

American Legion Mandarin Post 372

“Fallen Heroes”

Mail: 11250-15 Old St. Augustine Rd-PMB138, Jacksonville, FL 32257

Meetings: 10415 San Jose Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32257

904-297-8344

www.alpost372fl.org

Facebook page: American Legion Post 372, Mandarin, FL



December 2024

Vol. 24 No. 12



Early Bird Dinner

Our Early Bird Dinner and Christmas Party will be held on December 7th at 6:00 PM at the Mandarin Moose Lodge 42 on Losco Road. Dinner is on the Post for anyone who renewed/transferred/joined by December 1st. Cost to all others and guests is \$10.

Membership News

2024/2025 Membership – We are nearing the end of 2024 and are starting to receive 2025 renewals! We are at 66.93%. Any questions, contact our membership officer at Info@alpost372fl.org. Welcome to our new members! If you have friends, relatives or neighbors who served and are not members, please encourage them to join. Email the Membership Officer for assistance or apply to Join our Post via a link to an online application on our Home page at www.alpost372fl.org.

If you have not renewed by now, you have been dropped from the membership rolls and your continuous years of service restarts.

Eligibility Changes – The July 2019 LEGION Act expands eligibility to all Veteran’s honorably discharged from December 7, 1941 to a future date to be determined by the Federal Government. All memberships now require us to verify your service with a DD-214.

Annual Membership Dues:

Legion - **\$50 (For 2025)**

Auxiliary - \$35

Auxiliary 17 & under - \$10

Legion Riders - \$15

SAL - \$35 (21 and over)

\$11 (under 21 and dual Legionnaires members)

Sons of The American Legion

Due to the holidays, next meeting is January 2025. We have a great Sons of the American Legion Program. If you are a son of a veteran who served, you qualify to join our SAL. We have 28 members towards our goal of 34 and are FIRST in the district! You can renew your dues at mylegion.org, or by mailing a check made out to ‘Sons of the American Legion Post 372’ to the mailing address above. Our next quarterly 50/50 raffle drawing will be January 31, 2025, then will go to every 6 months. Net proceeds will be used for programs and the building fund.

Information in the weekly blast. The most recent newsletter is available on our page on the website – come check it out!

Legion Riders

The current newsletter and minutes are posted on the website. The application to join is available from the Legion Riders page on the Post website Eligibility requirements to become a member are:

- Members must hold membership in, and be in good standing with, The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of The American Legion.
- Members must be legally registered motorcycle owners or be the legally registered owner's spouse within the state of registration.
- All operators must be properly licensed and insured per state laws.
- All members must obey motor-vehicle laws in the state in which they are operating a motorcycle or riding as a passenger.

Auxiliary News

Due to the holidays, next meeting is January 2025. The current Unit 372 Newsletter is on the Auxiliary page of the website. Please read for important information for upcoming events. Donate your used tennis shoes to be repurposed or recycled. If you are not already a member and qualify, please consider joining. The application can be found on our Auxiliary page on the Post’s website. Any questions, please contact us at auxunit372@alpost372fl.org.

