



EARL GRAHAM POST 159

BRYAN, TEXAS

# THE LEGIONNAIRE

For God and Country - Since 1920

## Commander's Comments

Fellow Legionnaires,

As we approach the month of April there are a number of opportunities to be an active part of the workings of the American Legion, 2nd Division, 6th District and of course Earl Graham Post 159. On April 2nd will be our regular General Membership meeting preceded by Happy Hour followed by our evening meal and General Membership meeting. It is my request that you come and join us at 6:00 pm. On April 6th we will host the 6th District Convention at the Post beginning at 8:00 am. As a member of our post we ask you to plan to attend. We will also host the 2nd Division in May but this will be covered more in next month's newsletter.

Coming in April we have the opportunity to visit the facilities of Parsons Mounted Cavalry in College Station. At this point we are attempting to work with other veteran organizations to establish the best date for all concerned. It is my hope that all members of veteran organizations will be able to join with Earl Graham Post 159 to experience the facility and esteemed Parsons Mounted Cavalry.

As always I look forward to seeing/meeting you all in the coming days. We are grateful for your service to our nation, grateful for your dedication to Earl Graham Post 159 both now and into the future.

Gary M. Banta, Commander

## Membership JOIN OR RENEW

Contact the Adjutant  
adjutant@alegion159.org

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE



**MYLEGION.ORG**



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[\(979\)778-1936](tel:(979)778-1936)



[BRAZOSLEGION159](https://www.facebook.com/BRAZOSLEGION159)

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# ≡Welcome≡

## New Members

Gilberto Arguellez - USMC  
Chris N Barnes - USN  
Stephanie L Cosseron - USA  
Hughey J Eakes - USAF  
Charles I Ford - USA  
David C Hamil - USMC  
Thomas Herdman - USN  
Dwight Hunt - USA  
Earle R Johnson - USAF

Jeremy R Lawson - USA  
Edward R McDonald - USA  
Kevin M Moore - USA  
Kale K Murray - USA  
Cesar Rodriguez - USMC  
Rudolph W Schultz - USA  
James C Smith - USN  
Kenneth C Williamson - USN



## 6<sup>th</sup> District Convention

Post 159 is hosting the 6th District Convention on April 4<sup>th</sup> and it's our time to shine! We need volunteers for "spruce-up" tasks, organization, and hospitality to ensure our post looks its best for visiting Legionnaires. Whether you can give an hour or an afternoon, your help ensures we represent our community with excellence. Let's show the district what a premier post looks like—**sign up today!**

**Free Event and Meal  
brought to you by**

**TAMU ASSIST Organization**  
(A freshman student service group)

**Date:** April 18, 2026

**Time:** 4:30PM - 7:00PM

**Location:** Villa West Park  
Outdoor Pavilion  
2050 W Villa Maria Rd  
Bryan, TX 77803

**Cost:** Free and Open to All Veterans





## Administrative Notes

As we remember and honor our fellow Legion members who have passed, we are bringing back the Post Eternal section in our newsletter. Those recognized in this edition are based on Honor Guard records starting July 1, 2025.

Wes Wynn  
Acting Adjutant

## Mobile Vet Center - 2026 Rural Tour

Mobile Vet Center to Provide Critical Resources for Local Veterans at Post 159

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> the Austin Mobile Vet Center will be making a special stop at American Legion Post 159 to provide confidential counseling and benefits assistance to our local veteran community.

**Date:** April 2, 2026

**Time:** 8:00AM - 10:00AM  
and 5:00PM - 9:00PM

**Location:** 101 Waco St, Bryan TX

**Cost:** Free and Open to All Veterans

## NEW SERVICE OFFICER

JOSÉ NAVA (979) 219-7227

We are pleased to announce that our Post now has a new Service Officer ready to assist you. Don't navigate the system alone—reach out today to schedule a time to talk.



## The Big Event

March 21, 2026 - Thank you to the Aggies who helped spruce up the front of Earl Graham Post 159.

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### April 2 - Coffee & Donuts

8 - 10AM - Representative from Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston will be available to answer general VA questions.

### April 2 - Membership Meeting

5:30PM - Legion Social  
6:30PM - Membership Dinner  
Menu ~ Enchiladas, Beans & Rice  
{Bring Side Dish or Dessert to share}  
7:30PM Membership Meeting

### April 2 - Mobile Vet Center

Mental health and benefits  
8:00AM - 10:00AM and 5:00PM - 9:00PM

### April 4 - 6<sup>th</sup> District Convention

Volunteers needed all day.

