

The American Legion

Robert F. McDermott Post 309

“None Of Us Should Stand Alone”

OUR VISION

Veterans Strengthening America

OUR MISSION

To enhance the well-being of America’s veterans, their families, our military, and our community through our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

OUR PRINCIPALS

- ***A Veteran Is A Veteran*** – this means we embrace all current and former military members and endeavor to help them transition into our community.
- ***Honor Those Who Came Before Us*** – this means we pay perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure new generations never forget them.
- ***American Values And Patriotism*** – we advocate for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone, discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship, and honoring military service by observing and participating in memorial events.
- ***Selfless Service*** – this means we celebrate all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspire others to serve and strengthen America.
- ***Family & Community Engagement*** – We strive to fulfill the unique needs of our community.
- ***Advancing The Vision*** – we educate, mentor, and lead new generations of Americans.

We are the American Legion, Post #309 in Helotes, Texas, named in honor of Brigadier General Robert Francis McDermott, the first permanent Dean of the Faculty at the United States Air Force Academy, and later Chairman and CEO of USAA.

American Legion Robert F. McDermott Post No. 309

Meetings are 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM (Social time 6:30-7:00 PM)

Helotes Lions Club 14690 Bandera Road, Helotes, Texas 78023

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 884 Helotes, TX 78023

Phone: (210) 874-2018

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ALPost309>

Email: txalpost309@gmail.com

American Legion Riders Post 309

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM

Location: **via ZOOM until further notice**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ALRPost309>

Email: txalrpost309@gmail.com

American Legion Auxiliary

Meetings are 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM

Helotes Lions Club 14690 Bandera Road, Helotes, Texas 78023

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ALAUnit309>

Email: alaunit309@gmail.com

Sons of the American Legion Coming soon

Meetings: TBD

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/SALSquadron309>

Email: salsquadron309@gmail.com

Advertisement

IMPORTANT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MAY 19TH.

The upcoming General Membership on the 19th is very important for our post. In this meeting we will be voting for the 2021-2022 officers to help guide our post to success. We need to have all those that can attend be at the Casa Helotes Activity Center, 12070 Leslie Road, Helotes, TX. Start time 7PM.

We have the following opening for candidates, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, Finance Officer, Judge Advocate and 3rd Executive Seat. These positions are not total time consuming yet very rewarding.

For our Post to continue to grow comes the responsibility of the post members to add their expertise in volunteering. We cannot rely on a few members to continue the charge. Come join the Officer Corp plan our future. I have talked to a lot of you and we have the talent we need to spend the time. Think about where you feel you can help our post and put in for that position.

Lets start out the new year with full stream and leave the COVID year behind, letting us go back to the good things we planned to do for our veterans, community and the children and youth.

FIRST HALF OF THE 2020-2021 YEAR

I hope that this message finds you and yours in good health and spirits! After all the snow and power issues I also hope you managed to keep warm.

I want to thank you all for a great first half. We met the challenge set before us, we reached 100% membership goal before December 31st. We lead the way in the 20th District. We have done this by renewals of our family members and gaining several new members. I also want to thank the post family for renewing online and those how used the traditional method.

The next half of the year is looking pretty good, we are seeing a drop in COVID, we will start having person to person meetings soon, I hope. The Executive Committee is coming up with some great items to make the meeting more productive and fun. I will expect fundraisers will be started to raise funds for legion projects we have signed up for this year. I best part of this is to be able to meet our new members and the camaraderie we have when we are together.

Stay well and hope to see you soon.

STATE OF THE POST ADDRESS

My fellow Legionnaires of Post 309.

I hope you are all well and in good spirits. What a 2019/2020 legion year this has been! It is hard to describe the feeling we all must be felling, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, during the last three months of the year. We left the previous legion year with high hopes for the Post. We made our goals for the year, we had retained 90% of your members, met and exceeded our recruitment goals and had a positive bank account at years end. We were looking for to doing more for our veterans and community. We were looking forward to fundraising and the Helotes Cornyval Parade.

We find ourselves wondering what the rest of 2020 has in store for us, what will happen to our economy? Will we still have a job? Will the schools open? What is next for us?

As the Commander I wonder these things as well and I wonder if the Post will stand strong? I fear that because we cannot meet anywhere, we will lose members! I fear that as membership renewals are due, I fear many will not renew! I fear the momentum we had will come to a crawl or even stop.

Now is not the time to stop doing what we should do as Legion Members. Our annual membership fees are used to help those who come across adversity. Although the Post may not have the means to fund a request. A part of our membership goes to the Department Legionnaire Emergency Fund. We need to make sure there are plenty of funds for the future by renewing our memberships. Please renew.

If you help someone in need let a Post Officer know. We need this information to add to our Consolidation Post Report. This information will be used to advise Congress and The Senate of what The American Legion members do to help our fellow veterans and our communities.

