



The Flash

District 19 Council Newsletter



Email: editorpost51@yahoo.com

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CALVET SURVEY - WOMEN VETERANS

(Excerpt from calegion.org used with permission)
by [Rikki Almanza](#) | Jan 8, 2026



(Photo: U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis Washburn-Jasinski)

Nearly 3,000 Women Veterans across all 58 California counties participated in the [California Department of Veterans Affairs 2025 Women Veterans Survey](#).

The results provide one of the most detailed snapshots in more than a decade of how women who served are navigating life after the military. The findings identify ongoing challenges and emerging priorities shaping the state's approach to Veteran services.

Women Veterans make up approximately 11 percent of California's Veteran population, representing nearly 150,000 individuals. The survey provides insights to guide federal, state, and local efforts to improve access to healthcare, housing, benefits, and supportive services.

Respondents represented a more diverse population than in previous surveys, with higher participation

among women who identified as two or more races, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Pacific Islander. Approximately 16 percent identified as LGBTQIA+, consistent with prior surveys but now supported by a much larger sample size. Nearly half of the respondents were age 61 or older, while younger Post-9/11 Veterans also showed increased participation.

Outreach through email campaigns, social media, and community partnerships resulted in more than 2,700 qualified responses, nearly tripling participation compared to earlier surveys conducted between 2009 and 2013. For the first time, responses were received from every county in California, capturing perspectives from urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Disability compensation also remains a complex area. Most respondents reported filing a service-connected disability claim, with many receiving high disability ratings. However, experiences with the claims process were mixed, citing difficulties with documentation, understanding requirements, and navigating appeals, particularly for claims involving mental health or trauma-related conditions.

The findings point to the importance of coordinated, trauma-informed, and inclusive systems of care. CalVet officials referenced the role of partnerships with community organizations, County Veterans Service Offices, and statewide initiatives focused on mental health, housing, and benefits navigation.

For the first time, respondents could request follow-up assistance from CalVet, enabling the survey to serve both as a research tool and as a direct connection to services.

CalVet leaders say the results outline priorities for future policy and program development. As



California’s women Veterans’ population continues to evolve, the survey reinforces the need for systems that align with the diversity, complexity, and lived experiences of those who served. The full report is available on [CalVet’s Women Veterans hub](#).

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UPCOMING DISTRICT 19 EVENTS

February 4, 2026, Executive Board, Hawthorne Post 314.

February 6, 2026, Los Angeles County Council General Meeting, Post 46, Culver City, CA 6:30 PM

February 7, 2026, Area 4 Caucus, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, Los Angeles 09:00 AM to 12:00 PM

February 11, 2026, General Meeting, Hawthorne Post 314.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Washington Conference is scheduled for Feb 28-Mar 5 at the Washington Hilton! The full agenda and hotel information can be found on the Legion website here. Some important dates and events to note:

- March 2** – Legislative Commission Meeting and Commander’s Call
- March 3** – ‘Know Before You Go’ briefs and Hill visits.
- March 4** – National Commander’s Testimony to Joint session of Congress

DISABLED VETERANS STILL BARRED FROM HOUSING

Despite new laws and court order.
 (Reprinted with Permission VetsAdvocacy.org)
 BY [Anna Albarvan](#) West Los Angeles
 PUBLISHED 8:15 AM PT Jan. 24, 2026



Screen Capture from Spectrum News 1

LOS ANGELES — Inside a small 8-by-8 shed on the sprawling West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs campus, Air Force veteran George Fleischman has been living in what was supposed to be temporary housing for more than three years.

“It’s like living in the place that you keep your lawn mower,” Fleischman said.

Homeless veterans are still living in temporary tiny homes on the West LA VA campus years after Veterans Row

New federal rules and a Ninth Circuit court order



prohibit using disability income to deny housing. Advocates say VA plans to add more tiny homes instead of accessible permanent housing.

The VA says it's moving forward with a federal plan to house up to 6,000 homeless veterans.

The tiny homes were installed after "Veterans Row," when dozens of homeless veterans set up tents around the 388-acre campus in 2020 and 2021. The VA responded by offering temporary shelter, but for veterans like Fleischman, the short-term solution has become years of waiting.

Fleischman, who uses a wheelchair, says the conditions inside the unit are not suitable for someone with mobility challenges. But what frustrates him most, he says, is being barred from accessing permanent housing because of his disability income.

"They're using my disability payments against me. So, I don't qualify," Fleischman said. "And it's frustrating because that housing was meant for disabled, homeless veterans. I need to be close to a doctor. I need a place to stay where I am safe." That issue is now at the center of legal and policy changes.

Under new federal laws and a Ninth Circuit court order following a lawsuit filed by homeless veterans, disability income can no longer be used to deny veterans access to housing. One of those laws, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, took effect this week and requires developers to exclude service-connected disability compensation from eligibility determinations.

Those changes were discussed during a recent federal court hearing between the Department of Veterans Affairs and housing advocates, where a judge heard about plans for new permanent and temporary housing on the West LA VA campus.

FY 2026 DEFENSE BILL

BOOSTS BUDGET BY \$8B, LARGELY BYPASSING LAST-MINUTE \$28B MUNITIONS REQUEST

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

WASHINGTON, DC - House and Senate appropriators have agreed on a \$838.7 billion defense topline for fiscal 2026 in a bipartisan deal that would boost defense funds by \$8.4 billion over the Pentagon's request. But they declined to include tens of billions of dollars for additional requests made by the department in recent months.

Since the Defense Department released its budget request last June, it has identified more than \$50 billion in additional funding needs.

