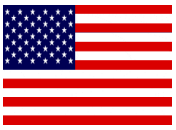




August 2026



Volume 102
No. 2



WANTED: FLASH Editor



19th District
Next E-Board meeting
Wednesday September 9th
South Bay Post 184
412 S Camino Real, Redondo Beach

General District Meeting
Wednesday August 12th
Hawthorne Post 314
14124 S. Prairie Avenue,
Hawthorne, CA
Meetings start at 7:00 PM



Notes from the Commander

Comrades,

Summer is moving along rather quickly with the Fall DEC the last weekend in July. I have taken back the FLASH from Fred and am now actively seeking someone to be the next FLASH Editor. Please let me know if you are interested.

Posts 170, 184, 341, 465 and 833 are currently on probation for missing reports to the department.

Please go to <https://calegion.org/department-reports/> and select Post Probation & Suspension Report to see exactly what reports need to be submitted.

The Department has not updated the database to reflect Membership data at this point.

California included \$2 million in its 2026-27 budget to expand free legal services for Veterans pursuing military discharge upgrades. According to Gov. Gavin Newsom's office, Veterans who were discharged due to trauma, injury, mental health issues, discrimination, or similar service-related situations may be eligible for free legal assistance.

Veterans may need to determine which review body handles their case, gather military and medical records, and explain why the circumstances of their separation support a correction. Legal counsel can help organize the evidence and present the case more effectively. When reviewing an application, military boards are expected to consider whether post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, or another behavioral health condition contributed to the Veteran's discharge.

A VA decision does not change the Veteran's DD Form 214. Only the appropriate military review board can formally upgrade a discharge or correct a military record.

CalVet lists discharge upgrade assistance among its pro bono legal initiatives. Veterans can check the CalVet Legal Assistance page for current resources and updates on how the expanded services will be provided.

Veterans should be cautious of businesses that guarantee an upgrade or demand large advance payments. Although approval is not guaranteed, the expanded funding could make professional help available to more California Veterans.



Karl Wilvert—Commander



Comrades,

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

The current generation of veterans have grown up with social media as an integral part of how they communicate and meet others. The days of the Friday afternoon social gatherings after work are a rarity or even a thing of the past for many. This trend makes getting veterans to come to the post for public interactions a tough sell. Even efforts being taken to promote video gaming in the post is difficult due to the nature of online games that are designed to keep the subjects in the seclusion of their home. Posts have an uphill battle to appeal to people to attend meetings and events. I wish I had the magic answer to solve this.

We all need to foster our membership and find ways to make events at the post something that is interesting enough to bring people together. One way I think we can improve this is to reach out to your members that you rarely if ever see coming into your post. Query them to see what interests them and seek any suggestions that they may have. This is a widespread issue; share any ideas you currently have with your comrades in other posts.

I continue to challenge each officer in each post to mentor your post comrades in how the Legion operates. While doing this, I am asking you to invite them to attend district, area, and department meetings. This will help everyone see how the business of helping veterans in our communities is managed. If they see things they feel could use improvement, have them bring them to the bodies for consideration. Getting new members involved is how we will evolve as an organization.

Mentoring new members to step up and begin navigating the chairs is an evolutionary tactic. We need fresh minds to bring fresh ideas to the table.

I encourage everyone to support those in need. Please pay your dues for 2027.

Please note that the next District 19 General meeting is on **Wednesday, August 12th, 2026, at Hawthorne Post 314**. The next EBoard meeting will take place **on Wednesday, September 8th, 2026, at South Bay Post 184** in Redondo Beach. I kindly request that each 19th District Post send at least one representative to our general meetings.

Karl Wilvert

19th District Commander

1st Vice Commander—Manny Vital



Fellow Comrades,

I hope everyone is doing well and in good health. First of all, I would like to Congratulate the Legion, the Auxiliary, the Son of the Legion and the Legion Riders, on the Elections for the new Officers for the year 2026-2027. All the Posts have not picked up there Membership cards, I will have them at the next District Meeting on August 12th, at Hawthorne Post 314 please come pick them up. FYI we will be having three Revitalizations this year, the 1st one will be at Norwalk Post 359 on September 19th, at 9:00 am to 2:00 pm lunch will be provided for a donation. There will also be donuts and coffee in the morning. This will be an Area Revitalization with the 23rd District who are on board but I have not gotten Confirmation from the 17th District if they will be attending or not. For those Posts that do attend please bring your current rosters with you so we can reach out to those members who always pay on time so you can achieve your Early Bird Goals. I will also have the Post 1000 list and the 1601 list so whoever would like to get started on those lists by making phone calls.

