The Flash

District 19 Council Newsletter

October 2026

Volume 102
No. 4

STILL WANTED: FLASH Editor





19th District
EBoard meeting
Wednesday November 4th
Norwalk Post 359
11986 Front St, Norwalk, CA
General Meeting
Wednesday September 9th
Montebello Post 272
616 W Cleveland Ave, Montebello, CA

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

AMERICA 250™

Quick Notes from the Commander

Comrades,

I have taken back the FLASH and am now actively seeking someone to be the next FLASH Editor. Please let me know if you are interested.

Per 9/28 Department Report: Posts ***170, 184, 341 and 833*** are currently on probation for missing reports or monies to the department.

Please go to https://calegion.org/departmentreports/ and select Post Probation & Suspension Report to see exactly what reports need to be submitted. ***It is each post's responsibility to verify that their reports are being registered at the department. If you have submitted them and they do not appear, contact the department adjutant.***

Bring your post Helmets for Heros donations to each district meeting. We will be starting a competition to see which post can bring the most for the fiscal year. We will present checks in DEC and at convention for district Helmets for Heros.



Karl Wilvert—Commander

Comrades,
I hope this message finds you and your loved ones healthy.

I was at the Carson Country and Western Fair working the Veterans Commision booth. It was great to meet the team working the Lincoln Village Post 833 booth. This type of activity is how we get the legion name out to the masses. This also allows us to reach out and offer resources to veterans in our community. Thanks go out to Post 833 for taking the time to accomplish this task.

In my efforts for the Veterans Commision I bring American Legion information with me. I meet many veterans at the events here in Carson. We veterans are a talkative group of people. I and my fellow veterans on the commission present an inviting and safe place to come as a veteran and tell us you veterean stories and experience the comaradarie. In addtion to being a member of the commission, I represent Gilbert Lindsay Post 352 at every one of the events we attend.

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

***REMINDER: We are dark for the November 11th General District Meeting*.**
Please note that the next District 19 General meeting is on **Wednesday, October 14th, 2026, at Montebello Post 272.** The next EBoard meeting is **on Wednesday, November 4th 2nd, 2026 and will be at Norwalk Post 359**.

I kindly request that each 19th District Post send at least one representative to our general meetings.

Karl Wilvert
19th District Commander

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS STAFF UPDATE

Greetings,

We would like to make everyone aware that our Department Adjutant and our Finance/HR/Events Coordinator have been placed on leave until further notice.

If you need assistance from either of these positions, please contact the following:

Michael Smith
michael@calegion.org
Interim Department Adjutant

Rusanne Anthony
rusanne@calegion.org
Department Finance Officer

Thank you for your understanding and patience while we navigate these changes.

United by Duty,
Janice Somers
Department Commander

1st Vice Commander—Manny Vital

Fellow Comrades,

Hope everyone is doing well.

Here are current numbers Dept. is at 56.55% #13 Area is at 56.03 #4 Dist. is at 54.56% #19.

On Sept.19th. we had a Revitalization at post Norwalk post 359 we only had 6 post show up from District 19.

District 23 Commander 4th Area Vice Commander & a District 23 Adjutant were there we need more District participation. We can only achieve 100% if more post participate in the process.

Hope everyone has great October. I look forward to seeing everyone at our next District meeting.

In Comradeship,
Manuel E. Vital
1st Vice Commander
19th District

2nd Vice Commander—Angelo Moldonado

Welcome Members, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders,

How do we win? We win by being together. Let's be together. I will be here for you and our struggle is real. When it comes down to us helping our veterans. Revitalization was wonderful this past month and so was the cigar night. The bus trip is this Saturday on October 3rd 0900hrs in support of the 19th District VA&R. Area 4 Cuscus is October 3rd. Let's get it together.

Events: Norwalk Post No. 359 is doing free haircuts by professional barbers on October 1st, at 4pm-pm. October 10th is Gills and Grills with the Norwalk American Riders to clean bikes and eat...come visit at 3PM.

Lets do another cigar night, give me options>>> A reminder again, we are still looking for a few more legions to host District Fundraisers at your post, just let me know and give me a few ideas.

Compton Standown was a great time to get together. But i was sadden to see none of you show. We donated a truck load of stuff for our homeless vets. Remember, We do this together.

