

2025 – 2026 ANNUAL YEARBOOK



JOHN E. JACOBS AMERICAN LEGION POST 68 LELAND, NC

Compiled by:

Anthony J. Schirillo III, Post Historian
John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68
P.O. Box 521
Leland, NC 28451

YEARBOOK OF
JOHN E. JACOBS POST No. 68
THE AMERICAN LEGION
LELAND, NORTH CAROLINA
FOR
2025- 2026

By Anthony J. Schirillo III, Post Historian

INTRODUCTION

Originally founded in 1973, American Legion Post 68 was revived in 2014. It remains one of the fastest growing Legion Posts in North Carolina, having largely benefitted from an influx of new residents to northern Brunswick County. The County is the fastest growing county in the state. Many were already American Legion members before retiring to the region. Today the post has grown to over 200 members with the majority being Vietnam Era veterans, a few veterans from the Korean War, several Vietnam War veterans, and several Desert Storm veterans. The Post Roster also includes several women. Its last WW II veteran died in 2020.

In 2019, the Post formally changed its name to “John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68” to honor the only Leland resident killed during the Vietnam War. Jacobs was killed by small arms fire while on patrol in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam on October 1, 1968. At the time of his death, he was serving as an infantryman with B Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division.

JOHN EDWIN JACOBS

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

3RD PLT, B CO, 1ST BN, 11TH INFANTRY, 5TH INF DIV, USARV

ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES

[Leland, North Carolina](#)

December 04, 1947 to October 01, 1968

[JOHN E JACOBS](#) is on the Wall at [Panel W42, Line 57](#) See the [full profile](#) or [name rubbing](#) for John Jacobs



The compiler of this annual yearbook edition acknowledges the hard work and timely efforts of Eric Mens, Post 68 Public Affairs Officer, Dan Dodge, Post 68 Adjutant, as well as those who contributed pictures to help document and publicize the Post’s achievements in the 2025 - 2026 year. Their efforts have helped Post 68 further embellish its community reputation as an active, contributing organization focused on meeting the needs of community veterans, families, and youth.

NOTE: Several articles contained herein have been edited and/or formatted to ensure consistency in font and style. Hyperlinks provided allow the reader to view the original text as published in the local print media.

A WORD FROM THE COMMANDER
(Started the new Year with a Thank you to the Post Members)

To our dedicated American Legion Post 68 members,

The American Legion was established to support Veterans in multiple ways. First, of course, is by ensuring access to and lobbying for benefits that our country's service men need and second which supports the first is providing a place and connection to other Veterans so that Veterans can support each other. As a local Post we connect to our members in various ways – the monthly meeting, community events and by Buddy Checks. It's simple to hold a monthly meeting (even though the PEC members give multiple hours to make it happen), Community events where we can connect with each other and help in the community are not as easy to happen. Community events need members to volunteer to do a variety of things (organizing, planning, staffing) commitment and follow-through. The Post has a number of opportunities to participate in upcoming events and I ask that you consider lending your support- National Night Out, Fall Festival, Car Show, Veterans Day Parade, Veteran Day Event at Belville River Walk Park to name a few of the upcoming fall activities. The Post will, of course, continue to support the Blood Drives and Cove residents along with the Be the One program. Your PEC has helped with all of the above and many more events and activities behind the scenes to support our area Veterans, but we need your help too.



I am excited to again support the Post and its members as Commander and hope that we continue with your support to be the best choice Organization for Veterans in the Leland area. As we continue to grow and connect with each other and explore the opportunities that are available to the Post we will make a difference in the community. Soon you will be receiving a survey about a December social activity please complete as soon as possible so that plans can be confirmed.

Thank YOU for being a member of Post 68 - Lets make things happen together. Your suggestions and input is appreciated.

Bea Frost, Commander
John E. Jacobs Post 68 Leland
American Legion

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Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion

For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- to maintain law and order;
- to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
- to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation
- to the community, state and nation;
- to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right
- the master of might;
- to promote peace and goodwill on earth;
- to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and
- democracy;
- to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual
- helpfulness.

CHAPTER 1 – ROSTER OF POST OFFICERS

JOHN E. JACOBS AMERICAN LEGION POST 68

JULY 1, **2025** – JUNE 30, **2026**



Post Commander – Bea Frost



1st Vice Commander – Jim McAvoy



2nd Vice Commander – Evan Jones



Adjutant – Dan Dodge



Finance Officer – Joe Frost



Judge Advocate – Dale Todd

OFFICERS

JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026



Chaplain – Rick Rodgers



Service Officer – Lane Adrian



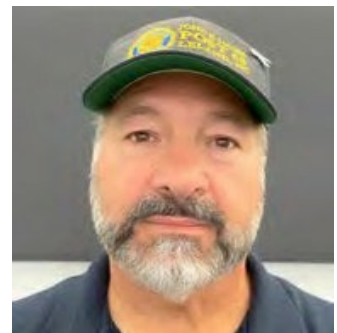
Sergeant at Arms – Kobe Kelly



Logistics – Eddie Jenkins



Public Affairs – Eric Mens



Historian – Tony Schirillo

OFFICERS

JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

Membership – Jim Barkley



Members-at-Large



John Hacker



Alan Simmons



Rob Penwell (R.I.P.)

CHAPTER 2 - ONE-YEAR POST HISTORY
JOHN E. JACOBS AMERICAN LEGION POST 68
JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

July 2025

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025 – 2026 LELAND, NC



Installation of Post 68 Officers. At the Post 68 membership meeting on July 17, 2025, District 9 Commander Jim Torr conducted the installation ceremony of Post Officers for the 2025-2026 term. Several members retained their current positions for the new term including Bea Frost, Commander; Evan Jones, 2nd Vice Commander; Dan Dodge, Adjutant; Joe Frost, Finance Officer; Dale Todd, Parliamentarian; Lane Adrian, Service Officer; Kobe Kelly, Sergeant-at-Arms; Eddie Jenklins, Logistics; Eric Mens, Public Affairs; Jim Barkely, Membership; and Members-at-Large Alan Simmons and Rob Penwell. Former Chaplain Jim MacAvoy stepped up to assume the 1st Vice Commander role, while former 1st Vice Commander John Hacker assumed a role as a Member-at-Large. Newly installed officers included Rick Rodgers as Post Chaplain

July 2025

Magnolia Greens Independence Day Parade. A unit of the Leland Fire and Police Departments, followed by the American Legion Post 68 Color Guard led the community parade in Magnolia Greens on July 4, 2025. Members of the *Be the One* Suicide Awareness team and the Legion Riders followed closely behind. Other Post 68 members walked the route, handing small American flags to welcoming and cheering bystanders. The colorful parade included Leland's Mayor Bozeman and other local dignitaries as well as an array of brightly decorated golf carts and cars ended at the Magnolia Community Center. The Legion and VFW Post 1296 led participants in a salute to the flag and Pledge of Allegiance followed by a brief, stirring speech from Bea Frost, Commander of Legion Post 68.



Photo 1 – L-R Color Guard Members Jo Anne Britt, Bob Northrup, Jim Barkely, Richard Fry, Bill Smith Photo 2 – L-R Be the One Team Leader John Hacker and Tom Powers

July 2025

Waterford Community Donation to Post 68. Members of the Waterford Social Committee, led by Chairperson Carol Fesser, attended the Post 68 membership meeting on Thursday, July 17. In an expression of the community's appreciation for and recognition of Post 68's role in serving area veterans and families, Carol Fesser presented a check for \$190 to Commander Bea Frost and John Hacker. The funds were raised at Waterford's annual Memorial Day ceremony and will help support Post 68's preeminent "Be the One" suicide awareness program. Hacker is the Post 68 Team Lead for the American Legion's "Be the One" program as well as the North Carolina Program Chair. The "Be the One" program highlights the alarming rate of veteran suicides and provides resources to help address the issue. Post 68's program is recognized as a leader at the state level. Intended to serve veterans and their families in Brunswick County, it serves as a model for American Legion Posts throughout North Carolina. The program has been presented to local service providers, non-profit organizations, emergency responders, and law enforcement agencies. Training classes will resume at the Brunswick Community College Extension Campus in Leland (2025 Enterprise Boulevard) in September 2025. Classroom sessions are open to the public and more information and resources are available at

betheoneconnects.org. The site provides veterans, their families, and other interested parties with a multitude of resources and contacts, that help address food, housing, employment,



addiction, and other issues.

