



## New SAL National Commander Hall: 'Representing more than me'

[Andy Proffet](#) | August 27, 2023



Sons of The American Legion National Commander Donald Hall Jr. speaks during the Sons of The American Legion National Convention at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, N.C., on Sunday, August 27.

Jeric Wilhelmssen/The American Legion

Donald "JR" Hall Jr.'s slogan for his term as National Commander of the Sons of The American Legion: "Representing more than me."

"As a member of the Sons, I represent my grandfather's service. As a member of the Sons, you represent your family's service. As a member of the Auxiliary, you represent your family's service. And if you served, you represent your branch of service, you represent your family," Hall said after his election as SAL National Commander on Aug. 27, the final day of the SAL's 51st National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.

"'Representing more than me' is big, is big. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my grandfather's service. That's what it's all about," Hall said.

Hall, a member of Squadron 40 in Glen Burnie, Md., where he's served as squadron commander several times, said, "This whole trip's been for one guy:

Edward Hall, World War II vet (and Hall's grandfather)." He also thanked his family for their support — "You don't do this without your family. You can't do it without your family. I have such a great family." — as well as the sizable contingent of Legion Family members from Maryland in the audience for his election and installation as SAL National Commander for 2023-24.

Leading candidates for American Legion National Commander, Dan Seehafer, and American Legion Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson, also spoke to the SAL convention after Hall's election.

"I'm really about servant leadership, and right there is the commander," Seehafer said, pointing to Hall.

"I am ready, I am super thrilled to be serving together with Dan and JR. It's not about me ... it's about our mission, and I truly believe that. It's about our mission supporting our veterans and their families and our communities, and our family as a whole ... we can accomplish so much more as a family," Williamson added.

It's that notion that the Legion Family is stronger when working together that Hall emphasized. That includes a renewed effort for [American Legion Family Day](#) on the last Saturday in April.

"I'd like to have a commitment from everyone in the room, this year we make American Legion Family Day something big. Get ahold of the press in your neighborhoods, get ahold of your communities, bring them in your post. Show them what we do," Hall said. "Let them know what we stand for and what we're all about."

see Commander Hall page 9

# Round-Up

**Donald "JR" Hall (MD)** *National Commander*  
**Robert L. Bristo (MN)** *Central National Vice-Commander*  
**John R. Cook (NH)** *Northeast National Vice-Commander*  
**Terry A. Harris (KS)** *Midwest National Vice-Commander*  
**Linwood A. Moore (VA)** *Southeast National Vice-Commander*  
**James R. Fischer (CA)** *Western National Vice-Commander*

**Christopher Carlton (IN)**  
*Immediate Past National Commander*

**Joseph Navarrete (NM)**  
*Leading Candidate for National Commander*

**William Clancy III (NY)**  
*Trailing Candidate for National Commander*

*Round-Up* is a publication designed to disseminate information related to Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Family, and is published weekly and distributed each Sunday.

*Round-Up* is a collection of information procured from various resources to stay better informed on happenings within The American Legion Family, and of other related topics of interest, and makes no claims or guarantees about the accuracy or currency of the contents of this publication, and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions.

**SUBMITTING ARTICLES:** All submissions are to be made electronically to [jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com). If you need assistance, please send an email to same.

**All information must be submitted by noon each Friday.**

PNVC [Jeff Vrabel, Sr.](#), Editor  
[Rusty Myers](#), Contributor  
[Lou Michaels](#), Contributor



## Donald "JR" Hall, Jr.

National Commander

## Representing More Than Me

### From the Editor

Today marks the 200<sup>th</sup> edition of *Round-Up*. I never expected to be publishing this newsletter/magazine for this long, and now I can't ever see a time when I won't be, at least for the near future.

I want to thank Past National Commander Chris Carlton for a great year, and to congratulate our new commander, JR Hall. Best of luck for a very successful year!

We are also going to be doing things a little differently this year, and I need your help. I would like to have contact information for each detachment's newsletter editor, public relations chairman, multi-media chairman, webmaster, and anyone else responsible for getting information out to the membership. I want to create a database where we can lean on each other for help, to be guest columnists, and just help each other. Please send name, detachment, email, and cell number to me at [jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com). I appreciate the help and look forward to working with this new group in the coming weeks.

***Honor the Veteran Who Made You Eligible. Renew Today!***

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., Editor

[jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com) | [Team Vrabel](#)

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[VCF](#) [DONATE](#) [EMBLEM SALES](#)

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**VRABEL**

**CRE 24**  
Central Region Extravaganza  
Columbus, Ohio  
April 9 - 7, 2024

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# Remembering the Greatest Generation

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## Bob Barker, WWII Navy veteran and dapper 'Price is Right' host dies at 99

Frazier Moore, Associated Press | August 23, 2023



Legendary game show host Bob Barker, 83, smiles as he takes questions from the media after taping his final episode of "The Price Is Right" in Los Angeles on Wednesday, June 6, 2007. Price died Aug. 26 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 99.

Damian Dovarganes/AP

A publicist says popular game show host Bob Barker, a household name for a half-century as host of "Truth or Consequences" and "The Price Is Right," has died at his home in Los Angeles. Barker was 99.

Barker — also a longtime animal rights activist — died Saturday morning, according to publicist Roger Neal. "I am so proud of the trailblazing work Barker and I did together to expose the cruelty to animals in the entertainment industry and including working to improve the plight of abused and exploited animals in the United States and internationally," said Nancy Burnet, his longtime friend and caretaker, in a statement.

Barker retired in June 2007, telling his studio audience: "I thank you, thank you, thank you for inviting me into your home for more than 50 years."

Barker was working in radio in 1956 when producer Ralph Edwards invited him to audition as the new host of "Truth or Consequences," a game show in which audience members had to do wacky stunts — the "consequence" — if they failed to answer a question — the "truth," which was always the silly punchline to a riddle no one was ever meant to furnish. (Q:

What did one eye say to another? A: Just between us, something smells.)

In a 1996 interview with The Associated Press, Barker recalled receiving the news that he had been hired: "I know exactly where I was, I know exactly how I felt: I hung up the phone and said to my wife, 'Dorothy Jo, I got it!'"

Barker stayed with "Truth or Consequences" for 18 years — including several years in a syndicated version.

Meanwhile, he began hosting a resurrected version of "The Price Is Right" in 1972. (The original host in the 1950s and '60s was Bill Cullen.) It would become TV's longest-running game show and the last on a broadcast network of what in TV's early days had numbered dozens.

"I have grown old in your service," the silver-haired, perennially tanned Barker joked on a prime-time television retrospective in the mid-'90s.

In all, he taped more than 5,000 shows in his career. He said he was retiring because "I'm just reaching the age where the constant effort to be there and do the show physically is a lot for me. ... Better (to leave) a year too soon than a year too late." Comedian Drew Carey was chosen to replace him.

Barker was back with Carey for one show broadcast in April 2009. He was there to promote the publication of his memoir, "Priceless Memories," in which he summed up his joy from hosting the show as the opportunity "to watch people reveal themselves and to watch the excitement and humor unfold."

He well understood the attraction of "The Price Is Right," in which audience members — invited to "Come on down!" to the stage — competed for prizes by trying to guess their retail value.

"Everyone can identify with prices, even the president of the United States. Viewers at home become involved because they all have an opinion on the bids," Barker once said. His own appeal was clear: Barker played it straight — warm, gracious, and witty — refusing to mock the game show format or his contestants.

"I want the contestants to feel as though they're guests in my home," he said in 1996. "Perhaps my feeling of respect for them comes across to viewers, and that may be one of the reasons why I've lasted."

As a TV personality, Barker retained a touch of the old school — for instance, no wireless microphone for him. Like the mic itself, the mic cord served him well as a prop, insouciantly flicked and finessed.

His career longevity, he said, was the result of being content. "I had the opportunity to do this type of show and I discovered I enjoyed it ... People who do something that they thoroughly enjoy, and they started doing it when they're very young, I don't think they want to stop."

Barker also spent 20 years as host of the Miss USA Pageant and the Miss Universe Pageant. A longtime animal rights activist who daily urged his viewers to "have your pets spayed or neutered" and successfully lobbied to ban fur coats as prizes on "The Price Is Right," he quit the Miss USA Pageant in 1987 in protest over the presentation of fur coats to the winners. In 1997, Barker declined to be a presenter at the Daytime Emmy awards ceremony because he said it snubbed game shows by not airing awards in the category. He called game shows "the pillars of daytime TV."

He had a memorable cameo appearance on the big screen in 1996, sparring with Adam Sandler in the movie "Happy Gilmore." "I did 'The Price Is Right' for 35 years, and they're asking me how it was to beat up Adam Sandler," Barker later joked.

Born in Darrington, Washington, in 1923, Barker spent part of his childhood on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where his widowed mother had taken a teaching job. The family later moved to Springfield, Mo., where he attended high school. He served in the Navy in World War II.



He married Dorothy Jo Gideon, his high school sweetheart; she died in 1981 after 37 years of marriage. They had no children.

Barker was given a lifetime achievement award at the 26th annual Daytime Emmy Awards in 1999. He closed his acceptance remarks with the signoff: "Have your pets spayed or

neutered."

## James Davakis



James "Jim" Davakis, DDS, passed away on September 1, 2023. Jim was born on January 6, 1927 in Youngstown, Ohio. Born to Greek immigrant parents, he quickly adopted the tough, hardworking personality of his hometown. After graduating from South High School, he worked in the Youngstown steel mills. He then enlisted in the U.S. Army during WWII, where he served in Germany as a member of the military police. After his discharge, he became the first in his family to attend college. He earned his bachelor's degree from Kent State University, followed by his DDS degree from Case Western Reserve. During this time, he met the love of his life, Sylvia Boyazis. They married in 1950 and raised three children in Poland, Ohio. Jim practiced dentistry in Youngstown for 33 years. He had a lifelong passion for woodworking and carpentry, and created countless beautiful pieces for his family and friends, in addition to building two homes. After retirement, Jim and Sylvia relocated to Clearwater/St. Pete, Florida, where they spent 29 great years. They returned to Ohio in 2016, to be near their children.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents, his four siblings, and his son-in-law, David Barshel. He leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife of 73 years, Sylvia, and his children, Karen Barshel of Dublin, Dr. Nicholas (Lani) Davakis of Upper Arlington, and Dr. Stephen (Michelle) Davakis of Dublin. He also leaves nine grandchildren and one great grandson.