Our Installation Team, has Installed most of the Posts in the District, there are still a few Posts out there that have not contacted us yet so please reach out to us if you would like your Posts to be Installed by us. I hope to see you at our next District Meeting so you can pick up your Membership Cards.

In Comradeship,

Manuel E. Vital

19th District

1st Vice Commander

(323)595-5407

cuauhtemoc51@yahoo.com

Historian—David DeMoss



Korean Luncheon

On Sunday July 26 the American Legion Post 184 hosted a special event for Korean Veteran of World War II and the Vietnam War. Post Commander Jesse Leal and his staff hosted these honored vets at the South Bay Post 184 in Redondo Beach.

R. David DeMoss
Commander American Legion Post 352
Carson, CA.
USAir Force (RET)
" This is the Way"

2nd Vice Commander—Angelo Moldonado

Welcome Members, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders,

Let's start our year right. For our District Fundraising, we are looking to have a cigar night soon at the South Bay Post in Redondo. It will be a Wednesday, just finalizing the date. I will let you know once confirmed. We will be having a day trip to a casino in October leaving from Norwalk Post as well, with details to be produced soon as well. Like last year, I am looking for a few legions to host District Fundraisers at your post, whichever works best. Some post are good with breakfast, some with dinners, and as you see some with cigars and some with casino bus trips. When we have our revitalization at Norwalk Post, September 19th, we will have a lunch for donation to benefit the 19th District VA&R efforts.

I am also looking for raffle (or opportunity drawing) baskets for our monthly meetings. For those Posts that can only donate with a basket, it would be a great way to help and bring us together. Think of ideas that identify your Post and location with sports teams, tourist destinations near your Post, etc., Thank you all for all you do to further the four pillars.

Don't forget to keep bringing in those Helmets for Heros funds from your Posts. That's another great way to get your membership involved for those that don't get out around the district, but would like to contribute. We are Family and it feels good to help. We did great last year with the Helmets for Heros, so keep up the good work. Let's have another great year!

Please contact me to arrange some events for our VA&R. Thank you for all your interest. You can reach me at agandalf22@aol.com or (253) 495-9462.

Thank you all for your continued support for our district.
Yours in comradeship,
Angelo Gandalf Maldonado, JD

3rd Vice Commander—Jessie Leal

Greetings comrades,

On July 24th we celebrated the 73rd Korean Armistice Day at Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos with the 40th Infantry Division. Remembering all our veterans who fought and died for the freedom of South Korea. We at South Bay Post 184 celebrated on July 26th honoring our 23 Legion members who fought and served in the forgotten war back in 1950-1953. Our South Korean veterans joined us in celebrating and honoring their service. On July 13th our fellow Legionnaire and Korean War veteran William Wolf Jr, US Navy veteran passed away to Post Everlasting at the age of 94. Mr. Wolf's service was held July 30th at Riverside National Cemetery. A reminder to all my District 19 comrades that the Compton Stand Down is coming up September 26th thru 28th. We need your help and support to help our homeless veterans. I would like to see our District and Posts representing on site with their tents to help out. Post 184 will be on site all 3-days. A donation would be appreciated to support this event.

Jesse Y Leal
Department of California
Commander
South Bay Post 184
Redondo Beach, California
3rd Vice Commander
Area 4 District 19
US Army Veteran



New District 19 Pin and 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.

