



The Flash

Serving the 19th District Community, State and Nation Since 1926

MAY 2025



Volume 100
No. 5

Member The American Legion Media Alliance



Final Nominations This Month !!



National
Commander
**James A.
LaCoursiere Jr**

James A. LaCoursiere Jr. was elected National Commander of The American Legion on Aug. 29, 2024, in New Orleans, during the 105th National Convention.

An Air Force veteran, LaCoursiere has been a longtime field representative for the American Legion Department of Connecticut's Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund, which financially assists veterans and their families in need.

LaCoursiere has held many leadership positions at The American Legion post, department (state) and national levels. He is a member of American Legion Post 91 in Moosup, Conn. He has also served as a national vice commander, Connecticut state commander, and chairman of the national Legislative Commission.

LaCoursiere is married to his wife, Lisa, and has two children (Patrick and Meghan), and three stepchildren (Jason, Kaylene and the late Johnathan).

Born to a military family in Honolulu, Hawaii, LaCoursiere attended Montville High School where he played junior varsity football, varsity football and varsity track.

As national commander, LaCoursiere is strongly committed to raising awareness for The American Legion's Be the One mission to prevent veteran suicide.

19th District
Next E-Board meeting
Wednesday June 4th
Leland A Cupp Post 341
4909 S Durfee Ave
Pico Rivera, CA

General District Meeting
Wednesday May 14th
Leland A Cupp Post 341
4909 S Durfee Ave
Pico Rivera, CA

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Saigon Falls; The War Ends
April 30, 1975

Operation FREQUENT WIND ends, though U.S. vessels continue to pick up numerous refugees escaping Vietnam by sea. The departure of the Seventh Fleet marks the conclusion of three decades of American involvement in Vietnam.

Saigon falls to North Vietnamese troops, and organized South Vietnamese resistance to Communist forces ceases. President Duong Van Minh, who has only been in office for days, announces the unconditional surrender of the Republic of Vietnam.

Skirmish on Hill 861, near Khe Sanh, April 24, 1967 – Philip H. Sauer earns the Silver Star

On April 24, 1967, U.S. Marine Corps **First Lieutenant Philip Howard Sauer** sacrificed his life in an attempt to save four other Marines under his command. During the first major battle of Khe Sanh, Sauer led a five-man patrol slowly up Hill 861 on a mission to reconnoiter a series of caves from the vantage of the hill top. Regrettably, Hill 861 was already heavily occupied by the North Vietnamese. As Sauer's small patrol approached a bamboo thicket, approximately 30 entrenched North Vietnamese soldiers ambushed them with grenades and automatic weapons. Sauer shouted at his men to withdraw, saying he would cover them, his only weapon being his .45-caliber pistol. Only one man from the patrol escaped the ambush alive. 1st Lt. Sauer posthumously earned the Silver Star medal for his actions that day.



First Lieutenant
Philip H. Sauer
U.S. Marine Corps
(VVMF)



Maj. Gen. Eric M. Smith presents the citation for the Silver Star medal to First Lieutenant Philip H. Sauer's siblings at Camp Pendleton, California, April 24, 2018. (U.S. Marine Corps)

First Lieutenant Sauer is memorialized on Panel 18E, Line 81, of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Fernando Gallardo—Commander



Good morning Comrades,

I would like to inform everyone that the 2024-2025 campaign is coming to an end.

I would like all Posts to continue conducting buddy checks. It is your duty to help out by contacting all members in good standing and expired members and recruiting new members to join your post and be part of the American Legion family. Let's make sure that you don't hold on to the transmittal. Let's submit it right away.

The deadline for the membership goal of 100% is May 15, 2025. We have Arthur L Peterson Post 27 (100%), Battleship Iowa Post 61 (107.79%), and Norwalk Post 359 (101.04%), which have met our 100% goal for 2024-2025. Great Job, Comrades. We have 4 Posts that are close to achieving our Department of California Membership goal of 100%.

Fleet Week 2025 is just around the corner. We need volunteers to help out during the event, so if you are available to attend, please contact District 19 Judge Advocate Adame at 71phantom68@gmail.com.

I would like to inform you that our second nomination is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at Leland A Cupp Post 341. If you are running for an elected position, we need a Resolution signed by your Commander and Adjutant.

Department of California Commander Nick Rosa's homecoming dinner was successful. I would like to thank all District 19 members and all who attended.

You can see some more of Nick Rosa's homecoming dinner photos on pages 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Thanks

Fernando Gallardo
District 19 Commander
Riviera Post 411
213-925-8927



1st Vice Commander—Karl Wilvert



Comrades,

Saigon fell on April 30 1975, I was in the USAF on that date. I am sure all Vietnam era veterans remember those times. Please remember the fallen. Please read the article on Page 6.

