

American Legion Marne Post 13

Volume 12 Issue 4

Membership Meetings:

Monthly on the 2nd Tuesday

Dinner 6:30pm

Meeting 7:00pm

American Legion Post 13
24741 W Renwick Road
Plainfield, Illinois 60544

(815) 436-9231



www.plainfieldlegion.com

April 2026

Dear Members of Plainfield American Legion Marne Post 13,

As we move into April, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation for your continued support and participation in our Post activities. Your involvement is vital to our community's strength and success.

Upcoming Weekly Events in April :

- **Bingo Nights: Every Thursday, doors open at 5:00 PM, ticket sales begin at 5:30 PM, and games start at 7:00 PM. Come enjoy an evening of fun and camaraderie.**
- **Queen of Hearts: Come and join us Every Friday until the Queen of Hearts is found. Jackpot varies every week depending on how many people play into the Queen. Tickets can be purchased at the Queen of Hearts dispensing ticket machines located at the main bar or in the pavilion. For more information and rules please visit our website. Queen of Hearts goes live on Facebook at 8pm every Friday night. You don't have to be present to win but must retain the other half of your ticket.**

Final Thoughts

Our Post thrives because of the unwavering dedication of our Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Legion Riders. Together, we continue to honor our mission of service to veterans and our community.

Thank you for your commitment. I look forward to seeing you at our weekly upcoming events.



**For God and Country,
Commander James "Casta" Castaneda
Plainfield American Legion Post 13**

Board of Officers

James Castaneda

Commander

David LaFrancis

Senior Vice

Brent Finney

Junior Vice

DJ Hale

Adjutant

Ken Blair

Finance Officer

David LeVally

Chaplain

Paul Thomason

Historian

Brad Sellers

Service Officer

Dennis Downing

Sergeant-at-Arms

—

Robert "Doc" Schiavo

Executive Committee

President

Senior Vice Commander Report

Thank you to everyone that came out to the Plainfield St. Patrick's Day Parade and I Hope everyone has a Happy Easter.

**David "Frenchie" LaFrancis
Senior Vice Commander
Plainfield American Legion Post 13**

Service Officer Report

Burial With Your Spouse in a National Cemetery: Here's What to Know

Who Qualifies for Burial

Any veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable qualifies for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs national cemetery. That includes the gravesite, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone and burial flag at no cost to the family.

Spouses qualify for burial with the veteran even if the spouse remarried after the Veteran's death. That detail surprises many people. A surviving spouse who remarries doesn't lose eligibility for burial in a national cemetery. The remarriage doesn't matter.

Minor dependent children qualify. Unmarried adult children with disabilities that began before age 21 also qualify under certain conditions. These family members can be buried in the national cemetery even if they die before the veteran. Former spouses whose marriage ended in divorce or annulment don't qualify unless they're also veterans with their own service-connected eligibility.

The Pre-Need Application

You can apply years in advance to confirm eligibility. The pre-need determination process lets veterans and family members find out if they qualify before anyone dies. This eliminates uncertainty and speeds up arrangements when death occurs. Apply online at va.gov or submit VA Form 40-10007 by mail or fax. You'll need the veteran's Social Security number, date and place of birth, military status and service history. A DD214 or other discharge documents help but aren't required. The VA will search for records if you don't have them.

If approved, you receive a pre-need decision letter. Keep it with important documents, and tell your family where it's located. When death occurs, the family or funeral director calls the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 to schedule the burial.

Having the pre-need letter speeds up the process significantly.

The pre-need application doesn't obligate anyone to burial in a VA cemetery. Families can change their minds and arrange burial elsewhere. The letter just confirms eligibility if you choose national cemetery burial.

You can indicate a preferred cemetery on the application, but the VA can't guarantee burial in a specific location. Cemeteries close to new burials when they run out of space. The VA assigns gravesites in cemeteries with available space at the time of death.

Service Officer Report

State Veterans Cemeteries

Many states operate their own veterans cemeteries separate from the VA system. Eligibility is similar to VA national cemeteries but may include residency requirements. Most states provide free burial and a headstone for the veteran. Many charge a fee under \$1,000 for eligible spouses and dependents.

The VA provides grants to states for establishing and improving state veterans cemeteries. Currently 120 state, tribal and territorial veterans cemeteries receive VA funding.

Planning Ahead

Only 16 percent of veterans choose burial in a national cemetery, according to VA estimates. Many don't know they're eligible. Others never get around to planning. The pre-need application takes about 15 minutes online. Processing typically takes a few weeks. The decision letter gives you and your family certainty about eligibility and simplifies arrangements during a difficult time.

National cemetery burial is an earned benefit. Veterans who served honorably and their families have the right to burial in a national shrine maintained in perpetuity. The application process removes guesswork and ensures families can access the benefit when needed.

Talk to your family about your wishes. Complete the pre-need application. Keep the decision letter accessible. These simple steps provide peace of mind and honor service to the nation.

Sources: VA, "Eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery," "Burial and Memorial Benefits," "Pre-need eligibility for burial in a VA cemetery," "Burial and memorial benefits for family members" and "VA National Cemetery Burial Eligibility." Military.com, "VA National Cemetery Burial Eligibility," (2024). The American Legion, "Plan ahead for burial in a VA national cemetery," (2025). MOAA, "Surviving Spouse Corner: What to Know About National Cemetery Burials," (2025).

**Bradley L. Sellers
Service Officer
Plainfield American Legion
Marne Post 13
alm13b.sellers@gmail.com**

Adjutant Report

It's not too late to renew for 2026!

If you need any assistance with renewal please let me know. We are up to 29 new members! Let's keep the post growing. We are at 96.25% renewal for 2026, we are almost at 100%! You can renew online at <https://mylegion.org/personifyebusiness/default.aspx> , by mail, or at the post! Thanks again and keep up the good work!

David "DJ" Hale

**Adjutant
Plainfield American Legion
Marne Post 13**

Chaplain

Legion family,

As we enter the month of April; we do so in the light of Easter—a season that reminds us that hope can rise even from the darkest places. Easter speaks of renewal, of life overcoming death, and of a promise that God is still at work in the world and in us. For many of our Veterans and families, this message is more than a tradition; it is a lifeline. Scripture tells us in 1 Peter 1:3 that through Christ’s resurrection we have been given a ‘living hope.’ “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” As spring unfolds around us, Easter invites us to look again for that living hope—strength for today, healing the weary, and the assurance that new beginnings are possible.

Sick Call this Month: Joe Kmiek, Paul Thomason, Ron and Mary Kay Allan, Frank Brow, Frank Pecoraro, Gary Taylor. George Shade, Frank Uher, Tom Mlynek. Jim Miller and family.

Post Everlasting: Wesley Hacker, March 6, 2026, Viet Nam Veteran.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF ANY OF OUR COMRADES SHOULD BE ADDED AT PHONE NUMBER 815 436 9231.

APRIL MILITARY OBSERVANCES:

Month of the Military Child: April honors the strength and resilience of military children. “Purple Up!” Events and simple words of appreciation go a long way in recognizing their sacrifice.

Gold Star Spouses Day — April 5: A solemn day to honor the husbands and wives of our fallen heroes. We remember their courage, their grief, and their enduring love.

Easter—April 5: Celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Army Day — April 6: Recognizing the founding of the United States Army and the Soldiers who have defended our nation since 1775.

National Former POW Recognition Day — April 9: We honor all former prisoners of war and remember those still unaccounted. Their endurance and sacrifice remain a sacred trust.

Air Force Reserve Birthday — April 14: Celebrating the Air Force Reserve and its essential role in national defense since 1948.

Army Reserve Birthday — April 23: Honoring the citizen-soldiers of the Army Reserve, serving both community and country since 1908.

National Military Brats Day — April 30: A day to recognize the unique culture and sacrifices of children growing up in military families.

Chaplain

Chaplain Continued...

Historical Military Events: April in Military History Key Battles and Turning Points

April has marked some of the most decisive and symbolic moments in American military history. From the opening shots of the Revolution to the final days of major wars, this month carries a legacy of courage, sacrifice, and national transformation.

Lexington & Concord – April 19, 1775, The American Revolution begins with the “shot heard 'round the world,” as colonial militia confront British forces in Massachusetts.

Battle of Shiloh – April 6–7, 1862 One of the Civil War’s bloodiest engagements, Shiloh becomes a turning point in the Western Theater and reveals the war’s growing scale.

Fall of Richmond – April 3, 1865; Union forces capture the Confederate capital, signaling the collapse of the Confederacy.

Appomattox Court House – April 9, 1865; General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Ulysses S. Grant, effectively ending the Civil War and beginning the long work of national healing.

U.S. Enters World War I – April 6, 1917, Congress declares war on Germany, bringing American forces into the global conflict.

Doolittle Raid – April 18, 1942, A daring U.S. air raid on Tokyo boosts American morale after Pearl Harbor and demonstrates long-range strike capability.

Operation Vengeance – April 18, 1943, U.S. pilots intercept and down the aircraft carrying Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, architect of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Battle of Okinawa Begins – April 1, 1945, the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific Theater begins, marking one of the war’s most intense and costly battles.