During the last few months, we have helped our community and veterans. Jamie Caratini has delivered food to a family in need. Alesa Arnett has been helping veterans with claims. Mark Ochoa Jr. continues to volunteer at the South Texas Fisher House and in addition we talked with a veteran on a street corner. He got Alesa involved, she was able to find his claim was submitted and will watch to make sure it will be completed. So, you see now is not the time to setback and watch. It is the time to stay active, stay onboard and help us help others.

Robert F McDermott Post 309 is still alive! We have a positive bank account; the Executive Committee still meets via digital devices on Virtual Meeting Platforms. We discuss issues such as making an amendment to our By Laws to allow Virtual Voting for situations as we have today. We discuss ways to provide virtual meetings with those who are bed ridden, out of town or on deployment. We are discussing ways that we can possibly hold meetings that meet the needs of our members and the guidance of the county.

Things I feel we need to conquer this next year. I think that one of our issues that faces us is the lack of a Post Home. It would be possible to have meetings in our Post. We would not have to rely on others to use their building. I am going to work harder this year to plan towards setting the goal of our own Post Home. I will need some people to help me. I want to have a Building Committee to set goals and achieve them. I want to have a Fundraising Committee to organize fundraisers and Post parties to ensure that we raise the monies to fund the Post's projects and Post celebrations for our efforts in these endeavors. I would like to see a Training Committee. I would like to see each committee member take the Basis Training course at The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI). I want them to realize how much The American Legion does for our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, our National Security, Americanism and Children and Youth. I would like them to learn the history, the pomp and ceremony and what it means. By doing so they can teach our members so they too will understand The American Legion.

I would like to see more members step up and become involved in the Post, take pride in what our Post has to offer. I understand we are all volunteers; I understand that some have more time than others and I understand life happens. God comes first, Family next, Country then Legion. God wants to help you to be a better person by following his guidelines and laws. The Family is next, your family is your support and your future to give to the world without them you would be lost. I feel our country is where we and our families live. Without our country our freedoms would not be the same. The call of

duty for us is to by voting what is right for our country every election. Then there's The American Legion, helping those who sacrificed their time, their bodies and the families that supported the veteran. We strive to help all our veterans to live a life the way a hero should live, a life that we veterans are owed for serving to our country.

I look forward to seeing each and everyone of our post members when that time comes. I am anxious to hold our return meeting hoping the COVID-19 has been conquered. I will be happy to see your faces and know that you survived this pandemic. I will be excited to work on getting our post home. I will show my gratitude to all the frontline workers, my gratitude to the first responders that face Covid-19 on a daily basis, my gratitude to my fellow Legionnaires for helping others, for following the CDC guidelines and returning to the post to celebrate The American Legion and our Post. Most of all I will show my gratitude to God for allowing us to continue our work towards helping veterans, our country, our country's, children and youth, and each other.

I am proud to be your Commander. I am proud of each of you and all the things we accomplished together throughout the past year. I will proud as we return and continue our quest. I see our post growing and one day it will be post that all will envy. As I look at our members, I see my replacement out there. I see our next Adjutant, Vice Commanders, Finance Officer, Chaplain, Sergeant at Arms and Executive Officers. I look forward to the day, hopefully not too soon, when I am a Legionnaire of our post such as many of you. Proud to be a member and contribute what I can to the Post and our Commander and our Officers.

Be proud, be ever proud.

Looking To The Future

I was wanting to give you some good news, however, the new restrictions have squashed the news. I was hoping to tell you when our next meeting was going to be, now I don't know. The Executive Committee meeting was held at the Burger King in Helotes. We discussed several items one being the use of virtual media to hold meetings. The problem is the bylaws do not have provisions to vote over a media format. A resolution has been written to address this issue. The problem is it has to be voted on by the membership and the viscous cycle continues. We will get through all of this.

I am happy to say that several of you have taken me up on my challenge to completed the Basic Training course. I am looking for to our next meeting to pin their pins on their caps. As I have said it in the past, by taking this course I have a better knowledge of the how, what and whens of The American Legion. The challenge is still on! During your down time I encourage you to go to the Legion.org site and search for Basic Training and take the course, you will be glad you did!

As a commander there are many things I need to keep up with. The most important thing to a post is it's membership. I worry during this time of when we can't meet you will no longer show an interest to be a member of our Post or The American Legion. I worry about each one of our members. I worry about COVID-19 and hope that all of you all are in good health! I was told today of a friend from post 336 has contracted COVID-19. If you need any assistance let one of the Executive Committee members know. I do know that Alesa Arnett, our Service Officer, has been helping others with claims. I know Jaime Caratini has delivered food to a family in need. We can still help one another if we follow the guidelines of distancing, wearing a mask and washing our hands.