I mentioned last month that I am looking for raffles (or opportunity drawing) baskets for our monthly meetings. This is an opportunity to engage your members that don't particularity make it to district meetings. Lets come together and show that we are the best district this side of the 10 Freeway.

Don't forget to keep bringing in those Helmets for Heros funds from your Posts. Its just a great way to keep our membership involved in our true mission of mutual helpfulness. Remember, if we aren't gonna have any fun, we aren't gonna do it!

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,

We had our annual Labor Day BBQ at the 184 and had a great turnout. Our Cigar Nite to support VA&R had a light turnout. We are preparing to get donations for Christmas for our non-profits to help our community and military families. Also preparing for another visit on Christmas Day at the Long Beach VA hospital to visit our veterans by getting donations to help support our veterans.

For God and Country,

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

Historian—David DeMoss

No Report

Chaplain – Monika Rueda



CALC is coming to SoCal

Redlands American Legion Post 106
814 West Colton Avenue, Redlands, California 92374

16-18 October 2026

- **The course starts at 8:00 am on Friday, 16 October, and will conclude with graduation at 1:00 pm on Sunday, 18 October**
- **Registration closes at midnight on 30 September 2026**
- **Applicants have until 30 September to submit a completion certificate from The American Legion's online Basic Training Course and a resolution on a topic of their choice**
- **Applicants will receive mileage reimbursement for travel to and from their home Post @ .40 per mile, along with a $50.00 per diem per day to cover expenses during the event**
- **Please send questions to CALC@calegion.org**

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN LEGION
COLLEGE

3-2026

Registration Period
Between 8/1/2026 and 9/30/2026

Topics include - Legion Charites, Be The One/Buddy Checks, Community Engagement, Corporate Responsibility, Legislative Advocacy, Tax Exempt status, Post Charters, Marketing/Public Relations, Parliamentary Procedures, Post Operations, Post VSO, Flag Code, Resolutions, Strategic Planning, & Trademarks

ABOUT LEGION NATIONAL COLLEGE

legion.org/college

The American Legion National College enhances knowledge and appreciation of The American Legion and teaches the core values and contributions of the organization, its Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and many subordinate programs. The National Legion College prepares Legionnaires for leadership positions in posts, districts, counties, and departments through education, development, and motivation. The curriculum challenges student leaders to think critically and creatively about issues confronting the Legion.

NATIONAL LEGION COLLEGE COURSE STRUCTURE

The curriculum centers on selftaught, smallgroup sessions supervised by graduate facilitators, staff members, contracted professional speakers, and national officers. Students review The American Legion's core values, develop new ideas and consider the future. An emphasis is placed on programs, management techniques, and leadership skills necessary to increase the visibility of programs, growth in membership, and public awareness of the Legion and its corresponding organizations

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 a 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

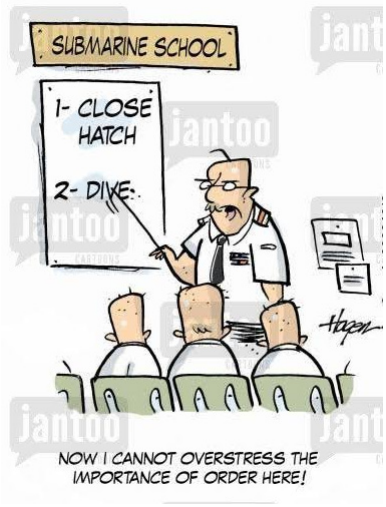
Go to https://calegion.org/commissions/ for information on all open commissions.

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

Some Fun for all









"This here is where the course starts getting a lot tougher."



Montford Point Marine and oldest-living MLB player just turned 102
By Anne R. Keene

The Rev. William "Bill" Greason, a Montford Point Marine, Baptist minister and the oldest-living Major League Baseball player and last surviving Negro Leaguer, just turned 102.

Growing up in the Depression era Jim Crow South, Greason never let prejudice define him. Rather, he kept moving forward with dignity, humility, and a sense of humor, creating a legacy that began with one question: Did I help someone?

Before Greason teamed up in the Negro Leagues with Hall of Famer and U.S. Army veteran Willie Mays — and decades before he preached the Gospel from the pulpit — he was a Montford Point Marine, America's first group of African Americans to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II.