This is the final stretch to 100% membership. Please keep up with your post buddy checks.

This time is busy, Fleet Week, Memorial Day, Department Convention, Post District Area Department nominations. This is the best period to excite our membership to participate in the American Legion pillars. Please make all efforts to inform your post membership of all events so that they can pick where they want to come participate.

I have duties beyond all these in that I am entering my 18th year as a volunteer for the Fairplex Garden Railroad for the LA County Fair, May 2 through Memorial Day. If you come to the fair please stop by. FGRR is located in the Kid Zone. This area is located between the south end of the Grandstand and Building 4.

Department of California - 2025 MEMBERSHIP REPORT 4/25/2025

DEPARTMENT TOTALS								
	New	PUFL	Members Paid	HQ/DMS Transfers	Total Members	Goal	%	Dept Standing
Posts	2,821	10,653	41,594	548	55,616	62,551	88.91%	33
HQ Administrative Posts	-	1,099	4,341	6	5,446	5,801	93.88%	
Totals	2,821	11,752	45,935	554	61,062	68,352	89.33%	

AREA TOTALS									
Area	Districts	New	PUFL	Members Paid	HQ/DMS Transfers	Total Members	Goal	%	Standing
1	1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7	383	1,732	6,362	165	8,642	9,801	88.17%	4
2	8; 9; 10; 13; 26; 28	269	1,592	4,358	73	6,292	7,199	87.40%	5
3	11; 12; 14; 15; 27	310	1,415	5,431	114	7,270	8,485	85.68%	6
4	17; 19; 23	212	691	3,602	13	4,518	4,860	92.96%	1
5	21; 22; 25; 29; 30	1,104	3,417	15,736	107	20,364	23,058	88.32%	3
6	16; 18; 20; 24	543	1,762	6,068	74	8,447	9,148	92.34%	2

DISTRICT / PRC / ADMIN TOTALS									
District	County	New	PUFL	Members Paid	HQ/DMS Transfers	Total Members	Goal	%	Standing
18	Los Angeles	78	293	1,098	10	1,479	1,637	90.35%	4
19	Los Angeles	104	439	1,514	7	2,064	2,321	88.93%	14

DISTRICT 19 Commander FERNANDO GALLARDO (AREA 4)

Department of California - 2025 MEMBERSHIP REPORT 4/25/2025

POST	Name	City	New	PUFL	Members Paid	1000/DMS Transfers	Total Members	Goal	%
27	Arthur L Peterson	Long Beach	0	21	4	0	25	25	100.00%
51	Whittier	Whittier	3	35	129	1	168	204	82.35%
61	Battleship Iowa	San Pedro	3	24	56	0	83	77	107.79%
134	City of Paramount	Paramount	3	16	53	0	72	100	72.00%
170	Bert S Crossland	Torrance	0	19	63	0	82	100	82.00%
184	South Bay	Redondo Beach	16	57	234	0	307	333	92.19%
270	Downey	Downey	0	21	53	0	74	93	79.57%
272	Montebello	Montebello	17	27	178	2	224	241	92.95%
314	Hawthorne	Hawthorne	9	27	87	1	124	130	95.38%
341	Leland A Cupp	Pico Rivera	3	6	32	0	41	48	85.42%
352	Gilbert Lindsay	Carson	0	8	36	2	46	53	86.79%
359	Norwalk	Norwalk	32	26	137	0	195	193	101.04%
411	Rivera	Pico Rivera	1	19	54	0	74	80	92.50%
465	Clyde F Hager	Bell Gardens	2	2	14	0	18	26	69.23%
496	Lakewood	Long Beach	14	98	302	1	415	470	88.30%
560	Houghton Park	Long Beach	0	11	4	0	15	26	57.69%
804	Eugene A Obregon	Los Angeles	0	16	46	0	62	75	82.67%
833	Lincoln Village	Long Beach	1	6	32	0	39	47	82.98%
Total			104	439	1,514	7	2,064	2,321	88.93%

2nd Vice Commander—David DeMoss



NO REPORT

District Historian— Fred Schacklett



District 19 Historian Report

Since last newsletter, I have noted 12 Facebook posting to have historical significance for the American Legion in California, with a number of those posting to be included in the District historical record.

Additionally, I attended in person the following events;

1. On 4/12/2025, I attended and photographed Department Commander, Nick Rosa's dinner held at Lackwood Post 496, Photos are located here; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/whittierpost51/albums/72177720325064637/>
2. On 3/30/2025, I attended the Department of California Oratorical Contest in Clovis, CA. The event was held at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building in downtown. Six contestants participated, with Dayne Famenia of Van Nuys High School selected this years winner. He was awarded a scholarship check for \$2400 as the top prize.