Front Row L-R Eric Mens, Public Affairs Officer; Shirley Rymer, Jean Anne Studer, Sue Ashley, Artie Charbonneau, Carol Fesser Back Row L-R Gary Studer, Casey Finn, Missy Barskey, Pat Finn, Patti Pearce

July 2025

Happenings and outreach events:

Post 68 Riders hosted a **Pancake breakfast** at the Harley Davidsons in Wilmington on July 19, 2025.

Post 68 Chaplin Rich Rogers put on a **birthday party celebration**, July 21, 2025, for the veterans at the **Brunswick Cove – Living Center**, on River Road in Winnabow, NC

July happenings at Legion Post 68 Leland

BY ERIC MENS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER,
AMERICAN LEGION POST 68
LELAND

A unit of the Leland Fire and Police Departments, followed by the American Legion Post 68 Color Guard led the Magnolia Greens Independence Day Parade on July 4, 2025. Members of the Be the One Suicide Awareness team and the Legion Riders followed closely behind. Other Post 68 members walked the route, handing small American flags to welcoming and cheering bystanders. The colorful parade included Leland's Mayor Bozeman and other local dignitaries as well as an array of brightly decorated golf carts and cars ended at the Magnolia Community Center. The Legion and VFW Post 1296 led participants in a salute to the flag and Pledge of Allegiance followed by a brief, stirring speech from Bea Frost, Commander of Legion Post 68.

2025 GOLF TOURNAMENT PREMIERE GOLD SPONSOR

On Wednesday, July 16, Chris Royal (Broker), SEE LEGION/PAGE C5

Photo contributed

From left are Color Guard Members Jo Anne Britt, Bob Northrup, Jim Barkely, Richard Fry, Bill Smith.

Above article Posted in the **Brunswick Beacon Newspaper** Aug. 7, 2025.

August 2025

LEGION POST 68 DONATES TO 2025 VETERANS DAY PARADE On November 11, 2017, Wilmington held the **first of its kind Veterans Day parade in downtown Wilmington**. Sponsored and organized by the nonprofit Southeast North Carolina (SENC) Veterans Day Parade, the event honors the sacrifices made by veterans and active-duty service members in the region. The parade provides a moment of public recognition and connection for veterans. For families, it offers inspiration and appreciation. For the greater Wilmington community, it reinforces the values of service, sacrifice, and remembrance. Since 2017, the parade has grown exponentially to now include not only veterans, veteran groups, veteran support groups, high school marching bands, ROTC units, and first responders, but also representatives from all branches of the military services. As a charitable organization, the SENC Veterans Day Parade relies on donations, fundraisers, and grants to carry out its work in the community. This includes not only organizing and hosting the parade, but also awarding scholarships to children of veterans, providing emergency financial assistance to veterans in need, supporting mental health and wellness programs, and other initiatives. Since the parade's inception, the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland has been an enthusiastic parade participant and ardent supporter. Recognizing the importance of donations to support the SENC Veterans Day Parade's ambitious plans, the Post recently donated \$500 to the organization. On hand at the presentation on Saturday, August 9, 2025, were Post 68 members Bea Frost, Commander; Joe Frost, Financial Officer; Evan Jones, 2nd Vice Commander; Lane Adrian, Veterans Service Officer; Eric Mens, Public Affairs; John Hacker, Member-at-Large; Bob Northrup, Post Color Guard; and Tom Powers. Jim Verdon, Vice Chair for the SENC Veterans Parade, accepted the donation on behalf of the organization's Board of Directors and presented a framed Certificate of Appreciation to Commander Frost. This year's event



L-R: John Verdon, Vice Chair, SENC Veterans Parade; Evan Jones, 2nd Vice Commander; Bob Northrup, Color Guard; Bea Frost, Commander; Lane Adrian, Veterans Service Officer; Tom Powers, Member; and John Hacker, Member-at-Large. Not pictured are Joe Frost, Financial Officer, and Eric

will be Saturday, November 8, 2025, in downtown Wilmington, NC. **Related Brunswick Magazine. Fall edition.**

August 2025

PROPER DISPOSAL OF UNUSABLE AMERICAN FLAGS

Is your flag faded, torn, frayed, or otherwise unsuitable for public display? Let the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 properly handle its disposal following the guidelines established in Title 4, U.S. Code, Chapter 1. Flag disposal boxes are conveniently located throughout the Leland community and regularly emptied by Post 68. Locations include:



Lowe's Home Improvement, 3716 Gateway Blvd (near the Exit door and checkout counters),

Ace Hardware, 117 B, Village Rd NE, and

Brunswick Forest Fitness and Wellness Center (main lobby area), 2701 Brunswick Forest Parkway.

Potential future locations being researched include the Magnolia Greens and Waterford communities. To learn more about flag history, proper flag etiquette, and the Sojourn 250 Campaign to honor the birth of America, visit <https://nationalflagfoundation.org/about/>. To learn more about American Legion Post 68 and its work within the greater Leland community and view a calendar of events, visit <https://ncpost68.org/>.

Photo-Nathan Ferguson, Store Manager, Lowe's Home Improvement, Leland, NC

August 2025

LEGION POST 68 DONATES TO SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE On Thursday, August 21, Tommy Underwood, President, Wilmington Chapter of **Sleep in Heavenly Peace** (SHP), accompanied by J. B. Brink, briefed members of the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland.



Pictured below, L-R are J.B. Brink (SHP), Tommy Underwood (President, Wilmington Chapter SHP), Bea Frost, Post 68 Commander, and John Marone, Post 68 member and SHP volunteer.

Members learned about SHP's mission, accomplishments, and continuing needs in serving children in the greater Wilmington area, including North Brunswick County. Following the briefing, Post Commander Bea Frost presented Mr. Underwood with a check for \$1,000 to help fund SHP's Build the Bed program. This marks the second year that Post 68 has donated to SHP, with members also donating new twin bedding sets. Working out of donated space in Independence Mall, the Wilmington Chapter built and delivered 500 beds during that same time frame. With each bed costing approximately \$250 in materials, the Wilmington SHP relies on the time and efforts of trained volunteers (nearly 700) during Build Days. The Chapter plans to expand its efforts to the southern part of Brunswick County in the coming months.

August 2025

American Legion Post 68 Welcomes American Legion Riders



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nearly 400 American Legion Riders stopped at the Battleship *North Carolina* on August 18 during their annual Legacy Run. The ride began in South Boston, Virginia, and ended in Tampa Bay, Florida, for the opening of the American Legion's 106th National Convention. Members of the Wilmington community and local dignitaries welcomed the riders, with the Legion Department of North Carolina and John E. Jacobs Legion Post 68 providing support, food and water. The Legion Riders, organized into over 2,200 chapters nationwide and overseas, raise funds for scholarships supporting children of fallen or disabled post-9/11 military service members and now also support the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation. Since 2006, the Legacy Run has raised over \$16 million for scholarships. The visit included a wreath-laying ceremony on the battleship deck, remarks from local Legion leaders and a performance by an honor guard bagpiper. The Riders continued to North Strand American Legion Post 186 in Little River, South Carolina, for additional veteran ceremonies.

August 2025

LEGION POST 68 ON HAND TO WELCOME AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS. Nearly 400 American Legion Riders stopped for a rest and recuperation break at the **Battleship North Carolina** on Monday, August 18, 2025. With Harley-Davidson as a major sponsor, the Riders started their annual Legacy Run in South Boston, VA, the day before. This year's Legacy Run culminates in Tampa Bay, FL, on Friday, August 22, marking the opening of the American Legion 106th National Convention. Members of the Wilmington community and local dignitaries were on hand to welcome the riders. With the Legion Department of North Carolina providing food and water for the riders, members of **John E. Jacobs Legion Post 68, Leland**, assisted the riders on-site. Jim Torr, North Carolina District 9 Commander, and Vice Commander George Freeman, who

provided remarks at the wreath-laying ceremony, also attended. Glossl, Executive Director, **Friends of the Battleship**. Dennis Ryan, an honor guard bagpiper for the Richard H. Stewart Post 543 in Southport, N.C, played the Armed Forces Medley. Afterwards, the Riders rode to the North Strand American Legion Post 186 in Little River, S.C., to end their day with additional ceremonies honoring veterans. To learn more about the **American Legion Riders** program and the Legacy Run, visit <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/american-legion-riders>. To learn more about the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 and view the Calendar of Events, visit <https://ncpost68.org/>.