That includes \$26.5 billion in funding discrepancies between its FY26 request and the reconciliation bill — essentially a laundry list of accounting errors that resulted in shortfalls to key programs like the Virginia-class submarine. It also included an additional \$2.3 billion in "emergent requirements" and a whopping \$28.8 billion sum for multiyear munitions procurement contracts.

While the Appropriations Committees remain open to working with the Pentagon to solve those shortfalls, "the agreement was unable to fully fund most of these unfunded requirements and priorities," appropriators wrote in a joint explanatory statement accompanying the bill.

"The agreement welcomes the Department's focus on strengthening our military, modernizing its capabilities, expanding industrial capacity, and replenishing munitions stockpiles. However, the agreement observes that solving these real challenges will be difficult without sustained funding through a predictable, annual appropriations process," it states.

The bill effectively dampens the Pentagon's last-minute push to add more than \$28 billion in multiyear funding for 13 critical munitions.

Instead, appropriators boosted funds for those weapons by \$1.8 billion and approved eight munitions for multiyear procurement: PAC-3 missiles, Standard Missile 6 (SM-6), Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), Advanced



Medium Range Air to Air Missiles (AMRAAM); Tomahawk cruise missiles; Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile Extended Range (JASSM-ER) and Standard Missile 3 Block IB (SM-3 IB).

The previous, broader request had been criticized by key lawmakers, including Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chris Coons, the top Republican and Democrat on the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee. The justification document puts some complaints in writing, saying that the Pentagon “has not demonstrated with necessary documentation” that the munitions meet the requirements for multiyear procurement authority as spelt out in law.

“The proposal was presented absent an official budget request, and without adequate funding offsets or additional topline. Concurrently, the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees had to address substantial reconciliation funding incongruencies and other Department priorities with limited discretionary resources,” appropriators stated. “This resource limitation constrained Congress’ ability to provide the necessary funding to fully support the MYP [multi-year procurement] initiatives as presented.”

During a briefing later this afternoon with reporters, a senior Senate GOP staffer said that appropriators believe the bill “makes a good down payment” on future multiyear contracts.

“But the reality is plain as day, as we have been saying to the administration for months, there is no money in the banana stand,” the staffer added, referencing a gag from Arrested Development in which \$250,000 in cash is stashed inside the walls of a frozen banana stand. “There are additional resources that need to be applied to these missions, but we had insufficient top line to cover these very, very needed costs.”

In addition to the relatively small boost in funding for munitions, lawmakers attempted to make headway on a key supply chain challenge for weapons: solid rocket motors. The omnibus bill provides \$500 million for solid rocket motor makers

to modernize or expand their facilities, with \$150 million of that sum going specifically to qualify second sources of supply.

“The Secretary of Defense is directed to prioritize actions that enhance competition within the solid rocket motor industrial base, including the introduction of new entrants, expansion of qualified suppliers, reduction of barriers to entry, and mitigation of single-point-of-failure risks,” the justification document states.

Appropriators have demanded several reports on munitions: one that would document all expended munitions, another that would compare requested munitions quantities with the maximum amount that could be manufactured by the industrial base, and a third on potential sources of new, low-cost munitions.

Lawmakers also direct the department to begin submitting semi-annual reports on the status of all multi-year munitions contracts until all of the weapons covered under the awards have been delivered.

[Congressional Contact Report Form](#)

Use this link to report your congressional activity to National Headquarters.

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Surveys/7747/Respond>

COMMISSION REPORTS **AEROSPACE COMMISSION**

Fred Shacklett, Commissioner



Monthly Update

Overall, the commission reviews, makes notes of, and provides information to Districts, Posts, and the Department Executive Committee on the following aerospace areas of interest.

- **Advocacy for Military and Commercial Aerospace:** To consider and project the advancement of military and commercial aerospace technologies and programs, including space exploration and research.
- **National Security Focus:** To make recommendations to ensure the U.S. armed forces possess sufficient numbers, quality training, and modern equipment to counter strategic threats.
- **Policy Recommendations:** To advise on policies related to sufficient personnel, quality training, modern equipment, and intelligence sharing concerning national security, terrorist activity, and strategic threats.
- **Monitoring New Technologies:** To report on new technologies that affect the nation's aerospace capabilities and national security.
- **Setting Policy through Resolutions:** To help shape and set policy through the development of resolutions and community action within the American Legion framework.
- **Fostering Education and Connection:** To engage in activities such as drone training and initiatives that foster connections between Legionnaires and younger veterans, exploring advancements in aerospace technology.

At our last commission meeting on January 22, 2026, four topics were discussed and reviewed.

1. A new commission Charter was presented and reviewed, but no motion was offered as no quorum was present. Planned to resubmit it at the next meeting.
2. A new commission three-year Strategic Plan for the years 2026-2029 was presented and reviewed, but no motion was offered as no quorum was present. Planned to resubmit it at the next meeting.
3. A status of the CALTAP program was given by Chair Fred Shacklett. The website and the teacher registration page were reviewed. The intent is for the Aerospace Commission to work with the Civil Air Patrol and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics for the benefit of students.
4. A resolution was submitted to the Department Resolutions committee, at the request of Michael

Smith, chairperson, for review and recommendation.

All meeting attachments are located on the Commission's Google Drive

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SRWozkBaeLeQnLO4YhcooTsO0lioNF?usp=sharing>

Modern warfare and the American economy have shifted to the "High Ground." From GPS-guided agriculture to satellite-secured banking, and from autonomous vehicles of all shapes and sizes, in the air, on the road, in space, on the sea, and under it, expanding our way of life. And our way of life depends on aerospace and what it brings to every citizen.