Jim was an incredibly intelligent, strong, and amazing man. Above all, he was a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather. His legacy will live on in his children and grandchildren. Jim was truly a shining example of the Greatest Generation.

Funeral services will take place on Thursday, September 7 at 11:00 am at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 555 N. High St., Columbus, with burial to follow at Union Cemetery. Friends may call immediately prior to services, beginning at 10:00 am at the cathedral. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Jim's memory

To share online condolences, please visit [www.schoedinger.com](http://www.schoedinger.com)

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## Robert L. Bristo

Central National Vice-Commander

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## John R. Cook

Northeast National Vice-Commander

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## James R. Fischer

Western National Vice-Commander

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Terry A. Harris

Midwest National Vice-Commander

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Linwood A. Moore

Southeast National Vice-Commander

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The Southern Region will have its first Zoom Business Meeting on Sept. 6, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. EST. I will send out the link on Tuesday Sept. 5 when I receive the link from National, and will attach the agenda to.

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

# BE THE ONE

If you're a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat) or text 838255.

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## National Commissions and Committees

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Chairmen wishing to have reports published should email them to [jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com) to be included. All meeting information subject to change.

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## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee

Part of CENTCOM

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Advisory Committee

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Joe Mayne (MN), Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Americanism Commission

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Chris Casey (NE), Chairman

Fourth Thursday of Bi-monthly

7:30 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 956 9846 2868 | 840 830  
(877) 853-5257



**FLYING FLAGS  
FOR HEROES**  
www.flyingflagsforheroes.com

As of September 3, 2023,

**1,014,824**

flags have been placed  
and reported to  
honor our veterans

since September 1, 2022

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## Century Committee

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Jeff Vrabel, Sr. (OH), Chairman

Second Thursday of Each Month

7:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 974 1352 0429 | 473 385  
(877) 853-5257

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## Child Welfare Foundation Committee

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Mark Nave (PA), Chairman  
Third Wednesday of Each Month  
8:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 989 9129 8443 | 967 563  
(877) 853-5257

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## Children & Youth Committee

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Joseph Lohman (MD), Chairman  
Second Wednesday of Each Month  
7:30 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 934 1509 0014 | 403 800  
(877) 853-5257

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## Finance Commission

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William G. Hill (MD), Chairman  
8:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 957 1342 7326 | 44846  
(877) 853-5257

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## Internal Affairs Commission

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William Clancy III (NY), Chairman  
First Thursday of Each Month  
6:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 917 1243 8217 | 914 458  
(877) 853-5257

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## Legislative Commission

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Blair Miles (AL), Chairman  
Third Thursday of ODD Months  
7:30 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 991 2070 0860 | 092 260  
(877) 853-5257

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## Member Training & Development Committee

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Michael Cotton (DE), Chairman  
First Monday of Each Month  
8:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 918 2414 1981 | 777 490  
(877) 853-5258

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## Membership Committee

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Daryl VerStrete Jr. (NY), Chairman  
Third Tuesday of Each Month  
8:00 p.m. Eastern Time  
(605) 472-5756 | 771 7294

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The current SAL membership report can be accessed on the national website at [www.legion.org/membership/standings](http://www.legion.org/membership/standings).

**SAL Online Renewal** - members can login and renew direct via [www.myLegion.org](http://www.myLegion.org) or quick renew by clicking here [SAL Online Renewal](#).

**SAL New Member Kit** is now online and ready for purchase. [New Member Kit \(SAL\) - American Legion Flag & Emblem](#).

Additional membership information appears later in this edition.

[How to use the Online Transmittal Process](#)



**RENEW  
ONLINE  
TODAY**

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## National Convention Committee

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Christopher Byrd (NC), Chairman

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 961 5391 3982 | 690 337  
(877) 853-5257

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## National Executive Committee Liaison Committee

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Jim Stewart (NV), Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## National Vice-Commander Selection Committee

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James Hartman (MD), Co-Chairman

David Stephens (IN), Co-Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Paid Up For Life (PUFL) Adhoc Committee

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Kevin Winkleman (TX), Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Public & Media Communications Committee

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Kevin Chaplin (VA), Chairman

Fourth Tuesday of Each Month

8:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 963 1528 2340 | 075 079  
(877) 853-5257

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## Subcommittee on National Appointments

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Donald Allisot, Jr. (ME), Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Subcommittee on Resolutions

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Ned Fox (CA), Chairman

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING TBA

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## Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

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Bruno Williamson (IL), Chairman

Fourth Monday of Each Month

8:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 941 4100 3972 | 378 079  
(646) 931-3860

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## VA awards \$1 billion to boost homeless veteran programs

The American Legion | August 28, 2023

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today more than \$1 billion in grants to help homeless and at-risk veterans through the [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) and [Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem](#) programs.

Additionally, VA announced it has permanently housed 26,470 veterans through July, on pace to exceed its goal of housing 38,000 homeless veterans this year.

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, VA is awarding 256 grants totaling

about \$799 million to community organizations that help rapidly rehouse veterans and their families, prevent the imminent loss of veterans' homes, or identify more suitable housing situations for veterans and their families.



Through the [Grant and Per Diem](#) program, VA is awarding 454 grants totaling about \$257 million to community organizations that provide veterans with transitional housing and case management — including connecting veterans to VA benefits, community-based services, and permanent housing.

Ending veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA and the [Biden-Harris administration](#). In 2022 alone, [VA housed more than 40,000 formerly homeless veterans](#), prevented more than 17,700 veterans and their families from falling into homelessness, and helped nearly 191,700 additional veteran families who were experiencing financial difficulties retain their homes or avoid foreclosure. Thanks in part to these efforts, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness has fallen by 11% since early 2020 and by more than 55% since 2010.

“We won’t rest until every veteran has the safe, stable home that they deserve – because none of our nation’s heroes should be homeless in this country they fought to defend,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said. “These grants will allow VA, alongside our community partners, to help provide more housing and wrap-around services to more homeless and at-risk veterans than ever before.”

If you are a veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838. Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for veterans exiting homelessness.



## IMPORTANT VETERANS UPDATE

Sept. 1, 2023

### Veterans in Crisis Reminded of 988 Lifeline

Earlier this summer, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services ([OhioMHAS](#)) marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. This important outlet also is available for military members, veterans, and their families, and is accessible by dialing 9-8-8 and pressing the number 1.

The lifeline is a simpler way to reach the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) (800-273-8255). As in the past, those phone calls are completely confidential and those connecting to that number and pressing 1 will speak with subject matter experts who are well-versed in military culture.

On this first day of [National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#), ODVS would like to remind that #OhioVets and their loved ones are afforded a multitude of options with regard to crisis intervention and mental health initiatives available all across the state.

Find [more information about 988](#) and why it is a vital and immediate resource.



Governor DeWine and his administration continue to address behavioral health needs in Ohio. In fact, just recently the Governor announced a \$90 million investment in [strengthening local behavioral health crisis response services](#).

The State also employs a comprehensive standalone website that addresses mental health matters for military members, veterans, their families, and local communities. ODVS works in partnership on this site, [OHIOcares.ohio.gov](#), with OhioMHAS and the [Ohio National Guard](#) to provide the most relevant information and services.

ODVS houses key behavioral health information at [OhioVets.gov](#), which can be found on our [mental](#)

[health landing page](#). And our department serves in a leadership role in the [Governor's Challenge](#) to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.

We also maintain a strong alliance with the [Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation](#) and continue to connect veterans who may be in crisis to [Star Behavioral Health Providers](#), who direct veterans and their family members to military-aware therapy.

In partnership with OhioMHAS, we also have created a new role to support veterans, titled [Certified Peer Recovery Supporter \(PRS\)](#). This position is based out of our Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky, and enables us the ability to offer guidance and help to former service members who are recovering from drug or alcohol addiction, with special emphasis on opioid abuse recovery.

### **"The Trusted Voice for Veterans"**

77 South High Street, 7th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 644.0898 | (614) 728.9498 F  
[www.OhioVets.gov](http://www.OhioVets.gov)

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## **Veterans Employment & Education Commission**

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Jim Coates (NY), Chairman  
Third Wednesday of Each Month  
8:00 p.m. Eastern Time | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 935 4405 3884 | 786 114  
(877) 853-5257



SONS OF THE  
AMERICAN  
LEGION

### **Governor honors Larson**

[The Mining Journal](#) | August 22, 202

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was on hand to present a Very Special Award at the U.P. State Fair to Sons of The American Legion 5th Zone Commander Dennis Larson of Squadron #50 Iron Mountain.

The Veterans Support Recognition Award was presented as part of the Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year program. Larson was recognized for his over 36 years of membership in the Sons of The American Legion at the Squadron level and as past State Detachment Commander. Dennis has Served the U.P. Veterans at the Oscar Johnson VA Hospital as a volunteer for over 25 years and over 540 Hours as the State Representative on the Hospital Committee.



Dennis has done food and clothing drives, plus many other fundraisers for the American Legion Post #50 and V.F.W. Post 3674. He was instrumental in starting the Dickinson County Hockey Association and did volunteer fundraising for the present day hockey arena.

According to a press release, *"Dennis is a guiding light in spending 18 years fundraising and building the Upper Peninsula Veterans Memorial on top of Pine Mountain at the base of the Ski Jump which has become a major tourist attraction for Dickinson County and the City of Iron Mountain. Not only has he sacrificed his own time, but he has also assured us that there is enough money to make sure the memorial will continue long after he is gone."*

Shown from the left are Gov. Whitmer, Barb Larson, and Dennis Larson.

### **Commander Hall**

continued from page 1

Hall also encouraged SAL members to not only work hard to support the organization's mission but to publicize those efforts.

"We need the (blue cap members) that are getting ready to work. We need the ones that are going to get out there and make sure our veterans are getting what they need, because we're getting on VoterVoice, we're

backing the legislation to tell them to give our veterans what they need. We need the ones who make sure the children of our veterans are getting what they need. We need the ones who are working in the community. That's what we need. We don't need somebody that's a bar member; we need real workers," Hall said.

"... Let everybody know what you're doing; ring your bell. When you get back to work, when you get outside the post, make sure everybody knows. ... Let everyone know what the American Legion Family does. There are so many great things being done all the time, and the only people to hear about it is the person you're doing it with. We've got to get the word out there!" he added.

