



EARL GRAHAM POST 159

BRYAN, TEXAS

THE LEGIONNAIRE

For God and Country - Since 1920

Commander's Comments

Fellow Legionnaires

As we move to May we have many opportunities for continued service at Earl Graham Post 159. To begin with we have Coffee and donuts each and every Thursday beginning at 8:00 am. Our General Membership Meeting will be May the 7th kicking off with our social hour beginning at 5:30 followed by our meal together at 6:30. Our General Membership Meeting will begin at or shortly before 7:30. Several very important items are to be discussed. Those will be the proposed 2025-26 budget proposal and the 2025-26 Nominations Committee report. It is very important for each of you to attend, so that we can not only get to know each other better but also foster the fraternity we share as Veterans of our Armed Forces in service to our Nation.

May 15th we will host the 2026 Spring Division Convention. This is going to be a three day and its schedule is included in this month's newsletter. Here again we are hosting and it is vital that our membership be here to assist in any and all ways to make this a welcoming place to the Delegates coming from the various Districts across the 2nd Division.

Finally May 1st Earl Graham Post 159 will become the proud recipient of an M47 Patton Main Battle Tank. We have already poured a concrete pad and prepared to receive this gift from Ft Hood. A great number of our members have worked very hard to make this happen. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

Regards,
For God and Country
Gary M. Banta, Commander



**M47 PATTON TANK -
LEGACY PRESERVATION
SCAN TO DONATE**



Follow Us on Facebook
For additional updates



ALEGION159.ORG



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



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

Membership
JOIN OR RENEW

Contact the Adjutant
adjutant@alegion159.org

Dignity®
MEMORIAL

Thank you!

to our newsletter sponsor

Dignity Memorial Funeral Home
Diana Mills, Pre-Planning
(979) 575-4301



Military Family Engagement Ministry Chili Cook Off

May 2, 2026
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
First Baptist Church Bryan
Fellowship Hall

One of the HOTTEST events of the year! Whether you want to compete & eat . . . Or just want to eat you're bound to have A lot of FUN! We will also provide Toppings, Hot Dogs, salad and dessert. This is a family event. Childcare is not provided. We will have a Cornhole Tournament, Bounce Houses, and other games for kids and adults with prizes.



Post Eternal

Marvin Emshoff - Army Air Corp
Doyle Moore - U.S. Air Force



**Boyd Ready Mix
Donating Concrete**

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

May 7 - Membership Meeting

5:30PM - Legion Social
6:30PM - Membership Dinner
Menu ~ Chicken Fried Steak,
Mashed Potatoes, Brown Gravy,
Baked Beans and Rolls.
{Bring Side Dish or Dessert to share}
7:30PM Membership Meeting

May 15 & 16 - 2nd Division Convention

Volunteers needed all day.

May 18 - Profit Share Texas Roadhouse

3:00PM - 10:00PM

To ensure our Post receives credit for your meal, simply present the flyer (digital or printed) to be scanned, or just mention that you are there to support American Legion Post 159 - it's that easy!

May 25 - Memorial Day Service

11am - Brazos County Joint Memorial
Day Service hosted by
VFW Post #4692
794 N Harvey Mitchell Pkwy
Bryan, TX 77807

1VC UPDATE: SPRING/SUMMER 2026 A SEASON OF GROWTH

Summer is fast approaching, and I want to thank everyone for pitching in to make our fast-paced schedule a success. We are steadily growing our membership and increasing our presence within the community.

6th District Convention Success

Our district convention was a resounding success! As one of the largest posts in the state, we truly stood out. Our engaged members were always ready to advise and assist guests, representing our post with pride.

Honoring Excellence in Our Youth

We continue our commitment to developing the six core qualities of citizenship: Courage, Patriotism, Honor, Scholarship, Leadership, and Service.

- Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets (April 11): Legionnaire Shawn Jarnagen and I presented 16 American Legion awards.
 - Scholastic Excellence (8 awards): Recognizing superior academic performance and leadership.
 - Military Excellence (8 awards): Honoring dependability, character, and discipline.
- Bryan High School (April 13): Jack Moore and I presented a Military Excellence award and a Scholastic Excellence Award to AFJROTC students, continuing a tradition of character-building that the American Legion began in 1926.