As the nation's premier veterans' organization, The American Legion **must lead in this domain to remain relevant** to the newest generation of veterans (from all military branches) and to the youth of tomorrow.

Fast Facts About the Future of the Aerospace Industry as of 2026



The Future of Aerospace (Graphic by Fred Shacklett/American Legion)

- **\$1 Trillion:** The projected value of the global space economy by 2030.



- **10,000+:** The number of aviation-related jobs currently unfilled in the U.S.
- **100%:** The relevance of aerospace to the Legion’s Four Pillars.

Rapid Growth: The global Aerospace and Defense sector is expected to grow significantly, with more than 40,000 new commercial jets projected to be manufactured by 2045.

Technological Advancements: Innovations in AI, autonomous systems, and advanced materials are transforming aerospace engineering and operations.

Space Exploration: The aerospace sector is expanding into commercial space travel and satellite services, unlocking new economic opportunities.

Sustainability Focus: The aerospace industry is shifting towards eco-friendly aviation technologies, with a focus on electric and hybrid-electric aircraft, sustainable aviation fuels, and advanced lightweight materials.

Economic Growth: The aerospace market is expected to reach \$1.2 trillion by 2030, driven by green technology and sustainable aviation.

Innovative Projects: By 2030, green technology is predicted to dominate new aerospace projects, paving the way for eco-friendly skies.

Private Ventures: Private players are entering the space race, developing reusable rockets and plans for Mars colonization.

AI in Operations: AI is revolutionizing aerospace operations, from autonomous flight systems to predictive maintenance.

Economic and Environmental Benefits: Embracing renewable energy and eco-friendly practices positions the aerospace industry for a prosperous, environmentally conscious future.

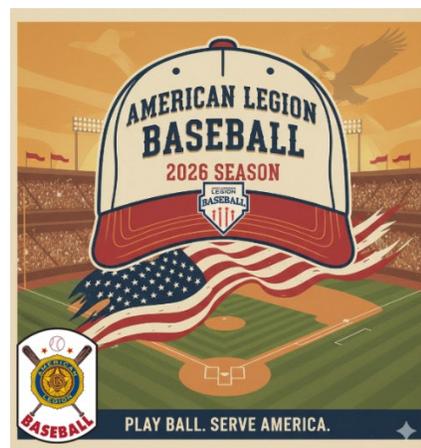
Free technology courses for Veterans

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.

<https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/ibm-skillsbuild-program/>

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL 2026
 Louie Adame, District 19 Baseball Team Chairman
Play Ball! The 2026 American Legion Baseball Season is Underway

As the crack of the bat returns to diamonds across the country, and the smells of hot dogs and popcorn meet our senses, the **2026 American Legion Baseball (ALB)** season is officially in full swing. This year marks a significant milestone as the program continues its second century of developing character, sportsmanship, and top-tier athletic talent. Whether you are a player, a coach, or a fan cheering from the bleachers, here is a brief summary you need to know about the road to the American Legion World Series this August.



Play Ball, Serve America 2026
 (Graphic: Fred Shacklett/American Legion)

📅 Key Dates for the 2026 Calendar

The journey from local league play to the national stage is a summer-long sprint. Mark these essential dates on your calendar:



- **January 1:** National registration officially opened.
- **May 15:** Priority registration deadline (teams registering after this may face late fees).
- **June 1:** Final deadline for team registration.
- **August 5–9: National Regional Tournaments.** Eight locations across the U.S. will host the regional showdowns to determine who moves on to the "Big Show."
- **August 13–18: The 99th American Legion World Series (ALWS).** The season culminates once again at the historic Veterans Field at Keeter Stadium in **Shelby, North Carolina.**

- **The "Ohtani Rule" Clarification:** While many MLB rules are adopted, the ALB continues to use its own designated hitter rules, specifically limited to pitchers only.

Did You Know? Since 2011, Shelby, NC, has served as the permanent home of the ALWS. Last year, the series saw over 120,000 fans pass through the gates, proving that Legion ball remains a cornerstone of American summer sports.

District 19 encourages all Posts to consider sponsoring a local high school team, or a donation to the **"American Legion District 19 Council"** and indicate on the check memo line **"District 19 Baseball"**. If you have any questions, please contact me at **D19LegionBaseball@gmail.com**. Thank you.

Louie M. Adame
D19 Baseball Team Chairman

2026 Regional Host Sites

The National Executive Committee has locked in the following locations for the eight regional tournaments. This year, Shrewsbury, MA, and Cherryville, NC, will pull double duty as hosts:

Region	Host City
Region 1 & 2	Shrewsbury, MA
Region 3 & 4	Cherryville, NC
Region 5	Lexington, KY
Region 6	Fargo, ND
Region 7	Medford, OR
Region 8	Fairfield, CA

ORATORICAL COMMISSION

Gil Soto, Area 4 Commissioner

Finding the Voices of Tomorrow: The 2026 California Oratorical Contest

The **2026 American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program** is officially entering its peak season. For nearly 90 years, this "Constitutional Speech Contest" has challenged California's brightest young minds to explore the nuances of the U.S. Constitution, develop public speaking skills, and compete for a share of more than **\$200,000 in national scholarships.**

Rule Updates & Eligibility

To keep the game safe and competitive, players and coaches should be aware of the 2026 eligibility requirements:

- **Age Limit:** Players born in **2007 or 2008** must play in the Senior Legion program. Anyone born in **2006 or earlier** is no longer eligible.
- **Safety First:** All adult participants (coaches, managers, and volunteers) must complete the **Abuse Awareness course** and pass a background check before taking the field.