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

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

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 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](#)

[Valley Forge Workshop Commission](#)

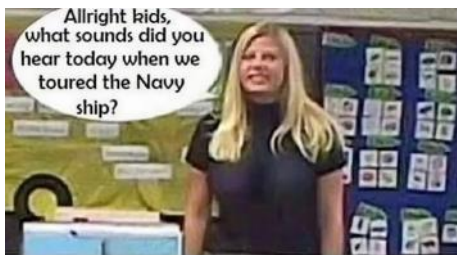
[Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation \(VA&R\) Commission](#)

[Veterans Employment and Education Commission](#)

[Ways and Means Commission](#)

Some Fun for all

**The U.S. Mint announces
the new nickel design for 2027.**



IN DAYS OF YORE, THE MILITARY PAID STIPENDS SO ITS RECRUITS COULD GO TO COLLEGE. NOW THAT 27% OF RECRUITS ARE **HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS**, THEY'RE HOLDING G.E.D. CLASSES FOR U.S. TROOPS. AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS:



**THERE IS NO "I" IN TEAM...
JUST REMEMBER...WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!**

In-County

In a suicide crisis, eligible veterans can go to any ER for free. Nearly 50,000 already have.



Editor's note: This report contains discussion of suicide. Troops, veterans and family members experiencing suicidal thoughts can call the 24-hour Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 and dial 1, text 838255 or visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

The COMPACT Act allows eligible veterans and certain former service members to receive Veterans Affairs-funded emergency suicide crisis care at VA and community hospitals, even if they aren't enrolled in VA healthcare. New data obtained by Military Times show 49,341 veterans have used the benefit since 2023, but veteran advocates and suicide prevention professionals say many eligible veterans still don't realize it exists until they experience a crisis.

In 2025, retired Navy Master Chief David Hull's life unraveled after he lost his job during the government shutdown.

The transition from military service had been difficult, but he had rebuilt his life. Then when his paycheck disappeared, so did his ability to provide for his three children.

"I didn't always consider taking my own life," Hull said. "It wasn't until I felt like I had no one and nowhere to go."

"It's easy to sink into feeling nothingness when you can't see your value anymore or you become disconnected from your purpose," he said.

After putting his children to bed one night, Hull searched online for combinations of pills that promised an easier way to end his life. As he poured medication into a single bottle, he accidentally knocked the empty container onto the floor.

His 6-year-old daughter picked it up.

"She looked up at me with her big brown eyes," Hull recalled, his voice breaking. "It cracked me wide open."

Hull left his children with a neighbor and drove to Garrett Regional Medical Center, a community hospital in Oakland, Maryland.

He wasn't enrolled in VA healthcare. He didn't have health insurance. Until that night, he had never heard of the COMPACT Act or that eligible veterans could receive VA-funded emergency suicide crisis care at a community hospital.

"I just needed someone to help clear my head and get me straight again," Hull said. "I was circling the drain. On the precipice of having no home, no food, no money and no job with a promise of a better tomorrow. Nothing."

About 40 minutes after arriving, Hull was evaluated by an emergency physician, who assured him he would be taken care of. A hospital social worker then explained that the Department of Veterans Affairs would cover the cost of his emergency treatment and follow-up care.

"I was shocked to find out that I could be seen for free after they identified me as a veteran," Hull said.

In 2020, Congress signed the [COMPACT Act Emergent Suicide Crisis Benefit](#) into law to remove financial and administrative barriers to emergency suicide crisis care. Three years later, it was implemented by the VA, but many eligible veterans remain unaware of the benefit until they need it, veteran advocates and suicide prevention professionals told Military Times.

★ 23RD ANNUAL ★ COMPTON VETERANS = STAND ★ DOWN =



**3-DAY
OVERNIGHT
EVENT**

**★ SEPT. ★
26-28,
2026**

*Save
the
date*

DOORS OPEN ·
6:00 AM
SATURDAY


 Veteran Peer Access Network - LA County


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


 BATTLESHIP
IOWA
 LOS ANGELES






★ PROUDLY PRESENTED BY THE COMPTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ★














★ SERVICES INCLUDE ★

- ✓ Employment Assistance
- ✓ Housing Assistance
- ✓ Legal Assistance
- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Medical & Vision Exams
- ✓ Mental Health Counseling
- ✓ Chiropractic / Acupuncture
- ✓ Massage Therapy
- ✓ Clothing & Hygiene Kits
- ✓ Showers & Haircuts
- ✓ Hot Meals
- ✓ Social Security Benefits
- ✓ & so much more

VETERAN PRE-REGISTRATION

Veterans may pre-register with their VA Healthcare System for a faster check-in process.

