZvCAW)

[c?si=dVwW4NNi6uFZvCAW](https://youtu.be/Bi1JRXKXU-c?si=dVwW4NNi6uFZvCAW)

<https://youtu.be/ZJPIXHyQzPo?si=BVU0s7fhYleJi8> -

BOY SCOUTS ANNIVERSARY WEEK - First Full Week in February

[NATIONAL BURN AWARENESS WEEK - First Full Week in February](#)

<https://youtu.be/ZeFQhpdAUDs?si=63ewHP2UzBkfcPdu>

NATIONAL GROUNDHOG DAY - February 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punxsutawney_Phil

FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY - February 3

https://youtu.be/W40p0BWWoDA?si=aey_uQWsMKwvQwPk

NATIONAL BOY SCOUTS DAY - February 8

https://youtu.be/YDO_EpwIVkc?si=uqlwT3NLgtR2ZndX

VALENTINE'S DAY - February 14

[NATIONAL VET GIRLS RISE DAY - February 19](#) [https://youtu.be/Hug-](https://youtu.be/Hug-xQUsrsl?si=cviYDgwRmmzYuoiR)

[xQUsrsl?si=cviYDgwRmmzYuoiR](https://youtu.be/Hug-xQUsrsl?si=cviYDgwRmmzYuoiR)

PRESIDENTS DAY | Third Monday in February

Military History Notes: Presidents Day, Boy Scouts, and Women Veterans

1. Who are the three presidents who served in 1841?
2. Forty years later, this same phenomenon occurred again in 1881. Name the three presidents who served that year.
3. Name the three presidents who died on July 4th.
4. Who were the four presidents who were assassinated while in office?

Answers

1. Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler
2. Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, and Chester A. Arthur.
3. John Adams, James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson.
4. Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley, John F. Kennedy

Feb 3

During World War II, four chaplains who had attended Chaplain School together at Harvard boarded the Dorchester en route to the Army Command Base in southern Greenland. Aboard the ship were 904 service members. The four chaplains were Reverend George L. Fox, a Methodist minister, Reverend Clark V. Poling of the Reformed Church of America, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and Father John P. Washington of the Roman Catholic Church. Their voyage began on January 23, 1943. At the time, German U-Boats were patrolling the area, and the convoy was on high alert. When a German submarine torpedoed the Dorchester on February 3, 1943, in the frigid waters off the coast of Newfoundland, chaos ensued.

Eyewitnesses recounted the chaplains' heroism, including giving their life jackets and gloves to other service members. They prayed with service members, assisting them into lifeboats. The four chaplains remained on the sinking Dorchester. Only 230 men were rescued from the waters. Congress awarded the four chaplains the Four Chaplains Medal in 1960.

Feb. 8

1910: William D. Boyce incorporates the Boy Scouts of America. Countless boys will cut their teeth as young adventurers in Boyce's scouting program before joining the military. When sub commander Eugene Fluckey - one of nine Medal of Honor recipients to earn the Boy Scouts' top distinction of Eagle Scout - assembled a landing party to go ashore and destroy a Japanese

train, he wanted former Boy Scouts to do the job, since they would be able to find their way back. 11 of the 12 humans to walk on the moon were Boy Scout alumni; and Neil Armstrong, the first was an Eagle Scout.

Feb. 12

1935: As the Navy's helium-filled rigid airship USS *Macon* (ZRS-5) flies through a storm, its tail fin and interior structural members are destroyed, puncturing the massive vessel's helium cells. The "flying aircraft carrier," which houses five Curtiss F9C-2 "Sparrowhawk" reconnaissance planes, crash-lands in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Point Sur, Calif, and all but two of the airship's 76-man crew are saved.

The 785-ft. *Macon* and her sister ship *Akron* (which crashed in 1933) are the largest aircraft ever produced by the United States - just 20 feet shorter than the ill-fated *Hindenburg*, which will famously be lost in 1937. Incidentally, *Macon's* commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Herbert Wiley, was *Akron's* executive officer and one of only three men to survive that crash.

