



## 2023-24 Goals Set During Planning Meeting

*-Written by Bill Granger, Post 416 Adjutant*

“Without a vision, the people perish,” Proverbs 29:18. While this famous biblical quote refers to those who don’t heed wise instruction, there is much to be applied in this verse’s application about charting an organization’s direction. The officers for the upcoming 2023-24 term met on Tuesday, June 27 to set the course of Post 416 for the next year, specifically in terms of identifying the challenges most pressing to the continuation of The American Legion at Lowe’s Grove, NC. All officers in attendance identified four main goals that will have the most long-term impact toward continuing the mission of The American Legion in our local community.

**Goal #1: Recruit at least 3 new TAL members, and standup a new SAL squadron of no less than 10 members.**

According to the North Carolina Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, the average age of the NC veteran in 2022 was 65.3 years old. That means most NC veterans are from the Vietnam era or older. This trend is expected to continue through 2046, as the percentage of U.S. citizens...

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**Friday, July 7** – Legion Baseball vs Wayne County Post 11, 7pm @ Jordan H.S., 6806 Garrett Rd.

**Tuesday, July 11** – TAL Membership meeting (no dinner, meeting @ 7pm), 5419 S. Alston Avenue

**Tuesday, July 25** – TAL Membership meeting (no dinner, meeting @ 7pm), 5419 S. Alston Avenue

**Tuesday, August 8** – TAL & ALA meeting (dinner @ 6pm, meeting @ 7pm), 5419 S. Alston Avenue

**Tuesday, August 22** – TAL Membership meeting (no dinner, meeting @ 7pm), 5419 S. Alston Avenue

**TAL** – The American Legion    **ALA** – American Legion Auxiliary    **SAL** – Sons of The American Legion

## Post Officers Installed for 2023-24 Term

District 12 Commander Lewis Atwater installed the Post 416 Legion and Auxiliary officers for Lowe's Grove American Legion Post 416 during the Executive Committee planning meeting held Tuesday, June 27, 2023. The following Legion officers were installed:

- Commander – James Lowe
- 1st Vice-Commander – Larry Strickland
- 2nd Vice-Commander – Leo Scrivner
- Finance Officer – James Snyder
- Adjutant – Bill Granger
- Sergeant-at-Arms – Rob Kaufman
- Historian – Manfred Emmrich

The following Auxiliary officers were installed:

- President – Sandra Rich
- Vice-President – Sally Jones
- Treasurer – Fay Dean Spencer
- Secretary – Elaine Wrenn
- Sergeant-at-Arms – Rose Hagan
- Chaplain – Linda Fogleman

These individuals will serve in their new capacities for the term effective July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. Congratulations to these individuals and thank you for your dedication and service at Post 416!

## Past Commander Ron Mitchell Transfers to Post Everlasting

Ronald Lee Mitchell, 86, passed away peacefully on June 27, 2023. His devotion to his family and firm belief in God gave him strength and peace throughout his life.



Ron married Mary Helen, the love of his life on September 22, 1962. They were married for 58 years until Mary Helen passed away in 2020. They had 3 children, David, Leigh and Stephen, all of whom they were very proud of.

Ron joined the Navy in 1956 and was stationed on the USS WASP. While in the Navy, Ron learned his craft of photography and took many pictures around the world for our country.

After being honorably discharged in 1960, he continued his career in photography with the VA hospital as a medical photographer. Later he joined the EPA before rejoining the VA hospital where he retired as the Chief of Medical Media in 1999.

Ron was a member of the American Legion Post 416 where he once served as Commander. He also stayed in close contact with his shipmates through the USS WASP Association and their reunions. During his retirement, he spent time enjoying the beach, playing with his sweet dog Chloe, and going to many cookouts with family and friends.

A graveside service will take place 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 5, 2023, at Lowe's Grove Baptist Church Cemetery. Reverend Paul Menard will officiate the service, with military honors given.



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...who served in the armed forces decreases. In World War Two, 11.2% of all U.S. citizens served. In the Korean and Vietnam Wars, 4.3% served. That trend has continued to decrease to less than 1% serving in Desert Storm or the Global War on Terror. We have seen that trend reflected in our own post membership, as our average age has crept upwards and is comprised of a majority of Vietnam-era veterans. To complicate matters more, Durham County is in the bottom five NC counties (out of 100) in terms of veteran population percentage, further challenging future recruitment of area veterans not currently participating in The American Legion.

Post 416 officers chose to accept the challenge from the TAL Department of North Carolina to grow our TAL membership by three persons, but this in itself does not set the post up for long-term sustainment as unfortunately transfer of more members to post everlasting will likely accelerate as our average age increases. Given the above challenges, one idea was identified to spark growth of younger membership: charter of a new Sons of the American Legion squadron at Lowe's Grove, NC. This would have the benefits of decreasing the average age of our post by a generation, and immediately adding no less than 10 new members to our roster (as required by the Department of NC). For these reasons, this goal was identified as a priority for the 2023-24 term.

**Goal #2: Book an average of three facility rentals per quarter.**

This idea was conceived as a way to forge potential new partnerships in our community and reach new audiences, complementing our recruiting and marketing efforts. For those who aren't aware, the post recently received a \$1,000 donation from RTP business Becton-Dickinson/Parata Systems. While this donation wasn't provided for a rental, the concept of serving our community by utilizing one of our prime assets – our facility – reaches new audiences who are not aware of Lowe's Grove Post 416 or what we do, such as local RTP business and organizations. Earlier in 2023, we hosted a health care event through a facility rental by Lifeline Health Services, which exposed Post 416 to attendees who never have been exposed to us previously. Staging more facility rentals for community events is a way to compliment our first goal, with the added benefit of growing additional income for an asset that would otherwise be vacant.

**Goal #3: Reach an average of five veterans monthly with some type of welfare check.**

Did you know that for those who served in Desert Storm or the Global War on Terror, 86% knew someone who was injured or killed? Furthermore, 75% reported a team member becoming a casualty, and 65% saw dead or seriously injured Americans during their service. It's not surprising to veterans, as we know firsthand the high personal cost of serving in the U.S. armed forces. For this reason, one of our goals this year will be to focus more on providing support for our comrades in arms, whether they are current post members or just area veterans. If we are successful in reaching other veterans in our community who are not current members, our actions will not only provide a very valuable service to them but may be an encouragement for joining our efforts at Post 416.

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## Post Receives RTP Donation

Lowe's Grove American Legion Post 416 extends a big thank you to Karen Thomas-Smith of Parata Systems (on right) and Michael Aluise of BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) (on left) for their amazing support of Lowe's Grove American Legion Post 416. They're pictured here presenting a gift before our American Legion baseball game vs Greenville, NC Post 39 at the Historic Durham Athletic Park to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Commander Commander Larry Strickland (in center). Thank you Parata Systems and BD for actively supporting veteran causes our community!



## 416 Sends Rising Senior to 2023 Tar Heel Boys State



Pictured above is 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Commander Larry Strickland as he welcomes our 2023 Tar Heel Boys State candidate, Rowan Hughes. Rowan is a rising senior at Jordan High School in Durham, NC and he received a full scholarship from Post 416 to attend the week-long event at Catawba College in Salisbury, NC this summer. Since 1938, Boys State teaches the principles of American government through real participation in a model state, complete with governing bodies and elected officials. We look forward to hearing from Rowan at our August membership meeting about his experiences at Boys State!

## In Memoriam – Wallace Inscoe

Mr. Wallace Reid Inscoe, a charter member of Post 416, passed away March 28, 2023. After serving in the Navy in the Pacific Theater during World War II, he joined his father in the family meat packing and wholesale business. He was famous for his grilling talents and known for his BBQ sauce and Brunswick Stew. We recently found a couple of photos of him serving “in the pits” during a BBQ chicken dinner. Wallace, we’ll miss you!

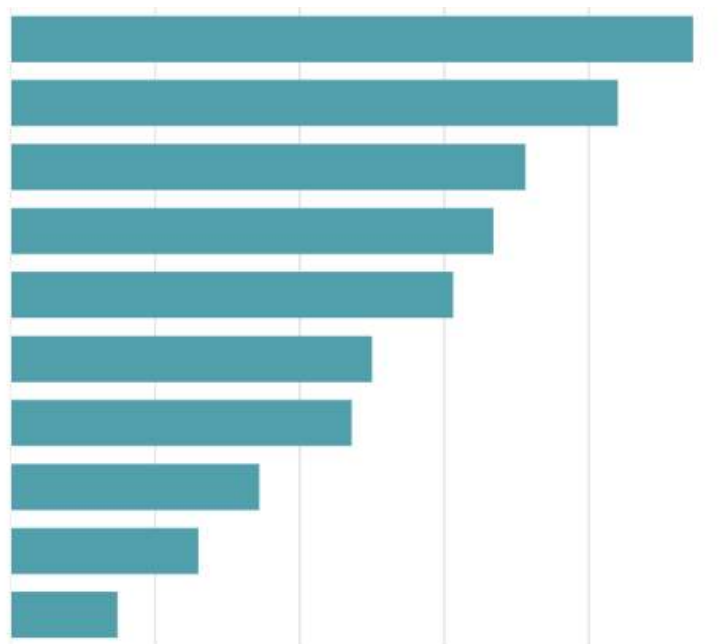


## 2023 Communication Survey Results

During the month of June, all TAL and ALA members had the opportunity to share how best to receive future communication from Post 416. There were 25 responses to the online survey, which took on average 3.5 minutes to complete. Takeaways from the survey are as follows:

1. Most everyone receives and enjoys Post 416 email and e-newsletter communications. When asked if they found these products useful and informative, 96% stated positively for email and 72% positively for the e-newsletter.
2. Facebook is NOT useful for internal post communication. Only 20% of respondents had a Facebook account, so moving forward Facebook posts will be focused on external, outward-facing audiences only.

- 1 E-mail messages
- 2 E-mailed Newsletter
- 3 Post Website
- 4 Text messages
- 5 Facebook
- 6 Newsletter Mailing via USPS
- 7 Phone tree (pre-recorded voice...)
- 8 Twitter/Instagram
- 9 Online blog
- 10 Other (from question #6)



3. The most effective communication tools for post members are: (1) email, (2) e-newsletter, and (3) the post website. The next most used communication method was text messages, and those who use text messages also use emails; therefore they duplicate the same audience and text messages will not be added at this time.
4. When asked if the post should mail the newsletter instead of the current electronic distribution method, only 8% said yes. In addition, when asked if a \$20 dues increase would be supported to pay for this, an overwhelming 76% said no. As such, we'll be sticking with the current e-newsletter format.

What is very encouraging from the survey is our 50% response rate, and the fact that the top three favored methods of communication are already being used at Post 416. However, as you can see from this July 2023 edition of The Sentry, we have re-formatted the e-newsletter to hopefully allow for better viewing on computers, smartphones, and tablets. It also facilitates easier printing, for those who like to have a hard copy while reading. Thanks to all who participated!

## If You Passed Away Today: Consideration for Retired Service Members

- By Mark E. Overberg, Director, Army Retirement Services

Have you been procrastinating about planning for your death? My dad did -- until he had a stroke. When he recovered, he created "The Book." He showed each of his children, on their next visit, "where the Book lives" and what was in it. He'd included everything we needed to know down to which mortuary to call and their phone number; the cemetery plots he'd purchased for Mom and himself; the casket he wanted; and where all their assets were with account numbers. But dad passed 13 years after his stroke, I was driving to visit him. I arrived too late to say goodbye, but as I sat with him, I remembered his plan, his wishes. So I called my brother and told him to email me the first two pages of The Book – the instructions for what to do immediately upon his death. Ten minutes later, I had his wishes in hand, and knew what he wanted me to do. While I was very sad, I did not have the stress of trying to guess what he wanted or whom to talk to. The Book was his way of reminding us that he still loved us, even in death.

