



American Legion Post 201

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### **Membership Recruiting Highlights Tuesday Post 201 Legion, SAL, Auxiliary Leadership Installation**

The need to recruit and maintain membership seemed to be the thread that was woven through this past Tuesday evening's installation proceedings during the General Membership meeting for the Post's Legion, SAL and Auxiliary leadership teams for the coming year.

Guest speaker Sean Sullivan, District 9 Vice Commander, noted that although Georgia has nearly 700,000 veterans living in the state, fewer than 30,000 are members of the American Legion.

Although Judy Lively, the District 9 Auxiliary Commander who is also a member of the Post's Auxiliary leadership team, did not directly address the membership issue in her charge to the Auxiliary leadership, that thread was evident. And the same message was quietly evident during the SAL installation conducted by George Gray, who currently serves as District 10's adjutant.

Sullivan, however, during his brief comments following the Legion leadership installation, spoke more directly to the issue with a challenge he called "What is your why?"

"Why did you join the American Legion? Why did you choose to stay? Why did you agree to lead?," he asked, noting that the Department of Georgia has established several priorities that all flow from those questions and membership is among those priorities.

"Membership . . . is about ensuring our mission continues. Every new Legionnaire brings another pair of hands to

serve a veteran, mentor a young person, advocate for veterans, and become a future leader."

"The American Legion . . . is measured by the difference we make," he said. "That is why we recruit. That is why we train. That is why we serve," he added.

Although he did not go into significant membership details, part of the "why" for the membership numbers issue he discussed are reflected in the following research.

During the past decade (2016–2026), the American Legion has experienced a steady downward trend in national membership, mirroring broader demographic shifts across traditional veterans' organizations.

In 2016, national membership stood comfortably more than 1.76 million active members. However, by 2026, official tallies dropped to approximately 1.43 million members. This represents an overall decline of nearly 20% during a 10-year span.

This rapid drop threatens the organization's existence, lobbying power, and its capacity to fund local community and veteran support programs.

### ***Factors Driving the Need to Recruit***

Generational Attrition: The historical backbone of the Legion (World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans) is aging and passing away at a rapid rate. Currently an estimated 300 to 557 Vietnam veterans die every day across the United States. Actuarial statistics suggest that more than half of the original 8.4 million Vietnam-era service members were no longer living by late 2024.

A "Clustered" Veteran Pool: Younger veterans are not joining at rates sufficient to replace the older generation. To younger service members, the focus of traditional posts can feel disconnected from modern struggles.

User opinions and online forum discussions suggest a consensus that the more traditional posts can sometimes feel unwelcoming or "cliquey" to younger veterans, often retaining an "old guard" atmosphere that doesn't align with modern preferences. While legacy posts historically built camaraderie around shared drinks and recounting deployments, the newer generation frequently prioritizes mental health support, outdoor recreation, and navigating complex GI Bill benefits.

Loss of Legislative Leverage: As membership numbers shrink, the organization's voice on Capitol Hill—where they successfully lobby for crucial benefits, healthcare, and GI Bill updates—loses its political weight.

### ***Some Editorial Thoughts***

So why should younger veterans join the Legion today? Because the American Legion remains the nation's largest veteran's service organization. And we are focused on legislative needs which are relevant to younger veterans .

An example: The American Legion, along with other veterans service organizations were instrumental in passing the 2022 PACT Act, which vastly expanded VA healthcare for veterans exposed to toxic burn pits in Iraq and

Afghanistan. Going forward, the Legion can continue to do that on downstream issues, as well as those that are before Congress and state legislatures and at present.

On a more local basis, and if we can “think out of the box,” Post 201 can offer younger veterans camaraderie that gets it. “You served. So did we. Sometimes you just need to be around people who understand without you having to explain.”

And it can also be a place for your family. Think youth programs, scholarships, child-friendly events (like the upcoming puppet show on Oct. 16 and 17), scouting, plus the opportunities offered by the Auxiliary and the SAL to participate.

We do refer to ourselves as the Post 201 Family. Could that be our “Why?”

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## **Old Soldiers Day Plans Announced**

Plans have come together for Old Soldiers Day at the Post on Saturday, Aug. 1. Sr. Vice Commander Ralph Jordan said a 45-minute or so ceremony will take place on the Walk of Memories grounds starting at 10 a.m. This year’s guest speaker will be decorated veteran and Georgia 7th District Congressman Rich McCormick, M.D.

Music for the ceremony will be provided by the Alpha Brass, a component of the Alpharetta City Band. Scott Childress will be the program’s master of ceremonies. Following the ceremony, a reception for those attending will take place in the Post’s Clubroom Bar.

The general public is welcome to attend the morning ceremony and reception. And the Post, including the Clubroom/Bar will be open to the public all day, starting at 11 a.m.

During his two decades of service, McCormick deployed to combat zones in Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan. As a Marine, he flew helicopters, was Airborne and attached to Army and foreign forces, and taught at Georgia Tech and Morehouse College as the Marine Officer Instructor. In the Navy, he earned the rank of Commander and served as Department Head for the Emergency Medicine Department in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Between deployments, he earned his Master of Business Administration from National University and a medical degree from Atlanta’s Morehouse School of Medicine where he was honored to serve as student body president.

He completed residency in Emergency Medicine through Emory while training at Grady Hospital in Atlanta. Most recently, he served as an Emergency Room physician at Northside Hospital.