**April 20 2026 - Texas Fleet Week
USS Kearsarge (LHD-3)**

Upcoming: 2nd Division Convention (May 16-17)

We are excited to welcome our brothers and sisters from across the state! This is a vital opportunity to showcase our post, elect officers, and pass resolutions that impact our state and nation. I encourage everyone to volunteer and participate to help make this our best convention yet.

Texas Fleet Week Highlights

On April 20, thanks to sponsorship from Comcast, 20 of our Legionnaires traveled to Houston for the state's inaugural Fleet Week. The group toured USS Kearsarge LHD-3, viewed cutting-edge equipment, and personally thanked active-duty Sailors and Marines for their service.

Strengthening Our Fundraising

We have established a new fundraising committee led by Legionnaire Brad Cunningham. His leadership and management expertise will be invaluable as we grow.

Call for Ideas: We are currently accepting new fundraising proposals. Please submit your ideas to me for review.

ADJUTANT NOTES

Thank you for placing your trust in me as your new Adjutant. I am committed to timeliness, efficiency in membership processing, and supporting the overall operations of Post 159.

We have many members with missing or inaccurate information in our records, including contact details, date of birth, service era, and branch of service. The most efficient way to update this information is through your online MyLegion account. If you are able, please log in at mylegion.org and review or update any missing or incorrect information.

If you prefer, I would be happy to assist by updating your information on your behalf. Please reach out.

Should you need any assistance, please feel free to contact me at adjutant@alegion159.org or by phone at (979) 422-5309. I look forward to serving as your Adjutant.

Wes Wynn



Profit Share Night

May 18 - 3 to 10 PM

Supporting the Post is now easier than ever! You don't need to worry about bringing a physical flyer—simply mention that you are there to support American Legion Post 159 for us to receive credit.

- Bonus: Even though you don't need the flyer to help us, you should still stop by the Post! While supplies last, we have free appetizer coupons available for those who drop in to see us in person.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER: MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day stands as one of the most solemn observances in the United States—a day set aside for remembrance. It honors the men and women of the armed forces who gave their lives in service to their country, individuals who stepped forward in moments of uncertainty and did not return home. We stand as comrades bound by service, sacrifice, and an enduring commitment to remember those who never came home.

Memorial Day is a sacred trust. Its origins, rooted in the aftermath of the American Civil War, remind us that from the earliest days of our nation's trials, Americans have paused to honor their fallen. What began as DECORATION DAY—placing flowers on the graves of the dead—has become a solemn national tribute to all who gave their lives in defense of freedom.

As Legionnaires, this day carries even deeper meaning. We understand the weight of the uniform, the bond of those who serve, and the cost of the oath we swore. We have walked alongside those who answered the call, and we carry their memory with us. Today, we honor not only their sacrifice, but their courage, their duty, and their unwavering love of country.

Across this nation, from small hometown cemeteries to the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, flags are placed, names are spoken, and silence is

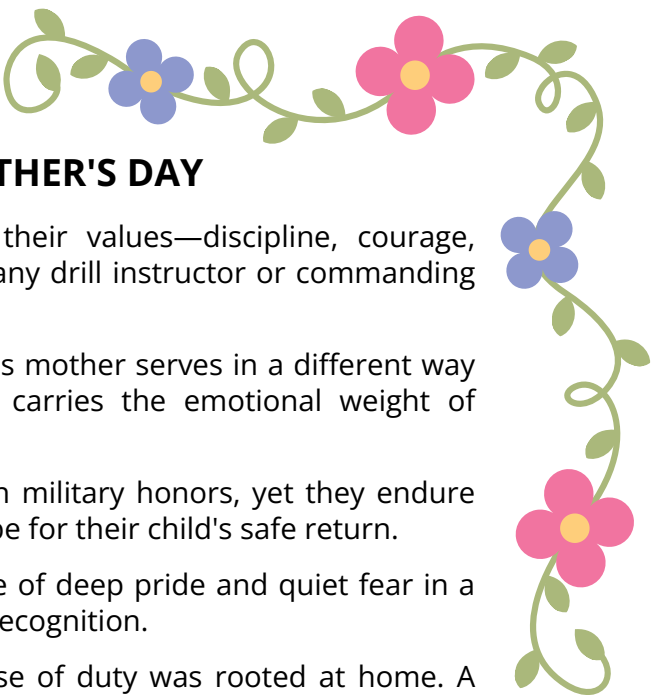
observed. Each marker represents a story a life lived with purpose, cut short in service to something greater than self. Let us also remember that Memorial Day is not about celebration, but about reflection. It is about ensuring that the sacrifices made are never forgotten, and that the freedoms we enjoy are never taken for granted. It is our duty, as veterans and as members of this great organization, to pass this understanding on to future generations.