August 2025

Happenings and outreach events:

Membership Education Series for American Legion Post 68, presented on August 21, 2025 by the Post Adjutant Dan Doge.

Post 68 Chaplin Rich Rogers put on a **birthday party celebration**, August 25, 2025, for the **veterans** at the **Brunswick Cove – Living Center**, on River Road in Winnabow, NC

September 2025

CARDINAL AWARD

2026



“EARLY BIRD POST”

LET IT BE KNOW THAT

POST 68 LELAND

Has begun a successful membership drive and has enrolled 50% of their membership goal for the 2026 Membership Year.

By this date September 11th 2025

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Zajc', written over a horizontal line.

JIM ZAJC

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Devell Durham Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

DEVELL "BO" DURHAM JR

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER 2026

SEPTEMBER 2025

LEGION POST 68 DONATIONS TO LOCAL CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS.



L-R: Lane Adrian, Post 68 Service Officer; Kyle Abrams, Executive Director BFA; Bea Frost, Post 68 Commander

Leland's **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68** recently presented checks to Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA) and the **Vet Smile Foundation (VSF)** for \$1,000 and \$1,500, respectively, in recognition of the charitable work both organizations do in improving the welfare and quality of life of Brunswick County veterans and their families. BFA is a private non-profit agency serving low-income residents in Brunswick County. The organization manages food pantries (including a mobile unit), provides utility, rental, and prescription assistance, runs a summer food program for children, and a Christmas distribution program for children and seniors, as well as other programs aimed at helping to provide a higher quality of life for low-income residents. To learn more about BFA visit <https://brunswickfamily.org/>.

VSF's **Vet Smiles Program**, in collaboration with the **East Carolina University (ECU) Dental Clinic**, provides an annual dental assistance day for low-income veterans. This program offers a unique opportunity for eligible veterans to receive necessary dental care at a minimal cost.



L-R: Jon Jones, ECU Vet Smiles Foundation Director; Tom Wills, Post 68; Jessie McCorvey, Vet Smiles Co-Founder; Bea Frost, Post 68 Commander; Lane Adrian, Post 68 Service Officer

To learn more about VSF, visit <https://vetsmiles.org/about/>. Donations should be sent to VSF, 104 South White Street, Suite 146, Wake Forest, NC 27587, via check or money order payable to VSF.

September 2025
HELP FILL A CRITICAL NEED FOR BLOOD DONORS



In cooperation with WWAY TV3, Leland's **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68** is hosting a Blood Drive on Friday, September 26, 2025. The event is scheduled to take place in the WWAY Community Room, located at 1224 Magnolia Village Way, Leland, NC 28451, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Donors of all blood types are urgently needed to ensure patients continue to receive critical medical care.

In 2024, this collaborative effort between the Post and WWAY resulted in the Red Cross receiving 127 units of blood. To date, in 2025, the effort has collected 84 units of blood. To reach a Premier Blood Partner status with the Red Cross, we need to collect an additional 73 units of blood and Power Red for the remainder of 2025. Please help us reach our goal!

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code. Scroll down to Friday, September 26, and click on "See Times" to select your desired appointment time.

VISIT www.redcrossblood.org/rapidpass on your appointment day to answer health history questions and reduce wait times. Please arrive at your appointment time with a picture ID and come well-hydrated.

To learn more about how veterans can join the **American Legion** or what the Legion brings to our veterans and the community, visit <https://ncpost68.org/>. Post 68 meets at 6 pm every third Thursday in the Blossoms Restaurant Banquet Room (1800 Tommie Jacobs Drive, Leland, NC). For those who want to participate, members gather at 4:30 pm in Blossoms Restaurant for dinner and a social hour preceding the meeting.

September 2025

Leland under the Lights Car Show: John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland participates in the event every year using the opportunity to reach out to our community and show how we are here to assist the community and offer support for our veterans. On Sept. 20, 2025, team lead Tom Powers (in photo), set up an information table alongside (and in support of) the **Be The One** information table.



September 2025

Happenings and outreach events:

Post 68 makes donation to the American Legion Veteran's and Children's Foundation. Led by 1st Vice-Commander Jim McAvoy.

WWAY sponsored a **Veterans Expo** at the Independence Mall, Wilmington, NC. **Post 68** along with other **area veteran organizations** participated in by setting up an information table manned by **Post 68 Members**, led by **Commander Bea Frost**. The **Post 68 Color Guard** also presented the colors at the event.

October 2025

Happenings and outreach events:

Trunk or Treat/Fall Festival: Post 68 set up at **Northwest Park**, Leland, handing out candy to the children from the area and conducting community outreach inviting veterans to join our meeting and to participate in our events. Led by Rick Rodgers.

District Commander Jim Torr visited Post 68's October meeting.

November 2025

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR – “TEE IT UP FOR VETERANS” TOURNAMENT

The 2025 “Tee It Up For Veterans” Golf Tournament, hosted by Leland's **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68**, marked the third straight year that Post 68 hosted its major fundraising event at the Magnolia Greens Golf Course in Leland. The tournament, held on Thursday, November 6, 2025, once again sold out in record time, attracting over 170 golfers, including many members of the North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce. Open Ceremony speakers at the event included (L-R) John Hacker, Past Commander; Martha Jacobs, sister of John E. Jacobs; Denny Birgel, Tournament Organizer; and Bea Frost, Post Commander.

Post 68's tournament also serves as a fundraiser for the **Wreaths Across America (WAA)**

program, which honors those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces by placing a live wreath at veterans' gravesites. To date, over 300 wreaths have been purchased through advertisement associated with the 2025 tournament, but more donations are needed to ensure each gravesite is honored. Wreaths will be placed at the Wilmington National Cemetery by Post 68 members and the greater Wilmington community on Saturday, December 13, 2025, following the Opening Ceremony at 11 am. The cemetery is located at 2011 Market St, Wilmington, NC 28403. On street parking is



L-R Dan Dodge, Post Adjutant; Patrice Cook; John Hacker, Past Commander; Jim McAvoy, 1st Vice Commander

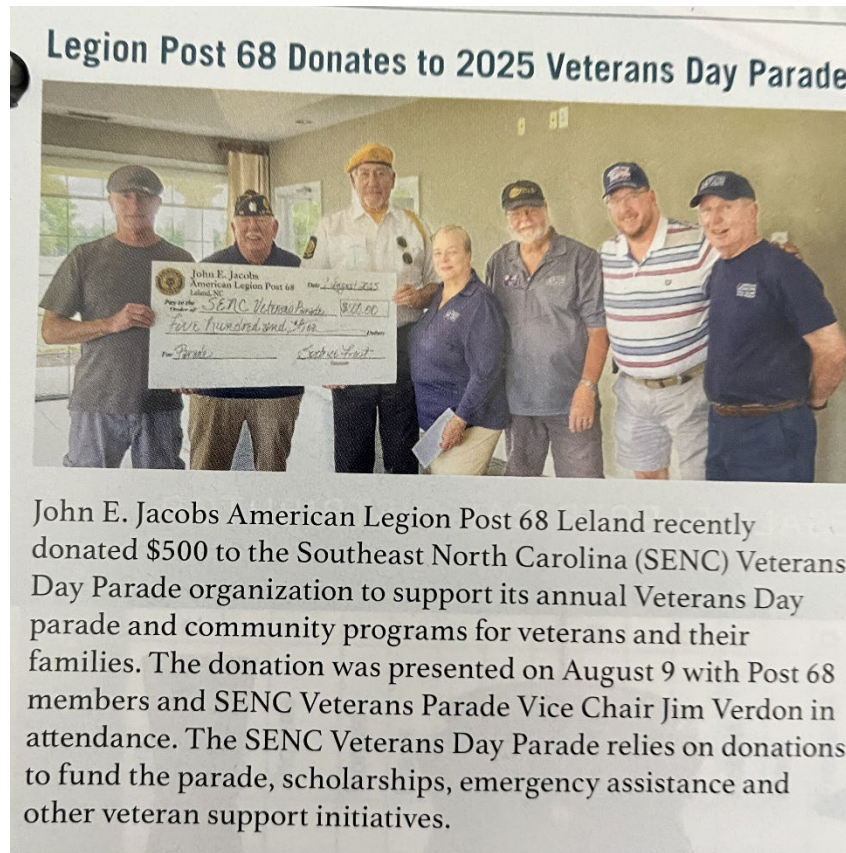
limited, so plan to arrive early. Donations to purchase a wreath must be made by December 1st, and can be made by credit card at: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/NC0380P>. Also present at the tournament was Patrice Cook, a 'Ride of Pride' Driver for Schneider Trucking.