The Podium of Freedom. (Graphic Fred Shacklett/American Legion)

As local Post and District winners advance, the **Department of California Oratorical Contest Commission** is hard at work preparing for the state-wide showdown in the Central Valley.

The Road to Fresno: Important Dates

The journey through the 2026 contest follows a rigorous path through six Areas across the state. Mark your calendars for these upcoming milestones:

- **Area Level Contests:** February 2026 (Various locations)
 - *Area 1 (Northern CA):* Feb 21 at Folsom City Hall.
 - *Area 5 (Southern CA):* Feb 15 at Post 595, Perris.
 - *Area 6 (Central Coast):* March 7 at Post 283, Pacific Palisades.
- **Department Finals: Sunday, March 22, 2026, at 1:00 PM.**
 - **Location:** Veterans Administration Hospital Auditorium, **Fresno, CA.**

- **National Finals:** May 15–17, 2026, at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan.

2026 Assigned Topics

In addition to their 8-to-10-minute prepared oration, contestants must be ready to speak for 3 to 5 minutes on one of the four "Assigned Topics" drawn at random. For 2026, the potential topics include:

1. **Article III, Section 3:** The definition and requirements for conviction of Treason.
2. **Article IV, Section 4:** The guarantee of a Republican Form of Government and protection against invasion.
3. **Article VI, Clause 3:** The requirement of an Oath of Office and the prohibition of religious tests.
4. **Amendment IV:** Protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Scholarship Rewards

The American Legion is committed to investing in the education of these young leaders.

- **State Level:** The Department of California provides significant scholarships for the top four finalists.
- **National Level:** The California champion will represent the Golden State in Michigan, where the top three national finishers receive **\$25,000**, **\$22,500**, and **\$20,000** respectively. Even state winners who participate only in the first national round receive an automatic **\$2,000** scholarship.

Call for Volunteers

The Oratorical Commission is seeking Legionnaires to assist with the Department Finals in Fresno. We need:

- **Judges:** (Must not be familiar with the contestants)
- **Timekeepers:** To ensure strict adherence to the 8–10-minute window.

- **Tabulators and Escorts:** To help manage the flow of the event and ensure a professional atmosphere for the students.

"This contest is about more than just winning a scholarship; it's about discovering a voice and strengthening the character of the next generation of American citizens." — *National Oratorical Leadership*

VALLEY FORGE WORKSHOP COMMISSION

Gil Soto, Commissioner

Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future: The 2026 Valley Forge Program

As the United States rapidly approaches its **Semi quicentennial (250th) Anniversary** in July, the American Legion remains at the forefront of preserving our nation's history. Central to this mission is the **Valley Forge Workshop Commission**, which has announced its most ambitious slate of programs yet for the 2026 season.



The 1777-1778 Winter Encampment. (Graphic Fred Shacklett/American Legion)

In partnership with **Founding Forward**, the Commission is dedicated to bringing the spirit of the 1777-1778 winter encampment to life for educators, students, and veterans alike.

🍎 Professional Development for Educators

The core of the 2026 program is the **in-person professional development experiences** for teachers and educators. Understanding that today's students are the keepers of tomorrow's democracy, the Commission offers fully funded, immersive experiences for educators to deepen their understanding of American civics and the Revolutionary War.

2026 Opportunities Include:

- **Residential Seminars:** Multi-day, content-driven programs at the Union League Liberty Hill and the historic Union League of Philadelphia.
- **Travel Seminars:** "On-the-road" learning experiences that trace the footsteps of the Continental Army across Pennsylvania and the surrounding colonies.
- **Immersive Workshops:** Hands-on sessions focused on the challenges faced by Washington's troops and the strategic importance of the Valley Forge encampment.

Teachers who participate join a prestigious network of over 14,000 educators nationwide who are equipped to teach American history with renewed passion and factual depth.

🕯️ The 2026 Pilgrimage and Wreath Laying

A cornerstone of the Commission's annual activities is the **Valley Forge Pilgrimage**. In February 2026, Legionnaires, Scouts, and community members will gather to honor the sacrifices of the Continental Army.

- **Wreath Laying Ceremony:** Held at the **National Memorial Arch** on February 14, 2026. This solemn event pays tribute to the founders and the soldiers who endured the hardships of the winter of 1777-1778.



- **The 2026 Scout Encampment:** Running from March 6–8, 2026, this event (held at Fort Washington State Park this year for historical significance) invites youth to experience a "day in the life" of a Revolutionary soldier, featuring black powder demonstrations, 18th-century cooking, and military drill instruction.

The Road to USA250

As part of the **American Legion Family USA250 Challenge**, the Valley Forge Commission is encouraging all local Posts and Districts to use 2026 as a year of "Service and Storytelling." By connecting with local historical societies and state commissions, we ensure that the legacy of Valley Forge is not just a chapter in a book, but a living example of American resilience.

"The journey to 2026 is a chance to honor our history while imagining the possibilities of our next chapter." — *National America250 Leadership*

How to Participate

Applications for the 2026 Teacher Workshops are now open. If you know a teacher who is passionate about history or a veteran looking to volunteer for the March Pilgrimage, please visit the Department website.

- **Learn More:** calegion.org/valley-forge
- **Sponsorship:** Posts are encouraged to sponsor a local teacher's travel or provide supplies for the youth pilgrimage.

GET INVOLVED!

Do you have a skill or passion that could benefit our District? Are you interested in taking on a leadership role? We are always looking for volunteers to assist with various committees and initiatives.

Please reach out to your Post Commander or a District Officer to learn more about how you can contribute or join a commission.

