



For God and Country

**The American Legion Family,
U.S.S. Tampa Post 5**
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A post with a Heart

For Immediate Release

Memorial Day Service to Honor the Fallen - May 29, 2023

**Hosted by The American Legion Cemetery Corporation &
The American Legion "U.S.S. Tampa" Post 5 Families**

May 15, 2023 – The American Legion "U.S.S. Tampa" Post 5 invites the community to its Memorial Day event with family-friendly environment to show support for our military's sacrifices. The two-day event begins with Luminaries at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, May 28th and concludes Monday, May 29th with the Memorial Service from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The ceremonies are at the American Legion, "*U.S.S. Tampa*" Post 5 located at 3810 W. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33609.

This year centers on "Be the One" to eliminate the stigma related to mental health treatment, and in turn, lower the number of veterans who die by suicide every day. We honor those who have fallen and are still in the battle for their lives. This focus is in collaboration on the goals of the American Legion National Commander and Ellsworth "Tony" Williams (American Legion Post 5 member and Veterans Counseling Veterans founder). Veterans Counseling Veterans, Inc., (VCV) is a veteran-led nonprofit providing training, education, advocacy, mentorship, and service (TEAMS) to veterans and their families in the areas of mental wellness and suicide prevention.

The number of veterans who die by suicide every day is estimated at between 17 and 22. The American Legion has elevated Be the One to be its top priority, empowering veterans, servicemembers, their family members and civilians to act appropriately when a veteran may be at risk. This event intends to bring more awareness to the problem while providing resources to those who may be able to help save the life of a veteran.

Sunday's luminary observance requests that friends and family come out any time after 8:00 p.m. and have a moment of silence at the cemetery after sunset. No official ceremony will be presented. The Luminaries will be left out for visitations throughout the night with no official service or ceremony. The sight of all the candles lit is breathtaking and a symbol that we will never forget for our tomorrow, they gave their today. Volunteers will set up starting at 5:30 p.m.

The Memorial Service is organized by the American Legion Cemetery Corporation President Alyse Duffy and presented by Terry Doan (American Legion Post 5 Member and Board Member of the Cemetery) as the Master of Ceremonies. The first guest speaker will be Emily Peake, District winner of the American Legion Oratorical Contest, a sophomore at Cambridge Christian School, and placed 3rd in the Department of Florida Oratorical Contest as the youngest contestant. The second guest speaker will be Lt. Col. Jeremy "Scooby" J.C. Shoop (ret.) was a career Special Tactics Officer and served within Special Operations for three decades, the mainly as a plankholder with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, an Air Force Special Operations Command unit. The ceremony will include special guests from the Boys State and Girls State Delegations. The invocation will be performed by Chaplain (Colonel) Eric J. Albertson is the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Command Chaplain as a special staff officer responsible for providing strategic guidance on spiritual, religious, and ethical matters pertaining to the force. Vocal tributes by Gail Cooper, American Legion Unit 5 member. The raising of the flags to full staff will still take place at the closing of the ceremony at 12:00pm (noon) to memorialize those who gave their lives serving the United States of America.

Feel free to bring a flag Monday and show support by flag waving along Kennedy Boulevard. **Wreath registration** is available if your group would like to place a remembrance wreath during the Post Everlasting portion of the ceremony to be part of the Roll Call. If any group would like to place their organization's personalized remembrance wreath in the ceremony, bring it to the registration table between 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. on Memorial Day. All branches of the military will be represented, as well as the remembrance wreaths announcement.

Since 1922 the American Legion has been honoring the fallen with a Memorial Day Service. The event provides a venue for all ages to give thanks for our military's sacrifices. The significance of the cost our soldiers have come to bear to preserve our way of life and the freedoms granted by their choices will never be forgotten. We asked them to give their all...they did. They ask to be remembered one day a year, and we will.

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