Funds raised through the golf tournament also support Post 68's various charitable activities in Brunswick County and surrounding areas. Locally, the Post can provide needed support to North Brunswick High School (NBHS), including its award-winning JROTC rifle team, the Legion sponsored Oratorical Contest, and scholarship awards. Post 68 also assists Lincoln Elementary School on an as-needed basis.

Through annual monetary donations, **Post 68 also supports several local Service Providers that serve veterans and their families in need.** These include organizations such as Brunswick Family Assistance and the Vet Smiles Program, both of which recently were awarded checks of \$1,000 and \$1,500, respectively. In 2024, the Post made a significant donation to Western North Carolina following the devastating floods that affected that area. The Post is also capable of providing donations to support disaster-related relief of all types when the need arises for area veterans and their families.

All these types of charitable activities would not have been possible without the community's overwhelming support and generosity, which ensured the tournament's success. Moreover, none of these charitable fund-raising activities and other community-service projects and programs could be as successful as they are without the strong and dedicated support of Post 68 members, their families, and other community volunteers.

November 2025



John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland recently donated \$500 to the Southeast North Carolina (SENC) Veterans Day Parade organization to support its annual Veterans Day parade and community programs for veterans and their families. The donation was presented on August 9 with Post 68 members and SENC Veterans Parade Vice Chair Jim Verdon in attendance. The SENC Veterans Day Parade relies on donations to fund the parade, scholarships, emergency assistance and other veteran support initiatives.

Happenings and outreach events:

John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Members, Color Guard and Post Riders all participated in the annual **Veterans Day** parade in Wilmington NC.

Post 68 sponsored the Nov. 7th **Blue Star Mother** event held at **Brunswick Electric MC** and manned an information table during the event for outreach **Jim McAvoy and John Hacker**.

Belville Veterans Day Event at Riverside Park. **Post 68** set up an information table (along with an information table presenting **“Be The One”**), conducted outreach identifying available veteran resources and inviting veterans to join us at our meetings and events **Led by Commander Bea Frost and “Be The One” Chair John Hacker**.

Post 68 are a member organization in the **North Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce**. On **November 11th** we set up an information table for **Post 68** and **“Be The One”** at the **Chamber Breakfast Veteran’s Day** event held at the **Leland Cultural Arts Center**.

December 2025

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA – The Wreaths Across America is a nationwide initiative honoring deceased veterans each December by placing wreaths on their graves. The event brings communities together across the country to remember and pay tribute to those who served, ensuring their sacrifices are never forgotten. On Saturday, December 13, 2025, members of the **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland**, joined forces with the greater Wilmington community at the city’s National Cemetery. Thanks to generous donors, over 5,000 wreaths were provided—enough



to adorn every veteran’s gravesite and offer a personal moment of remembrance for each. Post 68 member Patty Kelly, as the event emcee, welcomed attendees and set a tone of gratitude and reflection. Kelly introduced distinguished guests, including Leland Mayor Brenda Bozeman and Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, whose words underscored the significance of honoring those who served. Continuing the tribute, Post 68 members John Hacker, Jim Barkley, Dale Todd, and Evan Jones each stepped forward to place Memorial Wreaths representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force respectively. Member Bob Page honored prisoners of war and those missing in action with a dedicated wreath, reminding attendees of their enduring sacrifice and the nation’s gratitude to those who never returned home. Following the opening ceremonies, members of the public were invited to place wreaths on individual gravesites. Doing so allowed each attendee to connect personally with the legacy of service and the lives remembered that day.

HONORING VETERANS AT BRUNSWICK COVE – December 15, 2025, Post 68 Chaplain Rick Rodgers,

organizes and hosts a social event for veterans residing in Brunswick Cove Living Center in Winnabow. Each veteran residing at the facility has their annual American Legion dues paid for by Post 68 and the Cove transports their veterans to Post meetings at Blossoms Restaurant in Magnolia Greens. This year, as in past years, Post 68 members celebrated the holiday season with snacks and presents for the veterans.



December 2025



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD – Leland Mayor Brenda Bozeman presented the town's 2025 Citizen of the Year Award to **John Hacker**, Lead for Post 68's American Legion **Be the One** (BTO) suicide awareness and prevention program. Hacker has led the local program since its inception at the national level. This is the first time that a member of the Post has received the award. Over the last two years, Hacker's leadership in developing a local outreach and training program led to Post 68 being recognized by the Legion's Department of North Carolina as the community leader in addressing veteran suicide awareness and prevention.

Through Post 68's BTO Committee, local law enforcement and first responders, including Fire, Police, and EMS, have received suicide awareness and prevention training.

Hacker's efforts also led to the development of a "Be the One" wallet card app, which provides First Responders and others with critical links to County, State, and Federal resources available to assist veterans and their families in need of counseling, food, housing, employment, and other essential services. His efforts, within Leland, Brunswick County, and at the state level, have led to his appointment as the Legion's Department of North Carolina Chairperson for the BTO State Committee.

December 2025

Inspire Brunswick Forest, the 55+ Active Adult Apartment Community in Brunswick Forest, opened its doors in July 2023. Since then, the community has actively worked to establish and expand its relationship with the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland and the **North Brunswick High School (NBHS) Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)**.

Post 68 is well-known for its support to area veterans and their families and is recognized statewide for its Be The One suicide awareness and prevention program. JROTC is recognized nationwide as one of the most



Lauren Andracka Cox, Inspire Community Manager, and Tracy Beinke, Inspire Lifestyle

impactful youth character development programs. NBHS's program is one of the largest and most consistently successful JROTC units in the Southeast North Carolina area. Post 68 is also an ardent supporter of **NBHS and its JROTC**.

Inspired to do something to recognize and honor veterans, earlier this year, Inspire kicked off its Flags for Heroes Program with the goal of installing hundreds of small American flags on its property close to the Coastal Highway, US Route 17 South in Leland. Members of the public were able to purchase flags for \$5 each, with proceeds earmarked for donation to Post 68 and the JROTC.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2025, cadets from the NBHS, who had installed the flags, participated in Inspire's Opening Ceremony to honor, support, and remember veterans. Proceeds from the Inspire flag sales were recently donated to Post 68 for its Be the One program by Lauren Andraka Cox, Inspire Community Manager, and Tracy Beinke, Inspire Lifestyle Coordinator (pictured). Inspire also presented a donation of \$600 to the NBHS JROTC.

Reaching Out to Veterans. Recent Post 68 surveys affirmed that veterans in the Leland community are motivated to join the Legion not only to share the camaraderie of being with likeminded individuals but also to learn how and where they can help veterans, their families, and other disadvantaged individuals in the community. Post 68 is not a 'bricks and mortar' Legion Post and as such, is blessed with the support of Blossoms Restaurant in Magnolia Greens in providing the Post with a welcome place to hold our monthly meetings. As such, we have long recognized the importance of engaging our members to proactively reach out to community veterans and families, identify their needs, and support them where we can, whether through **Buddy Checks, donations, or in-person visits to veterans** in their homes.