Legion COMMISSIONS: Most commissions have

six commissioners, who represent the California Legion Area where they reside (i.e., Area 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

There are 27 commissions in the Department of California, with one commissioner appointed from each of our six areas. Our American Legion Baseball Commission is the exception, with two commissioners from each area.

Commission Web Pages

Go to <https://calegion.org/commissions/> for information on all open commissions.

- [Aerospace Commission](#)
- [Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy Commission](#)
- [Amateur Radio Commission](#)
- [American Legion Baseball Commission](#)
 - [CALegion.org/baseball](#)
- [American Legion Riders Commission](#)
 - [American Legion Riders Website](#)
- [Americanism Commission](#)
- [Boys & Girls State Commission](#)
 - [Boys & Girls State Foundation](#)
- [Constitution & Bylaws](#)
- [Children and Youth Commission](#)
- [Community Service Commission](#)
- [Disaster and Emergency Services Commission](#)
- [Finance Commission](#)
- [Foreign Relations and National Security Commission](#)
- [Housing \(Veteran\) Commission](#)
- [Internal Affairs Commission](#)
- [Law and Order Commission](#)
- [Leadership Commission](#)
- [Legislative Commission](#)
- [Media and Communications Commission](#)
- [Naturalization Commission](#)
- [Oratorical Contests Commission](#)
- [Ritual Commission](#)
- [Scouting Commission](#)
- [Sons of The American Legion Commission](#)
 - [Sons of The American Legion Website](#)
- [Valley Forge Workshop Commission](#)
- [Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation \(VA&R\) Commission](#)



- [Veterans Employment and Education Commission](#)
- [Ways and Means Commission](#)

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

January Newsletter 2026

by [caLegion Contributor](#) | Jan 9, 2026



The Legionnaire Insurance Trust
VALUE • SERVICE • TRUST

New Year, New Coverage: Why Cancer Care should be the top of mind in 2026.

Happy New Year to all our valued American Legion members and their families as we step into 2026. We want to help you start the year strong, with useful resources and the spotlight on an essential benefit that could protect your financial future: the Legionnaire Insurance Trust [Cancer Care Insurance Plan](#).

No Cost to Legionnaires

Did you know your American Legion membership gives you access to a valuable [LIT No-Cost benefit](#)? Activate your [LegionCare](#) protection **today** – it takes less than a minute.

[Enroll in No-Cost LegionCare](#)

SPOTLIGHT

Cancer Care Insurance Plan

Let your American Legion Department Endorsed [Cancer Care Insurance Plan](#) help protect your hard-earned money from the unexpected cost of cancer.

These benefits are paid directly to you or anyone you choose – not to doctors, hospitals or anyone else. Benefits from this plan could be used to pay for:

- Hospital bills
- Chemotherapy

- Operations
- Doctor visits
- Nursing care
- Prescription drugs
- Mortgage
- Car payment
- And more...

Ready to Enroll?

[Enroll Now](#)

Want More Information?

Our [Legionnaire Insurance Trust](#) information hub has more information, or visit [thelit.com](#).

Your 2026 VA Disability Pay Rates



(U.S. Marine Corps/Enrique S. Diaz)

Military.com | By [Amanda Miller](#)

Updated December 08, 2026, at 3:42pm ET

The following tables show estimated 2026 Department of Veterans Affairs monthly disability rates for veterans with a rating of 10% or higher following the Social Security's Administration's announcement of a 2.8% increase Oct. 24. These amounts are effective Dec. 1 of each year. They are tax-free.

VA disability payments are made to veterans who got sick or injured while serving in the military and to veterans whose service made an existing condition worse.

You may qualify for VA disability benefits for physical conditions, such as a chronic illness or



injury, and mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD, which developed before, during or after service.

Related: [Here Is the 2026 Pay Raise for Disabled Veterans and Military Retirees](#)

An annual payment increase is tied to an increase in Social Security payments by the U.S. government known as a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

Understanding the COLA Payment Boost

Millions of military retirees, veterans and social security recipients will get a 8.7% boost in their benefits in 2023. It's the biggest cost-of-living adjustment in about 40 years. (Oct 13) AP

10%-20% Disability

Percentage Rate

10%	\$180.42
20%	\$356.66

30%-60% Disability

Dependent Status	30%	40%	50%	60%
Veteran Alone	\$552.47	\$795.84	\$1,132.90	\$1,435.02
Veteran with Spouse	\$617.47	\$882.84	\$1,241.90	\$1,566.02
Veteran with Spouse and Child	\$666.47	\$947.84	\$1,322.90	\$1,663.02
Veteran with Child	\$595.47	\$853.84	\$1,205.90	\$1,523.02
Each Additional Child Under 18	\$32.00	\$43.00	\$54.00	\$65.00
Each Additional Schoolchild Over Age 18	\$105.00	\$140.00	\$176.00	\$211.00
Additional for A/A Spouse	\$61.00	\$81.00	\$101.00	\$121.00

70%-100% Disability

Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Veteran Alone	\$1,808.45	\$2,102.15	\$2,362.30	\$3,938.58
Veteran with Spouse	\$1,961.45	\$2,277.15	\$2,559.30	\$4,158.17
Veteran with Spouse and Child	\$2,074.45	\$2,406.15	\$2,704.30	\$4,318.99
Veteran with Child	\$1,910.45	\$2,219.15	\$2,494.30	\$4,085.43
Each Additional Child Under 18	\$76.00	\$87.00	\$98.00	\$109.11
Each Additional	\$246.00	\$281.00	\$317.00	\$352.45

Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Schoolchild Over 18				
Additional for A/A Spouse	\$141.00	\$161.00	\$181.00	\$201.41

