



'Sky's the limit' on Buddy Checks

'The American Legion | October 5, 2023



VA Secretary Denis McDonough speaks during The American Legion's 104th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., on Tuesday, August 29.

Hilary Ott/The American Legion

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will conduct the first National Buddy Check Week from Oct. 16-20. VA is encouraging the participation of all American Legion members, as is National Commander Dan Seehafer, who recently issued [this Commander's Message](#) underscoring the importance of the initiative.

In fact, The American Legion began its Buddy Check program in 2019 after its National Executive Committee passed a resolution calling for the twice-annual wellness checks on fellow veterans. Since that time, the Legion's Buddy Checks have expanded so that posts and members can conduct them at any time. To date, at least 1 million veterans have been reached through the Legion's Buddy Checks.

For resource material on how to conduct a Buddy Check, [download this kit](#). And join The American Legion and VA for a [kickoff webinar on Oct. 16 at this link](#).

Recently VA Secretary Denis McDonough spoke with The American Legion about Buddy Checks, their relationship and more.

Question: As we talk, VA's first National Buddy Check Week is just under a month away. Tell me about what your expectations are for the week, and how American Legion post and members can be supportive in these measures.

Answer: The idea is as simple as it is profound. I'm a non-veteran, but I see this in vets all the time. In every interesting corner of the country, every interesting thing that is happening, there's a vet involved. Vets are unbelievably generous. And they're constantly looking out for each other, but sometimes they won't ask for a little help if they need it.

So, what the Buddy Check says is, "You know what? I'm not going to wait for you to ask. I'm going to just check in on you." So, our expectation for and our hope out of Buddy Check Week is that simple act of connectivity among veterans reminds vets of that thing that so many of our vets feel that is missing since they took off the uniform, which is their connection to a larger mission.

Question: Looking ahead after the first National Buddy Check Week, what would you like veterans to take away from it and apply in the future going forward?

Answer: VA has a program called Peer Support. That's where vets who have come through recovery, substance use disorder, are looking out for other vets who might be in a different stage of recovery.

And that's based on a simple concept that's really powerful from all sorts of well-established precedent and clinical trials about managing substance use disorder.

see BUDDY CHECK page 21

Round-Up

Donald "JR" Hall, Jr. (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. 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

SAL Fall Meetings Oct. 6-8 in Indianapolis

The American Legion | October 2, 2023

The Sons of The American Legion National Executive Committee (SAL NEC) will meet for Fall Meetings Oct. 6-8 in Indianapolis.

SAL national commissions and committees will meet Friday and Saturday before making presentations to the SAL NEC Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. [All meetings](#) will take place at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, and the NEC meetings are scheduled to stream on the [SAL Facebook page](#).

Honor the Veteran Who Made You Eligible.

RENEW TODAY!

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., Editor

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Remembering the Greatest Generation

To honor a World War II Veteran,
please send information to jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com

Samuel J. Delgenio



Liberty, OH — Samuel J. Delgenio, 98, passed away Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, at his home after a long and fulfilling life.

Samuel was born Feb. 10, 1925, in Youngstown, a son of the late Thomas and Rose Schettino DelGenio, and was a lifelong area resident.

He was a 1943 graduate of Girard High School. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Fox in the South Pacific during World War II.

Sam worked at US Steel McDonald Works for 38 years before retiring in 1980.

Mr. Delgenio was an active member of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Brier Hill. He helped make their famous Brier Hill Pizza for many years and also served on the church's decorating committee.

Sam was a member of the Girard American Legion Post 235 and was honored this past August for being the legion's oldest member with 72 years of membership.

He was well known for his woodworking skills, making many crafts for St. Joseph the Provider School and also St. Rose School. He enjoyed ceramics, looking for golf balls at Mahoning Country Club, and in his younger days, Sam enjoyed taking his son and nephews down to the woods near his childhood home on Maple Avenue, where he would teach them the basics of *"living off the land."*

Sam's wife of 63 years, Florence K. Dionisio Delgenio, whom he married Sept. 13, 1947, passed away Dec. 29, 2010.

Sam leaves to cherish memories of him, his son, John Delgenio (fiancée Mary Ann Lowry) of Girard; his granddaughter, Janeen (Matt) Rees of Gilbert, Arizona; two great-grandsons, twins, Kyle David and Evan Samuel Rees; a sister, Josephine Bakes of

Girard; former daughter-in-law, Bernadette Walley of Mesa, Arizona; and many nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

Sam will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Besides his wife, a sister, Angelina DelGenio; four brothers, Frank, John, Angelo, and Tom DelGenio; and a brother-in-law, Leo Bakes, preceded Sam in death.

Family and friends may gather to pay respects 9 to 10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 1125 Turin Ave., Youngstown, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m.

Private interment will take place in Green Haven Memorial Gardens in Austintown.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Kinnick Funeral Home in Girard. Visit kinnickfuneralhome.com to view and share this obituary and to send condolences to Sam's family.

Robert L. Bristo

Central National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

Second Wednesday Quarterly

September 13, 2023 | December 13, 2023

March 13, 2024 | June 12, 2024

8:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 930 6046 3298 | Passcode: 140 802

Hey Central Region!

A bridge is needed to link one side to another. Way back in the 2014-2015 membership year I had the honor to serve as National Chaplain with National Commander Mike Moss of Colorado! (Remember him? He was the one who won the "Six-Shooter" award back in 1997!) His theme for that year was **"Building Bridges to the Future"**. He was trying to link the American Legion Family and their programs for a common goal. Boy, did we work the programs that year!

The SAL donated \$360,510.23 to CWF, \$1,203,088 to C & Y programs, 734,592 hours, and \$2,127,994 to Americanism programs, and VA & R programs

received \$1,249,154! Membership crossed the bridge in a big way with a final total of 362,319 members from 6,072 Squadrons!

That was also the year that members Bob Brown and Ronnie Grist received a Special SAL Humanitarian Award for their efforts in assisting Past National Commander JR Stillwell after an auto accident he was in returning from Commander Moss's homecoming! We SONS look out for one another in a **BIG** way!

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King once said... **"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just to take the first step."** As I have said before, small steady steps each day make reaching our goals an easy accomplishment! **October 18th is our 25% goal date and I encourage all of you to continue to take these steps to our goals!**

Good day my Comrades!

"As a member, you become a part of a legacy, contributing to a tradition that extends beyond your own lifetime." – Unknown

Legacy! Tradition! Do either of these words sound familiar? When I served as the Detachment Commander for Illinois my theme was **"Guided by Tradition."** When Greg (Doc) Gibbs served as the SAL National Commander in 2018-2019 his theme was **"Honoring the Past... Continuing The Legacy"**.

Why do these words matter? By our very membership in the Sons of The American Legion; **"Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage"** ... is to honor and uphold the **legacies and traditions** of our ancestors and all those that we strive to serve!

But to me the last part of the quote above says it all! The work we do today and have done in the past will **extend beyond our own lifetime!** Our membership and the hard work we do each and every year will affect the lives of those who may not yet have been born! In Commander Gibbs year we made a large difference that may still continue to help all American Legion programs!

From representing the SAL at the 75th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor to riding on the first ever American Legion Family float in the Rose Bowl parade! From finishing the year with another all-time high in membership to collecting enough donations for the Child Welfare Foundation to push the SAL total contributions to CWF over the \$8 Million dollar mark! Now that is a year the Sons can call a **Legacy!**

I have included a letter that could be used to send out to your former members as a way to encourage them to rejoin our ranks. Feel free to share this with your Detachment Districts and Squadrons if you feel it can help!

Please reach out to me should you have any questions or need any assistance.

For the Commander, **"Believe and Succeed"**

Butch Ray, Central Region Membership Chairman

"I'm the ONE, You're the ONE, BE the ONE!"

John R. Cook

Northeast National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

THIRD Wednesday Quarterly

September 20, 2023 | December 20, 2023

March 20, 2024 | June 19, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 980 7046 7820 | Passcode: 469 153

James R. Fischer

Western National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

THIRD Wednesday Quarterly

September 20, 2023 | December 20, 2023

March 20, 2024 | June 19, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 964 2285 1563 | Passcode: 433 552

What's up Westside!

I saw another quote this past week from Andrew Carnegie *"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."* This reminds me of us hitting the 105% as a Western Region and all Detachments hitting 100% last year and I know we can do it again this year!

Awesome job Westside. The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each individual member is the team.

Thanks again for all you do and keep up the great work.

Respectfully For God and Country,

Dan Ashley, Western Region Membership Chairman

Terry A. Harris

Midwest National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

Fourth Wednesday Quarterly

September 27, 2023 | December 27, 2023

March 27, 2024 | June 26, 2024

7:00 p.m. Mountain | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 924 0402 2733 | Passcode: 371 685

Linwood A. Moore

Southeast National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

First Wednesday Quarterly

September 6, 2023 | December 6, 2023

March 26 2024 | June 5, 2024

8:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 945 1723 1230 | Passcode: 58543

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 or text 838255.