December **2025**



Our **Veterans Service Officer, Lane Adrian**, and **Chaplain Rick Rodgers** are critical to this outreach. For several years, under Rodgers's leadership, the Post has actively supported **veterans at Brunswick Cove Living Center**. Typically, 14-20 veterans are housed in this local assisted living facility at any one time. Post support has included funding Legion memberships, and Rodgers was instrumental in securing Brunswick Cove's support for its veterans by arranging for the facility to provide transportation to and from Post meetings. Once there, these veterans share in the camaraderie, learn about Post activities, and socialize with other Legion members. In addition, each month, Rodgers organizes birthday and holiday celebrations for the veterans, including major holidays such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Christmas.

December **2025**

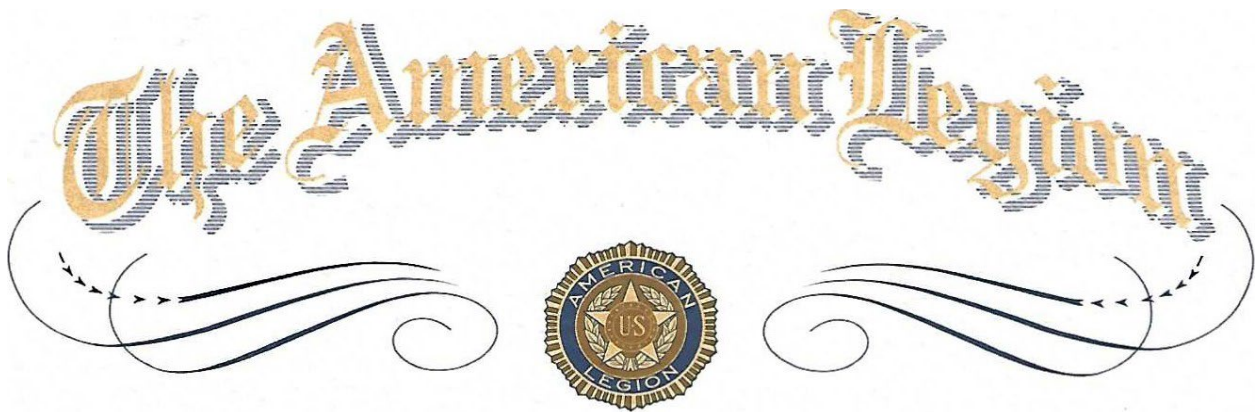
Happenings and outreach events:

Post 68 Leadership attended the District 9 meeting at Post 129 Carolina Beach, NC.

John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 annual Christmas / **Holiday Party** was held on December 14th at the Bridgewater. The event was a great time for members and their spouses (or plus ones) to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the year's accomplishments.

Flag collection: Post 68 places 7 Flag collection boxes throughout our community and assign members to check in and collect the flags for disposal. Led by **Logistics Officer Eddie Jenkins**.

Award for 2025, issued January 2026



Certificate Of Meritorious Service

For Faithfulness In The Performance Of Duties And Meriting Special Confidence
And Esteem Because Of Manifested Cooperation And Loyalty. Recognition Is

Hereby

Accorded For Meritorious Service Rendered As Hereinafter Set Forth, And
Presented To

John E, Jacobs, Inc, Post 68

Department of North Carolina

The American Legion

Who Has Rendered Meritorious Service By Enrolling For The Year 2026, A Membership Equaling Or Surpassing Its Previous All-time High. This Enrollment Was Accomplished By December 31 Preceding The Beginning Of The Calendar Year Indicated. In Witness Whereof, This Certificate Is Given To said Post, Under The Hand Of The National Commander, And Duly Attested By The National Adjutant, At Indianapolis, Indiana, This 22nd day of January, 2026, And Countersigned By The Commander And The Adjutant For The Department

January 2026

Annual Oratorical Contest conducted as part of the American Legion National program. The event was held at North Brunswick High School. Event consists of high school students delivering prepared speeches on any aspect of the U.S. Constitution and the responsibilities of citizens regarding that aspect of the Constitution. Each student also delivers a short speech on one of four predefined parts of the Constitution. The specific part to be addressed is randomly drawn during the contest. The purpose of the event is to promote understanding of the Constitution and help develop public speaking skills for students. This event was led by the **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 Leland** Parliamentary, and Americanism **Chair Dale Todd** (photo).



January 2026

Successful Community Blood Drive. The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 thanks the Leland community, American Red Cross, and WWAY TV Channel 3 for helping ensure the success of its first Blood Drive in 2026. The drive at WWAY's Leland facilities was supported by WWAY staff, who worked diligently to set up and break down the event. Alongside an excellent Red Cross team, Post 68 members, **First Vice Commander, Jim McAvoy**, led a team that included Tom Wills, Ed Grinnell, John Hacker, Tom Powers, Lane Adrian, and Tony Schirillo to provide on-site assistance. Every blood product collected is extremely important and eventually lifesaving. At the conclusion of the recent drive, more than 40 local donors responded to the urgent call for blood. The drive yielded four Power Red and 39 Whole Blood units. Power Red donations typically take longer to obtain, but such donations are critical for treating trauma patients, newborns, providing emergency transfusions during birth, patients with sickle cell anemia, and others suffering from blood loss.

Start 2026 with a blood donation

To help meet a current critical need for 70 units of blood, the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, in cooperation with WWAY TV3, is hosting a blood drive on Friday, Jan. 30.

The event will be held in the WWAY Community Room, located at 1224 Magnolia Village Way in Leland from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Donors of all blood types are urgently needed to ensure patients continue to receive critical medical care.

To make an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code. Scroll down to WWAY, Friday, Jan. 30, and click on "See Times" to select your desired appointment time.

Plan to arrive at your appointment time with a picture ID and come well-hydrated.

To learn more about how veterans can join the American Legion or what the Legion brings to our veterans and the community, visit <https://ncpost68.org/>.

Post 68 meets at 6 p.m. every third Thursday in the Blossoms Restaurant Banquet Room (1800 Tommie Jacobs Dr. in Leland). For those who want to participate, members gather at 4:30 p.m. in Blossoms Restaurant for dinner and a social hour preceding the meeting.

February 2026

Article posted in the what's happening section in the Winter edition of the **North Brunswick Magazine**.

Calabash Elks Donate to American Legion Post 68's Be the One Program



The Veteran's Affairs Committee of Calabash Elks Lodge 2679 recently donated \$1,000 to the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68's Be the One program in Leland. This initiative works to prevent veteran suicides by destigmatizing mental health issues, providing peer support and connecting veterans and their families with vital resources. Led by 1st Vice Commander John Hacker, Post 68 has become a state leader in suicide prevention, using innovative outreach like QR-enabled business cards, a dedicated website and community education events. The program's success has sparked interest from other Legion posts and local first responders, leading to John Hacker's recent appointment as North Carolina Legion Department Chair to help expand the initiative statewide.

Remembering Robert “Bob” Penwell. {Born April 8, 1946, Died February 12, 2026}



The Post mourns the recent death of an outstanding Comrade and active community leader, **Robert Penwell**. A resident of Magnolia Greens, Bob was a long-time Legion member and a leader in Post 68's very successful annual golf tournaments (Tee It Up For Veterans), the **Wreaths Across America Program** in Wilmington's National Cemetery (held each December), and **Magnolia Green's Annual Fourth of July Parade**. He was a compassionate, motivated, and helpful member of the veteran community, and we will miss him dearly. Post 68 extends its deepest condolences to his family.

March 2026

Happenings and outreach events:

Post 68 personnel attended the **Legion College** on **March 7, 2026**

The North Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce sponsored an **EXPO** at Leland Cultural Arts Center on March 18th. **Post 68 At-Large-Member John Hacker** set up an information table to conduct outreach and provide information on available resources and “Be The One”.

As part of our **Youth** outreach and support of the **North Brunswick County High School JROTC** several Post 68 members attended the annual JROTC Bal. **Lead 1st Vice Jim McAvoy & Adjutant Dan Dodge**.

Buddy Checks of Post 68 Veterans are conducted throughout the year. This function of veteran assistance and outreach is led by **1st Vice Chair Jim McAvoy**.

To host blood drive April 10

The Cape Fear Blue Star Mothers is a 501(c)(3) organization, consists of mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and female legal guardians whose children are in the military, National Guard, or Reserves, or who are veterans. One of the organization's most important projects is collecting items for and packing care packages (Morale Boosters Boxes) for troops deployed overseas. The boxes, packed with clothes, crackers, snacks, hygiene items and more, are shipped to individuals and units to show community support for these active-duty personnel.