At 3:00 p.m., during the NATIONAL MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE, I ask each of you to pause. Reflect on those you served with, those you lost, and those whose names you may never know—but whose sacrifices have shaped our nation. Today, we stand in their honor. We carry forward their legacy. And we reaffirm our promise: that they will never be forgotten. May we live lives worthy of their sacrifice.

Thank you, Almighty God, for these souls who gave their lives for our country's freedom—May they rest in your divine peace.

Virgil (Goofy) Marko
Chaplain, Post 159 American Legion





CHAPLAIN'S CORNER: MOTHER'S DAY

The first influence Many service members trace their values—discipline, courage, respect, and sacrifice—back to their mothers. Before any drill instructor or commanding officer, there was a mother teaching right from wrong.

Strength behind the uniform When a man serves, his mother serves in a different way—through worry, pride, prayer, and resilience. She carries the emotional weight of deployment, danger, and distance.

Silent sacrifice Mothers often don't get recognized in military honors, yet they endure sleepless nights, missed holidays, and the constant hope for their child's safe return.

Pride and pain intertwined There's a unique mixture of deep pride and quiet fear in a mother whose son has served. That balance deserves recognition.

Legacy and patriotism Many veterans say their sense of duty was rooted at home. A mother's teachings often plant the seeds of service to country.

On Mother's Day, we pause to honor the women who shaped the men and women who have worn our nation's uniform. Long before a service member took an oath, there was a mother instilling values of integrity, perseverance, and courage.

For every man who has served, there is often a mother who stood quietly in the background—supporting, encouraging, and praying. She carried a different kind of burden: the weight of distance, the fear of the unknown, and the strength to let her child answer a call greater than themselves.

A mother's sacrifice is rarely measured in medals or recognized in ceremonies, yet it is woven into every act of service. Her influence lives in the character of the soldier, the discipline of the Marine, the honor of the sailor, and the bravery of the airman.

This Mother's Day, we honor not only motherhood, but the profound role mothers play in the lives of those who serve. Behind every uniform is a story—and in many of those stories, a mother's love is the first and most enduring.

On this day, we come together with grateful hearts to honor and remember the gift of mothers. We thank you Lord for their love, their guidance, and the strength they have given to generations.

In your holy name we pray, Amen.

Virgil (Goofy) Marko
Chaplain Post 159 American Legion



Happy Mother's Day

Memorial Day Service

REMEMBER AND HONOR

May 25th at 11am

Join us to celebrate Memorial Day as we honor the sacrifices of those who gave all.

We're proud to partner with our fellow veteran service orgs. in Brazos County to reflect on the sacrifices made for our freedom and celebrate the spirit of unity that defines our nation. Honor guard, Wreath Laying Ceremony, and light lunch will be provided.

Featured organizations:

VFW Post #4692 - Brazos County

VFW Post # 12221 - College Station

American Legion Post 159 - Bryan

American Legion Post 1938 - College Station

Marine Corps League Detachment 1391 - Brazos Valley

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 937

Hosted by VFW Post 4692

794 N Harvey Mitchell Pkwy, Bryan, TX 77807

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

AND THERE WE WERE SERIES
BY FRANK OPITZ, HISTORIAN



Special Operations in the Vietnam War

U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began with clandestine missions conducted by special operations forces and the CIA. Because these operations were secret, many Soldiers could not receive official Army medals. To honor their service, the leadership of **1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)** designed a custom challenge coin.

The front featured the unit name, a combat-ready sword, and an eagle; the reverse bore the motto *De Oppresso Liber*, a Green Beret, and a space to engrave a unique number. By maintaining a secret registry of these coins, the command could formally recognize heroics that the Army couldn't openly acknowledge. This "shadowy" origin in the jungles of Southeast Asia has since become a cornerstone of military challenge coin lore.

Today, 1st Group retains that original design, continuing its missions across Asia.