New Non-Profit Foundation

Post 372 is forming a 501.c.3 non-profit organization that will be completely independent from Post 372 to allow us an easier path in securing grants, funding and donations. This foundation – Northeast Florida Fallen Heroes Foundation – is in the process of obtaining IRS approval for the foundation. This organization will reach several counties in the northeast portion of Florida. Updated information on the foundation’s status will be included in the weekly blast. The new website address is <http://www.neflfallenheroes.org/>. Feel free to share this site with anyone interested in donating who will need to donate to a 501.c.3 organization.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Post Officers</i></p> <p>Commander: Craig Bernat 1st Vice Commander: Dan Hemsall 2nd Vice Commander: Steve Sullivan Finance Officer: Paul Arambula Adjutant: Frank Nichols Chaplain: Mike Montonera Service Officers: Barry Litsky Judge Advocate: Bob Sussan Historian: Frank Nichols Sergeant-at-Arms: Daniel Taszarek</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Executive Committee</i></p> <p>Karen Tracy, Barry Litsky, Mark Shelton, Alan Painter</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>SAL Officers</i></p> <p>Commander: Charlie McFarland Adjutant: Vacant 1st Vice: Joe Streett 2nd Vice: Billy Decker Finance Officer: Paul Arambula Chaplain: E J Wojciak Historian: Vacant Sergeant-at-Arms: Blaine Demmons</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>American Legion Riders</i></p> <p>Director: Allane Strode Asst. Director: Billy Decker Treasurer: Sandra Shelton Chaplain: Joe Maltese Adjutant: Heidi Riddle Sergeant-at-Arms: Blaine Demmons Road Captain: Charlie McFarland Safety Officer: Tim Bailey Asst. Safety Officer: E J Wojciak Quartermaster: Mark Shelton</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Auxiliary Officers</i></p> <p>President: Daleana “Dee” McFarland Vice President: Bernadette Montonera Secretary: Lisa Doerler Treasurer: Patricia Madonna Chaplain: Esther Sills Historian: Caitlin Bailey Sergeant-at-Arms: Grace Arambula Membership: Reed Bailey</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Auxiliary Executive Committee</i></p> <p>Marilyn Painter, Judy Bernat, Robin Maltese, Reed Bailey</p>
---	--	---

WE HAVE A POST HOME

Our Post property on Old St. Augustine Road purchased in 2023 is located on the south side of Old St Augustine Road, across from Whitmore Oaks subdivision (east of Caron Drive). Our address is 13000 Old St. Augustine Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32258.



We are in FULL swing with permitting, ordering the building, fund raising and staffing our committees. Groundbreaking will be soon – stay tuned!!!

Our 10-set was finally approved by the COJ and we now have permits to proceed with land clearing and site preparation. If you know of a company that can provide these services either as a donation or at a reduced cost, contact projects@alpost372fl.org with their information.

If you or someone you know is interested in sponsorship or donating to the building of our Post, please reach out to info@alpost372fl.org for information on sponsor levels. The brochure detailing our project can be downloaded as a PDF from our website’s home page.

Several committees have been established for our Post Home project. If you are interested in being on one or for information on what each is responsible for, please reach out to the Adjutant (adjutant@alpost372fl.org) or general information at info@alpost372fl.org

- Communication/Community Relations
- Logistics
- Funding Acquisition
- Exterior Design and Landscape
- Interior Design and Build-out
- Post Brand/Image
- Human Resources and Recruiting

Post Home Fundraisers

Several fundraisers have been initiated with funds going towards our Post Home. Additional information, pictures and ordering information are available on our website.

Memorial Bricks: Memorial brick/paver Details with pictures and an order form are available on the website via a link from the home page. You can also order online via <https://donate.brickmarkers.com/mfh>.

License Plates: Our ALR has Post 372 Fallen Heroes license plates for sale. These license plates are available at \$10 per plate – and a picture is available on the website. Anyone interested can reach out to the Riders Quartermaster at alr372quartermaster@gmail.com.

Metal Tumblers: The ALR also have engraved tumblers for sale starting at \$30 – personalize for an extra \$10. Contact alradjutant@alpost372fl.org or 904-923-0948 to order.

Post Coin: Our membership designed a Post coin. The 2” coins are available for purchase for \$15 each.

Post Bottle Openers: The ALR has bottle openers with our Post name engraved in several colors for \$5 each. Contact alradjutant@alpost372fl.org if interested.

Service Officer News

The VA added presumptive conditions for Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The full list and information can be found on our home page of alpost372fl.org. Contact our Service officer at serviceofficer@alpost372fl.org for information and to file a claim.

PACT Act Expansion – VA Health Care

Beginning March 5, 2024, the VA expanded eligibility to enroll in VA health care directly without first applying for VA benefits. Any Veteran who served during the Vietnam era, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the GWOT, or any other combat zone after 9/11 are eligible. Any Veteran NOT deployed but exposed to toxins or hazards during training or on Active Duty in the US are also eligible. Visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care.

