



American Legion Post 201

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### **Post Joins with Alpharetta Leadership To Plan Local 250th Birthday Activities**

As the local Alpharetta community begins planning activities that will mark the nation's 250th Birthday this July 4, representatives from the Post were sitting at what may be considered the first 'official' planning meeting earlier this week.

Coordinated by local Realtor Donna Murphy, the meeting included Chris Lagerbloom, the city manager of Alpharetta; Morgan Rogers, the city's parks and recreation manager; Post 201's Immediate Past Commander, Tom Billings; and Tom Richardson, the Post's senior vice commander and designated leader for 250th Birthday planning at the Post.

Billings described the meeting as "an extremely productive idea generating session" designed to "get the ball rolling." A second meeting, with an expanded group of community leaders is scheduled tomorrow.

In addition to the city's plans for its traditional July 4 fireworks at Wills Park, Billings noted that much of the conversation was focused on activities that would keep people "downtown and engaged" for the entire weekend, not just Saturday, July 4.

Some of the creative concepts suggested included a Historical Walking Tour where businesses and other downtown organizations would be encouraged to link their participation to specific events associated with the nation's history. Other thoughts included a Friday "Patriotic Crawl", live music, a Friday night drone show, and the possibility of a military fly over which would include Roswell, Milton, and Johns Creek in addition to Alpharetta sometime during the 4th itself.

While much of the focus would be downtown-focused, Billings said community-oriented activities that could take place on the Post grounds during the extended birthday-celebration weekend were also discussed. Those discussions,

he said, included the recognition that the Post is well-known as an excellent location to see the city's traditional July 4th fireworks.

He also noted that the Post's "on the ground involvement in the initial community planning activities" represented a growing appreciation the community has of the Post's ongoing outreach activities.

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## ~ An Editorial Observation ~

As the nation, along with our local community, moves toward the celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary this July 4, let us never forget about the enduring legacy veterans have played throughout our nation's history. It is a testament that is older than the nation itself.

The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps were all established by the Continental Congress in 1775: the Army on June 14, 1775; the Navy on Oct. 13, 1775; and the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, 1775. All happened BEFORE our nation's July 4, 1776 birth date.

But, as we plan the grand look back at our founding, we are simultaneously facing something else - - - the very quiet departure of a generation of veterans who also answered the call to serve a cause greater than themselves. And in this case it is the generation that has anchored our military community for decades.

Just like the World War II and Korean War veterans, as well as those generations who came before them, the Vietnam veteran generation is now entering its sunset years. So as we get wrapped up in the hoopla of looking toward July 4, let us not overlook Sunday, Mar. 29 - - - Vietnam Veterans Day.

Vietnam veterans—now mostly in their late 70s and 80s—are dying at an alarming rate. Of the roughly 2.7 million Americans who served in-country, it is estimated that fewer than one-third are still alive, with hundreds passing away daily. This quiet, inevitable thinning of their ranks marks the end of an era.

This transition is uniquely poignant because of the era these men and women lived through. Unlike the clear-cut conclusions of World War II, Vietnam veterans returned to a divided country. Many spent their middle years fighting for Agent Orange benefits, better PTSD treatment, and the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Their legacy is not just one of military service. It includes the tireless advocacy that fundamentally changed how the U.S. treats all subsequent veterans.

Honoring them now requires active listening while their voices remain. Just as we recorded the stories of those who stormed Normandy, there is a renewed urgency to document the lives of those who served in Vietnam. They survived a difficult war and an even more difficult return; ensuring their stories endure is the final mission we owe them.

We recently read a tribute to a Vietnam Veteran that was written by Attorney Matthew W. Johnson of Georgia Veterans Law. The opening paragraph of his writing reads:

"John Randolph Cooper Jr. and I wore the same uniform during high school but different uniforms after high school. John was a distant relative of mine, and we both attended Central Gwinnett High School, in Lawrenceville, but he graduated on May 28, 1962, 37 years to the day before I graduated."

We hope readers of this publication will take a moment to [click here](#) and read the remainder of his article.

As this transition continues, the responsibility now shifts to the younger generations to preserve the lessons Vietnam veterans fought so hard to teach: that the soldier is separate from the policy, and that the scars of war—both visible and invisible—require a lifetime of support. With their departure, the military community loses the elder statesmen who understood the unique burden of fighting an unconventional war.

