



**American Legion Post 543
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 27, 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 Templeman.
- 4) The Commander recognized the POWs and those Missing in Action, as well as honored them by referring to the empty chair.
- 5) The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Commander with audience participation.
- 6) The Commander led the Members in reciting the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution.
- 7) The Commander welcomed the Guests and asked them to introduce themselves. Commander Carton welcomed Coast Guardsman Veteran Norman Macleod.
- 8) The Commander reviewed the four pillars and how the Post supports over 70 programs.
- 9) The Commander introduced Guest HWEC Manager Steve Brennan and staff member Stephen Ash. The Commander told the General Membership that the Wright Center Hosts over 2800 distinct reservations each year, with Post 543 accounting for 70 of these reservations. The Commander took this time to tell the General membership of a new program of identifying those businesses which support our Post. The Commander then provided Steve with a Decal identifying the HWEC as a primary supporter to the Post and followed up with the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation Plaque. Steve Brennan accepted the Plaque and thanked the Post with a short acceptance speech.
- 10) The Commander inquired of the meeting attendees if there were any other Vietnam era Veterans in the audience who had not received their 50th Anniversary commemorative pin and certificate for their service. None were present.

11) The Commander took a Roll Call of Officers.

Officers Absent were:

Doc Liberty, (Judge Advocate/Parliamentarian)

Phillip McGhee, (1st Vice Commander)

Tim Edman, (Finance Officer)

Jim McCrisken, (Public Relations Officer)

The Commander announced that there was a Quorum in Attendance.

12) The Commander requested the Chaplain brief the Membership regarding any sick call Members:

The Chaplain requested the Membership to remember Mark Lieberman, Brian Hughs and Zeb Starnes in their prayers.

13) The Commander requested a motion be made to approve July 23, 2025, General Membership Meeting Minutes. ***A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Seconded by Dan Bennett was made to approve July 23, 2025, General Membership Meeting Minutes with a correction to the date from June 25, 2025, to the correct date of July 23, 2025.*** No discussion was required. ***The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.*** – Commander.

14) The Commander called for the Officer and Committee Reports to be presented:

15) 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 by Commander Carton.



RICHARD H. STEWART JR. AMERICAN LEGION POST 543 Financial Report as of 27 August 2025

NC
Post
543

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

BUDGET CATEGORY	FY 2025 MEMBERSHIP REPORTING	Income		Expenses		% Executed
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	
1.0	VETERAN SERVICES	\$ 4,800	\$ -	\$ 23,890	\$ 2,129	8.91%
2.0	VETERAN SUPPORT	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,050	\$ 1,500	18.63%
3.0	DEFENSE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,850	\$ 840	6.53%
4.0	AMERICANISM	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 900	\$ -	0.00%
5.0	YOUTH	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,300	\$ 3,000	41.10%
6.0	HONORS & CEREMONIES	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,400	\$ 930	17.21%
7.0	POST OPERATIONS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,434	\$ 4,533	19.34%
8.0	POST FINANCE	\$ 12,509	\$ 4,598	\$ 10,225	\$ 2,992	29.27%
9.0	RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
10.0	VETERAN MEMORIAL	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 2,400	\$ -	0.00%
11.0	RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	\$ 127,540	\$ 21,790	\$ 36,500	\$ 1,552	4.25%
12.0	POST SCHOLARSHIPS	\$ 14,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 31,400	\$ -	0.00%
	GRAND TOTAL	\$ 162,349	\$ 27,888	\$ 162,349	\$ 17,475	10.76%