At its meeting on March 18, the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 presented a donation of \$250 to benefit the Blue Star Mothers' Morale Boosters program. Post Commander Jim Pate and First Vice Commander Jim McVay made the presentation to Michelle Bunting, chapter president. To learn more about the Blue Star Mothers and how you can participate, visit: <https://capefearbluestarmothers.com/>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE

The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, in conjunction with the American Red Cross and WFAE-TV Channel 3, will host a blood drive on Friday, April 10. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at WFAE, located at 1100 Monrovia Village Way in Lakeland.

Every blood product



Shown from left to right Post 68 Commander Jim Pate, Cape Fear Blue Star Mothers Chapter President Michelle Bunting and Post 68 First Vice Commander Jim McVay.

collected is extremely important and critically lifesaving. At the conclusion of a blood drive, more than 40 local donors are expected to be the target of the blood. This drive will collect both Pate's Red and White Blood units. Power Red donations typically take longer to obtain, but such donations are critical for treating trauma patients, newborns, providing emergency transfusions during birth, patients with sickle cell anemia, and others suffering from blood loss.

To make an appointment, go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code. Blood drive is Friday, April 10, and click on "See Dates"

to select your desired appointment time.

VETERANS EXPERIENCE ACTION CENTER (VEAC) HOSTING EVENT MAY 28 TO 30

The American Legion Department of North Carolina, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is again sponsoring the annual VEAC in North Carolina. This is a great opportunity for veterans to file a claim, check the status of an existing claim, or file an appeal. Veterans can also receive help with VA health care enrollment, medical health insurance, housing and employment support, survivor benefits and more. Past VEACs held in Wilmington have served

thousands of veterans, including those from out of state.

The VEAC will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 28 through May 30, at the National Guard Armory, located at 1011 Industry Road in Wilmington. All veterans are welcome. VA benefits officials and health care representatives will work with community service officers and officers throughout the event.

If you are a veteran seeking claims and benefits assistance at the VEAC, contact your local Veterans Service Office to learn the process now. For Brunswick County, the appropriate contact is Linda Hartell at (919) 253-2200.

COMMUNITY

in Co
from
May 24
June 10 through 16
May 27
June 24
January
April
November
CAROL
Call us
On email at

Post 68 work with the Cape Fear BlueStar Mothers:

April 2026



L-R Tom Powers, Marc Arrington, John Hacker

Educating Business Owners on Suicide Awareness: Most veterans value the skills gained through military service: discipline, dedication, teamwork, and camaraderie. The **Wilmington Veterans Business Collective** and **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68** in Leland embrace these values by fostering collaboration, promoting networking, mutual support, and maintaining a visible presence in their communities.

On Thursday, April 9, several members of **Post 68** in Leland briefed the Wilmington Veterans Business Collective on the Legion's Be The One suicide awareness program. They also answered questions. Attending from Post 68 were **John Hacker** (Past Commander and Chair, Department of North Carolina **Be The One** Program), **Tom Powers** (Be The One Co-Chair and Post 68 Website Developer), and **Eric Mens** (Public Affairs Officer). Post 68 understands suicide respects no boundaries of geography, profession, economic status, gender, or age. Since its inception several years ago, Be The One has proven to be effective at destigmatizing issues surrounding veteran suicides and educating the public on available resources. **Marc Arrington** (MSgt. USMC Ret.), President of the Veterans Business Collective, opened Thursday's meeting with a reminder to those present that their service to country did not stop the day they were discharged, hung up their uniforms, and left service.

Now, as a civilian and business owner, he encourages members to continue helping one another succeed in business by networking and sharing ideas and resources. Through his leadership, Arrington ensures that the organization continues to embrace the values members learned during their time in service—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and courage—and that those values endure long after individuals transition from military service to civilian life. Business owners and community members can support **Be The One** by attending information sessions, sharing materials, or inviting representatives to business events. By engaging directly, providing resources, or simply spreading the message, everyone can help make a positive impact and strengthen support systems for veterans in our community.

For more information on how to participate, please visit the **American Legion Post 68 website** or contact the program coordinators. Current membership in the Wilmington Chapter of the Veterans Business Collective, a tax exempt 501(c)(3), includes 175 veterans, spouses, and supporters. The organization is funded solely through member dues and donations. Meetings are at 6 pm on the second Thursday of each month at The Eagles Dare, 420 N 3rd St, Wilmington, NC 28401. They also have a Jacksonville, NC chapter that meets on the third Thursday of the

month at the Carolina Ale House, 1649 Western Blvd, Jacksonville, NC 28546, from 5-7 pm. To learn more, donate, or join, visit veteransbusinesscollective.org. To learn more about American Legion Post 68, visit our recently revamped website: <https://www.ncpost68.org> Membership meetings are held in the banquet room at Blossoms Restaurant (1800 Tommie Jacobs Drive, Leland) on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Dinner is an informal gathering for members starting between 4:30 pm and 5:00 pm; the official meeting begins at 6:00 pm. After the meeting, members socialize over drinks at the Blossoms bar area. Everyone is welcome: members, visitors, guests, and spouses.

April 2026

Community Blood Drive, April 10. The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, in conjunction with the American Red Cross and WWAY TV Channel 3, will host a blood drive on Friday, April 10. The event will be held from 12 to 5 PM, at WWAY, 1224 Magnolia Village Way, Leland, NC. Every blood product collected is extremely important and eventually lifesaving. At the conclusion of a recent drive, more than 40 local donors responded to the urgent call for blood. This drive will collect both Power Red and Whole Blood units. Power Red donations typically take longer to obtain, but such donations are critical for treating trauma patients, newborns, providing emergency transfusions during birth, patients with sickle cell anemia, and others suffering from blood loss. (Photo- Jim McAvoy lead Blood drive event)



American Legion Post 68 Thanks WWAY TV3 for Blood Drive Support

For several years, John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland, together with the Cape Fear Chapter of the American Red Cross, held multiple successful blood drives to address critical blood shortages. These events took place in the Community Room at WWAY TV3 in Leland, with strong support from local donors and the WWAY staff. At the most recent blood drive on April

25, Post 68 leadership presented a plaque of appreciation to WWAY Anchor Matt Bennett. Bea Frost (Post Commander) and Jim McAvoy (Post Chaplain and Blood Drive Lead) made the presentation, with assistance from Post members Alan Simmons (also representing the Red Cross), John Hacker, Joe Frost, Lane Adrian, Tom Willis and Ed Grinnell.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