Feb. 16

1804: U.S. Navy Lt. (future commodore) Stephen Decatur sails a captured Tripolitan ketch he renames USS *Intrepid* into the harbor at Tripoli. There, Decatur and a volunteer force of sailors and Marines board the frigate USS *Philadelphia* (the second of six so-named American warships), which had been previously captured by Tripolitan pirates. After a brief but violent close quarters struggle in which several pirates but no Americans are killed Decatur orders the *Philadelphia* burned.

1945: 2,000 American paratroopers jump over the Philippines' "fortress Corregidor" in one of the most difficult airborne operations of the war. For the next 11 days, the Americans will root out the enemy from a labyrinth of caves and tunnels and beat back multiple banzai attacks before wiping out almost all of the 6,500-man enemy garrison.

1953: Marine aviator - and future baseball Hall of Famer - Capt. Ted Williams crash-lands his crippled Marine Corps F9F "Panther" fighter at Suwon's K-13 airstrip. During a massive 200-plane raid on a troop encampment, Williams was hit by enemy ground fire which knocked out his instrument panel, landing gear, and hydraulic system; damaged his control surfaces; and set the plane on fire. Rather than eject, Williams brings the plane down on its belly and skids down the runway for over a mile before the mortally wounded plane comes to a stop. Williams, often flying as the wingman for future Mercury astronaut John Glenn, walks away with just a sprained ankle and goes on to fly 38 more missions over Korea before returning to baseball for good (he also flew in the Pacific Theater during World War II).

Feb. 17

1864: The Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley sinks the Federal sloop-of-war USS *Housatonic* in Charleston (S.C.) harbor, becoming the first submarine in history to sink an enemy warship in action. It is a pyrrhic victory however: the submarine also sinking either with its victim or soon after the attack with the loss of all hands.

Feb. 22

1974: Lt. J.G. Barbara Ann Allen Rainey pins on her wings, becoming the first female Naval aviator. Rainey is assigned to a transport squadron, flying C-1 "Trader" planes .In 1982, she will be killed in a crash while training a student pilot.

Feb. 23

1778: Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian Army officer — arguably the father of American drill instructors arrives at Valley Forge with the task of whipping the Continental Army into shape.

Feb. 27

1942: A flotilla of 14 Dutch, British, Australian, and American ships suffers a disastrous defeat at the hands of a much-larger Japanese invasion force in the Battle of the Java Sea. 11 vessels are sunk and over 3,000 sailors are killed in the engagement. Meanwhile, the seaplane tender USS *Langley* (AV-3) - America's first aircraft carrier - is sunk by Japanese land-based aircraft while ferrying P-40 "Warhawk" attack planes to Java.

[USS Jupiter \(AC-3\)](#) served as a [collier](#) from 1913 to 1920 and was converted into the U.S. Navy's first [aircraft carrier](#), being renamed [USS Langley](#) on 21 April 1920 and being recommissioned as an aircraft carrier in 1922.

Service Officer Report

<https://americanlegionpost642.com/index.php?id=119>

Start the new year strong with mobile tools to support your personal health goals





Don't miss a message from VA

Review and update your information all in one place

My HealtheVet on VA.gov is our new health portal for managing your health care online. With this change, we'll start to use the email address listed in your VA.gov profile to send you any health care notifications. Learn how to review and update your VA.gov profile so you don't miss a notification.

[Learn more](#)



[Review 2026 copay rates](#)

2026 copay rates for VA and VA-approved health care are now available. Use this helpful guide to understand if you may be exempt from copays. [Review 2026 copay rates on VA.gov](#)



[VA mobile apps for a healthy new year](#)

The start of a new year is a great time to build healthier habits. But we all need a little help to stay on track. VA has tools to help you make a plan and stay motivated. [Check out these mobile apps](#)



[It's not too late for a flu shot](#)

If you haven't gotten your flu shot this season, it's not too late. Our flu vaccine decision aid can answer any questions you may have and help you make an informed decision. [Try the flu vaccine decision tool](#)

[Sign in or create an account](#) to manage your VA health care and benefits online.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Veterans Health Administration · 810 Vermont Avenue, NW · Washington, DC 20420 · 877-222-VETS (877-222-8387)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



[#VetResources](#) is a weekly newsletter for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. [Connect with Secretary Collins on X](#)

Free technology courses for Veterans

The IBM SkillsBuild program provides over 1,000 free online courses for beginners and advanced learners to start or boost their careers in fields like data analytics, cybersecurity, AI, cloud computing, and IT support—no prior experience needed. This is free for Veterans, along with their spouses, adult children, and caregivers.

