

# THE BEACON



## AMERICAN LEGION POST 202 COLUMBIA, MISSOURI February - 2026 **Next Post** **202 meeting is February 18th**

### Commander Comments,

Legionnaires,

As the weather outside is all over the place please be mindful of yourself, family and others. Take some extra time as needed to get there safe. With that please take the time to check on our fellow veterans, family, and friends to make sure everyone is safe.

I would like to thank everyone who came in, donated their time, donated their talent, and effort to repair the stage. If this lasts as long as the last build on it we should be good to go for the next 15-20 years at least.

The American Legion Riders 202 have their friendly game of Cornhole Tuesday nights through March 10, 2026, 6pm. If you get a chance to come out and support them.

Look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting, and thank you for helping to make the Post better.

Thank you,

Roy Stigers

Post 202 Commander

Reminder for the Friday night poker night we serve a simple dinner/sandwiches. We need to have some volunteers for this each month. Please coordinate to help support these events.

1st Friday of the month is the VFW Post

2nd Friday of the month is the Legion Post

3rd Friday of the month is the VFW Auxiliary



4th Friday of the month is the Legion Auxiliary  
5th Friday of the month is the Americal Legion Riders

Post meeting dates: 2026: February 18th, March 18th, April 15th, May 20th, June 17th, July 15th, August 19th

District Meetings for 2026. April 11th Post 317 In Freeburg, 1:00, June 14th Post 624 in Sunrise Beach, 11:00, September 13th Post 52 in Booneville, 1:00, K of C Hall, 1515 Radio Hill Road, Booneville.

### **AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY Unit 202– Lorrie Mayes**

The Auxiliary met on Wednesday, January 21st at the Post. Highlights to follow.

Membership – 5 members did not rejoin this year and we hand one death.  
Scholarships – one scholarship applicant has been received and there have been emails regarding the scholarship from other students.

MSSA dinner is scheduled for March 28th at the Post. Auxiliary will be providing the meal. This is a fundraiser for the Unit.

Missouri Girl State applications have been received and interviews are set for Sunday, February 22nd at 3pm at the Post.

Nominations were taken for the Auxiliary President position that is vacant. Shanna Elam's name has been submitted to the membership. If there are no concerns, a vote will be taken at the next meeting. I personally feel she will do a great job and offer her my full support. She is an active member at the American Legion.

This month's meeting is on Wednesday, February 18th at 7pm. Hope to see you there.

### **EVENTS – Lorrie Mayes**

There has been a lot going on at the Post. We have a new refrigerator in the kitchen that is refrigerator only. No freezer. Refrigerator space was greatly needed. The old refrigerator is in the bar and has come in handy helping to keep extra beer cool for events. Thank you to every group who donated money to the refrigerator.

The stage was torn apart and redone on Saturday, January 31st. It took them all day, but the stage is much sturdier. No more bounce. Thank you to everyone who helped that day. It makes

me feel more comfortable having people up there.

We continue to have rentals filling our weekends. Church continues to meet on Sunday. There are lots of trivia events going on.

One new item that happened this week I am excited about. There will now be a Purple Heart group meeting at the Post. We are having a trial meeting and I hope it works out well. If you are a Purple Heart recipient and would be interested in this group, please give me your name and phone number so that I can give it to the organizer.

PLEASE MARK JULY 4TH ON YOUR CALENDARS TO HELP THE AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW CELEBRATE THE 250TH BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA! MORE INFORMATION TO COME SOON.

Please remember that the bar is open every Thursday and Friday night. Through March 10th it is also open on Tuesday nights. Food is served on Friday and Tuesday.

### Honor Guard news – By Paul Hobbs



Greg Henry

Kevin Wolfe

Doug Garrett

Mike Bietsch

Paul Hobbs

Due to logistics the January 24th funeral of Mr. Carl Buckner, U.S. Army, could not be moved and we were requested to perform his Military Funeral Honors at Memorial Park Cemetery.