Photos are located here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1a6rZwH92TwMzVKRwMSrJca4a17ZDaoWA>

Future plans

1. I am working a draft Resolution to establish a Historian Committee, to better manage the historical records and activities of post and district Historians. All past Dept Historians, and current serving historians will be members of this committee. The resolution is planned to be presented at the annual State convention in Visalia, CA in June 2025.
2. I plan to attend the annual Department convention in Visalia, CA in June 2025 at the Marriot Convention Center, as a delegate from Whittier Post 51..
3. I am working with the Department staff to finalize the posting of past Department officer photos for a wall display at the Sanger HQ. All photos from 1919 to present have been restored and re-touched and are digitally available on the Department Google Drive. Most photos will be reprinted and re-framed before placing back on the wall.

The Department Commander's

INAUGURAL STATEWIDE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY REUNION

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY REUNION

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF ALL LEGION FAMILIES—LEGIONNAIRES, AUXILIARY, SONS, AND LEGION RIDERS—AT A FREE EVENT PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THE LEGION FAMILY!

BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!



- ★ CHILI & BBQ RIB COOK-OFFS
- ★ HOT DOGS & BURGERS (FREE!)
- ★ POTLUCK-STYLE MEALS
- ★ ICE CREAM STATION & PHOTO AREA
- ★ JUMPERS FOR KIDS
- ★ GAMES FOR ALL AGES!
- ★ "DRIVE YOUR BEST RIDE" COMPETITION
- ★ LIVE MUSIC & MORE SURPRISES!!!

Fun, Food & Family Await!

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025 **TIME:** 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

LOCATION: W.O. HART PARK, 701 S GLASSELL ST, ORANGE, CA

KICKOFF CEREMONY: 12:00 PM - BASEBALL DIAMOND WITH A COLOR GUARD PRESENTATION & NATIONAL ANTHEM!

QUESTIONS?

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING OR VOLUNTEERING AT THE EVENT?

CONTACT: Jim Eubanks
pdc.eubanks@yahoo.com

DESIGNED & DONATED BY VIC MARTIN

Make It a Summer to Remember!

*We can't wait to
celebrate with you!
~ Nick*



Air America helicopter evacuating Vietnamese officials and their families from the roof of an apartment building at 22 Gia Long Street in Saigon, South Vietnam, April 29, 1975.

Fall of Saigon

Fall of Saigon, capture of Saigon, the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam, by North Vietnamese forces, which occurred from March 4 to April 30, 1975. It was the last major event of the Vietnam War and effectively signalled the bitterly contested unification of Vietnam.

The Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 had allowed the United States a face-saving way to extricate its troops from the Vietnam War. The agreement left North Vietnamese army units where they were in South Vietnam, and low-intensity fighting continued. The South Vietnamese were profligate in the expenditure of munitions and, with rapidly rising fuel prices, faced a financial crisis. Rampant inflation, glaring corruption, and the loss of U.S. support undermined army morale, with 24,000 troops deserting every month.

The North Vietnamese, resupplied and scenting a final victory, were eager to fight. In December 1974 they tested whether the United States would resume bombing if they blatantly violated the peace by invading Phuoc Long province, only 40 miles (65 km) from Saigon. Congress rejected U.S. President Gerald Ford's appeals for increased aid for South Vietnam, and there was no U.S. response. The speed and ease of the operation showed that South Vietnam's willingness to resist was disintegrating.

In March 1975 the North Vietnamese launched offensives in the Central Highlands and in Quang Tri province in northern South Vietnam. South Vietnamese counterattacks failed as large numbers of troops deserted to protect their families. On March 13, South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu ordered his army to withdraw southward, where supply lines would be shorter, but retreat rapidly became a rout as deserters, refugees, and troops clogged roads and spread panic. Emboldened, the North Vietnamese ordered their entire strength on the offensive—Saigon was to fall that spring. With only three divisions left to defend the capital, there was no question about the outcome. A desperate scramble to escape the approaching North Vietnamese army ensued. Some South Vietnamese units fought on with great courage: the 29th Division, for example, made a heroic last stand at Xuan Loc on the approaches to Saigon. But one air force pilot bombed the presidential palace before flying off to defect.