Making connections, saving veterans' lives

[Henry Howard](#) | September 30, 2023

The American Legion delivered its [Be the One message](#) during a special summit conducted by the Kansas City VA Medical Center on Sept. 29.

A dozen presenters, including The American Legion, discussed suicide prevention, mental health awareness, available resources for veterans and their families, and more. Topics included community-based solutions, Vet Centers, gun safety, the role of caregivers, women's health, family support and more.

Charlotte McCloskey is the VA Kansas City recovery coordinator for mental health and daughter of a veteran. She coordinated the KCVA Veteran Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Summit, which was attended by about 100 veterans, supporters, and their family members.



"While the VA is the center, it's really about creating spokes so that we all connect," she said. "The summit is a way to connect organizations like The American Legion that all care for veterans. We want people to not only get information but to share information."

Briget Lanktree, deputy chief of the KCVA's Mental Health/Psychology unit, helped opened the summit. "Mental health is one of the most important services and suicide prevention is the most important thing we do," Lanktree said. "We appreciate all of you for being here and working together to support our veterans, whatever that specifically means for them."

Army veteran Tom Tanner, the 5th District commander for the American Legion Department of Missouri, handed out information and engaged with other attendees.

“We’re going to talk about what we can do to help our servicemembers through some tough times,” said Tanner, a member of Post 21 in Independence, Mo. “It’s a big deal. We’re losing approximately 22 servicemembers and veterans a day to suicide. We’ve got to get the word out. We’ve got to get the number down from 22 to zero.”

As Suicide Prevention Awareness Month concludes, McCloskey sees the summit as a way to springboard the learnings into positive change.

“It takes all of us,” she said. “This also means we can all lean in together as we help someone in the moment who is suffering or has experienced a loss. Together, collectively, we will do better.”

A healing space for mothers who lost a veteran child to suicide

The American Legion | September 29, 2023

As a mother to two veteran sons, Michele Ladd understands the invisible wounds of war and the often-difficult transition from military to civilian life. This understanding and passion to help other veterans heal inspired her to start traveling the country six years ago in an RV that Ladd named Hero Mobile. Her travels have taken her to more than 50 American Legion posts among other veteran service organizations, and over 175,000 miles alongside her husband Randy, a Navy veteran and Legionnaire. Veterans have shared their stories with Ladd while she helped provide resource assistance.

She has heard stories from veterans about trauma, post-traumatic stress, divorce, and suicide. And she has met mothers who lost their military son or daughter to suicide. The stories these grieving mothers shared with Ladd inspired her to provide healing and help to them as well. While she placed the names of their children on the back of the RV on angel wings and a suicide prevention ribbon decal, she wanted to do more to show her dedication to these mothers.

Ladd started a faith-based private Facebook group called [Mothers of Veteran Suicide](#) that offers support and a safe space to grieve. Today, there are 160 mothers in the group.

“I believe there's no greater pain than a mother who has lost a child, but a mother who has lost a child who served our country because we cannot imagine sending our children off to war,” said Ladd, whose one son served in Iraq. “He's got a great job, but he struggles and there's a reason why I do what I do.”



Sarah Johnson holds photos of her son U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Johnson, who died by suicide. Sarah stands by her son's name on the RV, Hope Mobile, operated by Michele Ladd who found Mothers of Veteran Suicide.

Photo provided by Michele Ladd

Ladd is now touring the country in a new RV – Hope Mobile – that features butterflies with the names of veterans lost to suicide. She has also started retreats to bring moms from the Facebook group together, with a recent one held at American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park, Fla. To contact Michele, email michele@mothersofveteransuicide.org or visit mothersofveteransuicide.org/.

The American Legion spoke with Ladd about how [Mothers of Veteran Suicide](#) started, how the Facebook group provides healing, the retreats being held and how mothers can get involved.

The American Legion: Who or what inspired you to start Mothers of Veteran Suicide?

Ladd: (While traveling), I was introduced to a mother who lost her (military) son to suicide eight months prior. I reached out to her, and she said “It’s too soon. I’d love to talk with you, but I just can’t right now. I can’t come and meet you in person.” I said that’s fine. We live right on the border of Georgia and Florida and come to find out, she lives in the mountains of Georgia. So I called her one day and said, honey, anytime you want to come, if you want to just come and visit me, I’ll sit with you. I’ll talk with you. I’ll let you cry. She called me up and she said my sons

one angelversary, that's what we call it, is coming up. There's no one else that I would rather be with. Can I come? And she drove nine hours (to visit Ladd). I'm going to cry just talking about it. She drove nine hours and she wanted to sleep in my hero mobile. She wanted to sleep in it because she said this is where it all happens. This is where you're trying to save veterans. That next morning was her son's one year, and I sat with her for five hours on my couch. And she just cried and cried. It was at that time I said, I need to start something for these mamas.

So I started a Facebook group, and I called it Mothers of Veteran Suicide. Before I knew it, I just had mother after mother after mother joining the group, and it's a faith-based group so I just kept trying to find prayers to put in there and I could see the moms were really starting to bond and talk to each other. Now my passion has become so deep for these moms.

Q: What do you post in this Facebook group?

A: I'm in this group every day, all day, commenting, talking to them, trying to get them help. The first thing they receive from me is a prayer blanket with their child's name on it. I want them to be wrapped in comfort. They trust me. They see what I post in the group; it's nothing but love.

Every day I look for something. If it's a something silly or something funny, or a prayer for comfort. It's about the moms bonding with each other. They feel safe in this group that they can share their grief, and so it's a bonding experience.

I don't counsel. I don't give advice. I'm not a counselor. But I try to encourage them to get counseling and I try to give them the resources. I'll look for counseling for them. I always, always refer TAPS and GriefShare (a support program) that many of the moms have gone through.

It's a safe place that they can trust to share their grief that they can't share with family members and loved ones. They tell me, your group has saved my life. I hear it all the time, "I can't share this with my husband anymore. I can't share this with my daughter because my daughter's grieving and my daughter is suicidal. I can't tell them how much I'm grieving because I'm worried about them. So in this group, I can share my pain."

You know, every mother that comes on board says to me, Michele, I'm so sorry for your loss. They assume that I started this because I lost a child. I say to them, I haven't lost a child, I've met so many moms and I just want to do anything I can to comfort you because

I can't even imagine how you feel. Because I haven't lost my son. I pray every day that that my son can just keep moving forward.

Q: What are things mothers say once they find this Facebook group?

A: I asked the mothers to share what the group has done for them. (The following are a few the many positive thoughts about the group.)

"This club we unfortunately belong to creates a very special bond. We can vent, cry, share, ask questions... all in a Christian loving compassionate atmosphere. WE GET EACH OTHERS PAIN. We uplift, pray for each other, share good and bad. I don't feel guilty for sharing with our group no matter the topic, whereas I hold back so often with others because it makes people uncomfortable. Michele Ladd, thank you for providing us a safe place to grieve openly. I often refer to you as our Fairy Godmother because of your genuine care and protection of us. And, because you are a beautiful shining beacon of love and light. This is our sisterhood."

"I'm thankful for it, for the times I'm hurting that I need extra love and prayers. For the times I just want to share a story about my child and others will join in or just know it's a day I need someone to listen. I'm thankful for you Michel Ladd, it's like God knew we all needed this and you're willing to do the heavy lifting for us. I'm thankful for how strong I have become in helping others that we never knew we could be again but by being there for each other we have really grown. Love you!"

"This group has been a lifeline for me. At my lowest I could reach out and find the love and support I needed. I have found this group to be a second family I have gained so many sisters."

Q: You are bringing many of these mothers together with retreats. How did the retreats begin?

A: About a year ago I had maybe 70 moms in the group, and I said, hey, moms, anybody want to come to my house. I live about 40 minutes from Fernandina Beach (in Florida), and I can take you to the beach. Eight moms said they wanted to come. (Thanks to a generous donation), I had to get an Airbnb because I couldn't fit them all in our house. We had this great experience with the moms.

Then my husband and I took a six-week tour, and we went to visit about 20 mothers around the country and their families. We're meeting the fathers. We're meeting the wives. We're meeting spouses. We're

meeting the babies. One of our mamas, her name is Tammy. She had twin Army veteran boys Brandon and Bradley, and she's one of my first moms and Brandon and Bradley took their lives two months apart. And then her daughter took her life. I went to visit Tammy. I sat in her home. I held her hand. She loves me. I love her.

This year I had 17 mothers. I had to get a hotel room, and we took them to the beach. The biggest thing is for the mothers to meet each other because sadly, there's 40,000 organizations out there trying to help veterans ... there's nobody helping the mamas. We're a small grassroots nonprofit, but there's no group like my group that it's only mothers whose military son or daughter died by suicide.

Q: What happened at the retreat hosted by American Legion Post 69?