Battle of Pork Chop Hill – April 16, 1953, A fierce Korean War engagement fought during armistice negotiations, symbolizing the struggle and sacrifice of U.N. forces.

Fall of Saigon - April 1975 Evacuations and final battles throughout April lead to the fall of Saigon on April 30, marking the end of the Vietnam War.

Operation Provide Comfort – April 1991 A humanitarian and military mission to protect Kurdish refugees following the Gulf War.

Persian Gulf War Cease-Fire 1991.

Baghdad Falls – April 9, 2003, During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime marks the end of major combat operations.

As we reflect on these April milestones, we turn to the words of Isaiah 40:31: *‘But those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles.’* Renewal does not erase the past—it gives us the strength to carry it with purpose.

May this month remind us to honor the fallen, support the living, and walk forward with the same courage shown by those who came before us. And may God grant us the wisdom to serve our community, our families, and one another with compassion and resolve.”

David LeVally

Chaplain Marne Post 13

Americanism Report

Patriots,

Thank you so much to all of our members who came out to the Hometown Irish Parade! It was a great success and led the parade proudly through downtown. In addition, our WWI Color Guard helped start the miler run before the parade. Our next parade is Memorial Day Monday, May 25th!

At this month's meeting, I will be looking to schedule volunteers to present American Legion School Awards at the 8 local middle schools and scholarships at the 4 local high schools. This is an amazing, fun opportunity to represent the Post at a high-profile event. Please be ready to sign up for this cool experience.

Americanism Programs for Children and Youth:

Boys and Girls State literature and registration are available at illinoisboysstate.org and alaigs.org respectively. In addition, come talk to me or Sharon LeVally for more information on these wonderful experiences.

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Academy – Boys and Girls ages 15 – 17 who are physically fit and are interested in a career in law enforcement are invited to apply to attend this program which will take place at the Illinois State Police Academy in Springfield, IL from Sunday June 21st to Friday June 26th. Applications can be found at the American Legion Department of Illinois website under Programs & Services. Once under this tab scroll down to Safety Law & Order. Applications including securing Post sponsorship are due no later than May 31st and only 50 participants may attend, so get going on this now if you are interested. Due to the small number of slots, previous attendees are not permitted to apply.

Important Days in March:

Tuesday, April 7th – District 202 graduating senior AL and ALA Scholarship applications due to respective high school college and career offices

E pluribus unum,

Greg Roach

Americanism Chairman



Riders Officers

Chris Gibson

Director

Brad Arnold

Asst. Director

Karen Gibson

Secretary

Leslie Vavra

Treasurer

Donnie Williams

Membership Chairman

Donna Blagojevic

Chaplain

David Hale

Sergeant-at-Arms

Jason Vavra

Historian

Jeff Kocis

Communications Officer

Nick Mesik

Run Coordinator

Roger Scott

Safety Officer

Nick Mesik & Jason Vavra

Road Captains

Dear American Legion Family,

We hope this message finds everyone well and preparing for the Easter season with family and friends. As the days grow longer and the weather begins to warm, it's that time of year again, we're revving up our bikes and blowing the winter dust off. You'll start seeing more motorcycles not only at the Post, but out on the roads as well. We kindly ask everyone to stay alert and watch for motorcycles, our loved ones are always waiting for us to return home safely after every ride.

We are excited to kick off the 2026 riding season with our first **Bike Night on Wednesday, April 8th (weather permitting). The evening will include our annual **Bike Blessing**, led by Plainfield's very own Reverend Richard "Dick" Wisdom, who was recently honored as *Illinois Police Chaplain of the Year* by the Illinois Conference of Police Chaplains on March 10th. We are truly honored and privileged to have such a dedicated and respected member of our community continue this meaningful tradition. We hope to see you all there for a great start to the season.**

Meat Raffle Update

We are pleased to announce that the final totals are in! After the purchase of the cow and all processing fees, we were able to donate \$5,250.00 to the Midwest Veterans Homeless Shelter. This would not have been possible without the incredible support from all of you who purchased raffle tickets, thank you for your generosity. Stay tuned as we begin planning our next raffle event.

Poker Update

At this time, the Riders have made the decision to suspend our poker games. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Until we have a clear path forward, the games will remain paused. We look forward to getting everyone back to the tables as soon as possible and appreciate your patience and understanding.



Riders Officers

Chris Gibson

Director

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David Hale

Sergeant-at-Arms

Jason Vavra

Historian

Jeff Kocis

Communications Officer

Nick Mesik

Run Coordinator

Roger Scott

Safety Officer

Nick Mesik & Jason Vavra

Road Captains

Continued...