In 2012, Greason joined roughly 400 Montford Point Marines in Washington, D.C., to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor. Today, fewer than 400 Montford Point Marines survive among the 20,000 who served during the war.

Born in Atlanta on Sept. 3, 1924, Greason grew up across the street from Martin Luther King Jr. in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood bustling with Black-owned businesses, jazz and ragtime. His father, James, was a laborer, while his mother Lizzie took in laundry for white families.

Greason spoke with a whisper and chuckled about his circuitous path into baseball when he spoke to the author about his athletic legacy. He said, "I wanted to become a doctor and played two years of semi-pro football, but the Lord had other ideas for me, and I didn't argue with him."

To this day, he proudly wears a Marine Corps ballcap embroidered with the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor — a declaration that says, "Once a Marine, always a Marine."

The first Black Marines

As war loomed and fascism rose across Europe, there were few opportunities for Blacks to serve in the U.S. military. That scenario changed six months before the attack on Pearl Harbor when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, permitting Blacks to join the Marine Corps and any branch of the U.S. military — albeit segregated.

For a poor young man from Atlanta, this breakthrough signaled a chance.

At Booker T. Washington High School, Greason was an athlete and a budding leader. According to his military records, he captained the school's softball team. He also participated in boxing, football, baseball, basketball, tennis and wrestling, so he was in fighting shape when he enlisted in the service in Macon, Georgia, at age 17 on May 13, 1943.

Continued on next page

Greason soon found himself at a remote coastal North Carolina installation, built on swampy lowland behind a piney curtain, inhabited by snakes, bears and blood-thirsty swarms of deer flies and mosquitoes.

Bill Greason's service record. (USMC)

For Black Marines, Montford Point was their Parris Island, just on rougher terrain with fewer luxuries.

The first Montford Marines cleared the land with basic tools and saws in 1942. They laid gravel roads, dug latrines and built dozens of prefabricated huts, along with a mess hall, a chapel and supply warehouses to create a functioning Marine installation for thousands of men.

Montford Point would ultimately produce more than 20,000 Marines, including 13,000 who went on to serve in the Pacific during World War II.

Private Greason shipped out to the Pacific Theater with the 66th Supply Platoon, 34th Marine Depot Company, V Amphibious Corps. The men arrived on Iwo Jima several days after the initial invasion, when the island looked like a jagged moonscape choked with volcanic ash, smoke and blood.

His platoon's job was one of the most dangerous on the beachfront — unloading heavy ammunition and critical supplies from ships onto the shore under the constant spray of enemy fire.

"Two of my best friends were killed on that island. I prayed and said, 'Lord, if you get me off this island, whatever you want me to do, I'll do it,'" he told MLB in an interview.

Greason's Iwo Jima

As U.S. forces prepared to land on the beach, Greason was instructed to move forward, no matter the casualties that surrounded them, and not tend to the wounded, according to Gerard Choucroun, the executive director of the Heart and Armor Foundation.

As they advanced onto the island, Greason saw that his best friend at Montford Point, Hubert "Claro" Duverney, a fellow squad leader from New York, and another good friend, James Wilkins, from Tennessee, had been hit by enemy fire. Cpl. Duverney was alive. As blood poured from his stomach, Greason made the choice to disobey orders and picked up his friend and carried him to the medical tent overrun with wounded and dying Marines.

Wilkins perished. His valor is memorialized with a Purple Heart. And despite Greason's heroics, Duverney died two days later.

Greason spent 13 months in Japan with the American occupation force, where he was stationed in Sasebo and Nagasaki, after the United States leveled the city with the second atomic bomb. Choucroun recounts that his 102-year-old friend still dreams about being on the island.

On April 1, 1946, Greason was discharged from duty, yet he soon faced another battle — finding a job to come home to.

Continued on next page

Though the young Marine was a capable leader with solid mechanical skills, trade jobs with decent wages were hard to find for Blacks, especially in the Jim Crow South.

So he turned to the Marines to find work as a ball player.

In a typed letter, received June 3, 1946, to his rehabilitation officer at the 6th Marine Reserves District, he wrote: "I am now unemployed. I would appreciate it very much if you could contact some team, it doesn't matter where, but I am sure I have what it takes to make any team, and I would like a chance to prove myself, if given the chance."

The age of athletic patriotism

Greason, never formally trained as a baseball player, calls baseball a "Gift from God."