30%-60% Disability (With Dependent Parents)

Dependent Status	30%	40%	50%	60%
Veteran with One Parent	\$604.47	\$865.84	\$1,220.90	\$1,540.02
Veteran with Two Parents	\$656.47	\$935.84	\$1,308.90	\$1,645.02
Veteran with One Parent and Child	\$648.47	\$923.84	\$1,293.90	\$1,628.02
Veteran with Two Parents and Child	\$700.47	\$993.84	\$1,381.90	\$1,733.02
Veteran with Spouse, One Parent and Child	\$718.47	\$1,017.84	\$1,410.90	\$1,768.02
Veteran with Spouse, Two Parents and Child	\$770.47	\$1,087.84	\$1,498.90	\$1,873.02

70%-100% Disability (With Dependent Parents)

Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Veteran with One Parent	\$1,931.45	\$2,242.15	\$2,520.30	\$4,114.82
Veteran with Two Parents	\$2,054.45	\$2,382.15	\$2,678.30	\$4,291.06
Veteran with One Parent and Child	\$2,033.45	\$2,359.15	\$2,652.30	\$4,261.67
Veteran with Two Parents and Child	\$2,156.45	\$2,499.15	\$2,810.30	\$4,437.91
Veteran with Spouse, One Parent and Child	\$2,197.45	\$2,546.15	\$2,862.30	\$4,495.23
Veteran with Spouse, Two Parents and Child	\$2,320.45	\$2,686.15	\$3,020.30	\$4,671.47

Increased Disability Payments for Veterans With Dependents

Veterans entitled to compensation who have a disability rate at 30% or more are entitled to additional compensation for dependents. Dependent children between the ages of 18 and 23 must attend school and a dependent for tax purposes.

A veteran's parents may be considered dependent if the veteran provides more than 50% of their support.

Veterans with a disabled spouse may also be eligible for increased benefits. Check with the VA for details.

There is also a [Dependency & Indemnity Compensation](#) benefit for survivors of some disabled veterans.

Find Out More About Service-Connected Compensation

Are you a veteran with a 40% disability rating? [Learn about your benefits.](#)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED & EVENTS

Sunday, Mar 29, 12:00 – 3:00 PM•
Redondo Beach Post 184 and Fleet Week

You are requested to volunteer for Fleet Week at the District 19 booth, and to attend the National Vietnam Veterans Day event at Redondo Beach Post 184 on March 29th, with interviews for the Boys & Girls State Scholarship program starting soon.

Note

- Check out the website for future events [here](#)
- Volunteer for Fleet Week
- Attend the National Vietnam Veterans Day event.

Festival & Ship Tours

<https://lafleetweek.com/>

- Memorial Day weekend at LA Fleet Week® means family fun at the West Coast’s Memorial Day Fleet Week and Los Angeles’s Memorial Day tradition. Come out and enjoy:
 - **Active Ship Tours** available through virtual queue on the day of your visit
 - Battleship IOWA “**VIP Experience.**”
Save time, skip lines, enjoy exclusive collectibles, and relax in the VIP lounge.
 - Over 90 different exhibits, including games and displays to experience firsthand.
 - Competitions and entertainment throughout the day
 - **Food trucks and beverage vendors**
 - A covered tent for dining adjacent to

the stage

- **Activities** throughout the LA Waterfront to visit using the **free trolley and shuttle service.**
- **Parking** lots and street parking are available throughout the area.



LA Fleet Week® is Memorial Day Weekend with Festival & Ship Tours: 22-25 May 2026

VETERANS SOCIAL CONNECTION

0830-1030 | Canteen Patio | Bldg 165

JAN 26	JUL 26
FEB 23	AUG 30
MAR 29	SEP 27
APR 26	OCT 25
MAY 31	NOV 15
JUN 28	DEC 20

Proudly Sponsored by:
Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center
Veterans Connection Committee
Food and coffee will be served

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Wil Long Beach Healthcare System



OFFICER REPORTS

COMMANDER

Karl Wilvert

Comrades,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones in good health.

January has been a quiet month for me. I attended the Virtual DEC on the 25th of January. There will be another Virtual DEC on Feb 25th. The face-to-face DEC is in March in Vacaville, CA.

As we enter the new year, I encourage everyone to support those in need. Please pay your dues for 2026. Get out and vote this coming November.

Please note that I have scheduled the next District 19 Executive Board meeting for **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at Hawthorne Post 314**. The February district general meeting will take place on **Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at Hawthorne Post 314**. I kindly request that each Post send at least one representative to our general meetings.

Wishing you all a happy New Year.

Karl Wilvert

American Legion Department of California

19th District Commander

Post 352 Adjutant/Finance Officer

City of Carson Veterans Affairs Commission
Chairman

karl.wilvert@yahoo.com

FIRST VICE COMMANDER

Manuel Vital

Fellow Comrades,

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Safe New Year. Currently, our District is #16 in California, 80.39%

So, let's continue working on our Membership to reach our next goal of 85% by February 11, 2026. We have quite a few Posts that did not reach their 80% Goal by January.

I attended the DEC on Zoom on Sunday, January 25, 2026, the Department Commander would like us to keep reaching out to younger Members to join the

Legion. Let's show younger Members what our Legion is all about and help them learn to become our future leaders. He would like us to stop the negativity that occurs at our Posts and District levels. Our young Members see this going on and decide to leave the Legion. Let's try to resolve our issues peacefully. We are supposed to be a Family, we are going to have disagreements, but we shouldn't make it personal.