In Congress he serves on the House Armed Services, House Oversight, and Science, Space, and Technology Committees.

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**~ Post News Notes ~**

**New Legion Members** - - At Tuesday night's General Membership meeting three new members and three transfers were approved. The new members are: James, Stocinski, U.S. Army, other conflicts; Arlen Alexander and William Donges, both U.S. Navy and Vietnam vets. The transfers were Dennis O'Leary, U.S. Air Force, Vietnam; John Duncan, U.S. Navy; Vietnam; and William Norris, U.S. Army, Korea.

**SAL Golf Tournament Planning Dates** - - SAL Commander Derek Garmon has laid out eight golf tournament meeting planning dates between now and tournament day. The dates are Wednesday, Aug. 5 & 19, Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30, and Oct. 7. All meetings are scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m. The tournament is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 14 at The Golf Club at Bradshaw Farm, 3030 Bradshaw Drive, Woodstock.

**Welcome to the World** - - Bartender Ariel Lewis brought Berwyn Bishop Franklin Boggs into the world on Sunday, July 19 at 1:01 a.m. Born at Wellstar Kennestone Regional Hospital, the young man weighed in at 7-pounds, 10-ounces. He was 20 inches long.

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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**

**Saturday, July 25, 6 p.m. Baseball, Hot Dogs & Picnic Sides Golden Ladle Competition.** Contestants should bring a picnic side dish - - slaws, salads and dips, or whatever you would serve as a picnic side. Hot Dogs and all the fixings will be provided. Scott Hoehn with VIP of GA will be the DJ for the evening. The cocktail of the day will be a "Water Hazard" for \$5 per drink. Ingredients are vodka, Blue Gatorade, lemonade, Sprite and ice. Those attending will have an opportunity to win four infield, dugout level seats for the Tuesday, Aug. 11 Braves vs. New York Mets game which gets underway at 7:15 p.m. The winning ticket for the 50/50 raffle, which is raising money to purchase a new AED Defibrillator for the Post, will be drawn at 7 p.m. Watch for more info posted in the Clubroom.

**Sunday, July 26, 2 p.m. BINGO at the Post. \$1,000 Jackpot.**

**Saturday, Aug. 1. Old Soldiers Day.** The winning ticket for the Auxiliary's Handmade Quilt Auction will be drawn at 4 p.m. You do not have to be present to win. The Auxiliary started selling raffle tickets for the handmade quilt in early July. Tickets are 1 for \$5, 3 for \$10, and 10 for \$20. The quilt has a Pioneer pattern which ties in nicely with the nation's 250th birthday.

**Tuesday, Aug. 4. Coast Guard Birthday**

**Friday, Aug. 7. Purple Heart Day.**

**Tuesday, Aug. 25, 6:30 p.m. SAL Membership Meeting.**

**Wednesday, Aug. 26. Kabul 13 Remembrance Day.**

**Monday, Sept. 7. Labor Day.**

**Friday, Sept. 11. Patriot Day (*Informally known as 9/11 Remembrance Day*).**

**Friday, Sept. 18. U.S. Air Force Birthday.**

**Saturday, Sept. 19. POW/MIA Recognition Day.**

**Wednesday, Oct. 14. 9th Annual Rick Gimpel Memorial Golf Tournament.** The Golf Club at Bradshaw Farm, 3030 Bradshaw Drive, Woodstock. Registration opens at 8 a.m. Shotgun start at 9:30 a.m. Contact Derek Garmon, 770-549-5669, [derekgarmon@yahoo.com](mailto:derekgarmon@yahoo.com), or Bruce Hay, 309-657-8528, [hayville@att.net](mailto:hayville@att.net) for details.

**Saturday, Nov. 7, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. 10th Annual Cruz-In “car show”.** Free for members of the general public who want to visit the Post and look at the cars on display. The registration fee for those showing cars: \$10 pre-show; \$20 day of show. To register [click here](#) , or if you need more details or have questions email [al201carshow@gmail.com](mailto:al201carshow@gmail.com). Food and drinks will be available for sale, and children can take advantage of a jump house and other planned activities during the 4-hour event. Also, a “Stars & Stripes” baseball game pitting the Aviator Nation against the Georgia Jackets, is scheduled for 11 a.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 7, 12 noon. 2nd Annual Georgia American Legion Veterans Raffle Drawing.** [Click this link](#) for details. Tickets are now available at the Post. Winning tickets will be drawn Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026. You do not have to be present to win. For every \$20 ticket sold by Post 201, the Post gets to keep \$12 for its treasury.

**Wednesday, Nov.11. Veterans Day.**

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**CLUB 201 DANCE -  
LEARN MORE**

## VETERANS RESOURCES

Visit the [Resource Page](#) at Post 201's website, [www.legion201.org](http://www.legion201.org) for a significant amount of information concerning various resources available for veterans. You'll find a Survivor Assistance Checklist, Benefits for Georgia Veterans, Burial at Sea Information, Veteran's License Plates Information, Emergency Housing Information Guide and many other resources.

Past Issues of the Post's E-newsletter - [Click here](#).

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
Call 988 and Press 1 or Text 838255  
Visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

**VA Telephone Hotline - 1-877-222-8387**

**Post 201 Service Officer Hotline for Vets-at-Risk - 631-720-6022**