Their sunset is a reminder to listen now, while the living memory remains. - *hdh*

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## ~ News Notes ~

**SAL's Dinner Last Saturday** - - SAL Commander Derek Garmon reports that last Saturday's NY Strip Dinner evening was a great success. "We sold 48 dinners during the evening," he said. The volunteers who contributed to the evening's success included John McSween, Ed Holben, Stewart Croucher, Algie Allen, Bob Anderson and Rick Larose, as well as Garmon himself.

**Save The Date** - - The next Golden Ladle competition is set for Saturday, Mar. 28. Timing and details were somewhat lacking at publication deadline, but it will be a Potato Recipe Tasting. Watch for flyers in the clubroom and the event listing section of next week's publication for more information.

While on the subject of the food, the chili cook off winner who bested seven other competitors on Saturday, Feb. 21 was SAL member Brad Trego. His now has the Golden Ladle bragging rights for chili for the year.

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## ~ Scholarship Information ~

Applications are now available for the **Legion's annual awards** to graduating high school seniors, both male and female. Forms are available in the Clubroom, or may be downloaded by [clicking here](#). April 15 is the deadline to apply. The value of each Legion scholarship to be awarded this year is \$1,500, with plans to award at least four. For more information about the Legion scholarships contact the Post's Immediate Past Commander Tom Billings, Email: [tombill03@comcast.net](mailto:tombill03@comcast.net).

**The Auxiliary Unit of the Post has two scholarships available** for this year only. They are the Randall Porter scholarship which will be offered in the amount of \$2,000. This scholarship is available to a graduating senior in any of the greater metro area high schools, including the private schools. The second Auxiliary scholarship, which will be offered this year and the next two years, is the Coalson scholarship. This \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded only to a Milton High School senior. [Click here](#) for a copy of the Auxiliary's application form for both scholarships. For more information email Ellen Youngblood at [eftot57@gmail.com](mailto:eftot57@gmail.com)

Information about the SAL scholarship program and application form was not available by this week's publication deadline. It will be published here as soon as it is made available.

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## Upcoming Post 201, Other

# Veteran Related Activities

*9-Ball Pool Tournament, 2 p.m.  
Every 3rd Sunday in the Clubroom/Bar*

**VIEW FEATURED  
POST EVENTS**

**Thursday, Mar. 5, 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting.**

**Sunday, Mar. 8, 2 p.m. BINGO in the Ballroom. \$1,000 Jackpot.**

**Tuesday, Mar. 10, 6 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting.**

**Saturday, Mar. 14, 6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. Lucky Paws and Patriots Casino Night.** Sponsored by the Alpharetta Lions Club, all proceeds from this fundraiser will go to "Warrior Freedom Service Dogs." Tickets are \$75 per person. Visit [www.alpharettalions.com](http://www.alpharettalions.com) to purchase tickets. For more information call 410-708-6331 or email: [casino@alpharettalions.com](mailto:casino@alpharettalions.com).

**Tuesday, Mar. 17, 5:30 p.m. House and Grounds Committee Meeting.**

**Tuesday, Mar. 17, 7 p.m. General Membership Meeting.** Complimentary dinner will be served starting in the 6 p.m. time frame.

**Sunday, Mar. 22, 2 p.m. BINGO in the Ballroom. \$1,000 Jackpot.**

**Tuesday, Mar. 24, 6:30 p.m. SAL Monthly Meeting.**

**Wednesday, Mar. 25, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Life Line Screening.** Special Package for \$129 which includes screening for Carotid Artery Disease, Atrial Fibrillation, Peripheral Artery Disease and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm. To schedule an appointment call 800-324-9485 and use code HABC001.

**Sunday, March 29. Vietnam Veterans Day.** Discussions are underway about the possibility of holding a relatively 'low key' ceremony at the Post's Circle of Flags to commemorate the Day. More to come on this one.

**Saturday, May 16, 7 p.m. "Song Writers for Vets, Atlanta 2026"** at The Hotel at Avalon. Help VetBuds help Vets as songwriters join together for an unforgettable night performing their #1 hits and sharing the stories behind the songs. Sign up at [www.sw4vets.com](http://www.sw4vets.com) to be the first to know who the performers will be and when tickets are available.

**Friday, June 26 - Sunday, June 28. Department of Georgia Convention.** The meeting will be held at the Sonesta Gwinnett Place Hotel, 1775 Pleasant Hill Rd., Duluth.

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