



May/June 2025

AMERICAN LEGION CHARLES F. THOMAS IV POST 117
189 VETERANS DRIVE • PALM BAY, FLORIDA 32909 (321)729-8089

The Thomas Times

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Check Facebook and bulletin boards for more details.

Post 117 Directory

American Legion Officers

Commander.....Terry Struven
 1st Vice Commander.....Bruce Thurber
 2nd Vice Commander.....Ray Wright
 3rd Vice Commander.....Jimmy Donavon
 Adjutant.....Dana Jackson
 Finance Officer.....Bobby Dye
 Chaplain.....Donna Walkowiak
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....Leo Belanger
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....Bob Garry
 Historian.....Dana Jackson
 Judge Advocate.....Stanley Wood
 Service Officer.....Kevin McGarry
 Executive Committee.....Chuck Body
 Executive Committee.....Jim Fournier
 Immediate Past Commander.....Bill Davidson

Auxiliary Officers

President.....Kim Oaks
 Parliamentarian.....MaryAnn Spellman
 1st Vice President.....Brenda Miskow
 2nd Vice President.....Vacant
 Treasurer.....Pat Luckey
 Secretary.....Rachael Nash
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....Lisa Meeks
 Asst. Sergeant-at-Arms.....Averi Krogh
 Chaplain.....Barbara Simons
 Historian.....Karen Humann
 Executive Committee.....Lorraine-Carrier Ryan
 Executive Committee.....Barbara Ward
 Executive Committee.....Rhonda Suelter
 Membership.....Brenda Miskow

Sons of the American Legion Officers

Squadron Commander.....Greg Singler
 1st Vice Squadron Commander..Bruce Walkowiak
 2nd Vice Squadron Commander..Keith Prine
 Adjutant.....Andy Campbell
 Finance Officer.....Don Bilger
 Chaplain.....Mike Miskow
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....Eric Spellman
 Asst, Sergeant-at-Arms.....Terry Cox
 Historian.....Alvin Hill
 SAL Advisor.....Bruce Thurber

Legion Riders Officers

Director.....Robert Smith
 Assistant Director.....Stan Wood
 Secretary.....Sheila Cline
 Treasurer.....Bobby Dye
 Chaplain.....Brian Yancey
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....David Bolduc
 Historian.....Dana Jackson
 Road Captain.....Spencer Reinking
 Membership.....Vacant
 Merchandise.....Vacant

Honor Guard

Commander: Chris Livingston
 Members:
 Ed Milnor Sr. Dawn Hanner
 Leo Belanger Bruce Walkowiak
 Donna Walkowiak Rowena Milnor
 Andy Campbell John Pettinicchio Jr.

Ways & Means Committee

Chairman: Jimmy Donavon
 Members:
 Greg Singler Robert Smith
 Dana Jackson Stan Wood
 Kim Oaks Bill Davidson
 Brenda Miskow Ray Wright
 Bruce Walkowiak

House Committee Chair: Leo Belanger

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*The opinions expressed herein are solely those of the
 authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the
 American Legion, Post 117 or its affiliates.
 Editor: Dana Jackson <email: historian@all17.com*

2024-2025 Officers:
Basic Training—<https://legion.org/alei>

Department Merchandise
**[https://www.floridalegion.org/
 resources/department-merchandise](https://www.floridalegion.org/resources/department-merchandise)**



Commander's Corner

*Terry Struven
Commander,
American Legion
Post 117*

commander@al117.com

Let's recap March and April: The 1st of every month is Be The One. Ensure to talk to a veteran that you hadn't heard from and make sure they are ok. We thanked our volunteers with a Volunteer Appreciation Day. Thank you for your hard work all year. March 15th was a very busy day. We hosted the District 12 Picnic and also celebrated the American Legion's 106th Birthday. St Patty's day was next and everyone had a great time. First round of officer nominations took place on March 19th. April was full of events too. We kicked off the month with the Department Children & Youth Picnic which was a lot of fun. The Veteran's Healing Garden started their Saturday events from 10am-12pm. Easter Brunch was delicious and all of the volunteers did amazing. We ended the month with the Department Commander's HillBilly Hoedown and the District 12 DCC.

May is a pretty busy month which starts off with the Vietnam Veteran Wall Escort on the 4th, Wreath Ceremony on May 5th, Massing of Colors on the 10th, Join in with placing the American Flags on the veterans graves at Fountainhead Cemetery on May 24th. Scouts of America Troop 732 will have their Memorial Day BBQ on May 25th. Help us honor our namesake Charles F. Thomas IV on May 26th with a ceremony at his gravesite and then the riders will escort the honor guard to assisted living facilities so that veterans who cannot travel may have a ceremony. We will finish off the day with a Memorial Day ceremony at 1pm. June is a lot quieter with events but we do have our regular weekly events going on. Department Convention is 12-15 June and on June 13th, come say Happy Heavenly 79th Birthday to Charles F. Thomas IV.

Now, let me say this:

They say as you get older in this life that time seems to go by faster and kind of slips away without much notice. Well I certainly agree it seems to go by faster but these last two years as your Commander have definitely not slipped away without much notice. Myself and our wonderful officers have done our best to notice when something needed our attention and listened to you members who let us know the true needs of our Post. It has been my sincere honor to serve Post 117 as your Commander 2023-2025 and I know that the new incoming Commander will be there for you in every way possible. the installation of new officers will be Wednesday July 2 at 630 pm in the hall. All Post Officer positions are of course volunteer jobs but the work is immense and on going like any salaried job you have held in your life. I have enjoyed my time and will still be around to say hello and introduce you to the new officers who can be there to answer your questions and concerns. Think about volunteering when and where you can because it truly takes a group of caring folks to make things work around here on a daily basis. So many extraordinary volunteers have continued over these many years to give of their time and effort to make Post 117 what you see today. Lets continue to honor their hard work and dedication by keeping our Post and all American Legion's ideals in clear focus at all times when working with our Legion brothers and sisters. We are here for our Veterans and their families and we make a very positive difference in our Palm Bay community. Thank you for all of your hard work and selfless efforts.

Always for God and Country,
Commander Terry Struven



Kim Oaks, President
oaksk@bellsouth.net



Auxiliary Unit 117

Community Engagement Shines at American Legion Auxiliary Unit 117

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 117 continues to serve as a vital hub of community spirit and patriotic support in Palm Bay. With a calendar packed full of meaningful activities, the Auxiliary recently hosted a cheerful Easter Party, bringing together members and families for a day of fun, celebration, and camaraderie. Alongside the festivities, the group conducted event 50/50 raffles, raising funds to support ongoing programs and services for veterans and their families.

In addition to these events, the Auxiliary has officially begun its officer nomination process, encouraging members to step forward and lead future efforts in service and outreach.

Looking ahead, the Unit has an exciting lineup of events planned. Among the highlights on May 3rd is a Kentucky Derby celebration at the Post—a lively gathering expected to blend tradition, fun, and fellowship. Members and guests can also look forward to the popular Steak Shoot bingo game, which combines friendly competition with a chance to win some tasty prizes on April 27th in the pavilion.

On a more formal note, the Auxiliary will participate in the upcoming District Constitutional Conference, continuing its commitment to leadership development and policy discussions that guide the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary on May 3rd at 10:00 am hosted by Unit 163 in Melbourne. The Unit will also take part in a solemn and respectful Vietnam Wall wreath presentation, honoring the memory of those who served and sacrificed during the Vietnam War on May 5th at 6:00 pm located at Wickham Park in Melbourne.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 117 remains steadfast in its mission to support veterans, their families, and the community through a vibrant mix of events and service initiatives.

Yours in Service,
Kim Oaks





MaryAnn Spellman
Chairman

Maryannspellman9@gmail.com



Unit 117 Juniors

Greeting All,

February Junior Volunteer of the Month was Averi Krogh and March Volunteer of the Month was

In March, the Juniors raised money and gathered laundry soap for Suds of Love which Helps the homeless veterans get their laundry washed.

In April, the Juniors had their Department Children & Youth Picnic and also did a ceremony for the Table of the Military Child. Next up was the Junior Spring Fling. The Juniors painted rocks, hunted for eggs, and had their duck race.

Thank you for your support,

For God & Country

MaryAnn Spellman

Unit 117 Jr Activity Chairman



Suds of Love Fundraiser



Junior Bella Philpot March
Volunteer of the Month



Children & Youth Picnic



Junior Averi Krogh February
Volunteer of the Month



Robert Smith, Director,
Chapter 117
smittypj@gmail.com



Chapter 117, American Legion Riders

American Legion Riders Chapter 117 Newsletter

Dear Riders and Friends,

We have had an incredibly successful few weeks here at American Legion Riders Chapter 117, and I am excited to share our achievements and upcoming events with you!

Recent Events:

- On March 22, we hosted the Richard Philips Down Biker Fund Birthday Bash at Post 117. This wonderful event raised funds to support a great cause, and we thank all who attended and contributed.
- On March 29, we organized the Project Vet Relief Benefit Ride, rounding out our efforts to combat veteran suicide. Your participation helped make a significant impact!
- On April 5, we joined the Children and Youth Benefit Ride, raising money for youth programs that will support the next generation.
- On April 12, our In-State Unity Ride concluded at the Orange County Choppers Road House in Clearwater, Florida. Several of us rode to Clearwater to present the money we raised over the year for Project Vet Relief. We are proud to announce that we raised an impressive \$26,756 to help end veteran suicide. Thank you all for your dedication and efforts toward this crucial cause!

Upcoming Events:

- On May 4, we will be escorting the Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall from the EFSC campus in Cocoa to Wickham Park in Melbourne.
- On May 5, there will be opening ceremonies for the All Veterans Reunion, also at Wickham Park. We encourage everyone to attend and show your support!
- On May 26 (Memorial Day), we will ride to Fountain Head Cemetery to honor our post's namesake, Charles F. Thomes. Following this tribute, we will escort our Honor Guard to local assisted living facilities to help them celebrate Memorial Day.

Officer Nominations: I am proud to announce that the officer nominations are complete, and I will serve as your Riders Director for another year. Your officers for the 2025-2026 term are:

- ⇒ Director: Robert Smith
- ⇒ Vice Director: Stanley Wood
- ⇒ Secretary: Sheila Cline
- ⇒ Treasurer: Bobby Dye
- ⇒ Chaplain: Brian Yancey
- ⇒ Sgt. at Arms: David Bolduc
- ⇒ Road Captain: Eric Spellman

A special thanks goes out to all the volunteers who dedicate their time to make our chapter a success. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.
Until next time, ride safe!

Sincerely,
Smitty
Riders Director, Chapter 117



Donna Walkowiak
Chaplain

Chaplain@all17.com

Chaplain's Corner

I want to thank everyone that has given me support as your chaplain this past year. We have a solid foundation of concern and prayers when some one is in need. I am becoming more comfortable with the new chaplains board and hope to get information out quicker. These past two months has made the board very busy. We added to Post Everlasting: Veteran Gregory "Gunner" Heim, Veteran Terry Gibbs, Veteran Dave Parella, Veteran Donald "Pop" Hanafin, Veteran Joe Maher. We held Celebrations of Life for Joe Maher, Barbara Simons, Steve Lumm, and Gregory Heim, all of which were well attended. Prayers for healing and health were requested for Doe Stanley, Patti Lani Null, Nancy Reichert, and Sue Spreadbury. All are home now and recovering. Thank you all for your concern and prayers.

May is our month of remembrance and healing. The replica of the Vietnam memorial wall will be coming into Wickham Park for the Veterans reunion. Coming together with others who share the experience. Recognizing the sacrifices made and remembering those who gave all. There are ceremonies, demonstrations, and displays. If you can make it. You will not regret the opportunity to experience this event.

We will again be placing flags on the graves of our veterans laid to rest at Fountainhead. We invite our sister Post 394 to join us as well as several youth groups and the Scouts. We also invite and encourage families to come with their children to teach and learn respect. It is great to see these children step back and salute after placing their flag.

As we do every year on Memorial Day at 9 am a small service will be held at the grave site of our Post namesake "Charles F Thomas IV " after which I will join our Honor Guard and our Riders to bring the services of memorial day to veterans in 5 assisted living facilities. I am thankful we can do this and ask the Lord to bless our efforts to serve our veterans and their loved ones. May the Lord bless our Post and its effort to bring to our community the mission of the American Legion. We must never forget, continue to teach, and reach out to help.

Your Chaplain,
Donna Walkowiak



BE THE ONE

Click on Be The One to go to the website to learn more!

Post Meetings • • • Post Meetings • • • Post Meetings • • • Post Meetings

Legion EC Meeting, 2nd Thursday, 5:30pm

Legion Meeting, 3rd Wednesday, 7:00 pm

SAL Meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 pm

Auxiliary EC Meeting, 2nd Monday, 6:00 pm

Auxiliary Meeting, 3rd Thursday, 7:00 pm

Legion Riders Meeting, 1st Thursday, 6:30 pm

Legion Riders EC Meeting, 3rd Monday, 6:00 pm

Ways & Means Committee, Last Monday, 6:00 pm



Hall/Pavilion Rental

Our Post Hall or Pavilion are available to rent for special functions, weddings, anniversary & birthday parties, etc.

Please contact the Canteen Manager at (321) 729-8089 (canteen@all17.com) for facility information, rental availability, and price

Did you Know if you purchase Florida Legion 50/50 Raffle, some proceeds benefit Post 117? Take a picture of QR code & it takes you to site to buy tickets.



fllegion.fanthen.io

MERCHANDISE SALES

Legion Items For Sale

Legion T-Shirt	\$20
Legion Polo with pocket	\$35
Legion License Plate	\$5
R.E.D Friday Shirts.....	\$20

Riders Items For Sale

(For special orders contact Riders Merchandise Person)

All Men's Shirts	\$20
All Ladies Shirts	\$20
All 3x/4x shirts are special order.....	TBD
Small Riders Patch	\$10
Medium Riders Patch	\$20
Large Riders Patch	\$50

SAL Items For Sale

US Flag (3x5)	\$25
POW/MIA Flag	\$30
SAL T-Shirts (Red or Blue)	\$10

AUX Items For Sale

Auxiliary Ladies V-Neck T-Shirts.....	\$15
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See the bartender to purchase merchandise!

Visit the Post 117 Facebook Pages & Website

[American Legion Post 117](#)

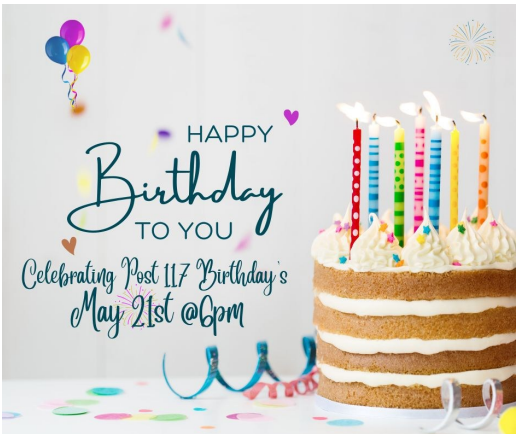
[American Legion SAL Squadron 117](#)

[American Legion Auxiliary Unit 117](#)

