



**American Legion Post 543  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 22, 2024**

**Meeting Minutes**

- 1) The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 PM – Commander.
- 2) The meeting was opened with a presentation of the colors – Post Honor Guard.
- 3) Opening Prayer – Chaplain.
- 4) Welcome Guests & recognition of first time Veteran Visitors: One Veteran attending for first time (friend of Rick Sessa) – Commander.
- 5) Roll Call of Officers (Absent: Doug Pratt, Steve Muir, Doc Liberty) – Commander.
- 6) Remembering the American Legion Four Pillars (There are 70 Post programs that support these four pillars) – Commander.
- 7) POW/MIA Recognition – Commander.
- 8) Pledge of Allegiance – Members & Guests.
- 9) Preamble to American Legion Constitution – Members.
- 10) A motion was made to approve April 24, 2024, General Membership Meeting Minutes and the motion carried, and the vote was unanimous. – Commander.



- 11) Introduction of Chuck Blackburn, Deputy Vice Commander – Americanism by the Commander.
- 12) The Deputy Vice Commander Americanism reviewed the reason for this special awards ceremony to celebrate and introduce students receiving scholarships.
  - a. Post 543 Alternative Education Scholarships (3 students)
  - b. Post 543 Early College High School Scholarships (6 students)
  - c. As part of the Early College High School Scholarship presentation, the newly formed Rodney L. Johnson Memorial Scholarship was introduced and presented by Rodney Johnson's widow (Marsha) and his daughter (Ashley).
  - d. Richie Hat Trick Scholarships (12 students) – As part of the Richie Hat Trick Scholarship presentation, the Post 543 Girls State Delegates (2 students) and the Post 543 Boys State Delegate (1 student) was awarded the GS Medal. The STEM Science Scholarship and STEM Robotics Scholarship recipients were also recognized during this part of the presentation.
  - e. The Deputy Vice Commander Americanism provided an overview of the Americanism and Children and Youth Pillar, reporting support of over 20 different youth programs. This year's Post 543 support of over 40 individuals with scholarships and tuition amounted to more than \$30,000, with much of this donated by individuals and local businesses. Post 543 has been awarded the Americanism and Children and Youth Post of the Year several times by the American Legion North Carolina Department. The Deputy Vice Commander Americanism thanked the many Post 543 Members who supported the program, as well as recognized the leadership by Rodney Johnson and Bill Morgan which helped make the program such a huge success.



- 13) The Commander indicated that the Post would need to conduct some brief business items but encouraged the guests and members to remain after the meeting for pictures and refreshments.
- 14) The Commander elected to postpone the Financial Report for this General Membership Meeting until the next monthly General Membership Meeting in June due to the focus of the May meeting being an awards ceremony.
- 15) The Commander introduced the Adjutant who reviewed the Post 543 By-Laws Article IV which covered procedures for Post 543 elections. The Adjutant indicated that the currently proposed slate of Post Officer candidates were all nominated and running unopposed. He presented the slate of Officer candidates on a presentation slide so the Members could do a final review. In keeping with the Post 543 Election Procedures and with no Officer position being contested relating to the FY25 Slate of Officer nominations, a motion was made from the floor and approved for the Adjutant to cast one vote for all the nominated Officers as presented in the presentation slide. The Adjutant formally cast the vote, electing the slate of Officers for the FY 25 period.
- 16) The Commander introduced Bill Morgan (Honors and Ceremonies Chairman). Bil Morgan reviewed the Honor Guard upcoming activities as for the next 60 days which included presenting colors at several music events, as well as flag raisings, funeral honors and the Post 543 Memorial Day Ceremony. Bill Morgan also outlined the agenda for the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 27, 2024 which will take place at the Saint James Community Center at 11:00 AM. The featured Guest Speaker will be Colonel (US Marine Corps Retired) Chuck Dallachie. All the guests and members were invited to attend.





Bill Morgan also reminded the membership that the Mike Fegan celebration of life will be held on June 22, 2024 at 11:00 AM at the Saint James Community Center.

17) The Commander introduced Mark Ferris who is a Post 543 member, as well as the Vice President of the Sea Notes Choral Society. Mark Ferris reviewed the upcoming Sea Notes "Let Freedom Ring" patriotic concert series which will take place on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Brunswick Community College Odell Williamson Auditorium. Both concerts are free and Mark Ferris offered tickets for special Veteran seating to all Post 543 members.

17) The Commander introduced Post 543 Chaplain Chuck Francka who reviewed the history of the red poppy as it relates to the American Legion history. The Chaplain indicated Post 543 will be handing out poppies and taking donations at the Southport Lowes Hardware store on May 25<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup>, with assistance from Post Members, as well as Cadets from both the South Brunswick High School JROTC and the Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron NC-170. The Chaplain suggested that any of the attending members who may want to volunteer to help distribute poppies should see him after the meeting.

18) The Commander recognized Rick Sessa (Post 543 Historian) and Rick reviewed the reason for postponing the Saint James Military Appreciation Day patriotic concert. He also informed the Membership and Guests that the concert would take place on September 21, 2024 and that the wrist bands that were purchased previously would be honored.

19) The Commander opened the floor for any Member input for the good of the Post and there were no comments.



20) The Commander requested the Chaplain provide a closing prayer.

21) The Commander requested the Color Guard to retire the colors.

22) The Commander reminded the Membership that the next Post 543 General Membership Meeting would take place on June 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM.

23) The Commander declared the May 22, 2024 Post 543 General Membership Meeting closed at 7:35 PM, with guests and members remaining for refreshments and pictures.

Aaron L. Largent  
Adjutant

Phillip E. McGhee  
Commander



## **ATTACHMENT #1**

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **MAY 2024**

- Honor Guard Maintenance of Flags at Cape Fear Memorial Park
- Steve Muir leaves the country for 3 weeks
- Military Appreciation Day Patriotic Concert in the Park cancelled: TBD
- EXCOMM (5-20-2024)
- General Membership Meeting/Post Officer Election (5-22-2024).
- Salty Dawgs Concert with Post 543 presenting the Colors (5-25-24).
- Poppy Distribution (May 25 & 26, 2024) Lowes Hardware Store, Southport.
- Post 543 Honor Guard participates in Palmetto Creek Veteran Ceremony (5-26-24).
- Memorial Day Ceremony (5-27-2024)

#### **JUNE 2024**

- Honor Guard Maintenance of Flags at Cape Fear Memorial Park
- Flag Raising Event on the Battleship North Carolina (6-15-24)
- EXCOMM (6-17-2024)
- Mike Fegan Celebration at Saint James Community Center (6-22-2024).
- Department Convention in Raleigh (6-19-24 to 6-22-24)
- General Membership Meeting and installation of new Officers (6-26-2024).
- Sea Notes Patriotic Concert Post 543 Honor Guard presenting Colors (June 29, 2024).
- Sea Notes Patriotic Concert Post 543 Honor Guard presenting Colors (June 30, 2024).

#### **JULY 2024**

- Honor Guard Maintenance of Flags at Cape Fear Memorial Park
- Flag Retirement Ceremony (7-3-2024) Southport
- Southport Fourth of July Parade (7-4-2024)
- EXCOMM (7-15-2024).
- General Membership Meeting (7-24-20)

**NOTE:** The SJMAD Golf Tournament has been moved to October 9<sup>th</sup>.