### April 11 - Manage Your Crazy Self

11am to 2pm - Randy Guttenberger presents practical tools for understanding stress, communication and decision-making

### April 25 - Family Day

10:00AM - 2:00PM Volunteers needed.

## A TIME FOR VIGILANCE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

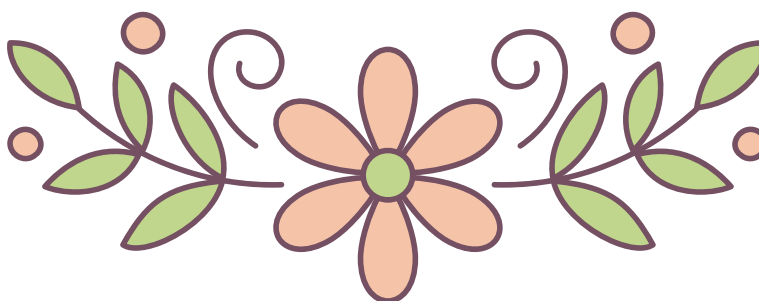
As spring embraces our nation, we find ourselves in a time of war, with our brave men and women in uniform serving in harm's way. This period calls upon us, much like generations before us, to actively uphold and strengthen our communities, our state, and our nation. It's crucial that we remain vigilant and well-informed about the current global geopolitical landscape, as well as developments within our local community. The American Legion's national organization is continuously monitoring these situations, advocating fiercely, and lobbying for essential legislative actions to support our service members and veterans. Your membership is absolutely vital to this process; it forms a reliable and substantial voting bloc that empowers our national officers to effectively leverage influence and engage with elected officials on critical issues.

### Upcoming Events & Opportunities:

- **Coffee and Donuts with Austin Mobile Vet Center:** On **April 2nd**, the Austin Mobile Vet Center will be making a special visit to American Legion Post 159. They will be offering confidential counseling services and comprehensive benefits assistance to all local veterans. This is a fantastic opportunity for our veteran community to access vital support close to home.

- **6th District Convention at Post 159:** Immediately following our monthly membership meeting on **April 4th**, we will proudly host the 6th District Convention. This is a prime opportunity to showcase our post and the dedication of our membership to fellow legionnaires and their families from across the state. I'm sure many of you have noticed the impressive display upgrades that our Historian, Frank Opitz, and George Weber have accomplished over the past several months. Please let me know if you would like to participate in welcoming our guests; it's a wonderful way to connect with the broader Legion family.
- **American Legion Family Day:** Mark your calendars for **April 25th**! This will be our inaugural annual American Legion Family Day, a brand-new event designed to bring everyone together. We're planning a fun-filled day featuring games, informative booths, a bounce house for the kids, and a delicious bake sale. To keep everyone energized, we'll be serving hot dogs, chips, and a refreshing drink. We'd love for you to get involved and help make this first-ever Family Day a huge success – please reach out if you'd like to participate or volunteer!

James "Jimbo" Pfeffer, 1VC



# AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY *Day!*

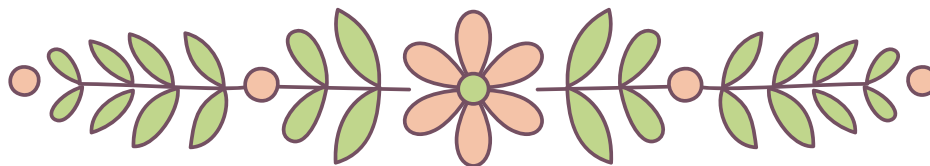
★ APRIL 25 | 10 AM - 2 PM ★

As we look to celebrate 250 years as a nation, we want to bring back patriotism. The American Legion Family Day is a day where the Legion Family can show the community who we are, what we do, and why we do it. This is our opportunity to reach out into the community and remind them of the great country we live in and to remember the freedoms we have today is because of the sacrifices made by those who served in the military. This is the first year for this event and it will take place on the side yard from 10 – 2 on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. The event is free. Think of it as a family picnic. The Legion is serving hot dogs, chips, and water. The Auxiliary rented a Bounce House for the kids. The Sheriff's office is sending a Patrol car and the Fire Department will have a truck along with some swag. Patriot Paws will be bringing some of the dogs. Junior Shooting Program representatives will be in attendance. The Auxiliary will have a poppy table with goodies for the kids. There will be several carnival type games for the kids and cornhole and Jenga for the adults. A Bake Sale will also be held to help fund the event.

