



**American Legion**  
**Fallen Heroes Mandarin Post #372**  
**(904) 297-8344**  
**www.alpost372fl.org**



Joseph Maltese  
 Commander



Frank Nichols  
 Adjutant

29 June 2024

Greetings Legion Family:

Spring has been very busy for our post. Each part of our Legion Family has nominated and elected their new officers for the upcoming 2024-2025 fiscal year which begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. Thank you to all who stepped up and agreed to lead our Family through another year. Our Post received awards from National and Department for exceeding 103% of our membership goal this year.

Spring is also the time for our Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year awards. This year's ceremony was held on a Saturday afternoon at the Mandarin Masons' Lodge. For the second time in the past few years, our nominee for Fire-fighter of the Year for our post went on to be selected as the Department's Fire-fighter of the Year. He was invited to our Department Convention in Orlando to receive his award and speak to the entire state's Legionnaires. He received a standing ovation. Once again, Barry Litsky did an outstanding job with this awesome Legion program. Barry is our Post's Law-and- Order Chair, and is also the Law-and-Order Chair for the entire 5<sup>th</sup> District.

Our Legion Riders participated in the In-State Unity Ride that began in Pensacola and terminated in Clearwater at the In-State Rally. As usual, our Riders from Chapter 372 were well represented. Our Riders were able to present a check of more than \$4,000 to the State Riders Chairman at the rally benefiting the PROJECT: Vet Relief Suicide Prevention Initiative. Our Riders are busy planning their 9-11 Ride for September.

Our Sons of the Legion continue to work with veterans in the community; giving rides to veterans needing transportation to doctors, helping with yard work for disabled veterans, building fences, etc. The Sons completed their year by meeting and exceeding the Detachment membership goal and finishing among the best in the District.

Our Auxiliary has been collecting sneakers to sell to a refurbishing company to provide to low income community members. Additionally, the Auxiliary ran a successful Poppy campaign, giving out Poppies and collecting donations at our Mandarin Ace Hardware. They also completed their year exceeding 100% of their Department membership goal.

I especially want to thank all of your Executive Committee and officers for all of their work making our Post successful. This last year and a half, these folks have worked tirelessly with the building committees to work on and design our new post home. During this time, we were able to identify and purchase a property, have architectural drawings, engineering, soil testing, EPA permitting, wetland mitigation, and more completed. We showed up en masse to multiple city council meetings to have the zoning and land use modified for our purposes. This project has required a herculean effort by all involved. During this past fiscal year, our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-commander, Craig Bernat has been knee deep in all of it and has taken the lead in our building design and also created, along with Committee member Bob Sussan, a charitable foundation to help make it easier for corporations to donate to our post and all posts in Northeast Florida. In addition, he has again run a successful membership campaign to help meet our membership goals. He also Commanded our Post 372 Sons Squadron. You have selected him as your next Post Commander and I'm confident he is up to the job and will lead our post to another very successful year. Please join me in giving him your full support.

As our fiscal year closes, I am thankful for all the members and especially our Family Leaders for making 372 an active and friendly Post. It has been my great honor and a privilege to serve as your Post Commander these past 4 years. I wish to thank each and every one of our Legion Family members for the support you have given me. The installation of our 2024-2025 Legion Family Leaders will be on Saturday, 3 August 2024 at the Mandarin Mason's Lodge at 10:00AM. Please attend to show your support for all that stepped up to lead us in our next fiscal year. The Auxiliary will be providing baked goods for all.

I encourage all of our Family members to reach out to your organization's leadership to discover how you can help create another successful year for the 372 Family. Remember to visit [www.alpost372fl.org](http://www.alpost372fl.org) and check our calendar regularly to stay abreast of all events.

For God and Country,

*Joe*

Post #372 Legionnaire's General Meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 1900 hours, at the Williams Family YMCA at 10415 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL.