

THE BEACON



**AMERICAN LEGION POST 202 COLUMBIA,
MISSOURI January - 2026 Next Post 202
meeting is January 21st**



Commander Comments,

Legionnaires,

Let me start by saying happy new year. As the year starts with a renewed sense of anticipation. One project we are starting on for cleanup is the large wood/brush pile out back. We are getting bids to have it removed. There is some usable fire wood there if anyone would like to get some of it prior to having it removed.

This Sunday January 11th at Post 5 Jefferson City, 12:30 is the District 8 meeting.

VFW meeting will be Monday January 12, 2026, 5-7:30pm.

The American Legion Riders 202 have their meeting the second Tuesday of the month, January 13th, 6pm. January 24, 2026, the Legion Riders are having a Texas Hold 'em Poker night and starting Tuesday January 20, 2026, through March 10, 2026, 6pm a friendly game of Cornhole.

The American Legion Post 202 have their meeting the third Wednesday of the month, January 21. I Look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.

Thank you,

Roy Stigers, Commander
Legion Post 202

Reminder for the Friday night poker night we serve a simple dinner/sandwich. We need to have some volunteers for this each month. Please coordinate to help support these events. 1st Friday of the month is the VFW Post

2nd Friday of the month is the Legion Post
 3rd Friday of the month is the VFW Auxiliary
 4th Friday of the month is the Legion Auxiliary
 5th Friday of the month is the Americal Legion Riders

Post meeting dates 2026:

January 21st, February 18th, March 18th, April 15th, May 20th

District Meetings for 2026:

April 11th Post 317 In Freeburg, 1:00

June 14th Post 624 in Sunrise Beach, 11:00

September 13th Post 52 in Booneville, 1:00, K of C Hall, 1515 Radio Hill Road, Booneville.

Thank you to all those who made our Holiday Christmas party a huge success. In addition to the Post 202 family of Post members; the Auxiliary, the Sons and Riders, those who attended



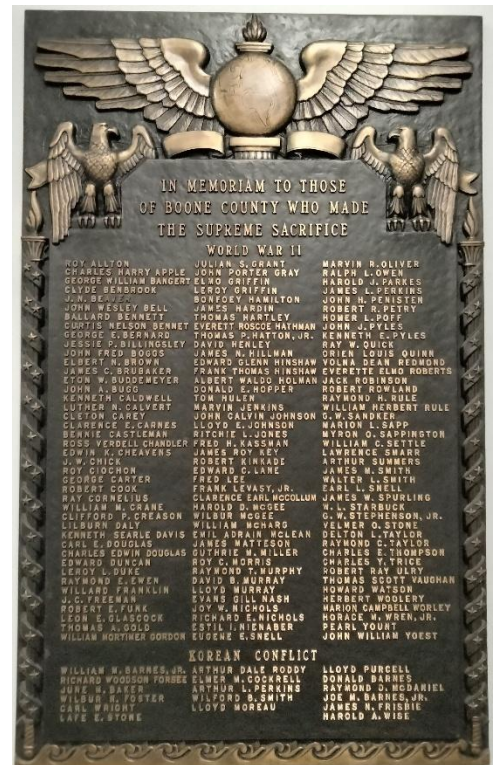
included VFW Post 280 and Auxiliary, Mid Missouri Vietnam Veterans Group, Blue Star Mothers and the Marine Corps League. Much work in recent days had the Post looking great. The table settings were beautiful and festive. It was a great gathering of patriots and supporters.

Post 202 History item

This plaque bearing the names of the men of Boone County who lost their lives in World War II and the Korean Conflict was first installed on the Ash Street Legion property in the spring of 1958. It is solid brass and extremely heavy, a bit over 100 lb.

For many years this plaque has been located in the hallway outside the main hall. It is now in a place of honor in the Memorial Room.

Given that the population of Boone County during WWII was about 35,000 (approx. 190,000 today), this number of losses must surely have affected nearly every family and devastated the community.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY – Lorrie Mayes

No meeting was held in December as we enjoyed the Holiday Party!

The next meeting is 21st at 7pm. Social starts at 6pm. Hope to see you there!

It is with sadness I let you know of the passing of Lora Shay. She was a long time member of Unit 202.



The Department of Missouri ALA also lost a very vital member. Nancy Reeves, department secretary, passed away after an illness. She will be greatly missed as she served in that position for many years. She was a life line for me when I started.

EVENTS – Lorrie Mayes

I was very excited about the turnout at the Holiday Dinner. We had some that were not able to attend for various reasons and we are glad they are all safe and sound. A big thank you to everyone who helped set up for the dinner and tear down. Janie and Susan did a wonderful job of making sure the food was kept full. The food that was left we sold as dinners to poker on Friday to regain some of the money spent. Needless to say, that meal was well received.

The VFW pancake breakfasts have been a huge success. I think they broke a record at this last one. If you have not been to one, you do not know what you are missing. My favorite part is the scrambled eggs which I top with sausage gravy!

I am going to list the big events that are coming up:

January 17th.....Hickman Softball Trivia Night

January 24th.....American Legion Riders Poker Tournament This is a great event. Even if don't play, come out and eat, have a drink and enjoy the fun.

January 27th.....American Legion Riders Cornhole Tournament starts every Tuesday evening until the end of March. Fun! Bar open! Food served.

February 7th.....Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary Trivia Night

February 14th, 15thMystery Dinner Theater The play is Chocolate can be Deadly! There will be a matinee and dinner on Saturday and a lighter fare on Sunday afternoon. More information to come soon.

February 21st.....VFW Pancake Breakfast from 8-11am

February 28thBattle High School Trivia Night

We are starting to take bids on getting the brush pile removed in the back. There is lots of wood available if anyone wants to come out and chop it up. Just show up and take it.

Getting rid of the brush pile will help the appearance of the property and stop giving a place for people to set up a home.

Legion Rider News- By Mike Williams

Christmas is a season of generosity. The Riders of Chapter 202 spent the month of December living that out in many different ways. After completing our own Toy Run in November, we supported the Hooligans Charitable Riding Group Toy Drive and Blacktop Harley Davidson's breakfast with Santa, raising \$365 in charitable donations. In addition to the collection efforts, several members also helped with the sorting and distribution later that week. We also got a chance to spread some holiday joy by participating in the Fulton Christmas parade and our annual Candy Cane Cheer Ride the last weekend before Christmas.

That same generous spirit was shown in the way our members continued to give back to area veterans.



Fulton Christmas Parade



Wreath's Across America - Jacksonville

Several riders braved the cold in order to lay wreaths at the Jacksonville Veterans Cemetery for Wreaths Across America. A few days later we partnered with our sister VFW post 280 and the Patriot Guard Riders to lay to rest retired Vietnam War nurse Maj. Janet Kimmons. Sadly, we also had to say goodbye to Kerby Mitchell's father just two days after Christmas. Through all these efforts, our members volunteered 288.5 hours serving our community. Huge thanks to everyone who came out to support the Kimmons and Mitchell families in their times of grief.

Although the winter cold has cut down on most people's riding, a few hardy



USAF Vietnam Nurse Maj Janet Kimmons funeral - Jacksonville

folks still logged a few miles either through commuting, short day rides when the weather broke, and our pre-Christmas burger and bike night at the Old Neighborhood Cafe. Steven Rush has taken an alternative approach, by heading out for the Christmas holiday. Leaving from Columbia, he made his way through Oklahoma and Texas before heading further southwest in January, posting videos of his adventures on TikTok all along the way. With his help we were able to log a total of 4,169 miles for the month.

Looking forward, we have several exciting non-riding events coming up. On January 24 we will host our annual Texas Hold'em Poker Night at 6 p.m. Starting on January 20, we will be hosting our corn hole league and dinner every Tuesday night. Whether you play or not, this is a great opportunity to spend time with your American Legion Family and raise money for a great cause. As always, thanks to all the organizers and volunteers who make these events possible.



December 2025 Sons of the American Legion Activities and Events - by Oliver Brilhante IV

As we enter a new year with hope and optimism, let's take the time to count our blessings. In the coming year there are plenty of opportunities to give of ourselves in a

variety of ways. The Post 202 Sons of the American Legion squadron are looking forward to continued service to our community and the American Legion Family.

After lending a hand with some of the work around the post in 2025, raising money for

Welcome Home in November and attending the Christmas Dinner in December, the Sons will be anxious to be of service in the coming year. Some of the initiatives that have been discussed and will be scheduled include additional help with upgrades at the post, helping with Friday night poker suppers and continuing to identify, donate and replace American flags in and around the Columbia area to not-for-profit organizations and veterans who are unable to replace their flag.

On January 31st, the Sons are planning on giving their time and talents to help with the continued updates to the Post. There are a lot of projects to accomplish in the continued effort to complete all the updates in and around the Post. If you have the time, the tools or would otherwise just like to help, we could use anything you can provide. While we plan on reinforcing the stage however, there are without a doubt other items that need to be addressed as well.

One of the most concerning issues too many of our military service members face today is their struggles with mental health as I have experienced the tragedy of the loss of a dear friend and Navy Veteran to his mental health struggles this past year. As a way to give to those who gave so much for us, we hope to make this a top priority that we can help with now and in the future in any capacity possible.

If there are any other topics, issues or items that you or someone you know in the American Legion family feels needs to be addressed on January 31st or simply added to the ever evolving list of “to do’s”, please reach out to one of the Sons members or officers so we will be aware of these so they can discuss and develop a plan of action to complete them.

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement.



Did You Know - by Paul Hobbs

Fleet Admiral Chester William Nimitz

“On the last day of 1941, Nimitz assumed command of the Pacific Fleet. Standing on the wharf at the submarine base, he spoke a few preliminary words. Then, as he opened his orders, he stepped across the wharf and read them from the deck of the submarine Grayling (SS-209), partly, no doubt, because the new commander-in-chief was an old submariner but also because few other decks were then available at Pearl Harbor.” *U. S. Naval Institute*

Chester Nimitz was born in the small German town of Fredericksburg, Texas on 24 February 1885. His grandfather and great grandfather were both German merchant seamen.

His grandfather, Charles Henry Nimitz (born Karl Heinrich Nimitz) immigrated to America in the early 1840s. He built the Nimitz Hotel in 1852 in Fredericksburg just 7 years after Texas became our 28th state. That hotel is now the National Museum of the Pacific War.

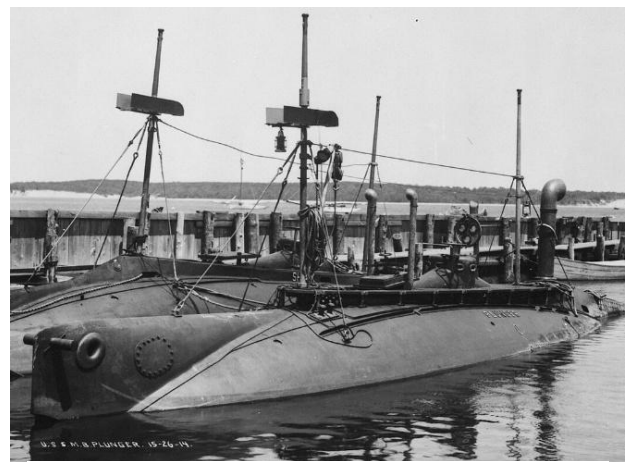
Chester's father died before he was born and his grandfather served as his father figure as he grew up. Grandfather taught Chester "the sea – like life itself – is a stern taskmaster. The best way to get along with either is to learn all you can, then do your best and don't worry – especially about things over which you have no control." *Theleansubmariner.com*. Given his tremendous success as Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet he learned well from his grandfather.

in September 1901 Nimitz left high school at age 16 and entered the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated with distinction, 7th of 114 in the Class of 1905. He initially attempted to enter West Point but there were no appointments available at that time.

As an ensign Nimitz was court-martialed in 1908 for running the destroyer USS Decatur aground in the Batangas Harbor, Philippines. He attempted to enter the harbor at low tide without checking the tide tables, an essential navigational tool. The ship ran onto a mud bank and there it remained until the tide rose the next morning and a local steamer pulled it free. The court-martial found him guilty of neglect of duty and hazarding a Navy ship. This resulted in a public reprimand and a letter placed in his service record.

In January 1909 he was assigned to instruction in submarine duty at Newport, Rhode Island. This assignment gave rise to his great naval career.

When he first stepped aboard USS PLUNGER SS-2 as her Commanding Officer on May 3, he considered the gasoline powered sub as "a cross between a Jules Verne fantasy and a humpbacked whale." *Naval History and Heritage Command*. "In the aftermath of his unfortunate experience at Batangas he no doubt thought that some senior officer had decreed "give PLUNGER to Nimitz". At that time pigboat duty was considered a hardship that scarcely served to advance one's career." *Naval Submarine League*. (Four U. S. Navy submarines have carried the name Plunger)



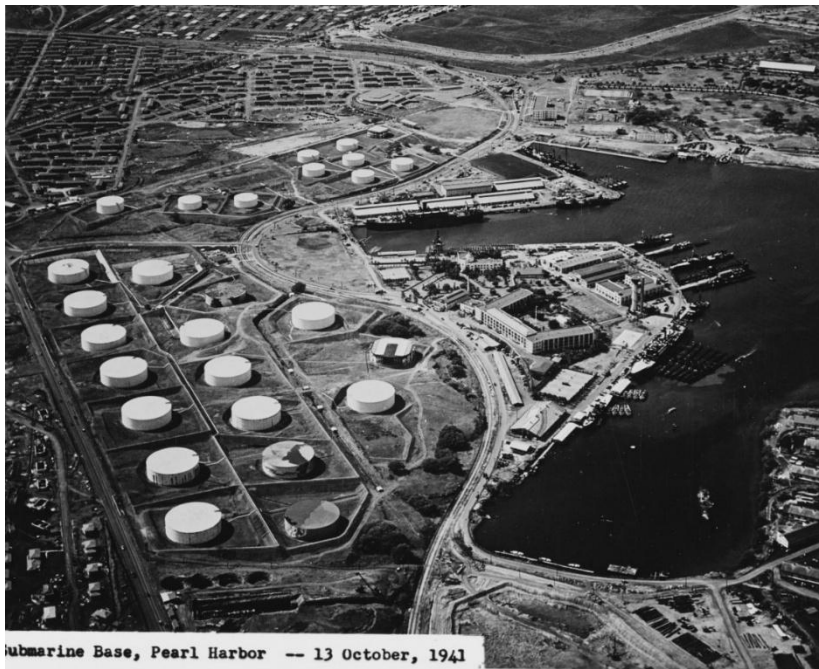
USS Plunger SS-2

Plunger was only 64 x 12 feet and design depth of 150 feet. Her compliment was 1 officer and 6 enlisted. Her armament was one 18-inch torpedo tube and 5 torpedoes. Sanitation and

cooking left much to be desired. Modern thinking is that submarines of that day possibly posed a greater danger to their own crews than they did to a potential enemy. She was the first of seven submarines commissioned in 1903 of which HOLLAND, commissioned in 1900 and the US Navy's first submarine, was the prototype.

Nimitz immediately saw many opportunities for improvement of submarines and recognized the future potential of undersea warfare. Over the next four years he became one of the most experienced and knowledgeable submarine officers in the fleet. He commanded several new submarines and had much input in later submarine design and construction.

On May 17, 1912 Nimitz was given command of the entire Atlantic Submarine Flotilla. The magnetic compass that submarines had been equipped with up to that time had been completely unreliable in submerged cruising. With the introduction of the gyroscopic compass Nimitz became a pioneer in underwater navigation. He also experimented with submerged radio transmission.



Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor -- 13 October, 1941

Submarine base Pearl Harbor 13 October 1941

In 1920 he established the Submarine Base at Pearl Harbor and served as its first Commanding Officer. By good fortune the submarine base which Nimitz had commissioned was practically undamaged by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Millions of gallons of diesel oil on the tank farm were undisturbed. Torpedo storage facilities were undamaged.

Technical improvements gave submarines the capability for independent operations in mid-ocean and Nimitz saw the significance of them for future naval operations. He became a recognized authority on submarines.

His zeal and talent won the confidence of his superiors as an innovator and leader as well as the admiration of his men for his courage and devotion to their welfare

According to notes from the Pacific War Museum, "When Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 December 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt selected Nimitz to replace the former

Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet and told him to "get the hell out to Pearl Harbor and don't come back till the war is won!"

When Japan surrendered in September 1945, Nimitz signed the surrender documents on behalf of the United States as General MacArthur and Admiral Halsey looked on.



Nimitz signing surrender documents aboard USS Missouri .

In his foreword to Theodore Roscoe's book *United States Submarine Operations in World War II*, Nimitz wrote: "When I assumed command of the Pacific Fleet in 31 December, 1941; our submarines were already operating against the enemy, the only units of the Fleet that could come to grips with the Japanese for months to come. It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never

failed us in our days of peril."

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the WWII Pacific Fleet commander, died on February 20, 1966, at his home on Yerba Buena Island, California, at the age of 80. He is buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery with his wife and fellow admirals, fulfilling his wish to rest with his men.

I dedicate this article to the 3,506 submarine sailors lost in WWII. Many of them are on "Eternal Patrol" in places and depths known only to God. 52 U. S. submarines were lost in WWII. According to the **Lost 52 Project**, 38 of those have not yet been found.



Nimitz statue next to USS Missouri Missouri – Pearl Harbor