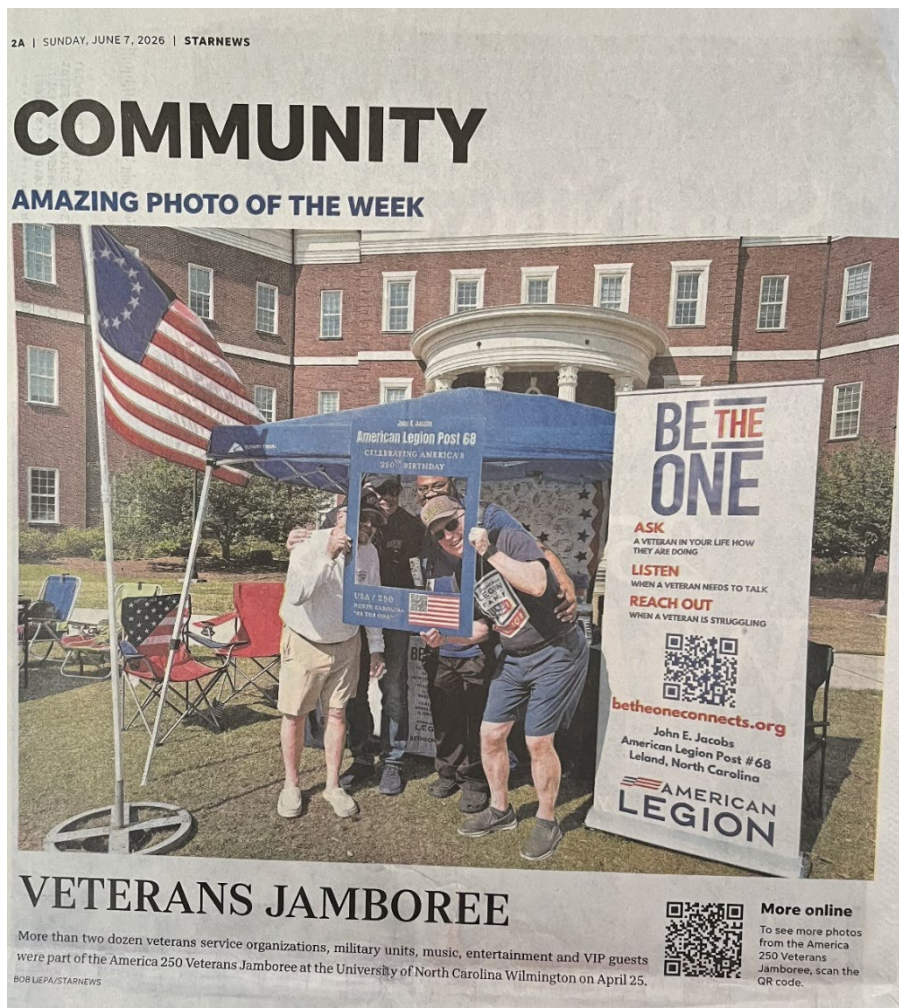
April 2026

Happenings and outreach events:

On April 18th John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 sponsored 4 Guardians to escort and assist on the World War II Veterans on their “Honor Flight” to the World War II Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. They flew out of Wilmington Airport to Washington DC , attended the ceremony at the Veteran’s memorial and then flew back to Wilmington (all in one day). The escort was coordinated bt **Post 68 Service Officer Lane Adrian.**

North Brunswick High School JROTC Change of Command Ceremony occurred on April 20th at NBHS. Post 68 supports the program and was represented by **1st Vice-Commander Jim McAvoy.**

April 2026 UNCW 250 EXPO



Post 68 member Rick Rogers and John Hacker are visible in the photo

Legion Post 68 Presents Awardsto NBHS JROTC cadets
May 7th, 2026 Article in the Brunswick Beacon Newspaper.

3 supports South High School JROTC



Photo contributed
Post 543 Commander Mike Carton alongside Cadet Command Sergeant Major Noris Baez, who was recently awarded the Cadet of the Year award.



Photo contributed
Post 543 Commander Mike Carton alongside Cadet Captain Justin Stevenson, who was recently named Leadership Cadet of the Year.



Photo contributed
The South Brunswick High School JROTC Archery Team alongside Post 543 Commander Mike Carton.



Photo contributed
The South Brunswick High School JROTC Drone Team alongside Post 543 Commander Mike Carton.

Legion Post 68 presents awards to NBHS JROTC cadets

BY ERIC MENS
POST 68

Congratulations to the North Brunswick High School (NBHS) JROTC recipients of the 2026 John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 achievement awards! Jim McAvoy, Post 68 first vice commander, presented the awards to the cadets at the recent JROTC Change of Command Ceremony.

Cadet MAJ Aaliyah Shaw won the \$1,000 John E. Jacobs Scholarship. Cadet C1SG Elijah Williams won the Legion's Military Excellence Award and Medal. Cadet CLT Eva Hutchins won the American Legion Scholastic Excellence Award and Medal. Both awardees received checks for \$500.

The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 meets at 6 p.m. every third Thursday in the Blossoms Restaurant Banquet Room (1800 Tommie Jacobs Drive in Leland). For those who wish to participate, members gather at 4:30 p.m. in Blossoms Restaurant for dinner and a social hour preceding the meeting. After the meeting, attendees typically adjourn to the Blossoms bar area to socialize. To learn more about how veterans can join the American Legion or how Post 68 Legion programs and projects benefit our veterans and community, visit <https://www.ncpost68.org/>. The next Post meeting will be on May 21.

Post 68 First Vice Commander Jim McAvoy presents Cadet CLT Eva Hutchins with the American Legion Scholastic Excellence Award and Medal.

Photo contributed



Photo contributed
Post 68 First Vice Commander Jim McAvoy presents Cadet MAJ Aaliyah Shaw with the \$1,000 John E. Jacobs Scholarship.



Photo contributed
Post 68 First Vice presents Cadet C1SG Elijah Williams with the Legion's Military Excellence Award and Medal.



May 2026

VETERANS EXPERIENCE ACTION CENTER (VEAC) An in-person VEAC is typically a multi-day event organized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with local veterans' organizations, veteran service offices, and other local service providers. The **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland** has supported this event since its inception. VEACs provide veterans with an excellent source of information, support, and peer-to-peer connections. Representatives at these events take the time to understand and assess each participating veteran's circumstances and challenges, offering one-on-one assistance and ensuring that veterans receive answers and solutions tailored to their needs. North Carolina has had great success meeting those needs through VEACs held throughout the state over the past several years. The American Legion Department of North Carolina, in partnership with Wilmington-area American Legion Posts and the VA, is supporting this year's Wilmington VEAC. This is an excellent opportunity for veterans to file a claim, check the status of an existing claim, or file an appeal. Veterans can also receive assistance with VA health care enrollment, mental health resources, housing and employment support, survivor benefits, and more. Past VEACs in Wilmington have served thousands of veterans, including those from other states. The VEAC will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 28 through May 30, 2026, at the **National Guard Armory, 2412 Infantry Rd., Wilmington, NC 28405**.

C8 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON Thursday, May 21, 2026

Veterans Experience Action Center event planned

BY ERIC MENS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER,
AMERICAN LEGION POST 68
LELAND

An in-person VEAC is typically a multi-day event organized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with local veterans' organizations, veteran service offices and other local service providers. VEACs provide veterans with an excellent source of information, support, and peer-to-peer connections. Representatives at these events take the time to understand and assess each participating veteran's circumstances and challenges, offering one-on-one assistance and ensuring that veterans receive answers and solutions tailored to their needs. North Carolina has had great success meeting those needs through VEACs held throughout the state over the past several years.

The American Legion Department of North Carolina, in partnership with Wilmington-area American Legion Posts and the VA, is supporting this year's Wilmington VEAC. This is an excellent opportunity for veterans to file a claim, check the status of an existing claim, or file an appeal. Veterans can also receive assistance with VA health care enrollment, mental health resources, housing and employment support, survivor benefits and more. Past VEACs in Wilmington have served thousands of veterans, including those from other states.

The VEAC will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 28 to May 30, at the National Guard Armory, located at 2412 Infantry Road in Wilmington.

To avoid overcrowding at the Armory, veterans should follow the registration guidelines below. However, VEAC representatives ensure that every veteran who registers at the door on event days will be seen.

- Thursday, May 28: Veterans with SSNs ending in 00-33.
- Friday, May 29: Veterans with SSNs ending in 34-66.
- Saturday, May 30: Veterans with SSNs ending in 67-99.

Veterans must come prepared with the proper documentation for their case (for example, a DD-214, VA claims or denials documentation, and all medical records (military and civilian) pertinent to their disability). If you are a veteran seeking claims and benefits assistance at the VEAC, contact your local Veterans Service Office to begin the process now. For Brunswick County, the appropriate contact is Anita Hartsell at (910) 253-2233.

The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland is a staunch supporter of the VEAC. To learn more about Post 68 and how its work benefits veterans and the community, visit <https://ncpost68.org/>. Post 68 membership meetings are open to the public and held every third Thursday at 6 p.m. in the Blossoms Restaurant Banquet Room (1800 Tommie Jacobs Drive in Leland). For those who wish to participate, members gather at 4:30 p.m. in Blossoms Restaurant for dinner and a social hour preceding the meeting. The next Post meeting will be on May 21.

EVENTS

FROM PAGE C7

Paramedic, Laboratory positions, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, Home Health, Environmental Services Attendant, Food Services, Public Safety Corporal (Armed), Plant Operations, Supply Chain, Support Associate, Patient Access and Administrative Support.

Healthcare continues to be one of the region's most critical and growing workforce sectors. These hiring events help connect local talent with mean-

about available career pathways, and explore immediate employment opportunities within the healthcare field and related support services.

Job seekers are encouraged to bring copies of their resume and dress professionally for possible on-site interviews.

