



Post 552

American Legion Meeting Minutes

21 May 2026

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
Finance Officer	Kent Van Horn
Chaplain	Bill Bartle (Absent), Jim Vander Ploeg (Acting Chaplain)
Service Officer	Dave Schmidt
Sergeant-At-Arms	Jim Vander Ploeg
Public Affairs Off.	Carlos Bazua (Excused Absence)
Asst. Adjutant	Bill Heard

Guests: None

Other members: Gabe Rowan

Minutes from the April meeting: Approved

Committee Reports:

Finance Officer Kent Van Horn reported that he sold 100 shares of QYLD to cover upcoming expenses. He said April was the weakest month for Post Bingo with only \$115.00 received. Bingo revenue for the May game was \$200.00. Total Bingo revenue since November 2025 is \$1,456.00. Raffle income for that period totals \$512.00.

Membership:

Adjutant Dave Schmidt said the Post's membership percentage stands at 89.29 percent, compared to the District's 91.5 percent. Post 552 is at the middle of the pack, he said. The District hopes to reach a goal of 100 percent by May 13. He has processed two new members and was contacted by a third. There were two membership renewals. There are 3 department reports due by June 1.

Boys and Girls State:

Kent Van Horn reported that the VFW Post has paid for one delegate to Boys and Girls State.

Boy Scout Troop 217:

Troop 271 Liaison Officer Bill Heard reported that he had participated in the Coastal Sage District Zoom meeting, which elected officers for the year. He and his wife, along with Commander Doug Benzel, attended the Troop's first Pancake Breakfast, which was very successful. The Troop collected \$3,480 and netted \$2,522 on the event. Planning has begun for the next fundraiser—a car wash in the last weekend of August or the first weekend of September. Chair Sarah Knoke has ordered a 3 X 5 Troop 271/Post 552 flag for display in the Post. The Post has agreed to reimburse the Troop for the flag, which will cost about \$180. She also forwarded to the Post a copy of the Troop Charter Agreement for signature by the Post Commander.

Sons of the American Legion Update:

Commander Benzel noted that the SAL had scheduled officer elections later in May. The group will begin planning its summer activities, including a BBQ at the Post on Friday, May 22, and a fish fry sometime later in the year.

Unfinished Business:

1st Vice Bill Marsh noted that only 12 people attended the May Bingo game. He proposed rescheduling the games to quarterly from monthly. He said this would allow the Post to focus on attracting more guests. Marsh said he discussed with Troop 271 Chair Sarah Knoke having two senior members of the Troop call the next Bingo games, with the hope that Troop parents would attend. He also proposed switching from awarding Costco gift cards to Trader Joe's or some other gift cards. Discussions included changing Bingo games from Sundays to a weeknight, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. The current plan is for the next Bingo

game to be at 6:30 P.M. on June 21. He also suggested placing a Bingo number screen in the Canteen as a way to promote ticket sales to Canteen patrons.

Commander Benzel reported that he had presented two awards to members of the Coast Guard Junior ROTC at Mission Bay High School on May 8. The awards were for scholarship achievement and military excellence. Brian Compton also attended.

New Business:

Commander Benzel called for additional nominations for Post officers, but none were offered.

Finance Officer Van Horn said the Post's budget for FY 2026-/2027 won't change much from the current budget. He projects total income of \$13,467.50 for the fiscal year, with expenses totaling \$11,625. These would include American Legion Baseball, Boys and Girls State, Scout Troop 271, American Legion Convention and other expenses. He assumes 90 paid members, with 30 PUFL members. Primary fundraisers will be Bingo and Raffles.

Dave Schmidt made a motion to approve the proposed budget. Mike Hill seconded the motion, which was approved.

Post Elections

Nominated for Post officers were Doug Benzel, Post Commander; Bill Marsh, 1st Vice; and Mike Hill, 2nd Vice. After nominations were closed, all three were elected unanimously on a motion by Bill Heard, and a second by Kent Van Horn. Installation is scheduled for the June meeting by outgoing District Commander Vic Martin.

All the other Post officers remain in their positions:

Adjutant	Dave Schmidt
Finance Officer	Kent Van Horn
Chaplain	Bill Bartle
Service Officer	Dave Schmidt
Sergeant-At-Arms	Jim Vander Ploeg
Public Affairs Off.	Carlos Bazua
Asst. Adjutant	Bill Heard

On a motion by Mike Hill, seconded by Dave Schmidt, Commander Benzel and 1st Vice Marsh were approved to attend the California American Legion Convention 25-28 June in Visalia, Calif. On a motion by Mike Hill, seconded by Kent Van Horn, a fund not to exceed \$1,500 was approved as expenses for the Post's convention delegates.

The Post took a memorial moment in memory of Donald Martocchi, USAF, who died April 28 at age 91.

Good of the American Legion:

Jim Vander Ploeg reported that he will leave for Iowa the day after our June 18 meeting. Cmdr. Benzel will appoint a temporary replacement for Sergeant-At-Arms and possibly the Chaplain

Members discussed a Welcome to Pacific Beach sign that includes the Post's name and emblem, planned to cost \$550--\$300 for the sign structure and \$250 for the sign itself. The designer has not provided a design to date and will not receive payment until a design is received.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

/s/Signed June 6, 2026

Adjutant Dave Schmidt