A: (Post 69 Commander) Larry Roberts has adopted me, and the post and the (Legion) Riders. I invited four local mothers and their families to come to the post. The post was in tears meeting the moms. Some of the moms got to ride motorcycles, the children (of the fallen veterans) received the most adorable stuffed animals with their names on it, and a dog tag with their daddy's name on it. Pastor Pete offered grief counseling and prayed over every family; they got so much love. I was overwhelmed with the love that this organization gave these mommas and their families. It was so amazingly touching.

I had the mothers send me a photo of them with their child. I put it in an 8x10 frame, and we presented them to the moms. There was not a dry eye in the house. I just wanted the community there to feel what I feel when they see a mother who has lost not only a child, but a child who has served our country.

Larry said to me, you know, you're like the epitome of [Be the One](#) (The American Legion's veteran suicide prevention initiative). I was like, really? I don't know that. I just love on our veterans, and I want them to stay here with us. And then in the in all my travels, I meet these moms and I'm a mom. We're helping our veterans through the moms helping the veterans.

Q: One of the programs featured on Mothers of Veteran Suicide website is MOVS4VETS. What is this program?

A: If we come across a veteran that is struggling, we have moms that want to love on a veteran to let them know that they're not alone, so they'll give them a call and say, "hey, how are you?" Or send them a little care package, write them a letter, or send them a text that says, "I'm thinking about how. How's your day going?"

Or send them a little prayer if they know they're struggling a little bit.

And I ask the mothers what they know of their child's last six months because I try to get an education. So if I have a call from a veteran or a military young man or woman, I can help them and send them to the right resources.

Q: What message do you want mothers who lost their veteran child to suicide know?

A: I think just if you are a mother of a veteran suicide to go to the Facebook group (<http://Facebook.com/groups/mothersofveteransuicide>) and request to join the group. I get request every day to join the group, but I ask very specific questions before they can join to make sure they're a mother who has lost their veteran child to suicide. Our mission is to provide hope and healing to the mothers, and they will receive that in our group. It's about the moms bonding with each other. (And visit <http://mothersofveteransuicide.org> for resources, programs, ways to help and more.)

There's a mom that lives outside of Orlando. She just came up on her one year with her son's death and she just wanted to go to the beach. I told her, I'm going to come pick you up and I'm going to take you to the beach. It will make that moms whole year for me to do that for her. And that's what I'm going to do for our mothers.

Texas Legion post bringing resources, mental health assistance to local veterans

The American Legion | October 4, 2023



American Legion Post 159 in Bryan, Texas, staged multiple veteran resource fairs prior to the pandemic in order to bring a variety of services under one roof.

Those halted for a few years, but it's back this year. And one of its organizers believes the timing couldn't be better.

The post's Veteran Resource Fair will take place from 8-10 a.m. Oct. 7; a breakfast will be served from 8-10. Post 159 Legionnaire Susan Marty, a past Department of Texas historian and one of the organizers of the resource fair, said bringing an event such as the post's to veterans fall in line with The American Legion's [Be the One](#) mission to reduce veteran suicides.

"I think it's important for (veterans) to reestablish a support network within the community they're living in," Marty said. "Once you step off a military installation in the big, wide world, it's not easy to connect with other people. That's the broader issue."

"I will also say that we have at least two organizations that are going to be there – our local (National Alliance on Mental Illness) chapter and a local organization that is providing mental health workshops at our post who will be there. We have a mental health component there."

Other veteran service organizations will be in attendance, as will a county service officer and representatives from the Texas Veterans Commission. Marty also is hoping staff from the Department of Veterans Affairs will be available to participate.

Local businesses and social service organizations, also will be available, as will experts on VA's home loan program, and estate and end-of-life planning.

"It's a smorgasbord of services," Marty said. "People are always asking these types of questions of our post officers, of our service officer. We have pretty good outreach within our Legion Family, but this is a bigger outreach to the wider community."

Those veterans who meet with the service officer on site will be available to answer questions. And if the need to file a benefits claim arises, the service officer will schedule an appointment with the veteran.

In addition to advertising the resource fair on social media, the post also has gotten stories on the event broadcast on both the local CBS and NBC affiliates.

"We've also done some outreach to the student veteran population over at Texas A&M (University)," Marty said. "They're newer veterans, and they may not know what's available in this community."

National Commissions and Committees

Chairmen wishing to have reports published should email them to jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com to be included. All meeting information subject to change.

100th Anniversary Committee

Part of CENTCOM

Kevin Winkleman (TX), Chairman

Advisory Committee

Joe Mayne (MN), Chairman

Americanism Commission

Chris Casey (NE), Chairman

Third Monday Bi-Monthly

October 16, 2023 | December 18, 2023

February 19, 2024 | April 15, 2024

June 17, 2024 | August 19, 2024

7:30 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 935 4066 0918 | Passcode: 571 659

Century Committee

Jeff Vrabel Sr. (OH), Chairman

Second Tuesday Bi-Monthly

November 10, 2023 | December 12, 2023

March 13, 2024 | April 9, 2024

June 11, 2024 | August 13, 2024

7:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 919 4714 3789 | Passcode: 241 429

Child Welfare Foundation Committee

Mark Nave (PA), Chairman

Third Tuesday Bi-Monthly

September 21, 2023 | November 16, 2023

January 18, 2024 | March 21, 2024

May 16, 2024 | July 18, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 984 7031 4786 | Passcode: 780 858

Children & Youth Committee

Joseph Lohman (MD), Chairman

Second Monday Bi-Monthly

September 11, 2023 | November 13, 2023

January 8, 2024 | March 11, 2024

May 13, 2024 | July 8, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 951 1622 6587 | Passcode: 799 095

Finance Commission

William G. Hill (MD), Chairman

Third Thursday as scheduled

September 21, 2023 | February 15, 2024

April 18, 2024 | July 18, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 966 1733 0121 | Passcode: 463 702

Internal Affairs Commission

William Clancy III (NY), Chairman

Fourth Thursday Bi-Monthly

October 26, 2023 | December 28, 2023

February 22, 2024 | April 25, 2024

June 27, 2024 | August 22, 2024

6:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 932 2650 4089 | Passcode: 725 519

Legislative Commission

Blair Miles (AL), Chairman

Second Thursday Bi-Monthly

October 12, 2023 | December 14, 2023

February 8, 2024 | April 11, 2024

June 13, 2024 | August 8, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 937 1376 7924 | Passcode: 172 912

Member Training & Development Committee

Michael Cotton (DE), Chairman

First Monday Bi-Monthly

September 4, 2023 | November 6, 2023

January 1, 2024 | March 4, 2024

May 6, 2024 | July 1, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 957 9605 2218 | Passcode: 528 704

Membership Committee

Daryl VerStreate Jr. (NY), Chairman

Third Tuesday Bi-Monthly

September 19 2023 | November 21, 2023

January 16, 2024 | March 19, 2024

May 21, 2024 | July 16, 2024

8:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 989 3388 3350 | Passcode: 546 900

The current SAL membership report can be accessed on the national website at www.legion.org/membership/standings.

SAL Online Renewal - members can login and renew direct via 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.



**RENEW
ONLINE
TODAY**

National Convention Committee

Christopher Byrd (NC), Chairman

Second Tuesday Bi-Monthly

September 12 2023 | November 14, 2023

January 9, 2024 | March 12, 2024

May 14, 2024 | July 19, 2024

7:30 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 953 4866 3402 | Passcode: 670 002

National Executive Committee Liaison Committee

Jim Stewart (NV), Chairman

National Vice-Commander Selection Committee

James Hartman (MD), Chairman

David Stephens (IN), Co-Chairman

Paid Up For Life (PUFL) Adhoc Committee

Kevin Winkleman (TX), Chairman

Public & Media Communications Committee

Kevin Chaplin (VA), Chairman

Fourth Tuesday Bi-Monthly

November 24, 2023, | December 26, 2023

February 27, 2024 | April 23, 2024

June 25, 2024 | August 27, 2024

7:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 914 4414 8114 | Passcode: 977 759

If you would like to view the Digital Dispatch content visit www.legion.org/dispatch or you can subscribe to the monthly Digital Dispatch newsletter by visiting www.legion.org/newsletters, click on "Dispatch" where you will be directed to www.myl-egion.org where members will sign in to subscribe. For questions about Dispatch stories, email Dispatch@legion.org.

Subcommittee on National Appointments

William Matoska (MD), Chairman

Subcommittee on Resolutions

Ned Fox (CA), Chairman

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Bruno Williamson (IL), Chairman

Second Monday Bi-Monthly

November 29, 2023 | December 11, 2023

February 12, 2024 | April 8, 2024

June 10, 2024 | August 12, 2024

8:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 971 3717 7471 | Passcode: 712 824

Share your Veterans Day plans with us

The American Legion | October 2, 2023



Veterans Day, Nov. 11, is the anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I in 1918, and today a holiday to honor all veterans. American Legion posts, districts and departments observe Veterans Day by

participating in or hosting parades, luncheons, ceremonies and more.