To register for the hiring events, call NCWorks at Brunswick Community College at (910) 755-8508. You can also stop in for career services such as NCWorks registration, resume assistance and interview preparation prior to the hiring event.

matching, resume assistance, interview preparation, access to training programs and employer recruitment support.

NCWorks Career Centers are an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL GRADE

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Safe. Fast. Affordable.
Free estimates — Call today

May 2026

Happenings and outreach events:

Post 68 hosted a **District 9** meeting, May 6th, coordinated by **Post 68 Commander Bea Frost**.

Post 68 coordinated 4 locations throughout the area to distribute Poppies on May 22nd and even though it rained we persevered to **honor Poppy Day**.

Flags In Cemeteries: May 22nd. Post 68 members spread throughout the **North Brunswick County area**, identifying each Veteran's grave and posting a flag at each one. Culminating the effort at our namesake's gravesite, where we meet the family of **John E. Jacobs** and mark his grave in **remembrance and reverence**.

Post 68 Riders and Patriot Guard Riders conducted a **Flag Raising Ceremony** at the **Battleship USS North Carolina** on May 23rd. Lead Post 68 Service Officer Lane Adrian

VEAC** May 28 – 30 held at the **National Guard Armory**, in Wilmington, to serve any veterans that needed assistance. The event brings Veteran Services into one location in order to address the veteran's claims. The event served over **600 veterans** this year. Post 68 is one of the largest contributors of volunteers to aid in the success of this service. John E. Jacobs American Legion Post **Parliamentarian Dale Todd** coordinated our portion of the event.

June 2026

Flag Day June 14th



Keynote Speaker Lt. Cil. (Ret.) Gary Green



FLAG DAY CELEBRATION

The official kickoff celebration of America's 250th birthday is July 4th, our country's Independence Day. However, the **John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 in Leland** isn't waiting. On **Flag Day, June 14, 2026**, Post 68, along with the Town of Leland and the North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce, will host a **community picnic** at Leland's Founders Park to commemorate Flag Day and America 250. The event, open to all area residents, will run from 12 pm to 3 pm. Local food vendors, including Crofton's Pretzels, Hot Diggity Dogs and Hogs, and CC's Frozen Treats, will be on site with refreshments for sale. The attached flyer provides additional details.

Bea Frost, Commander, Post 68, and the **Honorable Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland Mayor**, will open the festivities. Participating organizations and information booth operators will include the North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce, the Brunswick Town Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Blue Star Mothers, Legion Post 68, Be The One, and other local organizations.

Opening ceremonies begin promptly at 12 pm. at the park's Military Memorial Plaza. Veterans, local business owners, and families are invited to attend and bring chairs to enjoy the event. Attendees should arrive by 11:30 am. Founders Park is located at 113 Town Hall, across the street from Leland Town Hall.

Flag Day article posted in the
North Brunswick News

<https://www.nrcolumbus.com/northbrunswicknews/>

From refugee to U.S. Army: A Leland veteran's Flag Day story

By Justin Smith justinsmith@northbrunswicknews.com – Jun 14, 2026 **Updated** Jun 16, 2026



Eric Mens, Vietnam and Public Affairs Officer for John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, stands in front of an American flag before Sunday's Flag Day celebration at Founder's Park in Leland. Staff photo by

As the American flag fluttered at Founders Park on Sunday afternoon, Eric Mens thought about a journey that began more than 70 years ago on the other side of the world. The Leland resident is a Vietnam veteran and public affairs officer for John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, which organized the community's Flag Day celebration. For Mens, the flag's symbolism is tied to both his military service and his family's journey to America.



Community members gathered at Founders Park in Leland on Sunday for a Flag Day celebration hosted by John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68. Staff photo by Justin Smith



Members of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps Torpedo Squadron 8 of Wilmington stand at attention during Sunday's Flag Day celebration at Founders Park in Leland. Staff photo by Justin Smith

June 2026

LELAND LEGION POST 68 CHANGE OF COMMAND



Thomas Powers
John E Jacobs American Legion Post 68,
Leland Commanding Officer 2026 - 2027

At its May 21, 2026, membership meeting, the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 elected Thomas M. Powers (Tom) as its Commander for the coming year. Powers is among the youngest Commanders installed since the Post was rechartered in 2012. His installation ceremony on July 16, 2026, will reinforce Post 68's commitment to meeting the needs of area veterans and their families head-on. Tom joined Post 68 in early 2025. Despite his brief tenure in the American Legion, he has embraced numerous training opportunities to deepen his understanding of Legion history, programs, and protocol. His extensive military and business background has instilled in him a strong appreciation for collaboration, teamwork, community outreach, and service.

A native of Poestenkill, NY, Commander-Elect Powers moved to Leland in 2013. With a broad background in human resources, data analysis, bookkeeping, marketing, project management, and information technology (including website development and management), he opened Powers Professional Administrative Services in 2024. He has been an active member of the business community since then and is a member of both the North and South Brunswick Chambers of Commerce.

Since joining Post 68, Tom has been an extremely active member. His commitment to community service, especially for veterans, is evident in his deep involvement with Post 68's renowned Be The One suicide awareness initiative. He also co-chairs the Legion's Department of North Carolina's Be The One initiative. Recently, Tom designed and wrote the Post's new website (ncpost68.org), replacing the outdated site and creating a vital communications tool that showcases Legion members and Post 68's work in the greater Leland area for residents, especially veterans and their families.

Commander-Elect Powers stated that his goals for his tenure include ensuring that each Legion member can actively participate in community service to support the American

Legion's Four Pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. He also intends to reach out to and engage active-duty and transitioning military personnel. As a local small business owner and Chamber of Commerce member, Tom understands the value of collaboration and of building and expanding Post 68's relationships with local service providers, religious organizations, First Responders, elected officials, other business owners, and veteran organizations. Powers firmly believes that service, whether to the country or the community, does not end when a military member hangs up their uniform upon transitioning to civilian life.

See related article posted in the **North Brunswick News**. See link below
https://www.nrcolumbus.com/northbrunswicknews/american-legion-post-68-names-powers-commander/article_2b5941ab-c37b-4d38-a6ce-f3da2ceeabcd.html?utm_source=North+Brunswick+News&utm_campaign=626792ad78-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2026_03_16_07_35_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_cd9fa1952d-573133165#:~:text=Next%20Up,All%20rights%20reserved.

June 2026

Town of North West Founder's Day: The John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68 representatives at this event were **Jim Barkley**, **Carm Emerson** and Tony Schirillo (not in photo). Post 68 is based in Leland, but it serves all of the communities in North Brunswick County, NC.



June 2026

End of one year, beginning of another: At the monthly June meeting of the John E. Jacobs American Legion Post 68, Leland, District 9 Commander **George Freeman** conducted the installation of the 2026-2027 Post 68 Officers.



District 9 Commander
George Freeman

L – R: Mike Maybee, Joan Britt, Jim Barkley, Scott Wargo. Bill Powel, Evan Jones, Rick Rogers, Adrian Lane, Eric Mens, Dan Dodge, John Hacker. Missing – Allen Simons & Tom Powers.

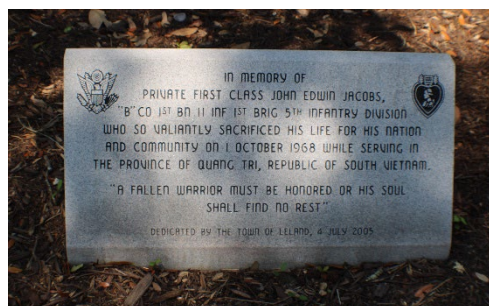
Final Note: The John E, Jacobs American Legion Post 68 works to be a resource and a comfort to the veterans in our community. One quit, but profound function we suport is the **“Pinning ceremony”** we perform for veterans and their families when they are in hospice. This unit is made up of our memberdhip led by **Bob Page** assisted by our Chaplin **Rick Rogers**. The Post 68 Riders and the Patriot Guard Riders make up the majority of the participants. **They have performed over 80 of the “Pinnings” this year.**

Thirteen Folds Ceremony Led by Post members John Hacker and Les Christensen



assisted by the USNSCC Torpedo Squadron 8 (Sea Cadets)

END Report



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