[Legion Riders FL Chapter 117](#)

www.all17.com

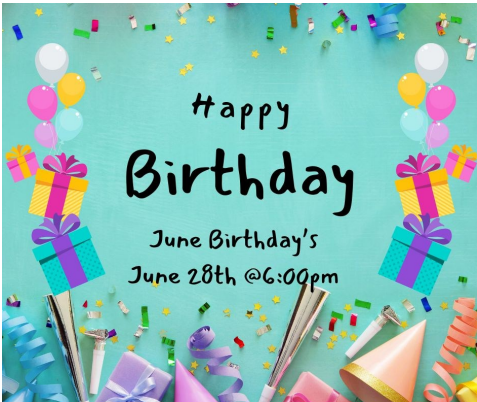
**Renew Your Membership
& Come See Us!**



**SAL Squadron 117
Annual Veterans Fishing
Trip**



When: May 31, 2025 (Be at the Post no later than 5:30am) Bus will leave Sharply at 6am
Where: 389 E. Blue Heron Blvd, Riviera, FL (Miss Blue Heron)
Whats provided:
• Fishing License
• Poles (You can bring your own)
• Bait
• Transportation to and from AL 117
• Breakfast and Lunch
• Beverages
We will be taking 40 Veterans on a first come first serve basis. I will put the sign up sheet up 60 days prior to the event.
ID's will be checked as you sign up to assure you are a veteran.
We will also be giving out commemorative shirts again



February Volunteers of the Month

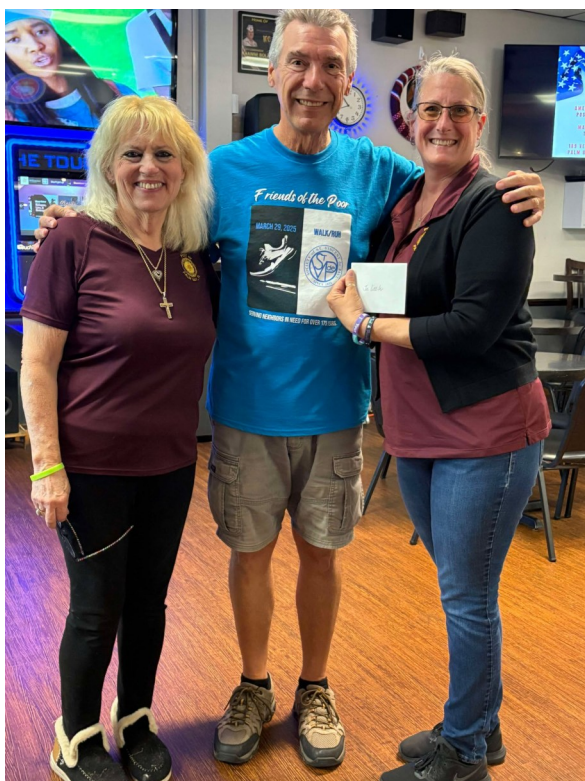


**Auxiliary member Shelby Kennedy
February Volunteer of the Month**



**Junior Averil Krogh February
Volunteer of the Month**

March Volunteers of the Month



**SAL member Joe Little March
Volunteer of the Month**



**Junior Bella Philpot March
Volunteer of the Month**

Thank you for volunteering!

U.S Veterans Holiday's and Important Events

May

May 1st—Silver Star Banner Day
May 9th—Military Spouse Appreciation Day
May 13th—Children of Fallen Patriots Day
May 17th—Armed Forces Day
May 26th—Memorial Day

June

**June 6th—Anniversary of the WWII Allied Invasion in Normandy, France ,
now known as D-Day**
June 14th—Flag Day
June 14th—Army Birthday
June 23rd—Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
June 27th—National PTSD Awareness Day

2025-2026 Installation of Officers July 2, 2025 @6:30pm

Commander: Chris Livingston
1st Vice Commander: Bruce Thurber
2nd Vice Commander: Ray Wright
3rd Vice Commander: TBA
Finance Officer: Bobby Dye
Chaplain: Donna Walkowiak
Historian: Robert Rodriquez
Sgt-At-Arms: Leo Belanger
Sgt-At Arms: Bob Garry
Past Commander: Terry Struven
EC Member: Jim Fournier
EC Member: Bill Davidson
Post Adjutant: TBA
Judge Advocate: TBA
Service Officer: TBA