We need your help. I am asking all who can help to give 2 hours of your time that Saturday. Whether it is helping with set up, clean up, supervising the games and bounce house, sitting at the various information booths promoting our programs and membership, etc. If you can't make it, other opportunities to volunteer would be to bake something for the Bake Sale, donate candy and/or cash for prizes for the games. We also need shade canopies. This event is at the end of April. If the weather cooperates it probably will be hot.

If you have a shade tent we could borrow, please contact Licia Kim (979-676-2227). We need about 8 – 10.





## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### The Spiritual Meaning of April: A Month of Renewal & Rebirth

April, the fourth month of the year, occupies a unique position in the spiritual landscape of various cultures and traditions. As nature stirs from its winter rest, April embodies the essence of rebirth, renewal, and the flourishing of new life.

Throughout history, many ancient and current civilizations held vibrant festivals during this month, paying tribute to the divine powers that they believe shape the rhythms of nature. They believed April embodies a sense of hope, growth, and the blossoming of new beginnings following a time of reflection.

When I walk in my yard at this time of year and thank our God for the beautiful trees, grass, flowers, and plants, it all looks fresh and new like a newborn

baby. Our mighty and loving God also makes life fresh and new for us each day. Lamentations 3:22-23 states: "His compassion never ends. It is only God's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his lovingkindness begins afresh each day."

Develop a spirit of gratitude toward our God each day for the gift of life and prosperity He has given us. He loves us and will always be with us. He hears our prayers and always does what is best for us.

It is my prayer.

Virgil "Goofy" Marko  
Chaplain, Post 159



## Post Eternal

Obie D Harrison - USMC  
 Jose P Hernandez - USA  
 Frank J Kocman Jr - USA  
 Robert L Lytton - USA  
 Charles E Neelley - USAF  
 Charles J Opersteny - USAF  
 Lawrence T Polzer - USA  
 Douglas L Riley - USN  
 Leon R Sinclair - USA



### **New 2026 Tax Rules: Your Donations to Post 159 Go Further!**

As we settle into 2026, there is some great news for those who support Earl Graham Post 159. The recently passed One Big Beautiful Bill Act has introduced a new "Universal Deduction" that benefits almost everyone.

#### **What does this mean for you?**

- **No Itemizing Required:** Even if you take the standard deduction, you can now deduct up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 for married couples) in cash donations to qualified organizations like the American Legion. This is a direct "above-the-line" deduction, meaning it reduces your taxable income regardless of how you file.
- **Support Local Veterans:** Your contributions directly fund our Honor Guard, local veteran assistance programs, and youth initiatives like the Junior Shooting Sports program.

The Bottom Line: Whether it's \$10 or \$1,000, the IRS is finally making it easier for the average American to get a tax break for doing good.

*Disclaimer: We aren't tax pros, so please check with your CPA to see how these new 2026 rules apply to your specific situation!*

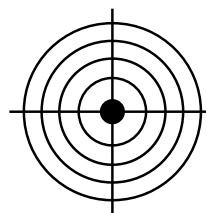
### **Invest in the Future of Our Youth – JSSP Volunteers Needed!**

Our Junior Shooting Sports Program (JSSP) is growing, and we need your help to keep it hitting the mark! We are currently looking for volunteers to serve as Coaches and Range Officials for the upcoming season.

Think you need to be an expert marksman? Think again. We aren't looking for Olympic shooters; we're looking for dedicated mentors who are willing to assist our youth in learning discipline, safety, and sportsmanship. If you are willing to learn and enjoy working with a great group of kids, we want you on the range with us.

No prior marksmanship experience is required—just a willingness to help!

Interested? Please contact Garrett Martin at [JSSP@alegion159.org](mailto:JSSP@alegion159.org) or join us at our next meeting to learn more.



## THE TRADITION IN YOUR POCKET: A HISTORY OF MILITARY CHALLENGE COINS

AND THERE WE WERE SERIES  
BY FRANK OPITZ, HISTORIAN



### Our Special Coin (Limited Edition)

250-Year Coin: These are still available for \$15.00 each—just ask at our Emblem Sales. These are available until supplies are gone.