With Veterans Day a little more than one month away, many American Legion posts are well into planning for various ceremonies and events. Once again, The American Legion National Media & Communications Division is looking for potential coverage opportunities.

If your post, district, or department is hosting, sponsoring, or participating in a Veterans Day event, please share it with us. Email sbrooks@legion.org with details that include the time, date, location and what the event will entail. We'll be looking for events to cover in person; other events may be featured in an advance Veterans Day story and follow-up after the events have concluded.

Posts, districts, and departments also are encouraged to share stories and photos of their Veterans Day events on [Legiontown](#).

National Headquarters staff also has prepared a guideline Veterans Day speech available for download [here](#). It is only a guide; posts are encouraged to tailor it to their respective ceremony or event.

Veterans Employment & Education Commission

Jim Coates (NY), Chairman

Third Tuesday Bi-Monthly

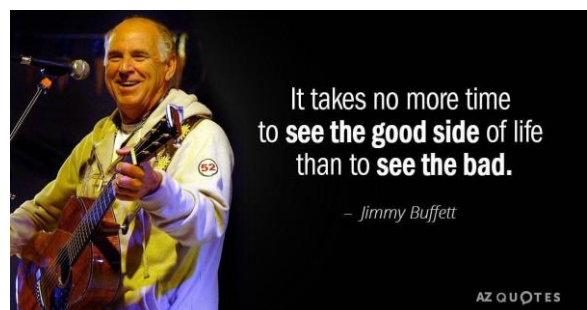
November 19, 2023 | December 21, 2023

February 15, 2024 | April 18, 2024

June 20, 2024 | August 15, 2024

7:00 p.m. Eastern | [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 989 2627 5747 | Passcode: 26060





SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

this legion follows through with their programs that they have, and they are here to serve veterans that's what we are all about, the American legion is all about serving veterans."

For more information on the Wakefield American Legion click [here](#).



AMERICAN
LEGION
RIDERS

Memorial ride raises \$3,000 to help others

[Bedford Gazette](#) | October 3, 2023

Money was placed into a scholarship fund this year in Jeff Onstead's name. Shown above are, from left, Bob Adams of the American Legion Riders; Joel Onstead and Sherry Onstead, brother and sister-in-law of Jeff Onstead; Joann Callihan and Joannette Corle, Onstead's sisters; Jim Harrison of the 480 Moose Riders; and Walt Hobson of Widow Sons-Faithful Defenders.

The Colocation of Clubs (COC) — including Bedford 480 Moose Riders, The Bedford American Legion Riders, The Widow Sons-Faith Defenders, and the Dunking Monkeys — combined efforts again this year to make the 3rd Annual Jeff Onstead Memorial Ride a success.



Ohio SAL 257 member Richard "Leg's" Zickefoose, Beano's Buckeye Ballroom Owner Brad Bilancini, and SAL 257 member Bill "Buster" Sutterlin. Bilancini was presented a certificate on June 28, 2023, for flying the American flag. Squadron 257 presented over 60 certificates to local business owners who fly the American flag every day.

Buster Sutterlin

American Legion Post 11 in Wakefield entered the Sons of The American Legion into organization

[Tristen Kendrick](#) | September 30, 2023

WAKEFIELD, Mich. ([WLUC](#)) - American Legions around the U.S. continue to honor veterans by adding new members to its cause.

On Saturday, the American Legion Post 11 in Wakefield entered the Sons of the American Legion into its organization. To become a Son, you must have a family member that served in the military.

American Legion past department vice commander Gary Lane said this signing is huge for the community because it will promote patriotism and Americanism. "The Sons of the American Legion is just going to be another body of this organization to help them," Lane said. "The organization also helps these veterans, and



Shown above at the presentation of the memorial ride checks are, front, from left, Emily Furnish, Sherry Onsted, Joel Onstead, Joann Callihan, Joannette Corle, Dan Smith and Alex Barenbregge; second row: Tonya Mearkle, Teddy Miller, Robin Thompson, Stacy Grimes, Jim Harrison, Debbie Stellfox, Bob Adams and Debbie Adams; and third row: Randy Mearkle, Mark Way, Connie Way, Steve Heise, Terry Peterson, Gena Strawmire, Walt Hobson and Dave Stellfox.

submitted photo

Each of the clubs shared in the work of hosting the ride. They covered the costs of the band, the food and the stops for the ride and gathered baskets and gift cards and more.

All of the proceeds are given to local charities, which this year included Chestnut Ridge Ambulance service and Center for Community Action-Manns Choice Food Pantry. Also this year, a scholarship fund in Onstead's memory was started.



Shown above presenting the check to Emily Furnish, second from left, of the Center for Community Action, are, from left, Bob Adams of American Legion Riders, Jim Harrison of 480 Moose Riders and Walt Hobson of Widow Sons-Faithful Defenders.

submitted photo

Money from the memorial ride was presented on Sept. 24 at the Bedford American Legion. The ride, which was held on July 29, raised \$3,000. Each of the three recipients were presented checks for \$1,000. More details on the scholarship will be available after the holidays.

The four local motorcycle groups have worked together on this ride since it started and have raised almost \$10,000 in the last three years. All of the money has gone to local service groups or charities that Onstead was involved with.

Onstead enjoyed belonging to groups that helped others. He could be seen on an ambulance, at a fire house, at a disaster with the American Red Cross, at the Moose Lodge helping with one of their charities, or standing tall and proud in his Fort Bedford Honor Guard uniform. It was often said that if there was a charity or someone in need, Onstead was there and helped any way he could. He passed away in December 2020 from complications of COVID-19.

You only control the effort, not the results.

-Unknown



AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY



Lisa Williamson,
National President
The American Legion Auxiliary

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 265 makes donation to Barracks of Hope

Barracks of Hope provides transitional housing for homeless veterans struggling with mental health as well as substance abuse.

[Observerlocalnews.com](https://observerlocalnews.com) | October 2, 2023

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 265 donated new clothes, 20 waterproof bed covers, hygiene supplies and food to Barracks of Hope on Sept. 11.

The items were donated by legion members or purchased by the Auxiliary, according to a statement to the *Observer*.



Rebekah Mead, Kerry Lewis, Holli Hudson, Barbara Marcus, and Sue Yoz.

submitted photo



Auxiliary President Rebekah Mead, a veteran with Barracks of Hope, media volunteer Christine Vitch, and Donna Frequez, chair of Veteran Admin. and Rehab. projects.

submitted photo

Sports



All-Pro Reels Photography

Legion Baseball alumni chasing title as Major League Baseball playoffs begin

The American Legion | October 2, 2023

A number of American Legion Baseball alumni are on the rosters and coaching staffs of the 12 teams which qualified for the 2023 Major League Baseball postseason, which begins with the four wild-card series beginning Tuesday, Oct. 3. Here's a look at the playoff qualifiers, including their connections to Legion Baseball:

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Baltimore Orioles (101-61). The Orioles reached the postseason for the first time since 2016 and won the AL East for the first time since 2014, finishing with the best record in the American League. They're hoping that leads to the fourth World Series championship in franchise history (1966, 1970, 1983). Baltimore will face either Tampa Bay or Texas in the AL Division Series, which starts Oct. 7.

Houston Astros (90-72). The Astros won the AL West for the third consecutive year when they beat Arizona 8-1 on Sunday as the Texas Rangers were losing 1-0 to Seattle on the final day of the regular season. Houston and Texas both finished 90-72 but the Astros won the season series against their fellow Lone Star State rivals. Justin Verlander, who played American Legion Baseball for Post 201 in Powhatan, Va., will likely be Houston's starting pitcher for Game 1 of the AL Division Series against Minnesota or Toronto. The Astros' Legion Baseball alumni also include manager Dusty Baker (Post 412/Fair Oaks, Calif.) and third baseman Alex Bregman (Albuquerque, N.M.).

Minnesota Twins (87-75). The Twins won the AL Central for the third time in five seasons but are looking to snap an 18-game postseason losing streak. Manager Rocco Baldelli (Rhode Island) will lead Minnesota against sixth-seeded Toronto in the AL Wild Card Series, which begins Tuesday.

Tampa Bay Rays (99-63). The Rays qualified for the playoffs for the fifth straight year under manager Kevin Cash (Post 111/Tampa, Fla.) and will host the Texas Rangers in the AL Wild Card Series. Tampa Bay finished with the second-best record in the American League—however, AL East division rivals Baltimore had the AL's best record. Aaron Civale (Post 36/Windsor Locks, Conn.) will be part of Tampa Bay's postseason pitching rotation.

Texas Rangers (90-72). Texas' loss on the final day of the regular season forced them on the road for the postseason. Corey Seager (Post 115/Kannapolis, N.C.) fell just short of the AL batting title but will be a key factor in the Rangers' first playoff appearance since 2016.