VA Long Beach
 Melanie Martins
 Phone: (562) 826-8000 ext 12054



More info:

Charlie Lonon
 (562) 400-1485
Charlie.Lonon@gmail.com

Dr. Lestean M. Johnson
 Compton Chamber of Commerce
 (310) 631-8611
cptchamber@aol.com




 Employment
 Development
 Department
 State of California




 LAFD.ORG


 KJLH
 KJLH.com


 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
EDISON


**THE AMERICAN
 LEGION**

"Still and Forever

Serving America"



DEADLINE

25TH OF MONTH

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

FLASH EDITOR WANTED

Looking for a volunteer to help get
 the district word out to the mem-
 bership

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.

E-mail: karl.wilvert@yahoo.com

Editor-in-Chief: Karl Wilvert

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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

END ZONE BRIEFS

Upcoming Events

8/12/2026 – District 19 General Membership meeting at Hawthorne Post 314 at 19:00. Dinner at 6pm

7/30-8/2/2026– Department Executive Committee meeting, Merced Post 83, 939 W Main St, Merced, CA 95340-4518. 0900 to 1600 daily. Hotel info
 El Capital Hotel
 609 W Main St, Merced, CA 95340
 (209) 383-1234

9/9/2026 – District 19 Executive Board, at South Bay Post 184 at 19:00

3/12-14, 2027 Department Executive Committee meeting, Santa Maria Post 56
 501 N Pine St, Santa Maria, CA 93458



POSTS OF DISTRICT 19

Post 27 Arthur L Peterson District 19 (4)

PO Box 20900, Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 436-6182

Post 51 Whittier District 19 (4)

PO Box 51, Whittier, CA 90606
(562) 201-3095

Post 61 Battleship Iowa (ALR) District 19 (4)

250 S Harbor Blvd, San Pedro, CA 90731
28625 S Western Ave, PO Box 214, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275
(310) 357-7063

Post 134 City of Paramount (SAL) District 19 (4)

7550 Somerset Blvd, Paramount, CA 90723
(310) 920-5545

Post 170 Bert S Crossland (SAL) (ALA) District 19 (4)

3309 Antonio St, Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 213-6484

Post 184 South Bay (SAL) (ALR) (ALA) District 19 (4)

412 S Camino Real, Redondo Beach, 90277
(310) 316-6718

Post 270 Downey District 19 (4)

(562) 544-0372

Post 272 Montebello (SAL) (ALA) District 19 (4)

616 W Cleveland Ave, Montebello, CA 90640
(323) 721-4878

Post 314 Hawthorne (SAL) (ALA) District 19 (4)

14124 S Prairie Ave, Hawthorne, CA 90250
(310) 675-1313

Continued on next page

Post 341	Leland A Cupp	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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4900 Durfee Ave, Pico Rivera, CA 90660
(562) 641-9043

Post 352	Gilbert Lindsay		District 19 (4)
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PO Box 11171, Carson, CA 90749
(720) 840-5578

Post 359	Norwalk	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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11986 Front St, Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 474-1977

Post 411	Rivera	(ALA)	District 19 (4)
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7642 Serapis Ave, Pico Rivera, CA 90660
PO Box 411, Pico Rivera, CA 90660
(562) 656-4117

Post 465	Clyde F Hager	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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7550 Eastern Ave, Bell Garden, CA 90201
(562) 927-6116

Post 496	Lakewood	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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5938 E Parkcrest St, Long Beach, CA 90808
(562) 420-1014

Post 804	Eugene A <u>Obregon</u>	(SAL) (ALR)	District 19 (4)
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4615 E Cesar E Chavez Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90022 (714) 360-9268

Post 833	Lincoln Village	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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21022 S Alameda St, Long Beach, CA 90810
(310) 518-5054

LIST OF DISTRICT 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 Ramierez
2018	Patrick Dowd
2019	Ray Gard
2020	Ray Gard
2021	Louie Adame
2022	Louie Adame
2023	Fernando Gallardo
2024	Fernando Gallardo
2025	Karl Wilvert
2026	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 and the Department Adjutant, meeting rooms, storage for records, and offices for our administration and support staff.