[Learn more](#)

Research that matters

Join VA Secretary Doug Collins in VA's Million Veteran Program! By participating, you're contributing to groundbreaking research that could revolutionize health care treatments and save the lives of your fellow Veterans.

[Learn more](#)

Can you work with a 100% VA disability rating?

Learn the difference between 100% VA disability ratings and how that impacts working with benefits. Watch the current SITREP to learn more.



[Watch](#)

VA resources, we're here for you.

- For any questions or requests, [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411) ([1-800-698-2411](tel:1-800-698-2411)) is always the right number.
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#): [988](tel:988) and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text [838255](tel:838255)
- [Vet Centers](#): [1-877-927-8387](tel:1-877-927-8387)
- [Homeless Veteran Resources](#): [1-877-424-3838](tel:1-877-424-3838) or [Chat](#)
- [Ask VA](#)
- [Schedule a 1-on-1 Appointment with a VA Benefits Expert](#)
- [Find a VA facility near you](#)

For non-urgent questions, you can reach VA using the [VA Health & Benefits App](#) or [MyHealtheVet](#) secure messaging to schedule an appointment, refill prescriptions, and access your medical records.

Upcoming VA events

VA hosts free events around the country for Veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors. Check out the weekly outreach events calendar to find an event near you.

[View all events](#)

Jobs for Veterans

Employers from around the country are looking to hire Veterans. Get info about openings across the nation and multiple career fairs below.

[Find your next job](#)



Exclusive discounts for Veterans

Check out hundreds of recently updated discounts and deals available to Veterans, service members and retirees.

[View discounts](#)

COLA Increase, VA Life Insurance, SBA Partnership, VA History, and more...

COLA Increase

The 2026 Veterans disability compensation rates are in! Starting Jan. 1, 2026, all compensation benefit rates have been increased by 2.8% to match adjustments made to Social Security benefits. This increase impacts [disability benefits, clothing allowance, dependency and indemnity compensation \(DIC\), as well as other assistance programs.](#)

Learn More



**Celebrating 3 Years of Helping Veterans
Protect Those Who Matter Most**



VALife Program Celebrates Three Years

VA Life is proudly celebrating its three year anniversary, as well as a significant milestone. Since its launch in 2023, VALife has provided over \$2.2 billion in total coverage to more than 70,000 Veterans, offering peace of mind and financial protection to those who have served our country.

VALife offers up to \$40,000 of whole life insurance coverage to Veterans, with guaranteed acceptance for Veterans age 80 and under with a service-connected disability rating from 0% to 100%. There are no medical questions to answer and premiums do not increase. [Learn more and apply today.](#)



Increased Cost Grants

VA has increased building and materials costs grant amounts for severely disabled Veterans and Service members eligible for Specially Adapted Housing to adapt their homes. VA wants to ensure that Veterans maximize their benefit no matter when they decide to adapt their existing home or build or buy an adapted home. [Learn More](#).



Enrollment verification for VA Education benefits required starting January 2026

Starting in January 2026, all Department of Veterans Affairs education beneficiaries, **including Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) students will be required to verify their enrollment each month to receive their benefit payments.** Please note that you must verify your enrollment for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to begin processing your monthly benefit. Once verified, payment processing can take five to seven calendar days.

You can learn more about the different enrollment verification methods in [this video](#) or [the Verify Your School Enrollment webpage](#). If you have questions about your enrollment, please contact your School Certifying Official. You can find their contact information listed on the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#).



Object 100: Iraq Burn Pit

A year after returning from Iraq with severe respiratory problems in 2008, Capt. Le Roy Torres and his wife founded Burn Pits 360 to raise awareness of the health hazards of burn pit emissions. Over a decade of persistent advocacy by Burn Pits 360 and other Veterans groups paid off with passage of the PACT Act in 2022, the largest expansion of Veterans benefits since the 1944 GI Bill.

Read more about [Object 100](#) in the History of VA in 100 Objects digital exhibit.