On April 21 Thieu announced his resignation on television, denouncing the United States for betraying South Vietnam in its hour of need. By April 27, Saigon was encircled by 100,000 North Vietnamese troops, but there was hardly a need for such a force. On April 29, North Vietnamese soldiers shelled Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the chief avenue of escape for U.S. citizens, approximately 5,000 of whom were still in the country, and who were already being evacuated. More than 10,000 Vietnamese thronged around the U.S. embassy, frantic for a seat on the helicopters that flew from rooftops to a fleet of 26 U.S. ships offshore, among them the aircraft carrier and operational flagship USS Blue Ridge. Operation Frequent Wind did evacuate 7,000 people, including 5,500 South Vietnamese, a fraction of those with reason to fear the North Vietnamese. Desperate people tried to get aboard already overcrowded boats on the Saigon River. The North Vietnamese did not hinder the flight.



Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger during the Fall of Saigon

U.S. Pres. Gerald Ford and senior advisers receiving an update from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger about the evacuation of U.S. personnel from Saigon, South Vietnam (now Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam), April 29, 1975.

When an artillery barrage announced that the final assault was about to be launched, there was little resistance left. North Vietnamese troops began to occupy strategic points in the city, and within hours the South Vietnamese government offered to surrender, but they were ignored even as the last South Vietnamese president, General Duong Van Minh, who had been in power only two days after Thieu fled the country, ordered his soldiers to lay down their arms. The North Vietnamese army saw no need to deny themselves a military victory to crown decades of struggle. At noon on April 30, 1975, a T-54 tank burst through the gates of the presidential palace, an act seen on television across the world. A few South Vietnamese units fought on in the Central Highlands and Mekong delta for a while longer, but the Vietnam War was effectively over.

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New District 19 Pin and Sticker
By Fred Shacklett

After too many years of not having a pin, our Department Historian, Fred Shacklett, has designed a new Noisy 19 collectable lapel/hat pin and a sticker. Yes, he is also a graphic designer.



The pin is approximately 1 ¼ inch wide. Made of polished brass, with dark blue background color. The pin has a double rubber clutch on the back and won't stain your cover or suit lapel.

The sticker is 3.00 inches wide, with yellow and blue colors on an adhesive back.

If you would like to have one of these collectables, come to a Post 51 meeting or a District 19 meeting

You can get both pin and sticker for \$5.00.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA



In 1919, many American Legion departments across the United States were holding conventions for the very first time. The Department of California held its first organizational gathering at Post 1 in San Francisco on October 10-12, 1919, where H. G. Mathewson was chosen as the first Department Commander. A year later, the first official Department Convention was held in San Diego on August 23-26, 1920, with David P. Barrow (Berkeley Post 7), elected as the second Department Commander.

Focusing on service to veterans and their families, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential non-partisan and veteran, non-profit organizations in America.

The state headquarters was located at the Veterans War Memorial Building on Van Ness Avenue, across the street from San Francisco City Hall. The building is under the administration of the American Legion War Memorial Commission, <https://alwmcfsf.org/>. But in 2014, when the headquarters rent was raised from \$1 a year to \$2,500 a month, the Department decided to look for a new home.

As it was in 1919 and continues to the present day, California has the largest veteran population of any state in the United States, at approximately 1.8 million veterans (as of 2022). San Francisco was our headquarters until 2015 and was home to the first American Legion post in California. That post was named as American Legion San Francisco Post 1 (within District 8) and was also located in the Veterans Memorial building, but now meets at the First Lutheran Church on 2nd Avenue SW.

In 2015, after approval from a majority of the state Legion membership, the Department of California bought an 8,000 square foot former bank building in Sanger, CA, sixteen miles east of Fresno (Janet Wilson Department Commander).

In March of 2015, the Department of California headquarters officially moved to Central California. Conveniently located in downtown Sanger, our new headquarters has ample parking and provides offices for the Department Commander, the Department Adjutant, meeting rooms, storage for records, as well as offices for our administration and support staff.

Some Fun for all

When the wind blows a leaf across our yard at night



Bravo Six going dark



THE M67 FRAGMENTATION GRENADE



Young Stephen King

When the Dr. says you can only have one Taco.



I wonder if the people paying \$300 for a colon cleanse even know about Taco Bell's \$4.99 deal

AN OVERNIGHT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH GROUPS ONBOARD THE BATTLESHIP OF PRESIDENTS

Battleship IOWA and the Pacific Battleship Center to host our popular Camp Battleship Youth Overnight program. A program steered towards youth groups of all kinds, from schools, churches, the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Scouts, Camp Battleship will be an incredible overnight adventure aboard the grandest battleship along the Pacific. Sleep in the original berthing areas of IOWA's sailors and live a moment in time that recalls those who served and fought for our country. Are you ready? Enlist in the experience of a lifetime!

