



**American Legion Post 543  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

- 1) The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 PM –Commander Michael Carton.
- 2) The Commander ordered the advancement of the Colors and a hand salute.
- 3) Opening Prayer – Chaplain.
- 4) The Commander welcomed the Guests and asked them to introduce themselves. No Veterans were attending for the first time.
- 5) The Commander recognized the POWs and those Missing in Action, as well as honored them by referring to the empty chair.
- 6) The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Commander with audience participation.
- 7) The Commander led the Members in reciting the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution.
- 8) The Commander reviewed the four pillars and how the Post supports over 70 programs.
- 9) The Commander introduced Guest Linda Burdoo, Mrs. Burdoo took this opportunity to Thank Post 543 for their support to her Husband Ron in his final days. She was impressed with the Post 543 Honor Guard in their performance providing graveside Military Honors. Mrs. Burdoo received a standing ovation from the Post 543 Membership as she left the podium.
- 10) The Commander Introduced Past Post 543 Commander, Steve Ratti to introduce Heroes Memorial Golf Tournament Representatives, Chairman Jim Rizzo, Ray Ventura, Former Secret Service Agent, and Michelle Jenkins Hoemann who presented a check to the RHS Foundation for \$3,000. This was also followed by a Standing Ovation.

- 11) The Commander introduced Past Post 543 Adjutant Aaron Largent. Aaron Introduced Jesse McPherson, Co-Owner of McPherson Marine Services. Past Post Adjutant Provided a Plaque to Jesse for his company's Support to our Post members by providing a Truck and Trailer for the use in each Parade the Post 543 participates in. Aaron mentioned that there are 3 parades each year and McPherson Marine services has supported us in each for the past 3 years. Mr. McPherson mentioned that his company is involved with the Veteran's Burial Reef in the Carolina beach Area.
- 12) The Commander inquired of the meeting attendees if there were any other Vietnam era Veterans in the audience who had not received their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative pin and certificate for their service. None were present.
- 13) The Commander requested the Chaplain brief the Membership regarding any sick call Members:
  - a. The Chaplain requested the Membership to remember Mark Lieberman in prayer.
- 14) The Commander requested a motion be made to approve June 25, 2025 General Membership Meeting Minutes. ***A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Seconded by Dan Bennett was made to approve June 25, 2025, General Membership Meeting Minutes.*** No discussion was required. ***The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.*** – Commander.
- 15) The Commander called for the Officer and Committee Reports to be presented:
- 16) Finance Officer Report – Tim Edman
  - a. The Finance Officer was excused from the Monthly meeting and the following Finance report was provided in his absence.

**General Fund Balance Sheet as of 7-23-2025**

**Bank Balance \$81,019.16**

PAYEE	INCOME	EXPENSES
ALNH DUES		\$525.00
CHECK RETURN		\$45.00
SVCS CHARGE/STOP		
PAYMENT		\$44.95
EURO MAX TENT		\$798.00
ZOOM		\$16.99
INSURANCE		\$1,451.00
ALNH DUES		\$225.00
STORGE		\$1,045.00
ALNH DUES		<u>\$412.50</u>
DUES/DONATIONS	\$7.50	
DUES/DONATIONS	\$300.00	
DUES/DONATIONS	\$225.00	
DUES/DONATIONS	\$495.00	

	DUES/DONATIONS	\$300.00	
	DUES/DONATIONS	\$100.00	
	DUES/DONATIONS	<u>\$630.00</u>	
TOTALS		\$2,057.50	\$4,563.44

17) The Commander invited Gary Purcell (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander, Membership) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update.

a. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander informed the Post 543 Membership that with the addition of the 15 Member Renewals at the July 23, 2025, meeting, the Post was at 115 members. This is an excellent start to the 2025/2026-year Membership.

18) The Commander invited Steve Muir (Post 543 Resource Officer) to give an update on the current active cases he is working on behalf of the Post.

a. The Service Officer spoke of his participation at the Legion College this past month and reminded the Membership that he had brought back a number of Handouts for the distribution on the current Legislation. The Handouts were provided on a table at the rear of the meeting room.

b. The Service Officer informed the Membership that in July of this year his team has been involved with 11 Veteran Claims. The Service Officer spoke of one of his cases being 96 years old and was scheduled to participate by throwing the first pitch in a Loggerhead Baseball Game but due to his current health he was unable to attend. This same Veteran has been referred to the Blind Veterans Organization.

c. General Joe Kinzer and his wife are now relocated and settled into the assisted care facility at Terra Bella in Southport. Steve thanked the Chaplain and his Ministry Team for visiting Joe and his wife and encourage any other Members to stop in and pay General Kinzer a visit.

d. Ron Harper is another Veteran case that Steve has been working, along with Gary Crowden to relocate an Air Force Veteran into temporary housing at the Veteran's Welcome Home Resource Center, He has signed himself out of the Veteran's Welcome home Center. The Veteran's Welcome Home Resource Center is looking to expand into Brunswick County in the future. Steve will request the Director of the program to visit the Post and be a Guest Speaker sometime later this year.

e. The Service Officer and his team is currently working with a female Coast Guard Veteran and will report on their progress at our next General Meeting.

19) The Sergeant-at-Arms/House & Entertainment Report – Rick Sessa

- a. Sergeant of Arms Rick Sessa Provided a follow up to all of the activities with the North Carolina 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival highlighting the US Flag Retirement Ceremony, the CAP Color Guard and the Post 543 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade.
- b. Rick Sessa reminded the Post 543 Salute to Veterans Dance at the Homer Wright Event Center.
- c. Rick also reminded that the House and Entertainment team continues to work on a Bus Trip to Ft. Bragg in the Fall of this year with a date to be announced later.

20) The Historian – Chuck Francka

- a. The Historian reminded the Membership of the growth of the post over the last 12 years. The membership was treated with pictures of the initial meetings.

21) Adjutant Report – Doug Pratt

- a. The Adjutant provided information to assist the Membership with the link to provide individual donations in support to those people affected by the Texas Flood Disaster by using the USAA Web site.
- b. The August Meeting schedule is as follows:
  - 1. ExCom Meeting 8/18/25
  - 2. SJMADs Meeting 8/20/25
  - 3. Honor Guard Meeting 8/20/25
  - 4. General Membership Meeting 8/27/25

22) The Veteran Memorial Brick Walkway Update – Tom Picinich

- a. Memorial brick sales continue. Tom encouraged any Member who might be interested in a memorial brick for themselves or a loved one to get in touch with him as soon as possible so he can consolidate the next order. He indicated he would hold off placing another order until he got at least 10 orders. He would attempt to get them delivered and installed before Veteran's Day. Members can contact him at [tapicinich@ATMC.net](mailto:tapicinich@ATMC.net) or 201-218-8753. Brick order forms are also available at the Saint James Town Hall. Tom also thanked Jim McCrskin for keeping the brick sales effort visual to the community through the various advertisements in the local publications. Orders must be placed by August 30th for Bricks to be installed by Veterans Day.

23) Commander's closing comments – Commander Mike Carton

- a. The Commander requested the Membership to review the 70 plus Programs that the Post works on and volunteer. The Commander is looking for members to volunteer to help

us with the programs we currently support. If interested in helping contact him and see how you can help not with all 70 programs but with only one program.

24) General Membership Meeting Closing Prayer – Chaplain Templeman

25) The Commander requested the colors be retired – Commander Carton

27) The General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM. – Commander Carton

*Douglas Pratt*

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**Douglas Pratt**  
Adjutant

*Mike Carton*

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**Mike Carton**  
Commander