Hall also announced his commander's challenge for the year: the national Four Pillar Squadron achievement.

"All you have to do is this: \$1 a member for OCW; \$1 a member for CWF; \$1 a member for your department's Boys State; and hold a blood drive. That simple," Hall said.

The SAL also elected the five national vice commanders for 2023-24 on Sunday. They are:

- Northeast National Vice-Commander John R. Cook of New Hampshire
- Southeast National Vice-Commander Linwood A. Moore of Virginia
- Central National Vice-Commander Robert L. Bristo of Minnesota
- Midwest National Vice-Commander Terry A. Harris of Kansas
- Western National Vice-Commander James R. Fischer Sr. of California

## Post Convention National Executive Committee Appointments

### 2023 – 2024 National Officers

National Adjutant: Anthony Wright (PA)  
 Assistant National Adjutants: Ed Sheubrooks (FL)  
 Robert Avery (NY)  
 Scott Williams (VA)  
 Scott Thornton (OH)  
 Jeff Hicks (NJ)  
 Cliff Hall (GA)  
 National Chaplain: Ernie Laberge (MA)

National Historian: Jeffrey Thorne (MD)  
 National Parliamentarian: Gary Leach (CA)  
 National Commander's Aide: Tom Deal (MD)  
 National Sergeant-at-Arms: Mark Fayer Sr. (MD)  
 National Asst. Sgts-at-Arms: Brian Waters (PA)  
 Lyle Larson (KS)  
 Greg Falco (NY)  
 Matthew Griffis (NM)  
 Tim Brower (NY)

## National Commissions

### Americanism

Daniel Maurin (LA)  
 Chris Sherbourne (OK)  
 William Murphy III (MA), Consultant

### Internal Affairs

Juan Torres (TX)  
 Wade Hudson (IL)

### Legislative

Blair Miles (AL), Chairman  
 Bernie Kessler (OH), Vice-Chairman  
 Wayne Madson (IL)

### Public Media & Communications

Doug Evans (KS)  
 Gene Theroux (MA)

### Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Bruno Williamson (IL), Chairman  
 Jeff Gibson Sr.  
 Gabe Cinquegrana (NY), Consultant

### Veterans Employment and Education

James Stewart (DE), Vice-chairman  
 John Robinson (OH)  
 James Noble (NJ)  
 Dennis Henkemeyer (MN), Consultant

## National Committees

### Children & Youth

Joe Lohman (MD), Chairman  
 Brian Shedd (GA)  
 Jeff Trout (IL)  
 Thomas Arista (TX)  
 Chris Reachard (DE)

### Child Welfare Foundation

John Sansoucie (MO)

### Subcommittee on Resolutions

Mark McCue (MA)  
Brandon Curry (KY)

### Membership

Daryl VerStrete Jr. (NY), Chairman  
Robert Manzo (MD), Northeast  
Thom Skelley (TX), Southeast  
Butch Ray (IL), Central  
Mike Monserud (IA), Midwest  
Dan Ashley (AZ), Western  
Matt Verkuilen (MN)  
Jason Miller (MD)  
Casey Hanson (SD)  
George Gray (GA)  
Jack Youngs (ID)

### National Convention

Gerard Sambets (FL), Vice-Chairman  
Chuck Treat II (AZ)  
Ben Baldwin (NM)  
Steven Navarrete (NM)  
Joseph Guidice Jr. (NM)  
Peter Booth (NY)  
one vacancy

### Member Training & Development

Mike Cotton (DE), Chairman  
Shawn Davis (MN), Bive-Chairman  
Michale Obremski (MD)  
Ron Roberts (MS)

### Paid Up For Life (PUFL) Ad hoc

Kevin Winkelman (TX), Chairman  
Camille LeJeune (LA)  
Marc Chaney (OR)  
Dennis Albright (OH)

### Century Committee (CENTCOM)

Joe Gladden (MD), Vice-Chairman

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (attached to CENTCOM)

Kevin Winkelmann (TX), Chairman  
Bob Worrell (IN)  
David Faust (WI)  
Greg "Doc" Gibbs (NY)  
Bill Towns (OH)



Lisa Williamson, National President  
The American Legion Auxiliary

### **2023-2024 National President Focus**

A few experiences from people close to 2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary National President Lisa Williamson have led to an ALA national focus on preventing veteran/military suicide. Williamson said her focus for the administrative year is surprising to many who know her bubbly personality.

"I know it's not a subject anybody ever thought I would take on because I like to have fun and roll up my sleeves and go do a service project or have fun and go to a ballgame," Williamson said. "But the ALA mission has always been there in my mind, and so I think that maybe because it is so unlike what people think of me, it will make even more of a strong impact because this is not something they see me doing. I could have done something less serious."

Living in Alaska with the shortest day of the year only about seven hours of daylight and being away from family, Williamson said she can see how military members could get depressed in that environment.

"You've got that single soldier who is in the barracks, away from family, in the dark, who has no resources when it comes to mental health — I can see why we have an epidemic for veteran/military suicide," she said.

Additionally, she has a really good friend she met one year when she and her husband, Darrel, went to Mexico. Four years ago, that friend's son died by suicide. There was no indication. The day it happened, he was upbeat, and everything seemed well. He died by suicide using a firearm.

Another story — this one from Williamson's son — solidified her decision.

"My son is in the Guard and his desk mate on one beautiful summer day went to a lovely lake and died

by suicide with a firearm,” she said. “My son worked across from him and had no indication the kid was struggling.”

The No. 1 thing is to destigmatize getting help, she said.

“Especially in the military, you’re made to be tough and strong and so you have to suck it up,” Williamson said. “It’s something that’s engrained in them from the very get-go. They think that getting help is making them weak or less of a person or less of a man.”

She said The American Legion’s Be the One initiative is not just the Legion’s, but The American Legion Family’s with all three leaders — American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, and the ALA — focusing on this important issue for the 2023-2024 ALA administrative year.

“Just be the one to save one,” Williamson said. “All those ones add up. Between three organizations, we are over 2 million strong. If each one of us helps one, there are 2 million we save.”

2023-2024 ALA National President Lisa Williamson will be going above and beyond in her role as national president, by not only helping to raise awareness about the Be the One initiative, but also to raise funds for the American Legion Auxiliary’s greatest need — Spirit of Youth (SOY) Scholarships. Beginning in fiscal year 2024, the ALA will increase the number of SOY scholarships by 49, bringing the total number of scholarships awarded to 67. This will bring the total amount awarded to \$100,000, the most the Auxiliary has ever awarded for SOY scholarships. With your help, the ALA can will help more students fulfill their educational pursuits in preparation to lead in the future.

*National President*

**LISA WILLIAMSON**

Department of Alaska: C. Russell Huber Unit 57

**Eligibility:** Through son, Kyle, who serves in the Alaska Air Guard. Also adds military service of her adoptive father, Keith LaChance.

**Offices Held:** Served/serving several unit-level positions and multiple department-level offices and chairmanships. National: served as chair of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Education, Legislative, Constitution

& Bylaws, Public Relations, and Junior Activities committees, and as 100th Anniversary Committee member, National Executive Committee member, ALA Centennial Strategic Plan strategy co-captain, and American Legion Auxiliary national vice president.

**Professional/personal background:** Lisa’s family is her pride and joy — husband Darrel, daughter Danielle, and son Kyle — and that pride is reflected in their commitment to The American Legion Family. All served in leadership roles at local, state, and national levels in The American Legion Family. Kyle is also one of her unit’s first male ALA members, and Danielle has blessed Lisa with two grandsons: Dawson, 9, and Micah, 6. All are Legion Family members.

**National President Focus**

For the 2023-2024 ALA administrative year, the national focus is to increase awareness about the veteran and military suicide epidemic by embracing The American Legion’s Be the One initiative — be the one to save one. A few experiences of people close to National President Lisa Williamson have led to this focus for our members. The goal is to destigmatize getting help when it comes to thoughts of suicide. Learn more about Williamson’s focus.

**Sports**

**Another top-10 finish maintains INDYCAR points lead for Palou**

The American Legion | August 28, 2023

Another top-10 finish for Chip Ganassi Racing’s (CGR) Alex Palou in the No. 10 American Legion Honda during Sunday’s Bommarito 500 kept the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points leader still in control of his title hopes. And now it’s down to a two-man race with two drivers very familiar with one another.

Scott Dixon, one of Palou’s CGR teammates, won his second consecutive race to move within 74 points of Palou with two races remaining. The pair are the only two in contention for the series championship.

Palou managed a seventh-place finish Sunday – his 15th of the season in as many races – moving up seven spots during the course of the race. He qualified fifth but had to move back nine spots because of an unapproved engine change on Saturday. Rain forced qualifying to Sunday morning, just hours before the race.

“It was a busy day with qualifying and the race, which isn’t very common,” Palou said. “Qualifying was a little bit better than we expected with P5, but we had to drop back nine positions with the engine change. It was an okay race, but it was very tough to pass. I thought it was a good race to finish P7 from P14. We’re very happy with our pace but we’ll keep working on the short ovals.”



Penske Entertainment: Joe Skibinski

With Josef Newgarden finishing 25th Sunday, he was eliminated from contention for the title. It will come down to the CGR teammates and the final two races – both road courses, including the Firestone Grand Prix of Monterey won by Palou last year.

“It was a very positive day for the team and the No. 9 car,” Palou said. “They did something that no one thought we could do on fuel and tire mileage. Now we know that the championship is going to stay with the team, and I can’t wait for Portland.”

After getting hit nose to nose by Will Power in Saturday’s practice after Power spun off the wall, Marcus Ericsson’s No. 8 Huski Ice Spritz Honda underwent major repairs from the CGR crew. Using parts of Palou’s backup livery, Ericsson took the track in a car featuring The American Legion’s Be the One message prominently displayed. And despite starting the race 10th, Ericsson was able to move up five spots to secure his 13th top-10 finish of the season.

“I think we had a decent day after starting from the back. It’s always hard to overtake here,” Ericsson said. “We had good strategy and some good restarts to move us up through the field. Huge thank you to the entire Huski Ice Spritz crew and Chip Ganassi Racing to get me out there today. Congrats to Scott for winning the race and congrats to Chip Ganassi Racing for winning the championship with either Scott or Alex. It’s a huge accomplishment.”

The INDYCAR SERIES moves West for the Bit-nile.com Grand Prix of Portland on Sept. 3.



## DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

by Jeff Vinabel, Sr.

## ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP



by Jeff Vinabel, Sr.

# Squadron Everlasting

to have a member's information listed here, please send to [jeffvlabels@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvlabels@gmail.com)

## Bruce McAllister



Bruce McAllister, 69, of Brocton, formerly of Westfield, passed away peacefully Wednesday afternoon, August 16, 2023, surrounded by his loving family at

ECMC in Buffalo.

Bruce was born in Westfield on June 9, 1954 to the late George and Peggy (Weatherup) McAllister. He graduated from Westfield High School in 1973. After graduation, he started his career with Renold Inc. and worked there for 43 years, retiring in 2016.

Bruce was very active in the Westfield Moose Lodge 118, where he served as an officer for many years. He was also on their ritual staff that competed against other lodges in state competitions. Bruce was also a member of the Westfield Sons of the American Legion Post 327, where he was also an officer for many years.

He enjoyed being the town Santa Claus from the time he was 13 years until he retired.

Bruce enjoyed collecting Coleman lanterns and spending time with friends and family.

He is survived by his loving wife of 46 years, Kathy Albro; siblings, Thomas (Holly) McAllister and Veva (Phillip) Sheperd; nephews, Michael Simon, Richard Simon, David and Brian Close, Charles Coleson, Jr., Thomas Colson, and Todd Colson; his godson, Ian Sheperd; and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

Per the family's wishes, there will be no calling hours or services at this time. Burial will be private in Westfield Cemetery.

Memorial contributions in honor of Bruce may be made to the Northern Chautauqua Canine Rescue in Westfield.

Arrangements have been provided by the Morse Funeral Home, 51

Highland Avenue in Brocton. To leave a message of condolences or a memory to share, please log on to the [www.themorsefuneralhome.com](http://www.themorsefuneralhome.com).

## Kevin Lindsey

Kevin Lindsey, age 61, of Shoals, Indiana, passed away surrounded by his family on Wednesday, August 16th, 2023, at Ascension St. Vincent, in Evansville, Indiana.

He was born June 2nd, 1962 in Washington, Indiana, to the late John D. and Doris (Wildman) Lindsey.

Kevin worked for the Premier Company, formerly White River Co-Op, for nearly 22 years. He spent his whole life working various farm and agriculture related jobs. He loved to fish and gardening. Kevin was a member of the Sons of the American Legion - Post 61. He also was a ten year 4-H member.

Kevin is survived by his wife, Lisa Lindsey, whom he married December 3, 2011; sons, Ben (Skylar) Lindsey and Brandon (Andrea) Lindsey; granddaughter, Eleanor Lindsey; siblings, John M. (Terri) Lindsey and Dora (Mark) Wampler; sister-in-law, Lisa Lindsey; step-children Jerry Neilson, Brittney Neilson and family, and Justin Valdez; step-granddaughter, Eva Valdez; Johnny, the dog; and many nieces, nephews, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, John D. and Doris Lindsey and brother, James Lindsey.

A funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 22nd, at Loogootee Methodist Church.

Visitation was held on Monday, August 21st, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Loogootee Methodist Church and Tuesday, August 22nd, from 10:00 a.m. until the time of service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Martin County 4-H Council.

Blake Funeral Home, in Loogootee, handled the arrangements.

## Harvey Allen Goldman, Jr.

Harvey Allen "Butch" Goldman Jr., 64 of Goose Creek, South Carolina, passed away on Friday, August 18, 2023.

Born on November 2, 1958 in Greenville, Mississippi, Butch is the son of Harvey Goldman, Sr., and the late Martha "Libby" Goldman.

After living in The Netherlands and New Mexico, Butch moved to the Charleston area in 1964 and called Goose Creek home. He graduated from Goose Creek High School in 1976. He worked for the United States Postal Service for over 30 years and retired in 2019. He was a member of the Sons of the American Legion and loved to shoot pool. Butch is preceded in death by his mother, Martha "Libby" Goldman. Butch is survived by his father, Harvey Goldman, Sr.; his two sisters, Debby Richmond (Jerry) and Susie Simmons (Randall); nieces: Ashton Houghton (Scott), Ally Killian (Trent), Sarah Schuster (Chris); nephews, Allen Baker, and Patrick Simmons (Kayla); 9 great nieces and great nephews.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, August 24th, 2023 from Noon - 1:00 PM at McAlister-Smith Funeral Home - in Goose Creek, South Carolina. The Celebration of Life will follow at 1:00 PM in the chapel.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Attn: South Carolina Chapter, 4600 Park Road, Suite 250, Charlotte, NC 28209 or online at [www.alz.org/sc](http://www.alz.org/sc). Butch's kind heart was evident in the many charities he supported including The Alzheimer's Association, Toys for Tots, Wounded Warriors, and St. Jude's, and it was most apparent in his willingness to always help others.

Expressions of sympathy may be viewed or submitted online [www.mcalister-smith.com](http://www.mcalister-smith.com).

Arrangements have been entrusted to McAlister-Smith Funeral Home, 869 St. James Avenue, Goose Creek, SC 29445, (843) 553-1511.

To order [memorial trees](#) or send flowers to the family in memory of Harvey "Butch" Allen Goldman, Jr., please visit our [flower store](#).

## Douglas Harvey



Brooklyn, MI - Douglas "Doug" D. Harvey, 81, of Brooklyn, Michigan, passed away on August 15, 2023, in Bronson Methodist Hospital, Kalamazoo. Born on June 25, 1942, in Tecumseh, MI, Doug was a beloved father, brother, grandfather, and friend.

Doug attended Morenci High School in Morenci, MI, graduating in 1961. During his working career, Doug dedicated 29 years of service to General Motors and then worked several more years at Tecumseh Products before finally retiring. His dedication and hard work were evident throughout his working years.

In his free time, Doug was a founding member of the Irish Hills Fraternal Order of Eagles and the Elbow Benders Snowmobile Club. He was also a proud member of the Sons of the American Legion. Doug enjoyed playing softball and participating in Euchre tournaments, always cherishing the camaraderie and friendly competition.

Doug is survived by his sister, Joan Irene Harvey of San Diego, CA; sister, Merri Belle Richardson of Adrian/Tecumseh, MI; daughter, Suzanne Kapica (Harvey) of Argyle, TX; son-in-law, Jason Kapica; grandson, Magnus Kapica; granddaughter, Lauren Kapica of Gainesville, FL; son, Robert R. Harvey of Paw Paw, MI; daughter-in-law, Geanina Harvey (Butean-Salajeau); grandson, Maximilian Thomas Harvey; granddaughter, Maria Butean-Salajeau of Argyle, TX; and former wife/friend, Carol Ann Harvey of Brooklyn, MI. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Doug was preceded in death by his father, Lyle K. Harvey; mother, Ruby May Harvey (Easton); brother, Russell Keith Harvey; brother, Ronald Dean Harvey; brother, James K. Harvey; and sister, Jean Marie Gluch.

In honoring Doug's wishes there will not be a formal service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests you consider honoring Doug and his love of small-town life by donating to your local fire department or a local charity of your choice. Please join us in remembering and honoring the life of Douglas Harvey.

Published by Jackson Citizen Patriot from Aug. 21 to Aug. 24, 2023.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

# RENEW

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## William Reigel

William A. Reigel, 74, of Seneca Falls, passed away unexpectedly at Geneva General Hospital on Tuesday, August 22, 2023. A visitation will be held on Wednesday, August 30, from 3-5PM with a funeral service immediately following at Doran Funeral Home, 4 East Bayard St., Seneca Falls. The family requests donations be made to a [charity of one's choice](#) in his memory.

Bill was born in Seneca Falls, the son of the late Clare and Ina (Barrows) Reigel. He attended local schools and graduated from Mynderse Academy, Class of 1967. On October 18, 1968, Bill married his high school sweetheart, the former Barbara J. Laude, at St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls. Initially working at Goulds Pumps, over the years Bill found his niche working for aerospace companies all over New York State. In 1983, he and Barbara moved to Remsen, NY where Bill began a 20-year career with Bendix in Utica. Later, the pair moved to Baldwinsville, NY where he worked in Syracuse at Tactair Fluid Controls, then Babbitt Bearings, when he finally retired from the aerospace industry. Due to the demands of his career, he became well versed in international travel, travelling to many corners of the world. In 2010, Bill and Barb moved back home to Seneca Falls. Bill was not one to sit still, and in the 13 years since returning to Seneca Falls, he worked for the Village of Seneca Falls as the Parking Enforcement Officer, the NYS Chiropractic College as a security guard, and the Seneca Falls Central School District as a member of the Board of Education.

To know Bill was to know a good time. He was always the life of the party, no matter where he went. He was also known for being quite the prankster. Bill loved to be outside in nature, hunting and fishing. He was a huge fan of the NYS Fair, not only the attractions, but also the sights and sounds. He was a lifelong fan of SU Football and has been a season ticket holder for 20 years. Bill was no stranger to the kitchen where he loved to put his culinary skills to the test. He was a life member of the BPOE Lodge 992 in Seneca Falls, as well as the Sons of the American Legion. Living in the Utica area, Bill ran in the Boilermaker 15K road race. Additionally, he was a member of the 1966-67 wrestling team that was inducted into the Mynderse Academy Athletic Hall of Fame. Bill is survived by his wife of 54 years, Barbara; brother-in-law, Bruce Laude; sisters-in-law, Trish

(Kirk) Ward and Pam Reigel; several nieces and nephews and extended family, as well as his special K9 companion, Gingersnap. He was predeceased by his parents and brother, Kenneth Reigel.

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of William A. Reigel, please visit our floral store.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

Obituary published on [www.Legacy.com](#) by Doran Funeral Home - Seneca Falls on Aug. 26, 2023.

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## Robert F. Irvin

Robert F Irvin, age 77, of York Springs, passed away August 23, 2023 at home.

He was born May 7, 1946 in Orrtanna, to the late Harold P. and Lottie M. (Baker) Irvin.

Robert was an equipment operator for Aero Oil Company and retired from Oxford Township as a road master.

He attended Upper Bermudian Lutheran Church, a life member of the Bendersville Fire Company and South Mountain Antique Engine Association and was a member of the Sons of Ira E. Lady American Legion, Post 262, Biglerville. He was a past member of the Adams County Fish and Game and various tractor club associations.

Robert worked security for the Apple Harvest Festival for over 40 years and was a board member of the Upper Adams Jaycees.

Known to many as "Junk Man Bob," he was a collector of many treasures, including his antique tractors and milk bottles. He loved his grandkids dearly and loved taking them on golf cart rides.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce E. (Sowers) Irvin, to whom they would have celebrated 57 years of marriage on September 3, 2023; daughter, Jody Pritt and husband, Todd of Orrtanna; son, Mark Irvin and wife, Kathleen of York Springs; grandchildren, Elena and Marcus Pritt of Orrtanna and Rosella, Aurora and Mark Irvin II of York Springs and siblings, Carolyn Carey and husband, Mike of Aspers, Jacob Irvin and wife, Joanne of Gardners and Brenda Kump of Gettysburg.

He was preceded in death by his sisters, Nellie Beamer and Joann Frey and brother, Donald Irvin. Professional services have been entrusted to [Dugan Funeral Home](#),

[Inc.](#), 111 S. Main Street, Bendersville.

Friends are invited to a visitation from 10 a.m. until time of memorial service at 11 a.m. at [Upper Bermudian Lutheran Church](#) 185 Ground Oak Road, Gardners, PA 17324 on Friday, September 1, 2023. Pastor Eric Snyder will officiate the service.

The family would like to extend a sincere thank you to Grane Hospice, especially to caregivers, Lisa, and Heather.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Oakside Community Park, 2880 Table Rock Road, Biglerville, PA 17307, or Ira E. Lady American Legion, 142 4th Street, Biglerville, PA 17307.

To send flowers to the family or [plant a tree](#) in memory of Robert, please [visit the floral store](#).

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## Robert Stack

Robert "Bob" Anthony Stack III, 75, of Vermilion, died Thursday, August 24, 2023 at his home after a lengthy illness.

He was born October 16, 1947 in Lorain, and had been a Vermilion resident for the past 28 years moving from Lorain.

Bob worked for the City of Lorain Police Department for 36 years retiring in 2009 as a Lieutenant. He was a member of the FOP #3, Vermilion AMVETS Post 22, Sons of the American Legion #397, and past member of VFW Post 7576. He enjoyed fishing, boating, snow plowing, real estate, and he especially enjoyed socializing with friends and family.

He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Linda (nee Balzer) Stack of Vermilion; sisters, Marie Dwyer of Novi, MI, Suzanne (Doug) Ashby of West Chester, IL, and Sheila Gatten of Lorain; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Anthony Jr., and Marcia (nee Schrenk) Stack and his infant brother, Joseph Bernard Stack.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 1:00 p.m. at the Riddle Funeral Home, 5345 South Street, Vermilion, OH 44089.

The family suggests memorial contributions to [The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research](#), Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 4777, New York, NY 10163 or

Tunnel to Towers Foundation, 2361 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10306.

Online condolences may be made at [www.riddlefuneralhome.com](#).

To send flowers to the family of Robert, please visit our floral store. To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

Obituary published on [www.legacy.com](#) by Riddle Funeral Home & Cremation Service - Vermilion on Aug. 26, 2023.

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## Bryn Hecimovich

Bryn Paul Hecimovich, 53, of Rochester, formerly of Austin, Minnesota, passed away Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at Mayo Clinic Hospitals - St. Marys Campus in Rochester.

Bryn was born November 13, 1969 in Austin, Minnesota, the youngest son of Norman and Helen (Dimich) Hecimovich. He graduated from Austin High School in 1988 and earned an Electrical Degree from Dunwoody Institute. He worked as an electrician within the wind tower industry.

Bryn loved spending time outdoors hunting and fishing and he enjoyed the Nature Center. Bryn was a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Sons of the American Legion, VFW Auxiliary, and the Masonic Lodge.

He was preceded in death by his father, Norman Hecimovich; brother, David Hecimovich; Godmother, Dorothy Hoshal; grandparents, aunts and uncles, and sister-in-law, Heidi Hecimovich. Bryn is survived by his daughters, Sarah Hecimovich of Austin and Hannah Hecimovich of Austin; mother, Helen Hecimovich of Austin; brothers, James Hecimovich of Brownsdale and Dr. Mark Hecimovich of Cedar Falls, Iowa; nieces, Cherie (Matt) Morgan and Michelle (Ben) Meyer; former wife and friend, Julie Hecimovich; dear friend, Todd Arens; aunts, Dorothy Hipkins, and Gail (Dennis) Nucech; uncle, Darrel (Lieschen) Hecimovich; great nieces and nephews; many cousins and friends.

A celebration of Bryn's life will be held at a later date.

Clasen-Jordan Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

Read more at: <https://www.austin-dailyherald.com/2023/08/bryn-hecimovich-53/>

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**PU Mourns Loss  
Of Long-Time Employee**

[Chris Blakeslee](#) | August 30, 2023



Dennis "Denny" Bouquin, a crew chief with the Board of Public Utilities, passed away last Tuesday. A moment of silence in his memory was held by BPU officials. Submitted photo

Jamestown Board of Public Utilities officials held a moment of silence in memory of a longtime employee who recently passed away.

*"Dennis A. 'Denny' Bouquin, 43, passed away last Tuesday," said David Leathers, general manager of the BPU. "Denny worked in the line department for the last 21 years and, for the last several years, he has been a crew chief. Denny was a top-notch individual that will be greatly missed and very fondly remembered. I would like to ask for brief moment of silence to honor his service, the many contributions to his family, friends and the Western New York community."*

While in high school, he was in the electrical program at the Erie-2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES. Bouquin was active with the Boy Scouts much of his life. He achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and later served as an assistant scout master of Boy Scout Troop 267, based out of the Fredonia Memorial American Legion Post 59.

After graduating from Fredonia High School, he applied for a position as a lineman apprentice with the village of Mayville. According to the obituary submitted by Bouquin's family, Bouquin was told by the individual who hired him that the fact that Denny was an Eagle Scout distinguished him from the other applicants and was one of the reasons he was hired. From the village of Mayville, Bouquin went to work for the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities as a lineman and was currently a crew chief at the time of his passing. He worked 21 years for the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities. He was a member of the IBEW, Local 459. He was a Past-Commander of the Chautauqua County Sons of the American Legion, having served 2 years in the position. Currently, Bouquin was serving as district vice-commander of the Sons of the American Legion.

Bouquin was a member of many of the social clubs in the area. He was also an avid bowler throughout his life. While in high school he was on the bowling team and was active in

junior bowling. Later in life, he bowled a perfect 300 games.

The gravity of this situation was not lost on the BPU's board members.

*"This is truly a heart-breaking loss, felt by everyone," said Gregory Anderson, BPU board president.*

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**Thomas "Duffer" Rosenbauer**



OTTAWA — Thomas "Duffer" Rosenbauer, 71, of Ottawa, passed away at 4:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, at the Meadows of Ottawa. He was born June 13, 1952, in Lima to the late Vincent and Margaret (Honigfort) Rosenbauer.

He is survived by a son: Brad of Kalida; two grandchildren: Danielle and Tyler; a brother: John; a nephew: Christopher, both of Ottawa; bonus family: Kristi, Rachel and Brandon and families.

Duffer was a retired car salesman. He was a lifetime member of the Ottawa American Legion, where he was a 10-time Commander and a 1 time First District Commander, Sons of the American Legion Commander, and First District American Legion baseball chairman for 12 years. He was also a member of Ottawa Glandorf Rotary Club, where he served as chairman of Little Nashville for 10 years, and a member of the Ottawa Glandorf Athletic Boosters. Duffer served on the Ottawa Village Council for 2 terms. He also served as a Putnam County Veterans Services Board Member. Duffer was also a lifetime member of the Ottawa VFW and the Ottawa Eagles. He was an avid supporter of Ottawa-Glandorf Titans, Post 63 Baseball, Cleveland Indians, Cleveland Browns, and the Ohio State Buckeyes.

Funeral Mass will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, September 1, 2023, at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Ottawa with Fr. Scott Kramer officiating. Ottawa American Legion, VFW and AMVETS will give military rites at the church. A private burial will be held at a later date. Visitation will be held on Thursday from 2 to 8 p.m. and again on Friday from 9 to 9:45 a.m. at LOVE FUNERAL HOME, Ottawa.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sons of the American Legion or a charity of the donor's choice. Condolences may be expressed at [www.lovefuneralhome.com](http://www.lovefuneralhome.com).

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**Ronald Leonard Baier**



Funeral Services for Ronald Leonard Baier, 75, were held at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023 at the First Christian Church, Guthrie Center. Burial was in Pleasant Hill Cemetery, rural Guthrie Center. The Twigg Funeral Home, Guthrie Center was in charge of arrangements.

Ronald Leonard Baier, 75, son of Alfred and Helen Lucille (Hutchins) Baier, was born June 9, 1948 in Carroll. He passed away Monday, Aug. 28, 2023 at his home in Guthrie Center.

Ron attended schools in Exira. In June of 1966, he enlisted into the United States Army. On Aug. 21, 1966, he married Raynette Sheley at the Methodist Church in Guthrie Center. Ron served in the Vietnam War and was decorated with 4 Bronze Service Stars. Prior to his honorable discharge, Ron and Raynette lived briefly in Baltimore and Texas. Following his discharge from the Army, they made their home in Guthrie Center. Ron worked for a short time at the gas station before working for Steensen Gas & Electric for 27 years. He then went to work for Guthrie Center High School as head custodian, working 20 years until he retired in 2014. Ron then did various repair work for those in the community that needed something repaired.

He was a member of the First Christian Church, Guthrie Center, Omar B. Shearer Post #124, Guthrie Center, and the Sons of the American Legion. Ron started the Avenue of Flags at Union Cemetery, Guthrie Center, and continued this for the next 44 years. Ron enjoyed golfing, the Kansas City Chiefs, and was a two time family fantasy football winner.

He was preceded in death by his parents and son, Rodney Baier. Ron is survived by his wife, Raynette Baier of Guthrie Center; son, Rick (Renee) Baier of Guthrie Center; two grandchildren, Jared Baier and Kena Baier; brothers, Greg (Lois) Baier and Mark (Joni) Baier both of Audubon; along with many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Memorials may be left to the discretion of the family.

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**RENEW**

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**Tyler J. Smith**



Tyler J. Smith, 24 of Roscoe, passed away tragically in an automobile accident Sunday, August 27, 2023.