Toronto Blue Jays (89-73). The final team in the AL field didn't clinch a playoff spot until Saturday. Outfielder Daulton Varsho (Post 54/Marshfield, Wis.) and bench coach Don Mattingly (Evansville, Ind.) will aim to help Toronto move past Minnesota in the AL Wild Card Series.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Atlanta Braves (104-58). The best record in Major League Baseball belongs to Atlanta, who will have homefield advantage in every postseason series, including the World Series if they get that far. Manager Brian Snitker's (Post 105/Decatur, Ill.) Braves will try to get that far after finishing the regular season with a record .501 slugging percentage and hitting a record-tying 307 home runs. Relief pitcher Brad Hand (Chaska, Minn.) will help the cause.

Los Angeles Dodgers (100-62). The Dodgers won the NL West for the 10th time in 11 seasons and are looking to win the World Series for the first time since 2020.

Milwaukee Brewers (92-70). Milwaukee won the NL Central with five games to go and locked in the No. 3 seed in the National League. Brandon Woodruff (Tupelo, Miss.) was expected to be a key factor in the Brewers' rotation as they host Arizona in the NL Wild Card Series, but he'll miss that series—and possibly longer—due to a shoulder injury.

Philadelphia Phillies (90-72). Three members of Philadelphia's likely starting lineup—catcher J.T. Realmuto (Post 170/Midwest City, Okla.), first baseman Bryce Harper (Las Vegas), and third baseman Alec Bohm (Post 1/Omaha, Neb.)—played Legion Baseball and will be aiming to help the Phillies defeat division rivals Miami in the NL Wild Card Series. Also contributing will be relief pitcher Craig Kimbrel (Post 15/Decatur, Ala.).

Miami Marlins (84-77). Arizona's loss in its regular season finale meant the Marlins didn't have to go back to New York to finish up a suspended game against the Mets on Monday. Instead, the Marlins could prepare for their NL Wild Card Series against the Phillies.

Arizona Diamondbacks (84-78). Arizona earned the No. 6 seed in the National League playoffs. Among the pitchers expected to contribute in the bullpen is Legion Baseball alum Paul Sewald (Las Vegas).

The Division Series will begin Oct. 7; the League Championship Series will begin Oct. 15; and the World Series will begin Oct. 27.

Switch-pitcher helped Alabama's Post 70 get back to ALWS

Richard Walker | October 4, 2023



Switch-hitting batters are fairly rare in baseball but a handful of them remain.

But switch-pitchers may be the rarest of all baseball skill sets.

And in Alabama, a switch-pitcher accomplished one of the rarest feats in the sport in the regional to allowing defending American Legion World Series champion Troy Post 70 to make a return to the ALWS in Shelby, N.C.

Jake Johnson, a recent graduate of Headland High School, threw a no-hitter in a 9-0 victory over Paragould (Ark.) Post 16 in the Mid-South Regional on Aug. 6 in Pelham, Ala.

Starting the game as a right-hander, Johnson went two innings before a 30-minute rain delay. Two innings later, another rain delay lasted more than an hour.

Even as Johnson was at 45 pitches, Post 70 coach Ross Hixon told him he'd have to switch to pitching left-handed as he'd done previously in the season if he wanted to finish the game.

Johnson did that and went three more no-hit innings to send Troy to its second straight ALWS.

"I'll go on record and say I'll probably never have another player like this," Hixon said of his switch-pitching standout.

And while Johnson writes left-handed and kicks a football left-footed, he first played baseball by throwing right-handed until an injury in his freshman year of high school altered those plans.

"I had an ulnar transposition," Johnson said. "It's where your bones get too crowded, and the nerve won't fit in there."

"So I had that happen and it was a 16-week recovery. I was OK and I was pushing to go back to recovery, and it regressed."

The problem kept Johnson from pitching in his traditional right-handed style for two years.

But it also gave him a chance to experiment.

"I just started trying to throw lefty," Johnson said. "I started playing wall ball with myself. And then I got where I could play outfield as a lefty. It wasn't pretty but it was good enough. And still my right arm was messed up."

Determined to figure out a way to get on the field, Johnson took the mound as a left-handed pitcher for Troy's 17-and-under American Legion Baseball team in 2022.

"Last summer was the first time I ever got on the mound left-handed," Johnson said. "It was throwing about 70-78 (mph). I had a lot of movement, but it wasn't very pretty."

“Then in my senior year, I was healthy enough to go back to pitching right-handed and it worked really well. I was up to 85 (mph) before the season and I climbed up to 90 (mph) by the end of the year. And then I pitched some as a lefty in high school.”

Hixon marveled at Johnson’s determination to find a way to get on the baseball field.

“He’s a headstrong, goal-oriented person and he said, ‘I’m going to figure out how to pitch left-handed,’” Hixon said. “So what started out as a gimmick that people thought was kind of cool has turned into something where he can compete with both arms.

“Now he’s right-handed but this summer, I’ve let him choose. I’ll say, ‘I’m comfortable and trust whatever you choose.’ And he’s figured out how to throw multiple pitches from both the right and left arms. That causes a lot of problems.

“Hitting’s hard enough facing one guy with two pitches. He’s a guy who can throw left and right with three pitches, so he’s got six pitches. It’s very unique.” This past summer, a strained right shoulder caused him to focus more on his left-handed pitching, and he threw two no-hitters before Troy won the Alabama state tournament to advance to the Mid-South Regional.

He picked up a win throwing left-handed in relief in Troy’s regional opener, a 7-5, 10-inning victory over Lafayette (La.) Post 241.

Four days later, Johnson threw the no-hitter even as he followed baseball protocol through the seven innings and both rain delays to accomplish the feat.

“They all gave me looks,” Johnson said of his teammates during the no-hitter. “But I was like, ‘Don’t say it! Don’t say it!’”

This fall, Johnson is considered more of a right-handed pitching prospect but will get the chance to show his new coaches at Dothan-Wallace Community College.

“At first, it was no doubt that I was a right-handed pitcher for them,” Johnson said. “And then it was, ‘Well, we’ll see about lefty’ and we’ve decided to see what it looks like both pitching both ways.”



American Legion Baseball enjoys a reputation as one of the most successful and tradition-rich amateur athletic leagues. Today, the program registers more than 5,400 teams in all 50 states, including Canada and Puerto Rico.



SAL recognizes Snapshots of Service, Videos of Service winners

The American Legion | October 4, 2023

Squadrons from Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Ohio were first-place winners in this year’s Sons of The American Legion Snapshots of Service contest. Entries were judged by the SAL Public and Media Communications Commission and announced at the National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.

Photos submitted to the Snapshots of Service program had to represent one of the Four Pillars: Americanism, Children and Youth, National Security, or Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

Snapshots of Service winners were:

- Americanism, 1st place: Squadron 207, West Springfield, Mass.
- Americanism, 2nd place: Squadron 105, Belleville, N.J.
- Children & Youth, 1st place: Squadron 112, Omaha, Neb.
- Children & Youth, 2nd place: Squadron 246, Betterson, Md.
- National Security, 1st place: Squadron 257, Loudonville, Ohio,

- National Security, 2nd place: none
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, 1st place: Squadron 105, Belleville, N.J.
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, 2nd place: Squadron 257, Loudonville, Ohio

The commission also selected winners in the inaugural Videos of Service contest. Video submissions were required to contain an SAL member or members wearing SAL covers or SAL-branded clothing participating in an activity or event that fell under one of three categories: program support; community engagement; or membership and recruitment. The video must have been no longer than five minutes in length and have been posted on social media.

Videos of Service winners were:

- Program Support, 1st place: Squadron 457, Phelps, N.Y.; 2nd place, Squadron 414, Sutton, Mass.
- Community Engagement, 1st place: Squadron 42, Floyds Knobs, Ind.
- Membership & Recruitment, 1st place: Squadron 105, Belleville, N.J.

Entry forms for the 2024 Snapshots of Service and Videos of Service contests are available at <https://www.legion.org/sons/publications>.



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) _____

E-mail Address _____ Telephone _____

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 _____

For God and Country _____

\$ _____ in payment of dues for 20 _____ in

Squadron _____, Detachment of _____

By _____



Kent City American Legion Post 123

SPORTSMAN'S NIGHT

14111 BALL CREEK AVE
KENT CITY • MI • 49330

Saturday, December 2nd, 2023 at 5:30PM

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Food & Refreshments Served at 6:00PM

Gun Raffle Tickets 5 Tickets for \$20.00

Main Raffle Items

- 1) MOSSBERG PATRIOT SUPER BANTAM COMBO 6.5CM 20" 3-9X40 STRATA
- 2) MOSSBERG PATRIOT 350 LEGEND 22" W/3-9X40 BLUED/SYN
- 3) BEAR-X XBOW KIT CATALYST 420FPS VEIL WHITETAIL

Many Other Games, Door Prizes & Raffle Items!

