



**American Legion Post 543
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 22, 2026**

Meeting Minutes

- 1. The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 PM –Commander Carton**
- 2. The Commander ordered the advancement of the Colors and a hand salute.**
- 3. The Commander ordered Opening Prayer – Rob McKinley**
- 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 reviewed the four pillars and how the Post supports over 70 programs.**
- 8. 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. There were four.**
- 9. The Commander asked if there were any Veterans visiting the Post for the first time.** The Commander welcomed the Guests and asked them to introduce themselves. The Commander then welcomed Guests Brian Carol USA and Darion Swain USN.

10. The Commander took a Roll Call of Officers.

Officers Absent were:

Dan Bennett- Active-Duty Support

Bruce Templeman- Post Chaplain

Chuck Francka- Historian

11. The Commander announced that there was a Quorum in Attendance.

12. The Commander requested the (Rob McKinley) to brief the Membership regarding any sick call Members:

The Ex. Chaplain McKinley requested the Membership to remember Doc Liberty and Chaplain Templeman in their prayers.

13. The Commander requested a motion be made to approve March 25, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes. *A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Seconded by Rob McKinley was made to approve March 25, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.* –Commander.

14. The Commander called on Post 543 Finance Officer Report – Rick Haley

The Finance Officer provided the Membership with the current view of accounts by type and use of each of the various line items. (Attachment “A”). The Finance Officer Stated that \$79,926 has been spent on the Budgeted \$179,257 or 44%. The Finance Officer asked the Ceremonies Chair to advise the Membership of a major purchase being made regarding the need for purchasing new AR15 Rifles to be used at the various Honor Guard functions where Military Honors are requested. (of note is that the previous 1903 Springfield Rifles were on loan to the Post for fulfilling these events.

The Commander requested a motion be made to approve April 22, 2026, Finance Report. *A motion by Post Member Bill Morgan and Seconded by Service Officer*

Steve Muir was made to approve April 22, 2026, Finance Report. No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.

15. The Commander invited Gary Purcell (2nd Vice Commander, Membership) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update.

The 2nd vice Commander, Membership, said that the number of total paid members to date is 261.

The 2nd vice Commander, Membership, reminded the Membership that the 2026 Goal is 269 Members, and that we are at 97% of our FY26 Goal. May 11th is the last day that we can achieve our 100% Membership Goal of 269 members.

16. The Commander invited Steve Muir (Post 543 Resource Officer) to give an update on the current active cases being worked on in addition to Information on the 5th Annual “Fallen Hero’s Ceremony.

17. The Resource Officer reminded the Membership that Past Post Member John Fryar will be a recipient of the Ceremony.

- The Post Resource Officer provided updates on 8 Active Post 543 Cases
- The Need for VEAC Volunteers and that a sign-up sheet will be distributed to the Membership. The date for the VEAC (at the NC Armory) is May28-30.
- The Post Resource Officer mentioned that NC General Assembly is reviewing a bill to provide a reduction or elimination of Property Tax on 100% disabled Veterans and that he will keep the Members up to date on this important matter.

18. The Commander called on Post 543 The Sergeant-at-Arms/House & Entertainment Report – Rick Sessa

- Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Sessa provided information on the May 1 Military Appreciation Dance at the HWEC and that discounted wristbands were available at this General Membership Meeting,

- Sergeant at Arms Rick Sessa announced that the UNCW Military Appreciation Baseball Game will take place on May 2 with tickets available Free on militaryaffairs@UNCW.edu.

19. The Commander called on Post 543 Post Nominations Committee Chair Dave Delong to the Podium to update the Members of the Closing of Nominations at the end of the April General Membership Meeting.

- The Nominations Committee Chair then provided the Membership with the schedule of the Post ExCom Officer events following the current April General Membership Meeting.
- The Nominating Committee Chair Asked for any additional Nominations 3 times which is required by Post Procedures, there were no additional Nominations.
- A reading of the Nominees' Names was provided. All Nominees stood to be recognized.

A motion was made by Sergeant at Arms Sessa for approval of the Slate of Candidates by the assembled Post Members. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Vice Commander Americanism Chuck Blackburn.

The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.

20. The Commander called on Post 543 Adjutant to the Podium to provide a report.

- Adjutant Doug Pratt discussed the American Legion Department of North Carolina Rifle Raffle. The Department Raffle is a "D-Day Commemorative Thompson .45 ACP Rifle" with an estimated value of \$3,000. The Adjutant advised the membership that Raffle Tickets for the Rifle will be available to members after the General Membership Meeting.

21. The Commander asked for an update on the Saint James Veteran Memorial and Brick Sales.

- Tom Picinich informed the Membership of the current Brick sales. Tom also advised the General Membership that Bricks purchased would be installed by the Memorial Day Ceremony.

22. The Commander asked for Additional Officer or Committee Comments.

- Deputy Vice Commander Blackburn informed the Membership that at the May General Meeting he will be introducing the winners of this year's Student Scholarships.
- Post Member Dr. Kathy Roth reminded the Members of the upcoming Women Veterans Healthcare Seminar on June 18 & 19th. She offered an invitation to the Post Members Wives to attend also.
- St. James Military Appreciation Day Chair Steve Ratti reminded the Members that Volunteers are needed for this Post Annual Fund Drive.

23. The Commander asked for Membership Comments

- Post Member Al Lebednik informed the Membership of the importance of the members DD214 in Burial Rights. Al urged the Membership to take action on this issue.
- Post Member George Freeman provided an update on the St. James Memorial and Re-Dedication on this year's Memorial Day.
- Ceremonies Chair Bill Morgan provided Membership of the upcoming Memorial Day Ceremony scheduled on May 25

24. The Commander requested the Chaplain to provide the General Membership Meeting Closing Prayer – Rob McKinley

25. The Commander requested the Colors be retired -Michael R. Carton

The Post 543 Color Guard Retired the Colors.

26. The General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM. – Commander Carton

Douglas Pratt

Douglas Pratt
Adjutant

Michael R Carton

Michael R. Carton
Commander



PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

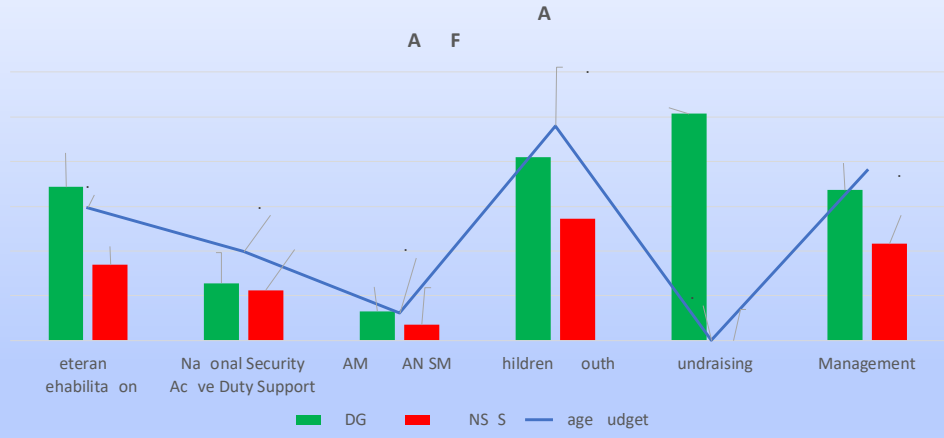
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PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Attachement A



PROPRIETARY INFORMATION



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