Topics to address in your final instructions:

- Getting a death certificate
- Burial or cremation plans and location
- Pre-need eligibility letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/>)
- How to report a Retiree's death (<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary>)
- How to schedule a benefits brief with the VA before the funeral if needed (800) 827-1000 (Benefits Hotline) or (800) 698-2411 (main information line)
- Military funeral honors (<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/casualty-assistance/military-funeral-honors>)
- Burial flag (VA) (<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/>)
- Headstone/grave marker or veteran's medallion for a private headstone (VA)
- Application for burial expenses from the VA (<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/>)
- Filing claim for VGLI or VALife (<https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/>), or private life insurance
- Applying for Dependency & Indemnity Compensation from the VA (<https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/>)
- Applying for DOD Survivor Benefit Plan annuity (<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/ApplySBP/>)
- Applying for the arrears of retired pay (<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/1174RetireeAOP/>)
- Transferring Thrift Savings Plan (<https://www.tsp.gov/publications/tspb31.pdf?TSP-BK-31>)
- Social Security survivors benefits (page 4) (<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors/ifyou.html>)
- Updating DEERS and ID Cards (<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>)
- State-specific veteran benefits (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits>)
- TRICARE plan updates (<https://www.tricare.mil/LifeEvents/DeathinFamily>)
- Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Plan (877) 372-3337 or (<https://www.benefeds.com/education-support/eligibility-military>)



LOWE'S GROVE, NC POST 416

 AMERICAN  
LEGION

# BBQ Chicken Dinner

\$12/meal

(Cash, check, or credit card)

Dine-In or Carryout from Noon-2pm

**Advance Ticket Purchase Required  
Before September 15**



5419 S. Alston Avenue, Durham, NC 27713  
<https://AL416nc.wixsite.com/AL416nc>

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### Goal #4: Reach at least 45 community youth through sports sponsorship.

According to multiple studies, participation in youth sports is associated with:

- Lower rates of anxiety, stress, and depression
- Less substance abuse behaviors
- Increased cognitive and creativity performance
- Improved cardiovascular health and decreased body fat %
- Improved teamwork, social skills, and life skills
- Direct decrease in health care costs (up to \$28B annually in the U.S.)

Among the value principles of The American Legion include family and community engagement, which requires meeting the needs of local communities. Through sports sponsorships, Post 416 intends to meet the needs of our youth by increasing opportunities for participation, and in turn, compliment our first three goals through improved membership recruiting and marketing.

During the course of the next few weeks, the lead individual in charge of each of these goals will be drafting a roadmap – a series of smaller baby steps towards achieving the larger goal with target timelines. If you are approached by a post officer in need of assistance, please take a moment to consider jumping into the fray to help the post achieve its goals for 2023-24. It's going to be an exciting year... help us live out The American Legion mission: VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA.



**AMERICAN  
LEGION**

VETERANS  
STRENGTHENING  
AMERICA

Lowe's Grove, NC Post 416

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# **FREE** Social Dance Lessons **FOR MILITARY VETERANS**



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EXERCISE WITH FREE SOCIAL DANCE  
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FRIEND.

LESSONS WILL BE SCHEDULED AT  
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This program was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.



## **RESEARCH STUDY:**

### **CANNABIS USE STUDY for VETERANS with PTSD**

**Are you a Veteran?**

**Have you been diagnosed with (or think you might have) PTSD?**

**Do you smoke or vape cannabis?**

**You may be eligible for this study:**

3 visits to the Durham VA Medical Center

Self-report questionnaires

2-8 weeks of home monitoring

Earn up to \$2075.50 for participation

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of reduced frequency and quantity of cannabis use on functioning in Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Veterans with PTSD who use cannabis may benefit from reducing or stopping use. Veterans with PTSD who do not use cannabis may also be eligible for this study.

**Call: 1-919-286-0411 ext. 134056**  
**or toll free: 1-888-878-6890 ext. 134056**

The study is being run by Jean Beckham, Ph.D at the Durham VA Medical Center.

Durham VAHCS IRB Committee  
Effective Date: February 7, 2023