We watched the weather forecasts getting worse by the hour but this soldier had to be honored for his service. Doug Garrett, Kevin Wolfe, Mike Bietsch, Greg Henry and I braved the 5 degree temperature and -15 degree wind chill and accomplished the mission. This was easily the coldest we have operated in. The hot brass hit the ground, melted the snow and then immediately froze to the road. They were hard to pick up with heavy gloves. It's what we do.

## **QUILTS OF VALOR EXHIBIT TO CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY**

Jan Hobbs, Group Leader Patriot Piecers  
Quilts of Valor

Last fall over 750 Quilts of Valor groups around the nation received a quilt panel commemorating the 250th birthday of America. Each group was invited to submit their finished quilt by the cutoff date of December 31st to be displayed in the national American Quilters Society QuiltWeek show. Patriot Piecers member Sally Stucker was able to complete our quilt before the deadline and it was submitted to the 10 member Quilts of Valor Sesquicentennial Committee. The committee ranked the quilts not knowing who the makers were or where their groups were located. The Patriot Piecers quilt was among the top 13 quilts selected for the display and will travel with the exhibit to the following QuiltWeek locations: • Daytona Beach, FL: February 18-21, 2026 • New England: April 8-11, 2026 • Paducah, KY: April 22-25, 2026 • Grand Rapids, MI: August 19-22, 2026 • Columbus, OH: September 23-26, 2026. This nationwide exhibit highlights the creativity of QOV members while honoring our nation's veterans during this historic milestone year.



It is such an honor for our quilt to have been selected and we are so proud of how beautiful it is thanks to Sally's fine sewing skills! If you have not received a Quilt of Valor in appreciation

for your service and sacrifice, please contact Jan Hobbs, jehobbs@centurytel.net, or Lorrie Mayes. Patriot Piecers would love to honor you and your service.

*(Editor's note: This is the second quilt that these talented, dedicated women have created that has been selected for display on the national stage. The first quilt made by Jan Hobbs was selected to represent Missouri in the book "Quilts Of Valor 50 State Salute." Congratulations Ladies! The Patriot Piecers meet at our Post the second Thursday of each month)*

### **Legion Rider News- By Mike Williams**

Winter hit the Legion Riders of Chapter 202 particularly hard this January. For the first time in several years none of us were able to head out for a New Year's Day ride. Instead, most of us began the month caging it to the VFW Post 280 pancake breakfast and coat drive hosted by the Guardians Charitable Motorcycle Group. D&D's weekly bike night has become a four wheeled event for the time being and a severe winter storm caused our annual poker night fundraiser for Welcome Home to be cancelled. All of this has reduced our collective riding to just 1,113 miles logged for the month.

Steven Rush is the one person who is bucking this trend. His epic motorcycle journey through the American southwest continues. Every day he sends



**Racing a speedboat in Arizona**

us photos and videos of his adventures, including accidentally racing a speedboat down a canyon in Arizona. If you would like to follow his adventures, check out TheBakedBikerVet on TikTok. For most of the rest of us our adventures have been much closer to home.

Several of us joined our American Legion friends in Ashland for Post 152's annual trivia night. Inspired by our namesake and mascot, Jim Elkhunder's service dog Moose, the Mooseketeers took home first place and received priceless two inch



**The Mooseketeers winning 1<sup>st</sup> place at Post 152 in Ashland**

trophies in celebration of all our useless knowledge.

January also saw the start of our annual corn hole league. We have had a great turnout so far, filling the ballroom at the post every Tuesday night with a full slate of teams. Volunteer cooks have provided delicious meals and the fellowship has been wonderful. It is not too late to get in on the fun. The league continues until March 10. Whether you play or simply want to have some great food while avoiding the winter cold, we would love to have you join us. Doors open at 6 p.m. and games begin at 6:30 p.m.



## **December 2025 Sons of the American Legion Activities and Events - by Oliver Brilhante IV**

As the new year has begun, the Sons of the American Legion are keeping busy with upgrades to the Post. The first item on the list of improvements to the post was tackled on the last day of January and that was the dismantling of the stage in the ballroom. The supports for the stage were insufficient for the types of use the stage has seen and we plan on using it for.