He was born November 17, 1998 in Uniontown, a son of John Smith (Sharon) of Fredericktown, and Tina Lombardo (A.J.) of Mather, who survive.

Tyler was 2017 graduate of Beth-Center High School and was a member of the soccer team and marching band. He was currently employed at SCI Fayette and had been previously employed at Model Uniform Services in Charleroi.

He was a member of the Sons of American Legion Post #816.

Tyler enjoyed remote control cars, video games, and spending time with friends and family. A fan of professional soccer, he followed the Manchester City soccer team.

Surviving in addition to his parents are a brother, John Smith Jr. (Jessica) and their son Carson of California; two sisters, Charlie Lombardo, and Toni Lombardo both of Mather, a stepsister, Shania Gullickson, of Alexandria, Minn.; grandmother, Joyce Nopwaskey of Crucible; a great-grandmother, Stella Wegner of Surprise, AZ; several aunts and uncles; his best friend Nick Harvey.

Deceased are grandparents William Nopwaskey, Roger Smith, and Josephine Smith.

Friends will be received from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, September 1, in the Greenlee's Fredericktown Funeral Home, Ltd., 42 Bank St. at Crawford Rd. Fredericktown, PA.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests memorial contributions be made to the Autism Society or the Beth Center High School Band.

A memorial luncheon will be held for family and friends Saturday, September 2, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Jefferson Fire Hall, Jefferson.

An online guestbook is available at [www.Greenlee-FuneralHome.com](http://www.Greenlee-FuneralHome.com) where you may express personal condolences to the Smith family.

Published by Observer-Reporter on Aug. 31, 2023.

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# AMERICAN LEGION



Daniel J. Seehafer,  
National Commander  
The American Legion

## About the National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, National Commander of The American Legion

Daniel J. Seehafer was elected national commander of The American Legion on Aug. 31, 2023, in Charlotte, N.C., during the 104<sup>th</sup> national convention. Seehafer likes to say, “It’s personal,” when it comes to The American Legion’s mission of serving veterans and their families. He is continuing the theme of “Be the One,” to prevent veteran suicide.

An ordained minister from Wisconsin, he earned his American Legion eligibility through service in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserve, where he served as a military chaplain. A member of American Legion Post 157 in Horicon, Wis., Seehafer served in a number of American Legion offices at every level, including national chaplain and commander of the Department of Wisconsin.

Born and raised in Merrill, Wis., he lettered in cross-country track while in high school and later received a bachelor’s degree in pastoral ministry from Concordia University and a Master of Divinity at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Seehafer was installed as assistant pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Horicon in 1997 and continues to serve as administrative pastor of the church and its school. His American Legion post was recognized for “100 percent” and “All-Time High” in membership during his terms as commander and adjutant. Other honors include District Commander’s New Post Achievement Award, Silver Brigade, and Post 157 Legionnaire of the Year.

In 2023, Seehafer earned an Outstanding Heroism Award for administering the Heimlich maneuver to a choking victim at an American Legion dinner.

National Commander Seehafer and his wife, Stacey, who is a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 157, live in Beaver Dam, Wis. Dan’s son, Jacob, and daughter, Emma, are also members of the Post 157 family. Dan is the son of the late Lester Seehafer and Jean Sabatke.



## Accomplishments aren’t much without funding

August 23, 2023

House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Ranking Member Mark Takano, D-Calif., issued a warning last February to veterans gathered at the American Legion Washington Conference: [“I am worried about the fate of these accomplishments.”](#)

He was referring to more than 80 bills passed in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to help veterans and their families. Among them was the Sgt. 1st Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 – better known as the PACT Act. The historic Legion-supported legislation, signed into law just over a year ago, opened the door to VA health care and disability benefits for some 3.5 million veterans exposed to toxic burn pits, atomic radiation, Agent Orange, and other contaminants during their time in service. So far, more than 750,000 veterans have filed VA claims under the PACT Act, and the number is climbing every day.

At the time Takano spoke to Legionnaires, a new congressional session was under way, and an old familiar tune was detected in Washington. Cut the VA budget to cover fiscal deficiencies elsewhere in the federal government. A Congressional Budget Office proposal explored reducing VA funding by over 20% – just in time for the first wave of PACT Act veterans.

The American Legion’s response to that proposal:

Look elsewhere.

Congress did, but it was by a narrow 219-211 vote that the House of Representatives approved the 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act on July 27 that would fully fund VA health care, benefits, programs, and services for the next fiscal year. The Senate will soon review and debate provisions of the spending bill so that VA can start the new year with a real budget in hand.

If, however, the measure gets hung up and the two houses of Congress cannot agree, the bigger threat is another government shutdown – as we saw in January 2019 when the entire U.S. Coast Guard went more than 30 days without pay. [The American Legion helped junior enlisted USCG personnel with children at home, by issuing over \\$1.1 million in Temporary Financial Assistance grants](#) to cover necessary costs as they waited for pay while at the same time fulfilling their duties.

This is why The American Legion has fought since then for passage of legislation that would protect Coast Guard members from pay delays in the event of a government shutdown. The other branches of service are so protected because they are under the Department of Defense, while the Coast Guard is under the Department of Homeland Security.

An on-time, adequate budget for VA solves the problem, for now.

Throughout The American Legion's history, our members have fought off a federal habit of retreating from veterans during times of peace. Veterans, we have often said, in times of conflict and peace, are a long-term cost of war. A new generation of those men and women is now entering the VA system, and rightfully so, facing new and different circumstances.

The American Legion's mission, as it has been for over a century, is to make sure their needs, and those of all generations, are met with the funding necessary to fulfill them. Otherwise, hard-won legislative accomplishments won't mean much at all.

## **Legion Family helps clean up Charlotte's Freedom Park as part of national convention**

[Andy Proffet](#) | August 25, 2023

As American Legion Family members cleaned two markers commemorating Mecklenburg County's World War II veterans Friday morning at Freedom Park in Charlotte, N.C., a passing jogger thanked them for their efforts.

That's part of the purpose of the community outreach projects that the Legion Family does in conjunction with the annual national convention.

"People have misconceptions about what the American Legion Family is all about, and by being out here and marked up that we're The American Legion and we're volunteering, folks who are running through the park having a great day are going to see Legionnaires in another light," said Past National Commander Denise Rohan. "They will see us as people who actually do community work across the country."

American Legion Auxiliary National Vice-President Lisa Williamson agreed.

"If we can be out doing things in the communities that are hosting our national conventions — or any event, even at home, a smaller event, and you're sitting there and you're branded, people see that we're actually active and doing things in our communities and instead of me giving them an application and saying, 'Hey, give me your \$30,' they come up to me and tap me on the shoulder and say, 'What are you doing and how can I be a part of it?'" Williamson said.

This is the 10th year the Legion Family has participated in a community outreach project during the national convention. It's become an annual tradition for many of the participants.

"I tell you what, I'd much rather be out here doing service projects than sitting in meetings," said Williamson, who was volunteering for the project for the ninth time. "We have to have meetings (at convention) ... but I'd rather be out here myself doing service projects and helping our communities and our military and our veterans."

The 50-some volunteers divided into teams to help parks department employees spruce up Freedom Park. In addition to cleaning the memorial markers, they painted handrails, pressure washed benches, and worked on landscaping including mulching, weeding and tree trimming.

"I was a Scout, so I grew up learning that if you go into someplace, especially a park, you leave it more beautiful than when you came. So you always take care of things," said Rohan, who noted that Freedom Park was "a beautiful park already."

"... I just feel better knowing that I've done something to help," Rohan added.

## History respected at American Legion Memorial Stadium

[Jeff Stoffer](#) | August 24, 2023

Darrell Bonapart grew up in Charlotte, N.C., but never knew the story behind what he always had called “Memorial Stadium.” He thought it had something to do with the hospital. The seats were concrete, and deteriorated. The field was natural grass, in rough shape. A rock wall encircled the playing surface. It had been home to hundreds of sports events, concerts, festivals, presidential addresses, and even pro wrestling matches since President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated it in 1936. But by the 2010s, “it was in bad shape,” said Bonapart, a 15-year veteran of the U.S. Army who fought in Iraq, was wounded, medically discharged, and joined The American Legion after he got out.

He took great interest in the fact that the facility was, in fact, American Legion Memorial Stadium, built in tribute to those from Mecklenburg County who had fought and died in World War I. The site was the home of American Legion Post 9 in Charlotte, but only a small sign inside the stadium, which in its heyday seated 17,000, indicated it had anything to do with the veterans organization he had joined and soon helped lead.



North Carolina American Legion District 20 Commander Darrell Bonapart (left) and Past District 20 Commander Joe Reale are delighted how the rebuilt American Legion Memorial Stadium is designed to remember its original purpose, as well as its namesake.

Jeff Stoffer

Water damage to the concrete stands and other areas of the facility led the Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department to undertake a near-complete replacement that would cost more than \$35 million. The county worked with The American Legion to respect the stadium’s history and identity as a veterans memorial. Today, a massive sign at the front entrance

leaves no doubt that this is AMERICAN LEGION MEMORIAL STADIUM.

Behind the sign is a set of 3-D laser-cut steel relief panels that feature the faces of military men and women who eerily follow passersby, adjacent to Central Piedmont Community College. The panel – produced by artists Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead and titled “Tribute” – is a source of pride for American Legion Past District 20 Commander Joe Reale, who was involved throughout the reconstruction process. “We looked at a number of artists, and when I saw this example, I got up and made my plea. I guess I was very passionate that day. I am very proud of that. This will be here, hopefully, forever, where I won’t.”

He remains awestruck by the panel set. “To me, it’s live. It’s breathing. It’s 3-dimensional. Every time you look at it, depending on your angle, you get so see something different.”

Bonapart and Reale worked together on the project, and gave high praise for the Parks and Recreation Department for its attention to the stadium’s origins. The process lasted from 2016 through its July 2021 dedication, attended by hundreds of American Legion members, as well as state and local dignitaries. The buildings, stands, scoreboard and field turf – now artificial – are all brand-spanking new, but the original meaning of the stadium is respected in all of its elements. And everywhere glow the words “American Legion Memorial Stadium.” Charlotte’s professional soccer team plays home matches there; it is also the site of high school football championships and home to other special events throughout the year.

Bonapart and Reale want Legionnaires from across the country to visit American Legion Memorial Stadium during the 104th American Legion National Convention this week in Charlotte, or anytime they may be visiting Charlotte.

