**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**
May 2026 **Facebook page: American Legion Post 372, Mandarin, FL** Vol. 26 No. 05

### *Membership News*

2026 Membership We have surpassed our goal with 287 renewal/new members, putting us at 103.24%!. 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.

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 - $55 for 2026 as of January 1, 2026**
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*

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 27 members renewed for 2026 putting us at 77.14% of our goal of 35. 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. 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. We currently have 40 members. The application to join is available from the Legion Riders page on the Post website. Challenge 22 ride event is July 4th. 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

The current Unit 372 Newsletter is on the Auxiliary page of the website. We have 33 members in our Unit. See the weekly emailed blast for further details. We have several arts and crafts activities coming up. 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

A new IRS approved 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation has been formed to support Veterans, active-duty military, first responders, their families, and veteran service organizations such as the American Legion in the Northeast Florida area. This foundation - Northeast Florida Fallen Heroes Foundation - will provide a path for individuals or organizations to donate to American Legion Post 372 via the foundation if they only donate to a 501(c)(3) non-profits. The foundation will also assist Veteran organizations in all Northeast Florida counties in securing grants and other funding to support Veterans in their area.

### PRO-BONO Dental Care

Dr. Dawit Adugna with Oceanside Dental offers pro-bono dental care to Veterans. Call 904-536-2200 for additional information or to schedule an appointment.

### POST HOME UPDATE

**We are looking at a 2-4 month timeframe to break ground due to obtaining construction permits. It takes two to four weeks for approval or denial. If denied, we will correct what needs to be fixed, then resubmit and the cycle starts over.**

| *Post Officers* | *SAL Officers* | *Auxiliary Officers* |
|---|---|---|
| Commander: Dan Hempsall<br>1st Vice Commander: Steve Sullivan<br>2nd Vice Commander: Jon Riddle<br>Finance Officer: Paul Arambula<br>Adjutant: Frank Nichols<br>Chaplain: Mike Montonera<br>Service Officers: Vacant<br>Judge Advocate: Vacant<br>Historian: Frank Nichols<br>Sergeant-at-Arms: Daniel Taszarek<br><br>*Executive Committee*<br>Karen Tracy, Mark Shelton, Alan Painter | Commander: E J Wojciak<br>Adjutant: Vacant<br>1st Vice: Steve Sullivan<br>Finance Officer: Paul Arambula<br>Chaplain: Joe Maltese<br>Historian: Frank Nichols<br>Sergeant-at-Arms: Blaine Demmons<br><br>*American Legion Riders*<br>Director: Allane Strode<br>Asst. Director: Jon Riddle<br>Treasurer: Sandra Shelton<br>Chaplain: Joe Maltese<br>Adjutant: Kari Houston<br>Sergeant-at-Arms: Blaine Demmons<br>Road Captain: Will Houston<br>Safety Officer: E J Wojciak<br>Quartermaster: Mark Shelton | President: Bernadette Montonera<br>1st Vice President: Daleana "Dee" McFarland<br>Secretary: Vacant<br>Treasurer: Judy Bernat<br>Chaplain: Esther Sills<br>Historian: Mere Schwartz<br>Sergeant-at-Arms: Michele Maze |

## POST HOME PROPERTY

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.

With the approved permit from SJRWMD, we are now soliciting bids for land clearance and will be looking at the proper time to order the building. Fund raising continues so any suggestions are entertained. 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.

To learn more, visit https://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.

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
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.

### Resource Officer News

Our Post currently does not have a Resource Officer. The American Legion has rebranded the Service Officer to Resource Officer. The VA added presumptive conditions for Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

### Children & Youth

We will once again be sponsoring youth to attend this year's NFL & Cheer Camp on Saturday, June 13th from 9 am – noon at the Duval Charter School on Baymeadows Road. See flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information.

## 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.

## 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 – no appointment needed. Call 904-542-5790 to speak with staff or leave a message.

**ALL** Military Retirees and their spouses are encouraged to have the new WHITE PLASTIC ID Card. This will replace the blue and beige/orange cards and are the same card stock the Active Duty use. Log into Rapids to make an appointment (priority over walk-ins) at https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/.

## 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 (314-801-9195). 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

## 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 at different locations – reach out to them for more information.

## Veteran Status on Driver's License

Do you want to add the Veteran status to your Florida Driver's License? Follow this link for several options open to get this done: https://www.google.com/search?q=how+do+i+get+veteran+on+my+florida+drivers+license&oq=florida+drivers+license+veteran&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j0i22i30j0i390i512i650l4j0i512i546j0i546i649.46473j0j7&client=ms-android-americamovil-us-revc&sourceid=chrome-mobile&ie=UTF-8.

## Florida Department Charity

Commander Jessica Moore has chosen to support Special Olympics as the Charity of Choice for her 2025-2026 term of office. Her goal is to raise $100,000 to support this charity. More information can be found here: https://www.floridalegion.org/commanders-charity/.

## VA Resources, We're Here For You.

- For any questions or requests, 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) is always the right number.
- Veterans Crisis Line: 988 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255
- Vet Centers: 1-877-927-8387
- Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838 or Chat
- Ask VA
- Schedule a 1-on-1 Appointment with a VA Benefits Expert
- Find a VA facility near you

For non-urgent questions, you can reach VA using the VA Health & Benefits App or MyHealtheVet secure messaging to schedule an appointment, refill prescriptions, and access your medical records.

## National Cemetery Burial Information

1. You can apply years in advance to confirm eligibility using a pre-need application. Apply online at va.gov or submit VA Form 40-10007 by mail or fax.
2. Any veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable qualifies for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs national cemetery. That includes the gravesite, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone and burial flag at no cost to the family.
3. Spouses qualify for burial with the veteran even if the spouse remarried after the veteran's death.

## May 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10<br>Mother's Day | 11<br>6:30-8:00 pm<br>Executive Committee mtg | 12 | 13 | 14<br>7-8:30pm Gen Assembly mtg | 15 | 16<br>LEO awards Mason Lodge 4 PM |
| 17<br>10:00 am<br>ALR meeting – YMCA | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23<br>Fireside Chat/Pool party<br>3 pm - ???<br>Lenny and Lisa Doerler's house |
| 24 | 25<br>Memorial Day | 26 | 27 | 28<br>7-8 pm<br>SAL at YMCA<br>7-8 pm Auxiliary mtg | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

## June 2026 - Fireside Chat at Charlie & Dee McFarland's house. Date/time TBD

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8<br>6:30-8:00 pm<br>Executive Committee mtg | 9 | 10 | 11<br>7-8:30pm Gen Assembly mtg | 12 | 13<br>NFL & Cheer camp<br>9-12 |
| 14<br>Flag Day<br> | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19<br>Juneteenth | 20 |
| 21<br>Father's Day<br>10:00 am<br>ALR meeting – YMCA | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25<br>7-8 pm<br>SAL at YMCA<br>7-8 pm Auxiliary mtg | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

Post 372 Legionnaire's General Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 1900 hours. Meetings are held at the Williams YMCA at 10415 San Jose Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING

# AMERICAN LEGION POST 372'S

# LAW & ORDER AWARDS

## Saturday, MAY 16 | 4:00 PM

## MASON'S LODGE

2914 LORETTO ROAD
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32223

RSVP: info@alpost372fl.org

www.alpost372fl.org

MANDARIN "FALLEN HEROES"
AMERICAN LEGION
POST 372

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