Mentorship Matters: Guiding Veteran and Military Spouse Entrepreneurs

Veterans and military spouses don't have to build their businesses alone. Through SBA programs like the [Mentor-Protégé program](#), experienced mentors provide personalized guidance, resources, and support to help the military community start, grow, and succeed in government contracting.



VR&E's new case management system marks transformation

VA completed Phase One of the Readiness and Employment System(RES) deployment nearly a month ahead of schedule. [modernizing the case management platform for the Veteran Readiness and Employment \(VR&E\) program.](#)

Together We Make A Difference

Are you interested in filing a VA claim or appeal? [American Legion](#) provides expert assistance to Veterans and their families, free of charge. American Legion service officers are trained to help you develop your claim, while also providing referrals and resources on education, employment, and more. For help with your claim, [contact the American Legion service officer at their nearest VA regional office.](#)

Learn More

VA Travel Pay Reimbursement

Find out if you're eligible for [travel pay reimbursement](#) through the Beneficiary Travel program. Eligible Veterans are repaid by VA for travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments.

Buddy Check ✓
Check on your buddy.
Make the call.

Make a difference.



Upcoming Events

Jan. 21 – [Wellness Wednesday | First Steps to Financial Freedom](#)

Feb. 18 – [Wellness Wednesday | Managing Employment Change](#)

Mar. 18 – [Wellness Wednesday | Investing for a Solid Financial Future](#)

View All Events

From *The California Legionnaire*, If you want your veterans news more often, visit [caLegion.org](https://calegion.org)

Here are the top Veterans news beats so far this week, starting with... *Men Get Breast Cancer Too.* U.S. Air Force Veteran and Post 177 Legionnaire Jim Plowden recounts his story of being diagnosed with male breast cancer just before Christmas 2021 before eventually being declared cancer-free.

Find Jim's full story in the links below.

More article snippets this week:

- Per a recent Government Accountability Office report, the VA is preparing to launch its troubled electronic health record system in as many as 10 sites across the country by the end of 2026. This comes despite many of the management and technical issues that stalled earlier deployments, as previously reported by the office.
- Honorably discharged Veterans may be entitled to extra Social Security earnings for active-duty military service or active-duty training. The link below has details on eligibility.

Curious about a Veterans issue or bill? Want to highlight the work your Legion post is doing or an event you're hosting? Email us at news@calegion.org.

More California Veterans news bites:

- A California state bill and constitutional amendment that would further enhance Veterans' property benefits was discussed in a committee earlier today. If passed, SB 623 and SCA 4 would allow eligible Veterans who qualify the Veterans' property tax exemption or Disabled Veterans' property tax exemption to also receive the homeowners' property tax exemption. *We will have more on this story later this week.*

Christian Southards | Associate Editor Cal
Legionnaire

VETERANS NEWS

SUBMIT LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF SB 694

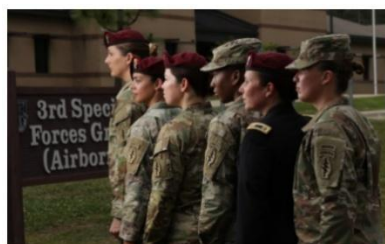
by caLegion Contributor | Jan 14, 2026

MEN GET BREAST CANCER TOO

by caLegion Contributor | Jan 12, 2026

MILITARY SERVICE EXTRA EARNINGS FROM SOCIAL SECURITY

by caLegion Contributor | Jan 9, 2026



CALVET SURVEY DETAILS PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING CALIFORNIA WOMEN VETERANS

by Rikki Almanza | Jan 8, 2026



GAO WARNS VA MUST FIX COST AND OVERSIGHT GAPS BEFORE EXPANDING NEW HEALTH RECORD SYSTEM

by Rikki Almanza | Jan 13, 2026



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST – JANUARY NEWSLETTER

by caLegion Contributor | Jan 9, 2026

Military Humor

IN-COUNTRY



THE MIXED BLESSING!

ENDX



VETERAN

SLOWER THAN A
SPEEDING BULLET
LESS POWERFUL THAN
A LOCOMOTIVE
UNABLE TO
LEAP TALL
BUILDINGS IN
A SINGLE BOUND
AND YET -
STILL A SUPER MAN



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