On June 14, 2024, three cancers were added to the presumptive list. For additional information, reach out to the contact site/number above or talk to your VA Service Officer.

Retired Military Information

Retired Activities Office on NAS Jax provides assistance to the military retiree community regarding many programs and resources. Examples include VA, DFAS/pay questions, Tricare and Survivor Benefit program, as well as many others. Located in Building 13 Yorktown Avenue (across from the USO), office hours are Tuesday – Friday from 1000-1400. Call 904-542-5790 to speak with staff or leave a message. Our next seminar will be April 5, 2025.

General Information

Cancelled Stamp Program: We need your cancelled stamps! Our Post participates in the Stamps for the Wounded Program for rehabilitating disabled veterans. Please bring your cancelled stamps to the next General Assembly meeting.

Youth Elks Camp - During the 7th week, active duty military children can attend for free.

VA Travel Pay Reimbursement – You or your caregivers may be eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses related to approved health care visits. To learn more, visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/>.

Career Opportunities for Veterans

Deploycare has put together a short article for three ideas to help veterans in any economy. The article can be found on our website under Important Links. Check it out to see if any of the ideas work for you or a veteran you know!

AND - to help Veterans create the perfect Military to Civilian resume, check out this link <https://www.resumebuilder.com/military-to-civilian-resume-examples/>, also available on our website.

Veteran Resource Links

There are several online sites with information about financial resources and healthcare guidance. These links are available from our home page under Important Links.

Military Records Request Information

Do you need your DD-214 or other military records? You can request them from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. Visit <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/>

for guidance on requesting military records online, by mail or fax. The form used is DD Form 180.

Project:Vetrelief

Mission is to provide a Legion of support for our service men and women as they transition into civilian lives. Backed by the American Legion of Florida, VetRelief ensures that our service men and women have the backing necessary to live successful and thriving civilian lives.

(<https://www.projectvetrelief.org/>) The Jacksonville Icemen have partnered with the American Legion to donate a portion of ticket sales during Veterans Appreciation Night to VetRelief. <https://allevents.in/arena/icemen-hockey-game/200019047449626>

A benefit ride will take place on September 8th that starts in Mandarin. Additional information is available on the flyer in the weekly newsletter.

Blood Donations

You can still donate blood to benefit our Post. The One Blood donation location in Mandarin is:

10501 San Jose Blvd
M-Tu 7-2:30 pm
W-Th 11:00-6:30 pm
F 10-6:30 pm
Sa-Su 8-3:30 pm

Once you have donated, enter your information in the Volunteer Log on the Legion page of our website. You can find other locations and times for The Big Red Bus at oneblood.org.

****Check Your Email****

You might want to check your SPAM or JUNK folder in your email application to see if any American legion emails were misdirected there. If so, move them to your Inbox and follow the instructions for your applications to verify/validate the email address.

National and Florida Department Info

The latest issue of the American Legion Department of Florida Legion Link is available at <https://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/legion-link/>.

Stay abreast of the progress the American Legion is making with legislative issues brought before Congress at <https://www.legion.org/legislative>.

??? Where Do We Meet ???

American Legion Mandarin Post 372, SAL and ALR meet at the Williams Family YMCA, 10415 San Jose Blvd. The YMCA is located North of Target/Publix. The Auxiliary meets a different location – reach out to them for more information.






December 2024 – No Auxiliary or SAL meeting this month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Early Bird Dinner, 6 pm Mandarin Moose Lodge
8	9 6:30-8:00pm Executive Committee mtg	10	11	12 7-8:30pm Gen Assembly mtg	13	14
15 10:00 am ALR meeting - YMCA	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Christmas 	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Years Eve 				

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6 6:30-8:00pm Executive Committee mtg	7	8	9 7-8:30pm Gen Assembly mtg	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Fireside Chat
19 10:00 am ALR meeting - YMCA	20 Martin Luther King, JR Day 	21	22	23 7-8 pm Auxiliary mtg 7-8 pm SAL at YMCA	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	