Don't forget we have our 4th Area Caucus on February 7th, it starts at 10.00 am at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall @1816 South Figueroa St, Los Angeles, Ca 90015

All 4th Area Commissioners, Post Commanders, Post Adjutants, and Post Officers are encouraged to attend. A special invitation to Sons of the Legion, Riders, and Auxiliary to attend as well. Following the Caucus, there will be a Family Picnic at the Los Angeles Police Academy from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. This is a Free event; everyone is welcome to join.

I hope you all have a great Valentine's Day!

In Comradeship,

Manuel E. Vital

1st Vice Commander

19th District

cuauhtemoc51@yahoo.com

(323)595-5407

SECOND VICE COMMANDER

Angelo Maldonado

Welcome Members, Riders, Sons, and Auxiliary, Thank you to all who attended our Champagne Breakfast at Norwalk American this past weekend. We raised some funds for hospitality. I am still looking for additional posts in the District to help with a fundraising event. Perhaps a taco night somewhere, spaghetti dinner, and still looking to set up the mystery bus trip. I am open to suggestions. Please reach out to me in order to plan at (253) 495-9462 or agandalf22@aol.com. Thank you for your support.

I am starting to solicit donations from Posts in our



district that have a Canteen or Post Hole for Hospitality, so let's get that done.

We will also be passing out a sign-up sheet soon for Fleet Week this coming May. Please come out and support. We are especially looking for volunteers on Memorial Day itself, as many of our Posts have their own programs at their home cities. So please see if you can help me with volunteering.

The 2026 Fleet Week sign-up sheet is located on our Google Drive at this link.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16RnoEVb904gN13E7NzjoZ3Aqzbo5Nwx?usp=sharing>

We continue to collect our Helmets for Heroes. Please remember to bring your funds to the district meeting for presentation. We will also continue to have our 50/50 raffles. We will be meeting in Hawthorne this month. Hope to see you there and thank you for your support.

Thank you for all that you do to support our district.

Yours in comradeship,
Angelo Gandalf Maldonado, JD

THIRD VICE COMMANDER

Jesse Y. Leal

Greetings comrades. Fleet Week is coming up on Memorial Day weekend, and starting on May 22nd through May 25th, we will need volunteers from all our Legion units, Riders, SALS, and Auxiliary to help man our District 19 booth. A volunteer sheet will be distributed to all our District 19 Legion units to help us out.

On March 29th, Redondo Beach Post 184 will be celebrating our 1st Annual National Vietnam Veterans Day with a BBQ and entertainment from the Jerry Romano band. Our event runs from 12 pm to 3 pm.

I will be starting interviews for our Boys & Girls State Scholarship program to select 15 students from Palos Verdes High, Bishop Montgomery High, Mira Costa High & Redondo Beach High.

For future events, check out our website

post184.com in the events calendar section.

For God and country.

Jesse Y Leal

Department of California

American Legion

1st Vice Commander

Redondo Beach Post 184

Area 4 District 19 3rd Vice Commander

US Army / Air Force Veteran

Email: post184vicecommander@gmail.com

(310) 951-8199

CHAPLAIN

Monika Rueda

Hello Comrades

There have been some terrible tragedies that have occurred in the past weeks. You look at the news, and we are constantly reminded of the negative. I have to be honest and say, sometimes it's hard to have a positive outlook when the world around me feels so heavy.

After much thought and prayer, I am reminded that humanity possesses an unbreakable ability to adapt and move forward. History shows us that.

We, as veterans, know this lesson well. It's not about running or ignoring our challenges. It's about facing them with courage, dignity and grace. Difficult times don't last forever.

REMEMBER, WE ARE WARRIORS! WE ARE RESILIENT!

The beautiful thing about life is that every day we wake up, we have a new beginning and a new opportunity to make this world a better place.
GOD BLESS YOU ALL

HISTORIAN

Fred Shacklett

This past month, aside from regular scheduled post-meetings, I attended two LACC meetings on 1/8/2026 and 1/21/2026, one Aerospace Commission meeting on 1/22/2026, and one Dept Executive Committee meeting on 1/25/2026.

I have noted six postings on Facebook related to

District 19 to be included in the annual history report.

I will be supporting upcoming district meetings and the Area 4 Caucus at the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall on 2/7/2026.

DISTRICT 19 PIN/STICKER

A limited number of District pins and stickers are still available.

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.



Noisy 19th Pin Front and Back

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



Noisy 19th Sticker

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

You can receive both a pin and a sticker with a \$5.00 donation.

About This Newsletter

The District 19 Council of the American Legion, Department of California, is a 503(c)(19) non-profit veterans organization registered with the IRS and the State of California. District 19 publishes this edition to all registered members without charge.

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Editor-in-Chief: Fred Shacklett

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District 19 meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM at various locations throughout Los Angeles County, California. See the latest calendar for locations.



Four Chaplains Ceremony at Faith House Chapel in Whittier, CA on 2/3/2026 at 6:00PM



Palm Springs Drone Fest 2026
 Thursday, April 30 to Saturday, May 2, 2026
 Palm Springs High School, Palm Springs, California, USA

Featuring
FIDA USA
Grand Nationals Drone Soccer Tournament
 Class 20, Class 40, Orb 40 Cracing, Super Pilot, & Coding
 Competitions
 Pairing Party
 Opening Ceremonies
 Drone Demonstrations
 Live Music, Food, & So Much More!

