



*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 27, 2024**

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

**May 6, 2024** – 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 26<sup>th</sup> and concludes Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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. 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 6:30 p.m.

**The Memorial Service** is organized by the American Legion Cemetery Corporation with the American Legion Post 5 Families. The service will be conducted by Terry Doan (American Legion Post 5 Member and Board Member of the Cemetery) as the Master of Ceremonies. The keynote speaker will be Major General Edward Dorman, III, U.S. Army Retired. The ceremony will include the Jefferson High School R.O.T.C. Color Guard and the Presentation of the Colors will be presented by the Tampa Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. The invocation will be given by Chaplain Cynthia Keeton-Gill, the Auxiliary District Chaplain. Vocal tributes by ET1 Joel Gutierrez, US Navy and Jeremiah Robinson. 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.

<http://www.post5tampa.org/MemorialDay.html>

## **About The American Legion U.S.S. Tampa Post 5**

The American Legion U.S.S. Tampa Post 5, Tampa, FL, received a temporary Charter on June 2, 1919, and granted its permanent Charter September 13, 1920. Our focus as a non-profit is to veterans, active servicemembers, and our community. Together the American Legion Families of Post 5 host the Memorial Day Ceremony, Wreaths Across America, and participate in the Veterans Day parade. Our Post sponsors and sends youth to the Boys State and Girls State Florida program every summer. An Oratorical Contest is hosted by the Post and our youth participants have gone to the District, State, and National Oratorical contest. The Legion Honor Guard represents the post at various ceremonies and funerals. We participate in Honor Flight, Blood Drives, volunteer at the V.A., and donate to community charities.

### **Namesake**

The Coast Guard Cutter Tampa had its strongest ties with the City of Tampa, Florida. In 1917, during mobilization for World War I the cutter was transferred to the U.S. Navy. On September 26, 1918, at about 8:45 p.m., the U.S.S. Tampa was sunk in the Bristol Channel while escorting a convoy to Milford Haven, Wales. The Tampa was torpedoed by a German U-Boat, the U-91, and sunk in under three minutes with no survivors. One-hundred eleven Coast Guardsmen (17 from Tampa and 17 more from Florida), four Navy men, a captain and 10 seamen of the Royal British Navy, and five civil employees (a total of 130 persons) lost their lives. A search found a few pieces of wreckage and two unidentifiable bodies in naval uniforms (one crewman was later identified). Due to its size this was a great loss to the Coast Guard. Eighty-one years after the ultimate sacrifice, the descendants of the men who perished received their Purple Hearts in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, held on Veterans Day, November 11th, 1999. Representatives from the American Legion USS TAMPA Post 5, of Tampa, Florida, were in attendance for the special presentation ceremony.

### **History**

Post 5 has the only American Legion Cemetery in the world. Post 5 bought the 2-acre land in the 1920s, with auxiliary member Mrs. O.N. Bie leading the charge. According to legion lore, Mrs. Bie couldn't stomach the notion of a homeless World War I veteran being buried in a pauper's grave. At the time, the cemetery was on the outskirts of town. Now, it's near one of Tampa's busiest intersections, adjoining the even smaller Hopewell Church Cemetery. Lindell Motors is on one side, a strip mall on the other. The bone-white tombstones march toward a line of oaks. Still, this is sacred ground. Protected ground. Care of the Tampa cemetery falls to the American Legion Cemetery Corp., a group founded in the 1970s. The corporation board has six members - three from Post 5 and three from Auxiliary Unit 5.

The Colored Veterans of the World Wars of the State of Florida was originally the Colored Auxiliary. They were sponsored by The U.S.S. Tampa, American Legion Post No. 5. This auxiliary group of veterans was known as Carmichael-Legree Unit 6. Eston Drew Legree and Herman Carmichael were from the City of Tampa and close friends as Crewmen about the U.S.S. Tampa. They were among the 11 black servicemembers aboard. The American Legion wasn't integrated at the time and they had to fight to exist. The Post became a part of the American Legion in Tampa, Florida in 1946 and was named American Legion Post 167 Carmichael-Legree. The Buffalo soldiers formalized out of Post 167. After the Post lost its home more than 20 years ago when the city of Tampa took the property for the I-4 expansion Post 5 and Post 111 supported them and aided by providing a meeting place to gather to do business and have social gatherings until they could reestablish a new home.

## **About Memorial Day**

More than 1 million men and women who have lost their lives defending America in wars from the Revolution to the global war on terrorism will be remembered on Memorial Day. Flags will be placed at gravesites, ceremonies and parades will be held, and many more events will occur nationwide to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day. Gen. John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, called for a day of remembrance on May 30, 1868, "for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion." Nearly 620,000 soldiers lost their lives in the Civil War. On the first

Decoration Day in 1868, Gen. James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, where 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there. In 1966, Congress declared Waterloo, N.Y., the official birthplace of Memorial Day for being the first town to celebrate the holiday 100 years prior. Waterloo, which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866, was chosen because it hosted an annual event where residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flags and flowers. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May, instead of May 30, in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. The change went into effect in 1971. On Dec. 28, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed into law the National Moment of Remembrance Act, which asks Americans to pause on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time for one minute to honor those who died protecting America's rights and freedoms.

On Memorial Day, the U.S. flag should be displayed at half-staff from sunrise until noon, then raised to the top at full staff until sunset. Red poppies are to be worn the Friday before Memorial Day. The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. The American Legion brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day. After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front lines.

The American Legion traditionally has a float in the 500 Festival Parade in the National Headquarters city of Indianapolis; as the Indy 500 is held over Memorial Day weekend, it essentially doubles as the city's Memorial Day parade. This year's Legion float has the theme "Turning the Corner Into the Next Century."

### **About The American Legion**

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization. Focusing on service to veterans, servicemembers and communities, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Membership swiftly grew to over 1 million, and local posts sprang up across the country. Today, membership stands at nearly 2 million in more than 13,000 posts worldwide. The posts are organized into 55 departments: one each for the 50 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines. Over the years, the Legion has influenced considerable social change in America, won hundreds of benefits for veterans and produced many important programs for children and youth. The American Legion was instrumental in getting the original GI Bill through Congress and the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Today, the organization is active throughout the United States, supporting current military personnel and veterans, sponsoring American Legion Baseball, Boys State, Oratorical Contests and other activities for youth, and pushing for the adoption of a constitutional amendment to prohibit desecration of the U.S. flag.

### **About The Sons of the American Legion**

The Sons of The American Legion is divided into detachments at the state level and squadrons at the local level. A squadron pairs with a local American Legion post; a squadron's charter is contingent upon its parent post's charter. However, squadrons can determine the extent of their services to the community, state and nation. They are permitted flexibility in planning programs and activities to meet their needs, but must remember SAL's mission: to strengthen the four pillars of The American Legion. Therefore, squadrons' campaigns place an emphasis on preserving American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship. Since 1988, SAL has raised more than \$9 million for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. SAL members have volunteered over 500,000 hours at veterans hospitals and raised over \$1,000,000 for VA hospitals and VA homes. The SAL also supports the Citizens Flag Alliance, a coalition dedicated to protecting the U.S. flag from desecration through a constitutional amendment.

### **About The American Legion Auxiliary**

Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary's mission is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security. The American Legion Auxiliary has nearly 8,000 local Auxiliary units with 3.2 million hours volunteered in serving veterans and military, nearly \$7 million raised (spent on youth, scholarships, communities), and learning opportunities through our Mission Training events and ALA Academy courses.