We are actively recruiting new members as soon as we become aware of their presence in our community. God is guiding us to these individuals, and we are gathering them in as quickly as possible to ensure they are covered by our cloak of family, protecting them from PTSD by sharing our experience and management of situations too unbelievable to imagine.

### Commemorating the 250th Birthday of the United States

We have designed and made available to our members a challenge coin for the 250th Birthday of the United States in homage to all of those who have served. To the left and right are the front and back designs for our coin. We also received National's permission to use the American Legion Logo.

### The Tradition of the "Coin Check"

Today, a popular tradition at unit social functions, formal events, and in local bars is the "coin check." This tradition dates back to the Vietnam War and the bars run by military service members at forward operating bases (FOB) and combat outposts (COB). As

the story goes, military service members were required to present enemy bullets or their unit challenge coin to gain entrance into the bar.

The tradition continues today. When someone yells out "coin check" and slaps their coin onto the bar, all military members—active duty and veterans—must respond in kind by placing their own coin on the bar. The last one to present their coin, or the one who is shamefully without theirs, must buy a round of drinks for the group.

Oftentimes, there are strong verbal arguments regarding whose coin is more senior. Generally, the older the coin, the more senior it is. However, a coin representing a higher rank (based on the rank of the presenter) usually wins out in the end.

### Building Community

The coin check is a great icebreaker that gets folks talking about their personal experiences. It brings out the pride many of our service members feel regarding their service during a specific era, branch, or mission. It starts the stories flowing at the bar that last well into the late evening and early morning hours.

# Explaining the Preamble to the American Legion, Part 9

## TO COMBAT THE AUTOCRACY OF BOTH THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES.

We are in our 9th part of Explaining the Preamble to the American Legion. When our founders gathered in 1919 to draft the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution, the world was in a state of chaos. The "Great War" had ended, empires had crumbled and radical new ideologies were attacking Democracy. It was against this backdrop of global instability that they penned a commitment that remains one of our most profound charges: "To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses."

At first glance, these terms might feel old-fashioned. However, this phrase is the constitutional anchor of our Republic. It is a declaration that the Legion stands for a balanced Republic—one governed by the rule of law rather than the whims of any single group.

The "autocracy of the classes" refers to a society where a small, elite minority holds all the cards. Whether defined by wealth, social status, or political connection, this form of autocracy occurs when the levers of government are used to serve the few at the expense of the many.

As veterans, we took an oath to the Constitution, not to a person or a social tier. Our commitment to combatting this type of autocracy means ensuring that every citizen, regardless of their background, bank account, or color has an equal voice and equal protection under the law.

Conversely, the "autocracy of the masses" is often described as "mob rule." It occurs when a temporary majority—fueled by passion or prejudice—disregards the law to trample on the rights of others. Both Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill described this as "tyranny of the majority." Our founders recognized that a crowd can be just as tyrannical as a king if it is not restrained by a framework of justice.

We combat this autocracy by being the "cool heads" in our communities—promoting civil discourse and upholding the rights of the individual against the fervor of the crowd.

Why does this matter to the members of Post 159 today? Because we live in an increasingly polarized time, where it often feels like society is being pulled toward these two extremes. As Legionnaires, we serve as the constitutional anchor in our community. Our service didn't end when we took off the uniform; we continue that mission by guarding the American middle ground. By standing our ground in the center and rejecting the pull of extremism, we protect the very stability and freedom that our brothers and sisters in arms fought to secure. Keeping our country on this steady, just course is the greatest tribute we can offer to their sacrifice.

Chuck Wilson - PR Officer



## EARL GRAHAM POST 159

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THURSDAY 0900-1000



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JOHN HINCE  
RALF HAUSER  
SHAWN JARNIGAN  
DAVID PEARCE  
TERRANCE NUNN  
DAVID MARION  
JOHN OGDEN  
PETE DIBELLO  
JACK MOORE  
CHUCK WILSON

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**VICE CHAIRMAN** – GARY KISTNER  
  
ROBERT MCCLYMOND  
TOM SMITH  
GEORGE WEBER  
LARRY FIKES (EMERITUS)

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**TREASURER** – LICIA KIM  
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**CHAPLAIN** – BEA HAUSER  
**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS** – SHARRON ROSEDAHL

### MEMBERSHIP-AT-LARGE

MARY ANN MCCLOUD  
JOANNA DAVIS  
NANCY REICHART

### SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

OFFICE: (979) 778-1936  
SQUADRON COMMANDER: TBD