

History of the Joseph G. McComb American Legion Post 146 of Oceanside, CA

Post 146 first assembled on November 1, 1919 at Mildred Hall in Oceanside by Army Colonel B. N. Jones Jr., the San Diego County membership director; F. B. Harrison, Assistant Secretary of San Diego Post 1; and Bryon Walters of San Diego. At this meeting our first officers were selected, they were Charles H. Merrill as Chairman (Commander); Jack W. Hall, Vice Chairman; F. Dorsey Merrill, Secretary (Adjutant); R.G. Higgins, and J.E. Clifford, Executive Committee.

During this meeting they registered over 60 veterans of the Great War (WWI) to be the first Post in the United States to have 100% membership of all eligible veterans in their designated area. All of these members all became founding members of the American Legion, because they enrolled before November 11, 1919. The final part of that historic meeting was to name of the Post. At that time, each American Legion Post was named after a veteran who had perished in the Great War.



Our post was named after Oceanside resident U.S. Navy Machinist Mate 1st Class, Joseph Gillis McComb who was the first WWI casualty from the Oceanside area. He served aboard the Colorado Class Battleship, USS Pueblo (previously named the USS Colorado). Petty Officer McComb was born April 23rd, 1893 in Stanton County, Kansas. His family moved to California shortly after the turn of the century. Joe enlisted in the US Navy Reserves in 1914 and was assigned to the USS Pueblo from September 1914 until his passing on September 28, 1918. He was initially stationed in San Diego, conducting patrols along the coast due to the instability in Mexico at that time. While stationed there, he met his wife Edythe Martin at the Pan American Exposition in 1915 whose father F. L. Martin was a prominent businessman in Oceanside. They married on October 25, 1916. In October 1917, his ship was transferred to the East Coast where it completed 8 convoy transport missions across the Atlantic. On the final cruise, Joseph caught the flu, then pneumonia, and subsequently passed. Notably, the flu killed more service members in the Great War than combat.

During the early years, the Post held many dances for fundraising and sponsored 4th of July events with the City of Oceanside. The Post participated in final vespers of fallen comrades both from the Great War and other veterans in the community. They held memorial celebrations for Armistice Day (now Veterans Day), Decoration Day (now Memorial Day), and other important event regarding veterans or community events.

In 1922, the Post purchased a plot of land near the intersection Hill Street and 2nd Street (now Mission Avenue and Coast Highway) in order to construct a building. The Post Ladies Auxiliary was formed on April 1, 1920, and they have been active in the local community ever since. The Post started an American Legion Riders Chapter in 2008 and a Sons of the American Legion Squadron in 2014.

The Joseph G. McComb American Legion Post 146 has been active member in the community, and has been a member of the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce since 1992. We have participated in the Oceanside 4th of July parade every year. In addition, we support many programs for the Veterans and Community: Cub Scout Pack 7146, American Legion Baseball team, School Medal Programs, Boys State, Constitution Oratorical Contests for high school students (the latter 3 for college scholarships), Flag Retirement Ceremonies in conjunction with the Oceanside Fire Department, Veterans observance holiday ceremonies, Escorts and Flaglines for veteran funerals, Wreathes Across America, Homes for Heroes, Wounded Warrior Homes, Veteran Service Officers, and many more programs. We provide service hours to the Oceanside Veterans Administration Clinic, Military Appreciation Day, North County Stand-Down (supporting homeless veterans), and other community needs.