Upcoming Poker Run – July 25th

Planning is currently underway for our annual Poker Run scheduled for July 25th. We are in the process of selecting a beneficiary organization. If you have a recommendation for a deserving local, service-based organization or charity, we encourage you to share it with us.

Please submit your suggestions, along with a link to the organization’s website, to:

plainfieldmarnriders@gmail.com

Deadline: April 1st

One organization currently under consideration is *Project Headspace and Timing (PHAT)*. On April 15th, a representative from PHAT will be attending our meeting to speak on PTSD awareness and suicide prevention. Based out of Kankakee, they are working to establish a chapter here in Will County.

We would like to extend an invitation to the Executive Committee and all Post leadership to attend this important meeting. Please let us know in advance if you plan to attend, as we typically coordinate dinner prior to the meeting.

More details regarding the Poker Run will be shared as they become available.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Riders and our mission.


Ride safe, look out for one another, and we hope to see you soon.

Riding in service to Veterans and Children,

**Chris Gibson
Director**




Plainfield American Legion Riders Present



BIKE And Cruise NIGHT

Bike Blessing at 7 pm



APRIL 8 TH, 2026
5-10 PM

Plainfield American Legion Hall Pavillion
24741 Renwick Rd, Plainfield, IL 60544

Made with PosterMyWall.com



Auxiliary News

Happy Spring!

As Easter Sunday approaches, I hope you all have a wonderful time celebrating with your loved ones. The Post held an incredible Easter Party for our members and their families this past weekend. A huge thank you to the Post and to all the volunteers who made the event such an amazing day! Also, thank you to the Auxiliary members who helped fill all the eggs for the hunt. We all appreciate all your hard work!

The Auxiliary also filled Easter bags to be delivered to local veterans in assisted living facilities at two Plainfield locations. Thank you to our volunteers for shopping and putting them together.

Poppy season is right around the corner in May! The Auxiliary is working on new shirts for volunteers and anyone interested in purchasing one. Please watch the Google Group for sign-up information on Poppy Day May 9th, and how to order a shirt. Please note, the Auxiliary is selling with special pricing for the shirts in order for more people to purchase them to help bring awareness to the meaning of the Poppy. Again, please keep a look out for volunteer time slots and shirt sales.

We will be have an Auxiliary meeting Tuesday, April 14th, dinner at 6:30p, meeting beginning at 7p. Hope to see you there!

Bunco is Sunday, April 12th. As usual, registration begins at 12:00, with game play beginning at 1p. Come on out to support this Auxiliary fundraiser and for a chance at winning cash prizes!

With much gratitude and appreciation!

**Deb Uher
President ALA Unit 13**

Auxiliary Officers

Deb Uher
President

amlegaux13@gmail.com
ala13.deb.uher@gmail.com

Renee Bush
Vice President

Linda Hale
Treasurer

Crystal Egle
Secretary

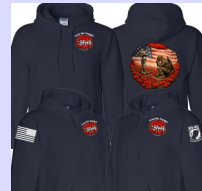
Erica LaFrancis
Historian

Sandi Mcvey
Chaplain

J. Truhler
Sergeant-at-Arms



POPPY SHIRTS ON SALE IN THE BAR!





Auxiliary News

2026 EASTER FESTIVITIES





SAL Officers

Michael Kasperski
Commander

Greg Roach
Sr. Vice Commander

John Selfridge
Jr. Vice Commander

Gary Uher
Adjutant

Jim Bush
Finance Officer

Chris Gibson
Chaplain

Don Raducka
Sergeant-at-Arms

Mike Krebs
Secretary

Greg Roach
Historian

Sons,

Welcome to spring! Our normal monthly meeting will take place (with pizza and a drink from the bar of course!) on Monday, April 13th with dinner starting at 6pm and the meeting to follow. Please come out and hear about all of the good things the Sons and our Post are involved in. Squadron 13 has been working with the Pace Bus Company and the Legion Leadership team to rent a multi passenger van/bus which will be at our disposal for transporting veteran Post members and veterans in the community to meetings and our events being held at the Plainfield American Legion. Many of our older veterans have difficulty finding rides or driving at nighttime and this bus option will help get more of our members to events at the Post. We will also use the bus in parades for members who would like to continue to represent the Post but can no longer march the parade route. Once the deal is finalized, we will be looking for members to be trained to drive the bus and be available to drive members to various events at the Post.

Important dates for the month include:

Wednesday, April 1 – Euchre (6-9:30p)

Friday, April 3 – Karaoke (7-11p)

Monday, April 13 – Dinner and Meeting to follow (6-8p)

In service and support,

Greg Roach
Senior Vice Commander
Squadron 13