American Legion Post 137



October 28, 2023
8 pm to 12 am

YOU ARE INVITED TO

HALLOWEEN PARTY

COSTUME CONTEST

\$5 cover

*Tony Sealock
Boombox D.J./Karaoke*

Open to the Public

21 or older w/id

484 Cold Stream Rd., Capon Bridge WV



SAVE THE DATE!

NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

SATURDAY, DEC. 16, 2023

 **WREATHS across AMERICA**

BE A BUDDY!

TAKE THE PLEDGE!
CHECK IN WITH 10 VETS

BLOOD EMERGENCY

DONORS NEEDED You can help. Schedule today.



AT AMERICAN LEGION POST 105
621 WASHINGTON AVE, BELLEVILLE, NJ

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023 1PM-7PM

 New York Blood Center

NATIONAL BUDDY CHECK WEEK



OCTOBER 16 - 20, 2023

SAL SOUTHERN MARYLAND REGION DRAWDOWN

**Saturday October 28th,
3:30pm to 7:30pm
at Laurel American Legion Post 60
2 Main St, Laurel, MD 20707
DONATION: \$45 per couple**



Each ticket (admits 2) and includes:
Dinner from 4pm to 6pm
Unlimited Draft Beer and Soda
Limited Open Bar from 4pm to 5pm
A chance to WIN up to \$1000 in Cash
Only 150 tickets Sold



**MOST OF THE PROCEEDS WILL
GO TO COMMANDER LOHMANS
DETACHMENT PROGRAM**

Only 150 tickets sold
Every 10th ticket drawn wins at least \$45
Last ticket drawn wins \$1000.00
50th ticket wins \$200 and 100th ticket wins
\$400 You do not need to be present to win
Entertainment and Drawing begins at 4:30

For more information contact
Buddy Mastin 443-370-7870
Any SAL Region Officer or Squadron 60





**American
Legion
Post 3**



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thank you for helping
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Men/Woman/Teens/Children

- ✓ Gently Used Coats
- ✓ Cold Weather Hats
- ✓ Hoodies
- ✓ Sweatshirts

DROP OFF BY 5PM 11/17/23

Drop Off Location:
American Legion (Porch)
710 Apperson, Dr.
Salem, VA 24153

Questions Contact Ken at 757-777-7090



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LIVES OF
VETERANS,
FAMILIES &
THOSE IN NEED**

**DISTRIBUTION
11.21.23 9AM-6PM**

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Roanoke VA

VETERANS & SPOUSES CAREER & JOB FAIR

**OCTOBER 18, 2023
10AM - 2PM**

**MORRIS COUNTY
ONE STOP CAREER CENTER**
13 EMERY AVE. RANDOLPH, NJ 07869



IN PERSON EVENT
REGISTRATION LINK
[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/G/PXC0GJ4XZK](https://forms.office.com/G/PXC0GJ4XZK)

WALK-INS WELCOME



Raise a fork for a great cause!
Join the "Woodbridge American Legion
Family" and the "Double O Rod & Gun Club"
for a delicious

Spaghetti Dinner FUNDRAISER

Includes: Salad, Bread,
Spaghetti & Meatballs,
and Dessert



Advanced Tickets Available

Eat In: \$10 | Take Out: \$12 per person
Sunday, October 15 from 2PM UNTIL 6PM
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR TEXT:
908-380-1095 or 732-742-4588

American Legion Post 87
314 Berry Street | Woodbridge, NJ
Sponsors: Bus Stop Restaurant (Carteret, NJ) and Saker Family Shop Rite



THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



The American Legion Family
Mid – Year Conference
Friday January 26 – Sunday January 28, 2024

LOCATION: The American Legion Post 32
 315 S. Bowen St., Longmont, CO 80501

All meetings, meals, and entertainment will be held at the post.
Registration, meal prices and agenda will follow in the near future.

Need a place to stay? There are 50 rooms blocked for the American Legion Family.
LOCATION: Hilton Garden Inn, 470 South Martin Road, Longmont, CO 80501.
PHONE: 720-759-4422
https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/denlci-hilton-garden-inn-longmont/?SEO_id=GMB-AMER-GI-DENLCGI&y_source=1_MTY2Njg2NjktNzE1WxvY2F0aW9uLndYnNpdGU%3D

This is just 1.5 miles down the road. There will be scheduled shuttles to the post.

Price: \$109 + tax
 Rooms are available to book today. Make sure you reserve under **CAL block** to get the quoted room rate.

The room block and rate is good until **12/26/24**.

BUDDY CHECK continued from page 1

That connection to a mentor is a really important opportunity for truthful relationships and watching out for one another.

So what the Legion has shown us here is that from Buddy Check, there are going to be certain organic connections that continue no matter what. Because what we've seen with The American Legion doing it the last several years is that rekindles connections, and those connections are very meaningful for our vets.

But then also, I'm confident we're going to see is the follow-on effect, which is the buddy who gets a call is going to think to himself then, "OK, I hadn't thought of this. I'm going to call my buddy." And so, there's a virtuous cycle then that comes out of it, too.

This has been true at VA since our founding — we're watching and learning from vets. We're watching and learning from our partners like The American Legion, and just emulating what you're doing. The sky's the limit on what we're going to learn from this.

Boys Nation president's experiences set him on 'a path of lifelong leadership'

[Andy Proffet](#) | October 5, 2023



President Ronald Reagan meets with American Legion Boys Nation in July 1987.

Photo provided by Bob Sternfels

As he reminisced about meeting President Reagan during the summer of 1987, Bob Sternfels pointed out two things that had stuck with him.

"I remember 'the path of lifelong leadership' was the term he used for all of us; that's always stuck with me. ... And I also got a chance to talk to the First Lady, and Nancy was extremely warm. ... She had one comment,



DOBBS-ADAMS POST 55
PRESENTS

Saturday NOVEMBER 11, 2023
VETERANS DAY
EVENT
 HONORING ALL WHO SERVED
 12-4pm

VENDORS, RAFFLE,
PHOTO BOOTH

Yank Apparel, Joe Joe's Crafts, Neurolumen, & MORE!

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CHISHOLM MALL
1206 N Hwy 81, Duncan OK 73533

Event@DobbsAdamsPost55.com

and it was about caring for others, and this idea of — ‘Ronnie can talk to you about lifelong leadership, but if you don’t care for people along the way, it’s not going to amount to anything.’

“And so those two things just stuck with me even to this day: you’re a 17-year-old kid and you’re getting these lifelong lessons from an icon. Never forgot that” Sternfels said.

Today, Sternfels is the global managing partner of McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm, and chair of the board of directors. In July 1987, he had just completed his junior year at Lodi (Calif.) High School and was elected president of American Legion Boys Nation after attending California Boys State.

He and his fellow Boys Nation senators met with President Reagan in the Rose Garden during their week in Washington, D.C.

“An enormous privilege,” Sternfels said of the visit to the White House. “I think it was originally supposed to just be a photo. And what I do remember is first, the president just kind of sat down and talked with us and exchanged some notes in a very conversational style; it didn’t feel formal or kind of talking down to us, it was more of a conversation.

“And then afterwards he singled me out and, being from California himself, ended up having a conversation on California. And he was even giving some details on Lodi, saying, ‘When I was in Sacramento as governor, I remember driving through there all the time,’ and ‘Do they still have zinfandel?’ and we were talking about grapes and things. His detail around that was amazing, just the personalization aspect.”



Sternfels conceded he almost didn’t have the opportunity. He ran unsuccessfully for governor at California Boys State — “I fell flat on my face” — and was planning to simply play out the rest of the week.

He credits one of his counselors, Junso “Jay” Ogawa, for creating “a bit of a spark” in him.

“He came to me and said, ‘Look, you should stay engaged. There’s other opportunities to participate in this. ... You could run for speaker of the assembly.’ And we had a minority party. I was like, ‘If memory serves, minority parties don’t usually get to elect the

speaker.’ And he said, ‘Well, why don’t you give it a shot?’ And he came back two or three times over the course of the week to basically tell me I could do more than what I was doing. Not in a heavy-handed way or anything. And he helped me figure that out,” Sternfels said.

He was elected speaker — again, despite representing the minority party — then earned an interview slot for one of the spots representing California at Boys Nation.

“By that point I had taken Junso’s advice and thought, this is really fun, I could have a unique opportunity to go to Washington and do it at another level. By that point, I was just sold that this is such a unique program, I was going to give it another shot,” Sternfels said.

By the time he arrived in Washington for Boys Nation, though, Sternfels was feeling a little intimidated.

“But you get there, and you realize everybody puts their pants on one leg at a time, and some really great guys, I became friends with a whole bunch. Having a couple of the other senators come up to me and say, ‘Hey, you should run,’ was (perhaps) the inspiration to do this,” he said.