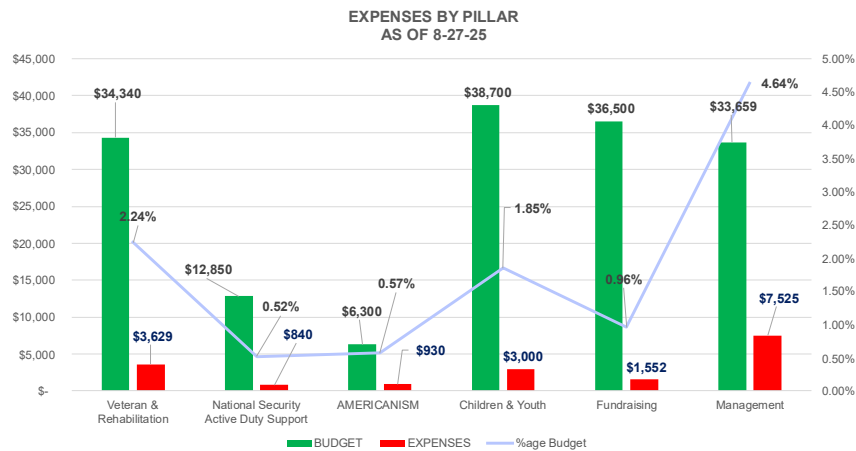
PROPRIETARY INFORMATION



August 2025 Financial Report by Pillar as of 27 August 2025

NC
Post
543

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION



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- 16) The Commander requested a motion be made to approve August 27, 2025, Post 543 Finance Report. ***A motion by Post Member Aaron Largent and Seconded by Steve Muir was made to approve August 27, 2025, Post 543 Finance Report No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.***
- 17) The Commander invited Gary Purcell (2nd Vice Commander, Membership) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update.
- a. The 2nd Vice Commander informed the Post 543 Membership that the 2025-2026 Membership Goal for Post 543 is 269 Members.
 - b. The 2nd Vice Commander stated that 50% of Membership by 9/10/25 will not be a problem this year based on our current 2025-2026 Membership of Post Members that have renewed and the addition of 5 new Members this evening.
 - c. The 2nd Vice Commander informed the Members of a 2nd letter from National will be appearing in the Mail in early October to those that have not renewed.
- 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 Informed the Membership that the “MyHealthVet.com” will be shut down on September 30, 2025, and the members will need to log in to the VA using “Login.Gov” or “ID.Me.com”
 - b. The Service Officer informed the Membership Federal Electronic Health Record is being deployed to 13 new VA sites with all VA sites have access by 2031.
 - c. VA stated this week that the 29th Million Home Loan was provided this week.
 - d. The Service Officer informed the Membership that the VA has processed more VA Claims this year than ever before. The VA is processing the VA Claims in three days.
 - e. The Service Officer mentioned that Members of Post 543 accompanied him to provide a \$1,500 Check for the Veteran Smiles Program at the Novant Dental Clinic in Supply, NC. We also found that the Veteran Smiles Program is being transferred to the ECU College Dental School.
 - f. A new Case being revied is a Veteran Army MP currently working at Sunny Point Terminal. He injured his leg and is now in Light Duty Status. Post 543 provided \$409.58 for his car payment and \$2,000 to help him pay his Mortgage.

g. Service Officer Steve Muir informed the Post about a female Marine Veteran suffered a brain injury after being assaulted while on Active Duty. As a result of a misunderstanding this Veteran became behind on a number of different debts. In a showing of cooperation between Veteran Service Groups, 13 Veteran Service Organizations came together to provide approx. \$7,500 to help her with her College Tuition and other miscellaneous debts.

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

- a. Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Sessa and the House and Entertainment team has arranged a Bus Trip to Ft. Bragg on November 5th. The Bus will leave the HWEC at 8:30am and return to HWEC at around 9:00pm. 40 passengers are required to attend, and the cost will be \$75 p/p.
- b. Rick Sessa reminded the membership of the Post 543 “Salute to Veterans Dance” at the Homer Wright Event Center on November 14th and tickets are available after the General Membership Meeting at \$15/p/p or \$25 per couple.

20) Adjutant Report – Doug Pratt

a. **September 2025 Meetings**

- 50% Membership Goal (9/10/25)
- ORVA’s “Strike for those who Served” (9/14/25)
- ExCom Meeting (9/15/25)
- Post 543 Honor Guard Meeting (9/17/25)
- Post 543 General Membership Meeting (Guest Joe Reale) (9/24/25)
- Colon Furr App. Deadline (9/25/2025)

22) The Veteran Memorial Brick Walkway Update – Tom Picinich

- a. Tom Picinich thanks everyone for their help with the latest Brick Sales and especially Jim McCrskin for keeping the brick sales effort visual to the community through the various advertisements and in local publications. The new bricks will be installed by November 11, 2025 (Veterans Day).

23) Commander’s closing comments – Commander Mike Carton

- a. The Commander reminded the Membership of 2025 St. James Military Appreciation Hats for sale as well as Post 543 Legion Baseball Shirts and Hats.

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 8:35 PM. – Commander Carton

Douglas Pratt

Douglas Pratt
Adjutant

Mike Carton

Mike Carton
Commander