Standing five foot ten, weighing 170 pounds, the Marine was blessed with a strong arm, a quick mind and a relentless work ethic that soon landed him with the Nashville Black Vols in 1947, and the Birmingham Black Barons from 1948 to 1951.

As Greason perfected his fastball and scouts took note of his Major League potential, Greason once again put his potential on hold, joining the ranks of future Hall of Famers, including Marine combat pilots Ted Williams and Jerry Coleman, who left the game to serve in Korea. However, Greason's war stayed closer to home this time.

Reflecting on his second tour of duty at Camp Lejeune, in an interview with The Oklahoman in 2012, Greason said he had a good camp commander, who said, 'That's a no-win war. You stay here. I'm going to have a baseball team.'"

During the Korean War, Camp Lejeune became a high-profile baseball hub for major and minor league talent who boosted morale. The Lejeune Leathernecks bested Fort Bragg, Cherry Point and Fort Jackson in America's favorite pastime. Greason certainly delivered on the mound, winning all but one game, and even beating a team with Brooklyn Dodgers ace and future Hall of Famer Don Newcombe.

A barrier-breaking debut
After eight years in the Corps, Greason faced difficulties with team owners, reluctant to sign players who might get called back to duty.

On July 23, 1952, the pitcher once again wrote a letter to his superior officer with the 6th Marine Corps Reserve District, requesting acceptance of his resignation from the reserves.

In loopy cursive handwriting slanting to the left, Greason wrote, "I served proudly with the Corps. and would be glad to serve again if another need should arise, but I do not wish to make a career of it. As we say, once a Marine, always a Marine, therefore, there is no other outfit I would care to serve in if there was another war."

The Marines released Greason on July 25, 1952. Just three days later the rookie broke the color barrier in professional sports as the first Black player for the Oklahoma City Indians of the Double-A Texas League.

Continued on next page

The Marines cheered on their pitcher when he landed on the biggest stage of all, making history as the St. Louis Cardinals' first Black pitcher in 1954.

There were 35,000 people in the stands at Wrigley Field on Memorial Day when the 29-year-old Marine pitched against the Chicago Cubs — the first game of a doubleheader. Greason could whip a wicked fastball. He could paint the corners of the strike zone but gave up a few runs in three innings, including Ernie Banks' homer smashed onto the back row of the left field bleachers. The Cardinals lost the rain-shortened game, 14-4.

After finishing out his career with Cardinals farm teams and playing ball in Puerto Rico with Roberto Clemente, the first Latin American player enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, Greason retired in 1959.

Greason and his wife Willie settled in Birmingham, where he drove a delivery truck for Pizitz Department Store and joined the 16th Street Baptist Church. On Sunday, Sept. 15, 1963, however, the Greasons weren't in their usual spots in the church. As they headed to a baseball game in Tuscaloosa, they heard the distant "boom" of an explosion that killed four innocent young girls at their church.

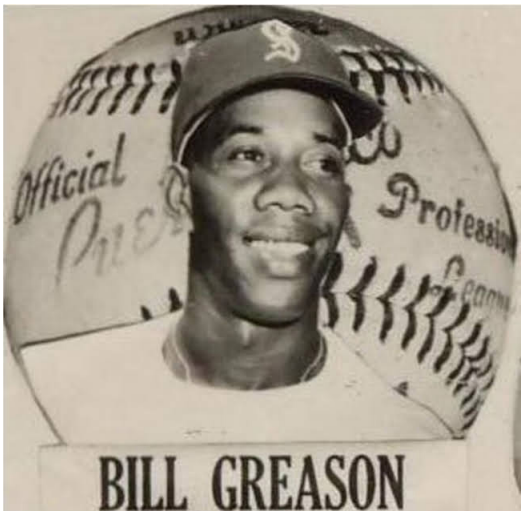
That infamous Baptist Street Bombing signaled a spiritual turning point for the budding minister, who went on to receive a doctoral degree in divinity.

Did I help someone?
Whether holding a bayonet, a baseball or a Bible, Greason maintains the same quality — that of a consummate team player.

"I've been through a lot of stuff. I know nobody, but God brought me out," he told the author in 2021. "No matter what happens in the world, nothing is impossible with God."