Beginning early morning on January 31, Post 202 Family and VFW members helped disassemble the stage and exposed the existing support system which was determined to be insufficient. With the help of several power tools, and volunteers, the process of reinforcing the stage began by removing the carpet, plywood decking and the support structure.



Through teamwork and commitment to this concerted effort, the stage improvements were successfully completed and now the post has a stage that is safe and sturdy which can be used for many years to come with the peace of mind that it will continue to be a safe and reliable feature of our building. The completion of this task will help with the liability of the use of the stage for others who rent the space and it will provide peace of mind to all who choose to use it.

The stage work has been just one of the steps in the process of completing the work identified that needs to be tackled at the post as the Sons of the American Legion plan on helping with the many other improvements that will be happening in and outside the post. We look forward to the progress that is in the works and hope to see others lending a hand where they can as we work together to improve Post 202.



One of the on-going efforts of the Sons of the American Legion is to identify and replace torn or tattered American Flags in and around Columbia and Boone County. Through a generous donation from an anonymous source, this effort can continue to impact the community as a whole. The flag recycle bin in front of the American Legion was loaded with brand new American Flags and we invite you to join in the effort of identifying, initiating contact with those locations which have flags that need to be replaced and donating these new flags to replace the worn ones. We are hoping to focus mainly on non-for-profit organizations, veterans and highly visible locations.



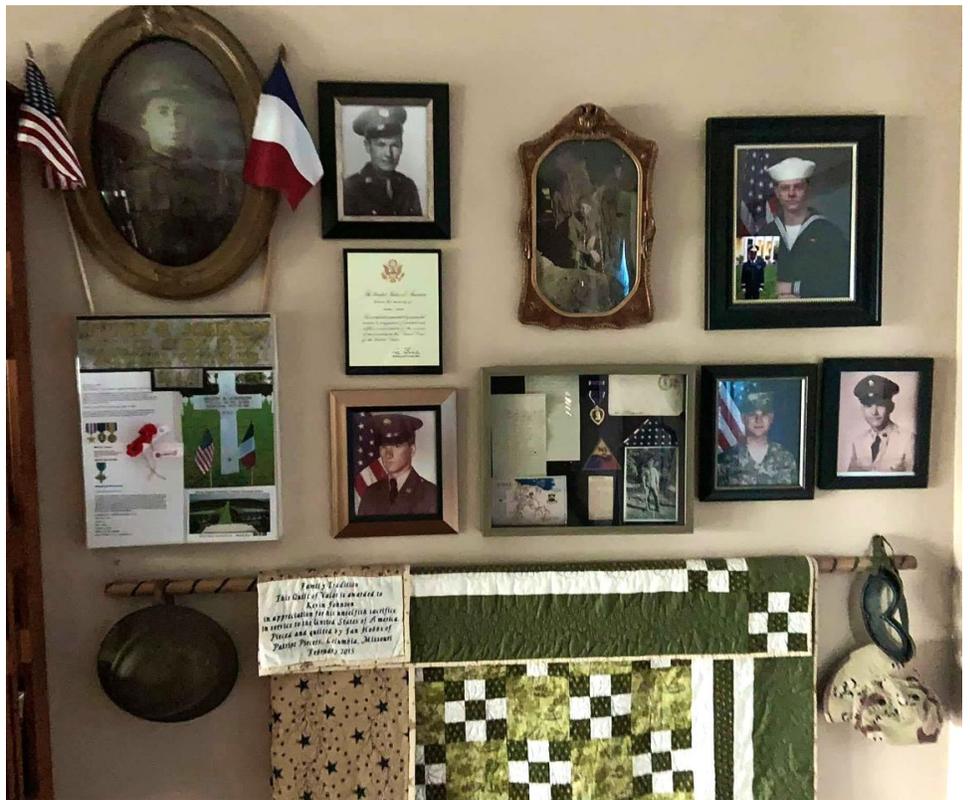
NOT THIS, the American Flag should look like THIS



**Did You Know - by Paul Hobbs**  
**Family tradition and Helicopters**

When I was working at Mizzou Campus Facilities and the Research Reactor, I had a fellow veteran co-worker, Engineer and friend, Kevin Johnson. Kevin was an Army "Huey" UH-1 pilot with the 24<sup>th</sup> Medical Ambulance company (Medevac) during Desert Storm. Kevin's family continues a strong military tradition as his son is now also serving in the Army.