Keep Calm and Legion On! I hope all of you the best of health. Keep in contact by cell, text email or by letter. Contact me by phone 210.452.5562, wegrayiitxalpost309@gmail.com or write to 12790 FM 1560 N #884, Helotes, TX. 78023.



Together, Veterans are Stronger

The American Legion strives to provide guidance for veterans, military personnel, their families, and its community. Help comes in the form of personal service, cash grants, donated goods, disaster relief, labor, networking, volunteerism, and advocacy.

Free Subscription to The American Legion Magazine

National leaders speak to citizens on the pages of The American Legion Magazine. The American Legion's national organizational goals are promoted through the efforts of talented writers, professional journalists, and contributing authors. Our goal at AL 309 is to grow the post through outreach, become a Helotes community benchmark, and be the locus for Veteran voices and their families in the Helotes area.

Benefits Assistance

The American Legion Post 309 has its own trained service officers. They keep up to date on the nuances and challenges of navigating the Veterans Administration. Their purpose is to provide expert advice, support, and representation for veterans and families seeking government benefits they are eligible to receive at the federal, state, and local levels.

Comfort for the Recovering

The American Legion's sense of family helps provide any veteran with a place of comfort around the like-minded, which is often lacking when among the pure civilian populace – lifestyle change is hard.

2019-2020 Officers

- **Commander.....Willis Gray III**
- **1st Vice Commander.....Mike Gilmour**
- **2nd Vice Commander.....Carlos Vela**
- **Adjutant.....Jaime F. Caratini**
- **Finance Officer.....N'De Narvaez**
- **Chaplain.....David Kottwitz**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Mark Ochoa Jr.**
- **Executive Officer.....Karen Stark**
- **Service Officer.....Alesa Arnett**
- **Judge Advocate.....Vacant**

2020-2021 Officers

- **Commander.....Willis Gray III**
- **1st Vice Commander.....Mike Gilmour**
- **2nd Vice Commander.....Carlos Vela**
- **Adjutant.....Jaime F. Caratini**
- **Finance Officer.....N'De Narvaez**
- **Chaplain.....David Kottwitz**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Mark Ochoa Jr.**
- **Executive Officer.....Karen Stark**
- **Service Officer.....Alesa Arnett**
- **Judge Advocate.....Vacant**
- **Executive Officer 1.....Karen Stark**
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2021-2022 Officers

- **Commander.....Willis Gray III**
- **1st Vice Commander.....Jeff Jewell**
- **2nd Vice Commander..... James Budden**
- **Adjutant.....Jaime F. Caratini**
- **Finance Officer.....John Brouse**
- **Chaplain.....David Kottwitz**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Mark Ochoa Jr.**
- **Executive Officer.....Karen Stark**
- **Service Officer.....Alesa Arnett**
- **Judge Advocate.....Vacant**
- **Executive Officer 1.....Karen Stark**

2022-2023 Officers

- **Commander.....Willis Gray III**
- **1st Vice Commander.....Jeff Jewell**
- **2nd Vice Commander.....James Budden**
- **Adjutant.....John Brouse**
- **Finance Officer.....Mario Cuellar-Garcia**
- **Chaplain.....Mark Ochoa Jr**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Daniel Guerra**
- **Judge Advocate.....Vacant**
- **Service Officer.....Jamie Gober**
- **Historian.....Vacant**
- **Executive Officer 1.....Karen Stark**
- **Executive Officer 2.....Luis Cardenas**

2023-2024 Officers

- **Commander.....Knowles Atchison**
- **1st Vice Commander.....John Brouse**
- **2nd Vice Commander.....Joe Young**
- **Adjutant.....Robert Dieguez**
- **Finance Officer.....Mario Cuellar-Garcia**
- **Chaplain.....Mark Ochoa Jr**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Daniel Torres**
- **Judge Advocate..... Ken Maynard**
- **Service Officer.....Rand Smith**
- **Historian.....Ron Allman**
- **Executive Officer 1.....Karen Stark**
- **Executive Officer 2.....Richard Baldwin**
- **Executive Officer 3.....James Toole**
- **Executive Officer 4.....Luis Cardenas**

2024-2025 Officers

- **Commander.....Don Rios**
- **1st Vice Commander.....Robert Diegues**
- **2nd Vice Commander.....Joe Young**
- **Adjutant.....Ron Allman**
- **Finance Officer.....John Brouse**
- **Chaplain.....Mark Ochoa Jr**
- **Sgt-at-Arms.....Bill Gray**
- **Judge Advocate..... Scott Guller**
- **Service Officer.....Rand Smith**
- **Historian..... Don Showmaker**
- **Executive Officer 1.....Karen Stark**
- **Executive Officer 2.....Richard Baldwin**
- **Executive Officer 3.....Kerry Tschirhart**
- **Executive Officer 4.....Deric Schmitt**