Contact for Partnership Opportunities:
Tim Ingram,
 tim@fidausa.com
 (760) 660-3372
Ellen Goodman,
 egoodman@psusd.us
 (760) 416-8455

Hosted by

*Palm Springs Drone Fest 2026, 4/30 – 5/2/2026,
 Palm Springs High School.*

“CALL TO CAUCUS”
SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 7, 2026
9AM-12NOON
4th Area Caucus
LOCATION
Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
1816 South Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Required Attendees: 4th Area Officers, 4th Area Commissioners, 17 & 19 & 23 District Officers, Post Commanders & Adjutants & Post Officers. The Legion Family is Invited

Please, Please, Please Bring Your District & Post Flags for Display

4th Area Commissioner & District Commanders Reports are Required - If you submitted a written report and are at the meeting, please give a verbal report as well

The Legion Family (SAL, Riders, Auxiliary) is Encouraged to Give an Update Report

The 4th Area 1st Lady "Ana" will be conducting Fund Raiser Raffles for the Area Hospitality Fund

PLEASE RSVP to the Area Adjutant Angela Adams at ADAMSAN43@YAHOO.COM

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

MINDSET MONDAY

YOUR JOURNEY TO GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP CONTINUES HERE!

Join our inspiring online training sessions designed to elevate your American Legion Experience. On the second Monday of each month, unlock new strategies, boost your confidence, and cultivate a winning mindset to make a lasting impact in your community.

DATE	CLASS	INSTRUCTOR
Dec 8th	TAL: Community Engagement & Impact	Vic Martin
Jan 5th	Labor Law Compliance	Attorney Diane Coderniz
Feb 9th	Maintaining my Post Tax Exempt Status	John Hudson
March 9th	Parliamentary Procedures: Tactical Motions	Diane Devries
April 13th	Post Adjutant: Administrative Excellence for Legion Posts	Chris Yates

Each class will start at 6:00 pm and are approximately 60 minutes with an added 30 minutes for Q&A. Register for your virtual seat today at <https://calegion.org/mindset-mondays-registration>

AMERICAN LEGION
BASEBALL
NOW ACCEPTING TEAMS FOR 2026!

- COMPETITIVE BASEBALL!
- BUILD CHARACTER & SPORTSMANSHIP!
- BE PART OF A GREAT TRADITION!

SIGN UP TODAY!
 CLICK THE REGISTRATION LINK TO JOIN

Baseball Contact:
D19LegionBaseball@gmail.com



**LIST OF DISTRICT
19 COMMANDERS
1927 TO PRESENT**

Department of California

Year Served	Name
1927	A. B. Waddingham
1928	Charles C. McGonegal
1929	Charles C. McGonegal
1930	Lawrence Klinker
1931	Lawrence Klinker
1932	Ray Hoskins
1933	Art Bliley
1934	Stephen M. Cope
1935	Lawrence M. Windle
1936	Authur Longnecker
1937	John C. Dunn
1938	Charles F. Walter
1939	Charles S. Warren
1940	Tracy C. Hicks
1941	Richard J. Myerscough
1942	Ray F. Tucker
1943	Raymond E. Jones
1943	Walter E. Mueller
1944	Merl W. Horn
1945	J. E. Child
1946	R. Y. O'Shaughnessy
1947	Robert L. Rossier
1948	Joseph F. McCann
1949	Emerson C. Miller
1950	Ralph E. Smith
1951	Henry S. Wilson
1952	Al Kaiser, Jr.
1953	W. Devore Walden
1954	Leonard G. Cross
1955	H. Ed Hissey
1956	J. Vincent Walker
1957	Ray Kimberlin
1958	Albert F. Mazzie
1959	Fredrick J. Pelletier
1960	Thomas Pope
1961	Willam H. Gilmore
1962	Nathan Sommer
1963	Christian A Akeo

1963	Maynard E. Norquist
1964	H. Gordon Gregson
1964	Kenneth L. Van Sant
1965	Marvin Jones
1966	J. U. MacCartney
1967	Raymond R. Pfluger
1968	Roy W. Grimwood
1969	Guy F. Millburn
1970	Clifford R. Bell
1971	Casper C. Rea
1971	Robert A Okeson
1972	Floyd W. Schultz
1973	Daniel M. Castillo
1974	John Hudak
1975	Thomas G. Jaurez
1976	Elbert W. Ralston
1977	J. W. McCormick
1978	Donald R. Carter
1979	John E. Mummert, Sr.
1980	Robert R. Hart
1981	Raymond F. Berucki
1982	Patrick M. Reese
1983	Lauro J. Jaime, Jr.
1984	Werner E. Wolf
1985	Thomas Vincent
1986	Fernando Soto
1987	Louis R. Gomez
1988	Gary CmCracken
1989	Frances F. Berlucki
1990	Carl F. Shasha
1991	Malcolm A. Jeffris
1992	James W. Wysong
1993	Ray Curry
1994	Albert B. Clugston
1995	James T. Higurea
1996	Ralph W. Shipley
1997	LeRoy "Lee" Spann
1998	John H. Holloway
1999	Rudy Moreno
2000	Johnny T. Brown
2001	James Potter
2002	Brian Franklin
2003	James Drew
2003	Richard Benninger

2004	Henry Pacheco
2005	Joe Gonzales
2006	Bull Musser
2007	Frank Dulleson
2008	Robert Mitchell
2009	Gil Soto
2010	Art Castro
2011	William Perry
2012	Gil Palmer
2013	William (Bill) Miller
2014	Dennis Radcliffe
2015	Robert Boyd
2016	Nick Rosa
2017	Richard Ramirez
2018	Patrick Dowd
2019	Ray Gard
2020	Ray Gard
2021	Louie Adame
2022	Louie Adame
2023	Fernando Gallardo
2024	Fernando Gallardo
2025	Karl Wilvert



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:// alwmcsf.org/](https://alwmcsf.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.