While most everything else is replaced, still standing from the original facility is the rock wall that encircles the field. “Keeping the original wall made it so that it didn’t lose its historical (value),” says Bonapart, now District 20 commander. “It’s definitely a historical monument ... The inside looks pretty much the way it did in the ‘30s.”

In a statement about the rebuilt stadium posted on Charlotte’s Partners for Parks website, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation official Bert Lynn references the stadium’s American Legion connection, which continues today.

“It’s in recognition of the work The American Legion does after conflicts, after our veterans come home and acclimate to life,” Lynn said. “It was absolutely important. It was actually part of the contract with the county commission that this would always remain American Legion Memorial Stadium.”

Bonapart adds that the view of Charlotte’s skyline from inside the stadium “is breathtaking ... We just want people to know that it’s here, to come and see the American Legion Memorial Stadium and use it. We don’t want it to fall into the same shape it was in 2016.”

## Defenders of the Constitution receive Legion’s highest award

[Cameran Richardson](#) | August 29, 2023



First Liberty Institute Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer David Holmes accepts the 2023 American Legion Distinguished Service Medal during Day 1 of The American Legion 104th National Convention at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, N.C., on Tuesday, Aug. 29.

Jeric Wilhelmssen/The American Legion

The American Legion presented its highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal, to First Liberty Institute on stage at the 104th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., on Aug. 29.

“The brilliant legal minds that we are honoring today, defend the ability of Americans to live according to one’s beliefs no matter one’s faith, ideology or background,” American Legion National Commander Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola said. “Because the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is not conditional.” Troiola highlighted First Liberty Institute’s efforts of [defending a high school football coach’s](#) right to pray on the field, to winning the 2019 landmark Supreme Court case, *The American Legion vs. the American Humanist Association* that [saved the Bladensburg World War I veterans memorial](#).

“As they defend the use of the cross and other symbols on veterans memorials, they remind us that the framers of the Constitution believed in protecting religious beliefs, not cancelling or removing them,” Troiola said. First Liberty Institute Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer David Holmes accepted the Distinguished Service Medal.

“It is a pleasure to accept, on behalf of all our employees and our CEO Kelly Shackelford, this award. It’s with a humble heart that we accept it,” he said.

Holmes, a retired Air Force colonel and former fighter pilot, said, “I know full well the value of The American Legion. You help protect some of the most precious tributes of our country, and it’s most appreciated. We at First Liberty for 20 years have been standing alongside the Legion as we’ve tried to protect these rights starting 20 years ago in Mt. Soledad overlooking San Diego Bay ... to Bladensburg, Virginia, where we won a monumental case with the United States Supreme Court.”

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 on June 20, 2019, that the 40-foot (Bladensburg) memorial erected by Gold Star mothers can remain on public land in Prince George’s County, Md., where it has stood since 1925 to recognize 49 Prince George’s County veterans who died during World War I.

“It’s with enormous gratitude we accept this award,” Holmes said, noting that First Liberty Institute looks forward to a continued relationship with The American Legion. Holmes looked at [the list of people who have also received this award](#) and was happy to see that the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders are a past recipient because “my combat call sign was Dallas with a secondary call sign of Cowboy.”

## Sergeant Major: recruitment can be Legion’s next ‘get-it-done mission’

[Jeff Stoffer](#) | August 29, 2023

At one point in a 34-year journey that led him to become the 17th Sergeant Major of the U.S. Marine Corps, Micheal P. Barrett found himself at the reins of a recruiting station for a 17,000-square-mile swath of northern Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. His area of responsibility had more than 300 high schools. The station, however, had not been effective at convincing young people to enlist.

It ranked sixth out of eight among Marine Corps recruiting stations in the district, and it stood 30th out of 56 nationally. Had he been the coach of a sports team

with that kind of record, “I’d have been fired,” he told thousands of veterans gathered Aug. 29 in Charlotte, N.C., for The American Legion’s 104th National Convention.

Barrett had 21 years of service under his belt when duty took him to Cleveland. The global war on terrorism was in its infancy. “I brought my experience, my drive, my passion, my love of God, country, and Corps. I brought that to the streets and to the families of Cleveland ... every day, every month, it was a knife fight in a phone booth to make mission. But we did it.”



Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett speaks during Day 1 of The American Legion 104th National Convention at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, N.C., on Tuesday, August 29.

Jeric Wilhelmsen/The American Legion

He did it by remembering a moment from his own time preparing as a “poolee” for Marine Corps recruit training. His recruiter in Niagara Falls, N.Y., never seemed to have a problem attracting young people. Every other Saturday, Barrett and his fellow poolees from the region were assembled for competitive functions – football, baseball, running, push-ups, tug of war ... “to get us ready for the rigors of recruit training.”

At these functions, The American Legion, VFW, Marine Corps League, and other veterans groups would arrange picnic tables and serve hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks for the young future Marines. Beyond the meals, “they would come over and talk to us, prepare us for the challenges we were about to embark on for the rest of our lives.”

One veteran Barrett met was a survivor of the Battle of Iwo Jima who did not spend time with the recruits talking about his historic time fighting in World War II. “He didn’t talk about his exploits on Iwo Jima. He talked about the brotherhood, the fact that 35 years later, from 1945 to 1980, he was still in contact with every member who survived Iwo Jima. He talked about a bond that lasts forever.”

That connection – between veterans and future servicemembers – was the recipe Barrett would apply to improve recruitment numbers in his area of responsibility over two decades later. “I immediately, after taking the mantle, went and visited all of our veterans service organizations, all of our military service organizations, all of our community influencers. Before my first year ended, we were first in the district, and we were first in the nation. This was not a coincidence. I did not do that. My recruiters are good, but it was those community influencers – it was you – the get-it-done groups.”

Barrett, a member of American Legion Post 18 in Bloomington, Ind., discussed the accomplishments of the organization throughout its history – establishment of the Veterans Administration, passage of the GI Bill “that changed the nation forever,” congressional support for a full accounting of POW/MIAs, the demand for successful studies into the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and Agent Orange – “and today, Be the One mission. I don’t call it a campaign personally because this is a mission. The Be the One mission is absolutely making a difference.”

He said that when “critical issues face veterans and military families – America’s must-not-fail issues – The American Legion doesn’t sit back and admire ... the problem. You get at it. We still have a duty to ensure that our grand republic thrives, and the strength of our military is an imperative. We all have a unique set of skills and resources, a real and substantive connection to our communities. We are the community influencers. We are the problem solvers. We are the get-it-doners.”

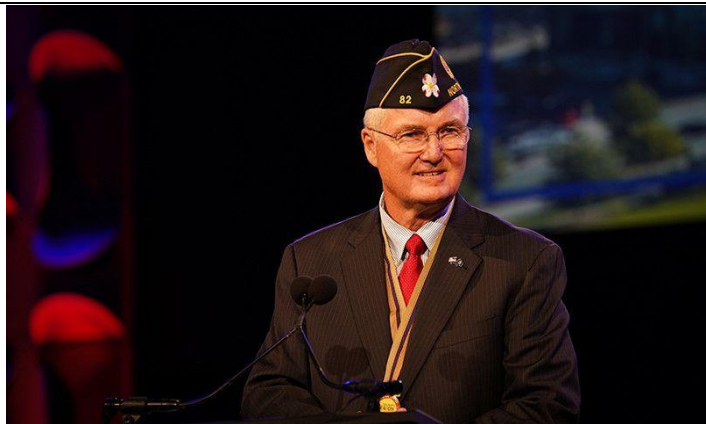
He posed a question to the thousands of Legionnaires in the Charlotte Convention Center: “What if the Legionnaire family aggressively applied their unique skill set to our nation’s military recruiters, our military recruiting effort – like my recruiter did over 40 years ago ... what do you think we could, we would, achieve?”

“A must-not-fail mission for this nation is the physical strength of our military. Can’t this be our next get-it-done mission for our nation?”

In his closing statement, he made a plea: “Let’s bring someone to the frickin’ recruiter’s office.”

## USAA board member looking forward to ‘facing the fight’ together with The American Legion

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | August 29, 2023



Retired U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. and USAA Board Member Gerald Murray speaks during the Day 1 of The American Legion 104th National Convention at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, N.C., on Tuesday, August 29.

Jeric Wilhelmsen/The American Legion

North Carolina Legionnaire Gerald R. Murray took to the stage to welcome American Legion Family members to the Legion’s national convention in Charlotte on Aug. 29. But he also had another message: one of the importance of suicide-prevention efforts among the veteran population and the Legion’s new entry into a group geared toward doing just that.

Murray, the 14th Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force and a member of American Legion Post 82 in Shelby, N.C., also wore another hat during his address: that of a member of USAA’s board of directors.

Murray discussed USAA’s [Face the Fight](#), a coalition of which The American Legion is a founder member. The coalition is made up of corporations, foundations, non-profit and veteran-focused organizations joined together to raise awareness and support for veteran suicide prevention. The mission is to break the stigmas surrounding suicide in order to open conversation and support around the topic.

Face the Fight is funding and providing philanthropic grants to nonprofit organizations that can help stop veteran suicide.

“The American Legion, USAA, and a coalition of like-minded corporations, foundations and nonprofit and veteran-focused organizations have come together to Face the Fight,” Murray said. “This group is bounded together with the aspiration to cut veteran suicide in half by the year 2030.

“Our great organizations ... have taken a stand to Face the Fight,” Murray said. “You know better than anyone that suicide is a major problem among our veterans. In fact, the suicide rate among veterans is 1.5 times the rate of the general population in our nation. We’ve got to do something about this. They’re our fathers, our mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors, and our children. They’re brave men and women who’ve given so much through their service, only to end up in a crisis at home.

“I’m pleased to know that the Legion is a leader in this fight right beside USAA. I’m excited to see what we can achieve by facing the fight together.”



## National Commander Troiola: New coalition opportunity to expand suicide-prevention efforts

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | August 29, 2023

When he was elected American Legion National Commander one year ago in Milwaukee, Wis., Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola made the Legion’s suicide-prevention initiative, [Be the One](#), his focus for his year leading the organization.

Addressing the 2023 National Commander in Charlotte, N.C., on Aug. 29, Troiola told attendees that the Be the One message is getting out there – and that the formation of a new coalition has created the opportunity to get the message out to an even broader audience.