Our Tradition Today

At **Earl Graham American Legion Post #159**, we carry this tradition forward. Just as we are challenged by District, State, and National levels to excel each year, we use the challenge coin to foster excellence and unit pride. We are proud to be all-inclusive, honoring members from:

- Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, & Space Force
- National Guard (Army & Air)
- Public Health Service (CC-USPHS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Explaining the Preamble to the American Legion, Part 9

To Make Right the Master of Might

When we recite the Preamble, the phrase "To make right the master of might" serves as our organizational moral compass. Historically, the American Legion was born from the aftermath of a global conflict where dictators believed that sheer force—their "might"—gave them the authority to decide what was "right." Our founders, having seen the devastation of that mindset firsthand, wanted to ensure that the Legion stood for what was right. We believe that moral principles, justice, and the rule of law must always come first, while physical or political power should only be used to protect those ideals. For the veteran, "Right" is the anchor that keeps our nation's strength moored to its purpose.

As Veterans, this phrase is a direct reflection of the choice we made to stand apart. Today, less than one percent of Americans are currently serving, and only about seven percent of the adult population can claim the title of Veteran. This means that a very small few of us chose to stand up and defend the other 90-plus percent of our fellow citizens who will never know the weight of the uniform. We took a sacred oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. We made the conscious decision to leave our families and our homes behind to protect the families and homes of people we will never meet. This is the ultimate example of "Right over Might"

using our strength not for personal gain, but as a selfless shield for our families, our friends, and our freedom. We didn't fight for what was in front of us; we fought for the peace of everything we left behind us. That choice is our anchor.

As Americans, this commitment is the very essence of our democracy. We advocate for a strong national defense because we know that "Right" requires a shield. We want to achieve a situation where our ideals are backed by enough strength that no bully or dictator can ever threaten us or our homes. By designating right over might, we pledge to preserve a country where the law is king, where our families are safe, and where the liberties of every citizen are respected. That commitment is our anchor.

Our service did not end when we hung up the uniform; it simply changed shape. Many of us are all still serving in one capacity or another, and that means looking out for the veteran sitting next to you who may be fighting a silent battle. Today, "making right the master of might" could mean being the strength for a brother or sister-in-arms who is struggling. If you know a fellow veteran burdened by isolation or hardship, I challenge you to be their "might." Reach out, check-in, and remind them that we still stand together. There is no higher "right" than ensuring that the men and women who defended our freedom are never left to struggle alone. And our service to our brothers and sisters, is also our anchor!

Written by Chuck Wilson



EARL GRAHAM POST 159

MAIL: P.O. BOX 326 BRYAN, TX 77806
PHYSICAL: 101 WACO ST. BRYAN, TX 77803
OFFICE: (979) 778-1936

OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAY 0900-1100
THURSDAY 0900-1000



AMERICAN LEGION POST OFFICERS

COMMANDER – GARY BANTA
COMMANDER@ALEGION159.ORG
(979) 218-0807
1ST VICE COMMANDER – JIMBO PFEFFER
1VC@ALEGION159.ORG
(979) 229-9227
2ND VICE COMMANDER – MARK WILLIAMS
2VC@ALEGION159.ORG
FINANCE OFFICER – ROGER SMITH
FINANCE@ALEGION159.ORG
ADJUTANT – WES WYNN
ADJUTANT@ALEGION159.ORG
(979) 422-5309
ASSISTANT ADJUTANT – GARRETT MARTIN
ADJUTANT@ALEGION159.ORG
HISTORIAN – FRANK OPITZ
HISTORIAN@ALEGION159.ORG
CHAPLAIN – VIRGIL MARKO
CHAPLAIN@ALEGION159.ORG
JUDGE ADVOCATE (JAG) – RANDY MICHEL
JA@ALEGION159.ORG
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS – ANDREW GAYER
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS@ALEGION159.ORG
SERVICE OFFICER – JOSÉ NAVA
SERVICE@ALEGION159.ORG

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – AT LARGE

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

TRUSTEES

CHAIRMAN – BRADY DRENNAN
BOTCHAIR@ALEGION159.ORG
(757) 650-7156
VICE CHAIRMAN – GARY KISTNER

ROBERT MCCLYMOND
TOM SMITH
GEORGE WEBER
LARRY FIKES (EMERITUS)

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT – JEANNE PRESTWOOD
BARJEANLO@GMAIL.COM
(979) 324-4024
VICE PRESIDENT – RUTH BOSQUEZ
JUANRUTH24@GMAIL.COM
SECRETARY – DIANA MILLS
TREASURER – LICIA KIM
LICIAKIM.ALATEXAS@GMAIL.COM
(979) 676-2227
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