



Post 552

American Legion Meeting Minutes

16 October 2025

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 pm

Officers Present: (Note absences)

Commander	Doug Benzel	
1 st Vice	Bill Marsh	
2 nd Vice	Mike Hill	
Adjutant	Dave Schmidt	Absent
Finance Officer	Kent Van Horn	
Chaplain	Bill Bartle	Absent
Service Officer	Dave Schmidt	Absent
Sergeant-At-Arms	Jim Vander Ploeg	
Asst Adjutant	Bill Heard	

Other members: Carlos Bazua, Gabe Rowan

Minutes from the September meeting were accepted as posted.

Finance Report:

Finance Officer Kent Van Horn reported that the Post's investment strategy is working well.

Membership:

New member Carlos Basua is a Marine Corps veteran who worked on Osprey aircraft. Following active duty, he served with the Border Patrol and now is employed in the mortgage industry. He is married and has two children. He is very interested in being involved in American Legion activities.

Commander Benzel reported that the Post has reached 78 paid members of its 140-member target—a 55.71 percentage achievement. The 22nd District average is 57.4 percent. 1st Vice Bill Marsh reported that four members manned the Post's booth at PAESAN. The experience indicated that the Post needs more recruiting materials. The Post will use a new table banner at the next recruiting event. Gabe Rowan said he can give the Post access to social media for its membership drive.

1st Vice Bill Marsh offered a motion, seconded by Jim Vander Ploeg, to invite those members who have not renewed yet for 2026 at the Post on November 11 to encourage them to pay their dues. The VFW Post is holding a BBQ and will offer a free drink at the Canteen. The motion was approved. Finance Officer Kent Van Horn will investigate ways for members to pay their dues online.

Boy Scout Troop 271:

Asst. Adjutant Bill Heard reported that he has completed one of two online courses required to be the liaison with Boy Scout Troop 271. Computer difficulties have prevented him from taking the second online course, which is required by the State of California. He will work with Troop officers to complete this course. Both courses are aimed at acquainting applicants with the laws and rules to protect youth involved in Boy Scout programs. He also will attend a Troop 271 Court of Honor on 21 October in La Jolla.

Sick Call:

Chaplain Bill Bartle remains on the sick list. He would appreciate phone calls from any Post member.

Unfinished Business:

1st Vice Bill Marsh plans for the Post to host a Bingo event from 3-5 p.m. on Sunday 16 November. He proposes that the Post would conduct Bingo the third Sunday of every month. Rather than gather prizes from local merchants, he plans to offer gift cards as prizes. Five Bingo cards would sell for \$20. For Bingo to be profitable for the Post, he said 18 people would need to attend a session. He asked that his expenses be paid for the Bingo prizes and he moved that a fund not to exceed \$600 be approved. Kent Van Horn seconded the motion, which was approved.

New Business

There was no new business to report.

Good of the American Legion:

Commander Benzel noted that suicide among veterans is at an alarming rate. He provided a pamphlet, "Be The One", sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, for distribution to members of the American Legion and VFW.

Gabe Rowan reported that the VFW will sponsor a Halloween Party on 31 October at 6 p.m. Beginning at noon on Veterans Day, 11 November, the VFW will host a BBQ at the post and provide one free drink at the Canteen.

A Navy flag will be displayed outside the post to commemorate the Navy's 250th Anniversary. Gabe noted that the VFW recently replaced all the old flag stands with new ones. The Post will place two new flag stands in the meeting room. One will have the Boy Scout flag for Troop 271 and Post 552.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

/s/Signed October 27, 2025

Adjutant Dave Schmidt