I had arranged for Jan to award Kevin a Quilt of Valor at a department staff meeting. He proudly displays his quilt along with a collection of family military photos on his Wall of Honor. His quilt title is "Family Tradition."



**Kevin's Wall of Honor**



**Pvt Melvin Johnson's grave in France**



**Kevin and his Huey**



**Hueys in Kevin's unit training near Chimney Rock in Nebraska**

Kevin's Great Uncle Melvin Johnson was killed in France during WWI and is buried there in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. His grave has been adopted by and is cared for by a family in Romagne. Melvin Johnson American Legion Post 256 in Clearbrook, MN is named in honor of Kevin's great uncle. The Poppies shown on Melvin's grave are from our Post. I gave them to Kevin to take there on a trip.

Kevin's Uncle Roy Johnson was in the first wave onto Omaha Beach on D Day with the 743<sup>rd</sup> tank battalion. He fought across France and Belgium and was mortally wounded near Aachen, Germany.



**Hueys in Vietnam**

Jumping ahead to Kevin's generation, Desert Storm was one of the last major deployments for the Army's Huey fleet. They were replaced with more powerful, twin-engine Sikorsky UH-60 "Black Hawks" made famous by the 2001 movie *Black Hawk Down*.

Many if not most U.S. Army helicopters are named after Indian tribes to honor their warrior spirit, strength, and tactical prowess. There have been names like Chinook, Lakota, Kiowa, Comanche and others used.

Technically the “Hueys” are the Bell UH-1 Iroquois. They were the workhorse of the Vietnam war as most folks my age and Vietnam Veterans can attest. The distinct "whop-whop-whop" sound of the two bladed Huey is a serious PTSD trigger for many Vietnam Veterans. There were about 7,000 Hueys used in Vietnam. 3,300 were lost resulting in 2,700 crew deaths.

Helicopter use by the Military began on a limited basis during WWII and during Korea their role increased dramatically for medevac, resupply and reconnaissance. The Bell H-13 Sioux, (Bell 47 in civilian terms) was made household famous during the MASH TV series.



**Bell H13 Sioux as seen on MASH**

Most helicopters have a rear tail rotor to counteract the torque from the large main rotor.



**Marine One**

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President Trump’s primary Marine One is a Sikorsky VH-3D Sea King. Not surprising it holds 16 people and is equipped with a restroom and

kitchen. In inner circles its nickname is “White Top.” Its call sign is Marine One only when the President is on board. If not, it normally goes by its tail number.



**Army AH 64 Apache**

The Army's fearsome Boeing AH 64 Apache is designed as a weapons delivery platform and from any angle it fully looks the part. It is highly mobile, lethal, and with fire control radar (the donut over the prop) it can destroy armor, personnel, and materiel targets in obscured battlefield conditions at ranges out to 5 miles. The 4 blade Apache is powered by two General Electric T700 turboshaft engines rated at 2000HP each. It can attain speeds up to 150 MPH.



**University of Missouri Hospital Bell 407**

For interest closer to home the University of Missouri Hospital uses several different helicopters at bases around the state. One of these is the Bell 407. This popular helicopter is a highly versatile, single-engine utility helicopter known for its reliability in corporate transport, air ambulance, law enforcement, and news gathering. It's a 4-blade unit and can fly up to 160 mph.

And for a bit of trivia: Helicopters can't typically reach the summit of Mount Everest (29,031 feet) due to the extremely thin air that drastically reduces rotor lift and engine power.