Today Greason is a Veteran Ambassador for Heart and Armor, serving as a role model for veterans transitioning from difficult military service to civilian life.

"Reverend Greason has an astounding resume of achievement and citizenship. But his most inspiring qualities are his most subtle — humor and humility, said Choucroun. "Whatever uniform he wears — military, baseball or clergy — he plays for the team, not for himself. His personal warmth and longevity are indomitable. But these qualities are real and, when viewed up close, massively inspiring."



LOS ANGELES AMERICAN LEGION COUNTY COUNCIL

17 18 24 19 20 23

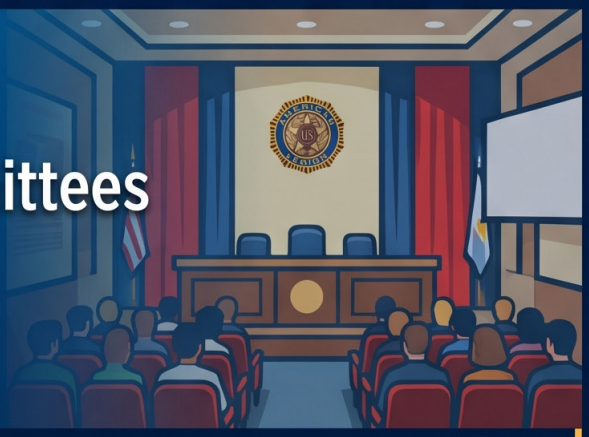
GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

DINNER: 6:00 PM **MEETING: 7:00 PM**

MEETING AGENDA

- Commissions & Committees Assignments
- Annual Budget



LOCATION

Hawthorne American Legion Post 314
14124 S Prairie Ave
Hawthorne, CA 90250

310 675 1313



THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

4TH AREA

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA VICE COMMANDER

David Fuller

invites you to the 4th Area Caucus

CAUCUS MEETING

ALL POSTS AND UNITS WELCOME

DATE: Saturday, October 3, 2026

9:00 AM - PCC Meeting
10:00 AM - Caucus General Meeting

LOCATION: Norwalk Post 359 - 11986 Front St., Norwalk, CA 90650

Lunch Available After the Meeting

AGENDA HIGHLIGHT

SPECIAL TRAINING

Commander's Responsibilities

During PCC Meeting - 9:00 AM

For information contact David Fuller at: fullerdave22@gmail.com

For God and Country - American Legion Post 578

Veterans serving Veterans since 1919

THE AMERICAN LEGION

"Stand Fast Swing Anvil"

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

The Flash

DEADLINE

25TH OF MONTH

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

FLASH EDITOR WANTED

Looking for a volunteer to help get the district word out to the membership

About This Newsletter

The District 19 Council of the American Legion, Department of California, is a 503(c)(19) nonprofit veterans organization registered with the IRS and the State of California. District 19 publishes this edition for all registered members at no charge.

Email: karl.wilvert@yahoo.com
EditorinChief: 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

9/9/2026 – District 19 General Membership meeting at South Bay Post 184 at 19:00. Dinner at 6pm

10/3/2026 - Area 4 Caucus at Norwalk Post 359. PCC @ 9am. Caucus at 10am. Lunch after the meeting.

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			

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Post 341	Leland A Cupp	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
4900 Durfee Ave, Pico Rivera, CA 90660 (562) 641-9043			
Post 352	Gilbert Lindsay		District 19 (4)
PO Box 11171, Carson, CA 90749 (720) 840-5578			
Post 359	Norwalk	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
11986 Front St, Norwalk, CA 90650 (562) 474-1977			
Post 411	Rivera	(ALA)	District 19 (4)
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)
7550 Eastern Ave, Bell Garden, CA 90201 (562) 927-6116			
Post 496	Lakewood	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
5938 E Parkcrest St, Long Beach, CA 90808 (562) 420-1014			
Post 804	Eugene A Obregon	(SAL) (ALR)	District 19 (4)
4615 E Cesar E Chavez Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90022 (714) 360-9268			
Post 833	Lincoln Village	(SAL) (ALA)	District 19 (4)
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 1012, 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 2326, 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 warweary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential non-partisan and veteran nonprofit 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/ . 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 8,000squarefoot 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 includes offices for the Department Commander and the Department Adjutant, meeting rooms, record storage, and offices for our administration and support staff.