Sternfels emerged from a loaded primary — “If memory serves, I think everyone and his brother was running” — to be one of the final candidates for president. He remembered facing some difficult questions, touching on subjects like the Berlin Wall, the Cold War, and the Iran-Contra scandal.

“There were a couple of ones I was like, ‘Guys, I just don’t know. I don’t know the answer to this one.’ I think some of that honesty also helped, not trying to pretend you know the answers to all this stuff,” he said.

Even prior to his experience at California Boys State and American Legion Boys Nation, Sternfels was aware of the Legion’s impact.

“Both my granddads were in World War II and Legion members, my dad served in Vietnam — in fact, I spent a couple years as a kid in Subic Bay (in the Philippines) because he was in the Navy. So they were all Legion members, and I grew up in Lodi, Calif., which was a small agricultural town at the time — it’s gotten a lot bigger since — but the Legion played a big role in our town. This notion of community and community events and things. So I would say I got to know The American Legion before I got to know Boys State,” he

said, adding that his mother had attended Girls State when she was a teenager.

“I had a firm appreciation for, still do, for our system of government. No matter how imperfect, it beats all the alternatives. And I felt that as a high school kid, so I was deeply involved in student government, and I was involved in some state student government, we had this thing called the California Association of Student Councils, so I would go up to Sacramento and try and get involved,” Sternfels added. “So when I heard about Boys State, there were two things that were exciting: first was the notion of a bunch of kids from all over the state getting together and that kind of excited me — I was from a small town, chance to meet a bunch of kids from across the state; but then to spend a week actually practicing and learning government sounded pretty exciting. Kind of those two aspects that I thought were maybe the reason why to apply at the time.”

He encouraged those eligible to attend Boys State or Girls State to not miss out on the opportunity.

“If you don’t go, you’re going to regret it for the rest of your life. ... One, you’re going to learn a lot about the best system of government in the world from an insider perspective. Two is you’re going to meet just some amazing people that will also change your perspective on life. But three is maybe you learn something about yourself. So why not take the plunge, for those three things? It is a week that you will invest and never regret.”

Sternfels certainly has no regrets for the two weeks he spent in the programs.

“I helped open our McKinsey office in South Africa, and I was there when (Nelson) Mandela was president. He had this great quote, ‘I never lose, I either win or I learn.’ And there’s some aspect at Boys State about that, just getting back up and kind of continuing to engage that I really took as a lesson.

“The other lesson was, although on the one hand the incredible complexity of our system with all the different aspects of government can at the time be a little overwhelming, was the notion that checks and balances actually work. And that even if you’re a governor or a president, you couldn’t just kind of impose your will, you had to work with people. And this idea of the balance of powers really stuck with me, one of the unique aspects of our system of government. But our system of government only works if you get involved. You’ve got to participate,” Sternfels said.

He noted that participation in Boys State and Girls State programs is a factor in McKinsey’s hiring process.

“I think one of the aspects we look at particularly for our analyst hires who are coming out of university, is participation in Boys or Girls State, because it’s a marker on leadership. And it is one of the defining criteria — it’s not the only criteria, but it does say something about somebody. It’s why we have so many in our ranks today,” he said.

While acknowledging Ogawa’s impact, Sternfels expressed his “deep appreciation for all the volunteers that make a Girls or Boys State possible.

“I wouldn’t underestimate the impact that you have on a young person’s life by investing that time,” he said. “I also have just a deep thank you to the Legion itself. I always think of community when I think of The American Legion. I think in particular in today’s society where people need to actually feel like they belong, I think there’s a key role that The American Legion can play, in kind of deepening a sense of community. But I also think of selfless service, and the idea of helping other people. I think in today’s day and age we could use a little more of that. Just super grateful for The American Legion on that front and the role it played in my own family’s life.”



Boys Nation

At Boys State / Nation, participants learn the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of franchised citizens. The training is objective and centers on the structure of city, county, and state governments.



Squadron Everlasting

to have a member's information
listed here, please send to
jeffvabals@gmail.com

John Hamilton



John Patrick Hamilton, 62, passed away on August 23, 2023, at Cleveland Main Campus Hospital with family by his side. He was

born on September 26, 1960, in Fort Campbell, Kentucky to Thomas E. Hamilton and Charlotte (Evans) Hamilton. He married Leena (Singer) Hamilton in March 2008. He served four years in the United States Navy with an honorable discharge in 1982.

John retired from Ford Motor Company as an electrician with 27 years of service. He was a member of the Sons of the American Legion Post #34 in Tecumseh.

John excelled in several trades including carpentry. He took great pride in his work. He enjoyed his many talks with his brother Tim along with his treasured daughter time.

Besides his wife, Leena, he is survived by his daughter, Laine Hamilton; brothers, Tom (Melissa) Hamilton and Tim Hamilton; numerous nephews and nieces. Besides his parents he was preceded in death by daughter Lauren Renee Hamilton, brother Michael Hamilton

Cremation has taken place with no service as requested.

Posted online on September 28, 2023

Published in Daily Telegram

Robert R. Deschenes



Rindge NH - Robert R. Deschenes, 67, of Rindge, NH, died peacefully at his home on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, after a

long period of complications from kidney failure.

'Bob' was born on January 2, 1956, in Peterborough, NH, son of the late Gilbert J. and Yvette (Morin) Deschenes. He graduated with the

Class of 1974 from Mascenic High School in New Ipswich.

On July 3, 1976, Bob married his high school sweetheart, Sharon Halbedel, in a small, but beautiful Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Greenville. Through the years, Sharon not only shared her heart and her love with Bob, but she also gave him one of her kidneys and the gift of life.

Bob had worked at Warwick Mills as a supervisor, and later at Keene Chrysler, which fit well with his love for classic cars – especially old Dodges. Bob was an active member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron, with Post 13 in Greenville. He enjoyed playing cards, watching old TV shows, and collected anything and everything from the 3 Stooges. Bob and Sharon didn't have children, but they were loving and devoted dog parents to Mandy, Casey, Freckles, Amber, and currently Avery, and their cats, Mork, Cody and Salvatore.

Bob is survived by his loving wife of 47 years, Sharon, and by his sister, Rachel Sullivan of Milford, NH, as well as by many nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws, and close friends.

Family and friends are warmly invited to calling hours on Friday, October 6, 2023, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Cournoyer Funeral Home Cremation Center, 33 River Street (Route 202), Jaffrey, NH.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, October 7,

2023, at 11:00 AM in Saint Patrick Church, 89 Main Street, Jaffrey. Burial will follow at Hillside Cemetery on Goddard Road in Rindge.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the [charity of one's choice](https://www.charityofone'schoice.org) in Bob's name.

To share memories, photographs, and condolences with Bob's family, please visit www.cournoyerfh.com. Published by Monadnock Ledger-Transcript on Oct. 5, 2023.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](https://www.sympathy-store.com).

RENEW



AMERICAN LEGION



Daniel J. Seehafer,
National Commander
The American Legion

A call to support our Battle Buddies

October 4, 2023

Dear American Legion members and friends,

We all remember our Battle Buddies.

We served our nation together. Learned how to be good servicemembers together. Helped each other through trying times. We were always there for each other, no matter what.

While our active-duty service has concluded, our commitment to fellow veterans has not. That's the driving force behind [The American Legion's Buddy Check program](#), which began in 2019.

In that time, we have witnessed countless successes. Legionnaires have re-engaged with long-lost friends. A simple phone call has brightened an older veteran's day. And American Legion Family members have provided support in numerous ways to veterans who needed assistance but were too proud to ask.

This month, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is conducting the [first National Buddy Check Week](#), Oct. 16-20. We are honored to be partnering with VA in a kickoff webinar on Oct. 16 to highlight the

importance of making connections this week. ([Join the webinar here.](#))

I'm asking all American Legion members to participate in National Buddy Check Week. To help you get started, National Headquarters has updated the Buddy Check resource kit ([available here](#)).

You can reconnect with a fellow veteran who you haven't seen or talked with in a while.

Call up someone you served with and reminisce about the good times. It's good for the soul.

Reach out to an older veteran in your community and ask there's anything you can do for them. Maybe it's picking up groceries, doing a little yardwork or just talking. It all matters.

There are many ways to participate. But what is most important is that we all rally and make the connection with a buddy.

Simply put, they would do it for us.

Veterans assisted by Legion claims specialists: 'It's changed our life'

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | October 5, 2023

Since it opened in 2018, The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) service office at the John H. Geiger Operations Center (GOC) in Indianapolis has successfully filed or appealed more than \$195 million in Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for veterans.

But those are just numbers, albeit staggering ones. Behind those numbers, though, are stories. And a small handful of them were shared Oct. 3 during a special event at GOC that brought together veterans who have been assisted by staff at the office for the opportunity to talk about the impact The American Legion has made on their lives.

Four Vietnam War veterans were in attendance, while a fifth veteran living in Alabama joined the event via ZOOM. There to hear their stories were American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, VA&R Director Tiffany Ellett and national staff.