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Pentagon & Congress

More than two-thirds of reserve troops are overweight: Report

By [Leo Shane III](#)



Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 75th Training Command participate in a run as part of a physical fitness test in Houston, Texas, on April 21, 2017. (Lt. Col. Adam Collett/Army Reserve)

More than two-thirds of Guard and Reserve troops are overweight, potentially limiting their readiness and ability to deploy in support of national security, according to a [new study](#) released by the American Security Project this week.

“With the diminished size of the [active-duty] force and increasing demands on the National Guard and reserves, service members separated due to obesity and its comorbidities are vital personnel the Armed Forces cannot afford to lose,” researchers wrote in the report.

The study, which calls for new policies to [ensure those troops' health](#), comes one day after [Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth](#) declared during a speech at the Army War College that all military personnel “need to be fit, not fat,” echoing his past demands for more rigorous personnel standards.

The Defense Department’s latest data on obesity in the reserve components dates back to 2018, when 65% of personnel were classified as overweight or obese. ASP researchers now estimate that figure is closer to 68%.

[Past studies](#) have shown the highest rates of weight problems are among Army National Guard members, with about 21% of personnel meeting the definition for obesity.

“These service members experience heightened risk for a wide variety of serious health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, and osteoarthritis, which may lead to life-threatening health events such as stroke and heart failure,” the report states.

Past studies from ASP have shown roughly the same level of obesity among members of the active-duty force. But officials noted that dealing with the problem for the different components will require different approaches.

“Although the reserve component’s obesity-related challenges are similar to those in the active component, commanders and policymakers will not be able to combat these trends with a uniform approach,” researchers wrote.

“As most National Guard and reserve personnel serve part-time, there are a number of unique logistical and lifestyle challenges to consider when crafting policy to prevent and treat obesity in the reserve component.”

To address the problem, ASP leaders recommended further research and tracking of obesity rates in the reserve forces, as well as providing some level of medical insurance to all reserve troops to help address the health issues.

They also noted that improvements in the military’s electronic health records should assist in monitoring those weight issues among reservists, even if they don’t report to command as frequently as their active-duty peers.

Hegseth and other defense leaders are conducting a review of military enlistment and retention standards to ensure force readiness, although that work has focused more on gender equity in requirements than general weight issues.

The full report is available on the [American Security Project’s website](#).

About [Leo Shane III](#)

Leo covers Congress, Veterans Affairs and the White House for Military Times. He has covered Washington, D.C. since 2004, focusing on military personnel and veterans policies. His work has earned numerous honors, including a 2009 Polk award, a 2010 National Headliner Award, the IAVA Leadership in Journalism award and the VFW News Media award.



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DEADLINE

25TH OF MONTH

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

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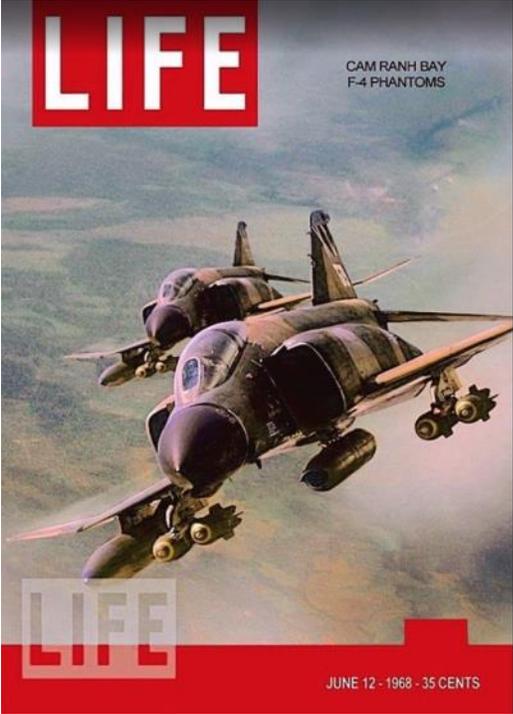
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Download Legion+ membership app

The American Legion has launched a new mobile membership app, Legion+. Download the app through Apple iTunes and the Google Play store.

Legion+ provides a direct route for members to access their digital membership cards, manage membership information, recruit new members, help veterans in crisis and get the latest news at **legion.org**. The new app includes four channels:

Search for Legion +



First Air-To-Air Kills of the Vietnam War
June 17, 1965

Two U.S. Navy F-4 Phantom aircrews record the first confirmed U.S. air-to-air kills of the Vietnam War. The Phantoms, of Fighter Squadron 21 from the carrier USS *Midway*, shoot down two North Vietnamese MiG-17s using air-to-air missiles.