“During my travels as commander, I have had conversation with many family members whose veteran attempted to... or, in some cases... committed suicide,” Troiola said. “The pain those families feel will always be there but our Be the One message is resonating. Just as we advocate for veterans, these families are advocating for us. They want us to continue to make this our top priority.”

Troiola said the Legion's National Executive Commission in July passed a resolution that allows the organization to join USAA's [Face the Fight Coalition](#). One of the key strategies of Face the Fight is to identify and support veterans at risk by partnering with and investing in veteran service organizations to implement suicide prevention strategies within their organization, team, and membership.

"The American Legion has traditionally, and by direction of a national resolution, refrained from joining coalitions," Troiola said. "We do not want to be part of a committee or group that might commit to a policy contrary to our principles. When it comes to veteran suicide prevention, however, an exception was needed, and an exception was made.

"I am very excited about this opportunity and believe it will greatly enhance The American Legion Be the One initiative. By leveraging the resources, talent and expertise of corporations, VSOs, philanthropists and researchers, Face the Fight can achieve its aspirational goal of a significant reduction in the veteran suicide rate by 2030. We have already lost more than 120,000 veterans to suicide since 2001. The Army and Marines both reported increases in their active-duty suicides during the first quarter of 2023, compared to the same time in 2022."

But Troiola said Be the One will continue to be a top priority of The American Legion. "While you will be seeing much more about Face the Fight in American Legion media, you will not be seeing any less about Be the One," he said. "We will continue to Be the One to destigmatize asking for help, to reach out to our brother and sister veterans and raise awareness about the 988 Crisis Line."

Also included in the Legion's suicide-prevention strategy is the continuation of Buddy Checks. "The purpose of our Buddy Checks is to remind veterans that they are not alone. They have friends and allies in the American Legion Family," Troiola said. "Going alone is not a healthy way to deal with a crisis, we often tell people with suicidal ideations. It's time that we follow our own advice. The American Legion, with the help of its friends in USAA and other great organizations, has just received some reinforcements."

Troiola told Legion Family members it was a good time to be excited about the organization's accomplishments and its initiatives, including the National Security Commission's [BASE \(Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience\)](#) initiative. The program strives to strengthen connections between The American Legion, Department of Defense, active-duty

installations, and Guard and Reserve centers and armories worldwide, in order to help address issues such as food insecurity, military family health care, childcare and career opportunities.

"Our members understand what it means to choose the military way of life," Troiola said. "They know the rigors, hazards, and uncertainties of service, as well as issues that can affect health, quality of life, family stability and economic outlook after discharge. We also appreciate the pathways of opportunity made possible only through military service. In short, we've been there. We've lived that.

"That's why The American Legion National Security Commission launched an initiative built purely on the military experience – specifically to improve it where needed, and assist in whatever form that may take, from support for commissaries to military spouse employment to understanding VA benefits for those about to separate."

Troiola said another example of supporting the U.S. military to support our allies. "That's why I am proud that The American Legion took the lead in calling for Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act," he said. "This legislation would provide a pathway to permanent residency for Afghans who have been granted humanitarian parole in the United States and create pathways for continued relocation for those who've been left behind. Our organization, along with several other VSOs, recently drafted a letter to Congressional leadership pointing out that American veterans served alongside Afghan allies for two decades. We fought side by side with them, and those veterans saw firsthand the courage and dedication displayed by many, especially the interpreters.

"When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, many of our allies were left behind. Since then, it has been veterans who have carried the burden of evacuating some to safety while Congress has delayed meaningful relief. Under the Afghan Adjustment Act, eligible Afghans in need of protection would undergo the vetting required during the adjustment application process and have their status adjusted so they could rebuild their lives in the relative safety and stability of the United States."

Troiola said the Afghan Adjustment Act is the best way to accomplish this.

"There are other bills in Congress that pretend to protect our Afghan allies but do very little. They instead lump the issue in with large-scale immigration reform," he said. "Every day we are losing allies and their

families to torture and death by a hostile regime that is punishing them for helping us. We owe them special consideration.”

Advocacy for U.S. servicemembers includes support for the U.S. Coast Guard, whose pay is not protected during a government shutdown.

“In this era of divided government, the possibility of a federal shutdown is always real, and Congress still has not passed the Pay Our Coast Guard Parity Act of 2023,” Troiola said. “Because the Coast Guard, unlike the other branches, falls under the Department of Homeland Security, its personnel go unpaid during prolonged shutdowns. The American Legion fully remembers the shutdown of 2019. During that period, we provided more than \$1 million of Temporary Financial Assistance to Coast Guard families in need.

“We did our job. Now Congress needs to do the same.”

*Thank You to our Sponsors*

Juan Cruz Rodriguez  
Department of Puerto Rico



## 1919 Society Pledge Commitment

### DONOR INFORMATION

Donor(s)			
Address			
City		State	ZIP
Phone		Email	
Are you a member of the American Legion: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Member number	

### TERMS OF PLEDGE

I am supporting the 1919 Society with a pledge total of:  
\$

- ☐ Today with a single payment  
☐ Over the next year, beginning on (date): \_\_\_\_\_  
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beginning on (date): \_\_\_\_\_  
Please bill me  
☐ Annually  
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### METHOD OF PAYMENT(S)

☐ Check - Make checks payable to: American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation - 1919 Society

☐ Credit card  
☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AmEX ☐ Discover  
Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Planned Gifts and Stock - Please contact The American Legion Office of Charitable Gifts toll free at 833-257-0955 or by email at [CharitableGiving@legion.org](mailto:CharitableGiving@legion.org)

☐ Other  
My/Our gift will be matched by \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Matching gift enclosed  
☐ Matching gift form will be sent

By electronically signing this 1919 Society Pledge Commitment (pledge commitment) I/we agree that this is a legally binding contract to give the amount(s) specified above to the American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, doing business as American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation (ALVCF) and the ALVCF accepts such pledge/donation. I/we agree that the terms of this pledge commitment is legally binding upon and enforceable against me/us and my/our respective successors and heirs, including without limitation, my/our estate(s) and executor(s). This pledge commitment shall be governed by and interpreted under the laws of the State of Indiana. The ALVCF is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization under the provisions of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). The ALVCF's federal tax identification number is 35-6039680. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Donor Signature	Date
Donor Signature	Date

**Thank you for your charitable contribution.**

American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

## Sons of The American Legion Membership Application

Detachment of _____ Squadron No. _____	Birth Date _____	Date _____
Name _____ (First) _____ (Initial) _____ (Last)	Recruited by _____ (Initial) _____ (Last)	
Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)	Telephone _____	
E-mail Address _____		
Veteran through whom eligibility is established _____		
(a) Above is a member in good standing of Post No. _____, Dept. of _____		
OR (b) Above is a deceased veteran who served honorably from _____ to _____		
(c) Relationship of Applicant to Veteran _____		
I hereby subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, apply for membership, and transmit \$ _____ as annual membership dues.		
Signed _____		(By Applicant or Parent)
Eligibility certified by _____		(Post Adjutant)
00-001 (2013)		



### RECEIPT

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Received of \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ in payment of dues for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ in  
Squadron \_\_\_\_\_, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_  
By \_\_\_\_\_

SONS OF THE  
AMERICAN  
LEGION





## 2023 - 2024 SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

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<b>SEPTEMBER 13, 2023</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>OCTOBER 18, 2023</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 15, 2023</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>DECEMBER 13, 2023</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>JANUARY 18, 2024</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>FEBRUARY 14, 2024</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>MARCH 13, 2024</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>APRIL 10, 2024</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>MAY 15, 2024</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>** JULY 24, 2024</b>	<b>105%</b>

**\*\* DELEGATE STRENGTH TARGET DATE**

**Target dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of that week.**

**Since Columbus Day falls on a Monday, the October target date will be on a Thursday.**

**The January target date will be on the third Thursday of the month because of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.**



## 2023 - 2024 SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION RENEWAL SCHEDULE

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### CUT-OFF DATE

### RENEWAL POSTCARD MAIL DATE

#### 1ST NOTICE:

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2023**

**OCTOBER 23 - 27, 2023**

#### 2ND NOTICE:

**FEBRUARY 23, 2024**

**MARCH 25 - 29, 2024**

#### 3RD NOTICE:

**APRIL 22, 2024**

**MAY 27 - 31, 2024**

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Transmittals not received by the cut-off date may not prevent a subsequent renewal notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

**Note:** Renewals transmitted and received by the cut-off date(s) noted above will be updated/processed prior to printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned once received. Membership that must be hand-keyed (i.e., new members, renewals and/or membership cards that can't be scanned) will take longer to process. Please transmit membership as early and as often as possible in advance of the Target Dates to help avoid delays in processing.



## 2023 - 2024 THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

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EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF	SEPTEMBER 13, 2023	50%
FALL MEETINGS	OCTOBER 18, 2023	55%
VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 15, 2023	65%
PEARL HARBOR DAY	DECEMBER 13, 2023	75%
MID-WINTER	JANUARY 18, 2024	80%
PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEBRUARY 14, 2024	85%
LEGION BIRTHDAY	MARCH 13, 2024	90%
CHILDREN & YOUTH	APRIL 10, 2024	95%
ARMED FORCES DAY	MAY 15, 2024	100%
** DELEGATE STRENGTH	30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION	

Target dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of that week. Some target dates were moved to the third week to maximize end of year renewal notices.

Since Columbus Day falls on a Monday, the October target date will be on a Thursday.

To maximize the December renewal notice, the January target date will be on the third Thursday of the month because of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



# 2023 - 2024

## THE AMERICAN LEGION

### RENEWAL SCHEDULE

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<u>CUTOFF DATES</u>	<u>RENEWAL MAIL DATES</u>
MAY 15, 2023	JULY 1-8, 2023
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023	OCTOBER 7-14, 2023
OCTOBER 18, 2023	NOVEMBER 10-18, 2023
DECEMBER 13, 2023	JANUARY 6-12, 2024
FEBRUARY 14, 2024	MARCH 2-8, 2024
APRIL 10, 2024	May 4-10, 2024

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Transmittals not received by the cutoff date may prevent a subsequent renewal notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

Please note, renewals transmitted and received by the cutoff (which is also a National Target Date) will be updated prior to printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned. Membership that must be hand-keyed (new members and renewals that can't be scanned) will take longer to process.

Please transmit as early and as often as possible in advance of the Target Dates to help avoid delays in processing.