A photo was placed on the wall inside the service office of each veteran prior to their time to speak, which included stories of frustration and then gratitude after a Legion representative was able to help them get the benefits they'd earned.

The event was organized by Tony Cross, team lead for the Indy-based VA&R staff. "This office, we opened it up in 2018 with the idea that we would be a sister office to our Washington, D.C., office. I can't begin to tell you the journey we've been on," Cross said. "A lot of people that come here ... they really need help. Today's about them. Some of them weren't going to file (claims). Some of them were hesitant to file. These stories are real. These stories are amazing."

"I Thank God for The American Legion." Mike Chastain joined the U.S. Army in 1966 and served in Vietnam until 1969. After some time in the Army Reserves, he rejoined active duty in the Army in 1977 before retiring in 1995. While in Vietnam, his landing zone received regular heavy fire from the enemy. He also narrowly missed being hit by a mortar while in bed, saying a voice told him to get out of the building – though he was the only man in it.

"When I came home, I didn't know it, but I had things in my brain that I never did before," said Chastain.

He was one of five brothers who served in the military, three of whom had tours in Vietnam. One of those was instrumental in connecting Chastain with American Legion Claims Specialist Steve Voller.

Chastain had first gone to the VA in Dayton before being referred to the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis. It was at Roudebush he was told he needed to file a benefit claim and was given forms to fill out.

Chastain reached out to one of his brothers for advice and was told that, "The American Legion is the best place to go," he said. "And you know what? The American Legion is the best place to go."

Chastain came to the Indy office and met initially with Cross, who told him to gather up any documentation he had of his service. Chastain had kept track of his military service in Vietnam in a diary. Voller was able to get Chastain service-connected for post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I thank God that we're here today, and I thank God for every one of you," Chastain said. "I thank God for the USA, and I thank God for The American Legion (and) for Tony and Steve."

"I Want to Thank The American Legion." Though his service from 1966 to 1968 in the U.S. Army included time in Vietnam, Leland McDaniel never felt he was owed any kind of VA disability compensation. "For years, I had people tell me, 'You should

go file.' And I didn't," he said. "I didn't feel like I deserved it. During my tour in Vietnam, I came under minimal fire. Nothing drastic. Was not wounded. And thought I had come home scot-free."

But he also admitted seeing things in Vietnam that stayed with him. "I didn't realize what PTSD was, or what Agent Orange had done to people," McDaniel said. "I have no idea where I came in contact with Agent Orange, but I did. And I've got physical problems because of it."

McDaniel was able to connect with American Legion Claims Specialist and Team Trainer Ken Hagner in the Indy office. Hagner urged McDaniel to file, but it wasn't until McDaniel's wife, Janet, suggested it as well did he do so.

"I just didn't feel worthy of what was trying to be told to me," McDaniel said. "I finally did come in and see Kenny and Tony, and they filed the papers and everything, and I got rewarded in that respect. I feel if the veterans would only listen to the people that are trying to help them, if they would come forth, The American Legion is a great place to come. I want to thank Tony and Ken, and I want to thank The American Legion for all the help they've given me and my family. Thank you so very much."

"It's Changed Our Life." Donald Ent served in the U.S. Army from 1967-1970, including a tour in Vietnam that exposed him to Agent Orange. His wife, Evelyn, said he filed a claim for the Agent Orange exposure in 1986, but the doctor said he couldn't document it. Another time, she said, Donald was offered "a raise" from his disability rating of 10 percent.

"They just led us around one time after another," she said. "I told him, 'I am not going to give up.' He kept saying, 'They're not going to do anything for me.' But I drug him along with me."

Evelyn said a friend recommended trying The American Legion, which is where they met Cross and American Legion Claims Specialist Landry Foley. The couple provided documentation and photos of Donald being in areas that would put him in direct exposure to Agent Orange.

Working with Cross and Foley, the Ents were able to get a favorable response from VA resulting in a new disability rating, as well as getting medication to deal with the first stage of Alzheimer's.

"I'm very thankful," Evelyn said. "Without the help of Tony and Landry, I don't think we still would be

anywhere today. We consider them our close friends. We appreciate ... I don't know how to say it. It's changed our life. We're able to help our daughters if they need help. Whatever we want to do, we do have the funds to do it now. Before, it wasn't as easy. I can't say enough about these people. They both go to the most major thing they can do to help you."

"I Love This Country, and I Love The American Legion." Very early into his tour in Vietnam during his service in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1969 to 1971, Bill Clarke learned very early on the severity of his situation. Seconds after being dropped off via helicopter with his unit, he was running to a trench as enemy artillery fire whizzed past him.

His service took him from Khe Sanh to Da Nang and other locations. He was wounded and said around half of his company got wiped out during one operation. He also was exposed to Agent Orange.

When he returned home, he was awarded a 10-percent disability rating but started dealing with other medical issues, including heart problems. The 43-year veteran of the Indianapolis Police Department was advised to meet with Cross by Clarke's son Ryan, who Cross had assisted with a benefits claim. After talking, Cross asked Clarke to write a lay statement about his service in Vietnam. Clarke came back with 22 pages detailing various aspects of that service, including the mental health side.

Cross said seven of the 22 pages were "occasions of the worse, that I couldn't even picture." Cross asked if he could share it with the rest of his team; Clarke said yes. "We all carry it at our desks," Cross said. "When you think of having a bad day, you just read that. And this is what changed my whole (approach) to being a service officer."

Cross was able to get Clarke's rating upgraded. "He filed everything for me," Clarke said. "I don't know how to describe it. If it hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have ended up with any benefits. I love this country, and I love The American Legion."

"The Best Advocate I Have Had." LaMargaret McArthur served in the U.S. Army from 1983 to 1992 before she had to leave for medical reasons.

"It was my honor to serve in the Army for nine years," she said virtually during the event at the GOC. "But I had reached the point on active duty where I had a number of physical issues ... and I felt like I had reached a point where I could no longer effectively serve the Army as I wanted or I needed to."

McArthur started her claims process using a service officer in rural Alabama that she said, “appeared to be very uncomfortable helping women veterans, especially with predominantly female issues.” Admitting she was very naïve when it came to navigating the VA benefits system, she followed the service officer’s advice in 1992. Two years later she got her initial rating and then spent the next 11 years developing more complex medical issues. VA medical staff couldn’t provide a diagnosis, so she eventually went to an outside medical provider and underwent surgery that revealed her conditions were directly related to her military service. That started her down another path of filing with VA in 2006 that went on to 2020. “It was an extremely difficult journey because during all that period of time ... I had denials, appeals, reprimands, notices of disagreements, more tests, more check-ups,” McArthur said. “I tried using my local VSO, calling around in my state. I even went to try to call my congressman to get help in that direction – all to no real avail. I really felt like I had been passed around.”

It was then she reached out to the Legion’s Washington, D.C., office, which connected her with American Legion Claims Specialist Landry Foley in the Indy office. McArthur admitted that at first, she felt she was being passed around again.

“I was extremely incorrect,” she said. “Landry suggested we look more intently at her medical records. She said, ‘You have some secondary conditions that truly needed to be looked at,’ and that while it was a complex case, it did require further attention and, quite frankly, some additional compensation. She really listened to all I had to say and was able to provide some precise direction for me.”

The end result: a favorable response, “more than I ever could have expected,” McArthur said. “I never would have reached that without Landry being right there with me, making recommendations and pointing me in the right direction. Landry invested herself into getting the absolute best outcome for me. And most importantly to me, Landry was willing to get in the ditch with me. I finally felt that I had someone who was willing to be in the thick of it and stick it out.

“Landry has been the best advocate I have had the entire time I have been involved with the VA system. Her help has been invaluable to me and my family. Because of the assistance she has provided me, I can now contribute financially and feel more valuable to my family.”

Not Just An Organization. After the stories were shared, Seehafer thanked the veterans while noting

what the Indy VA&R office does every day falls directly into the Legion’s Be the One suicide-prevention initiative.

“When we say, ‘be the one,’ this is not just a fancy slogan or a campaign. It is a mission,” the national commander said. “That mission is to reach one (veteran) at a time. We are a family that changes lives and saves lives. That is the bottom line.

“We’re not just an organization. We’re a lifeline. We don’t charge. We do it because you earned it. Never forget that. You are our brothers, our sisters, our family.”

Legionnaire competing for Ms. Veteran America this weekend

The American Legion | October 4, 2023

Breezy Grenier knows what it’s like to hit a low point in life.

The U.S. Coast Guard veteran and member of American Legion Post 60 in Danbury, Conn., started her own business just weeks before the pandemic forced business lockdowns across the nation. One of the businesses she’d contracted with went bankrupt. And a second business she started had to shut down because of supply chain issues.



Legionnaire Breezy Grenier (back row, far left) is competing for Ms. Veteran America on Oct. 8.

In addition, she lost both parents within a short period of time and went through a divorce. And though she never ended up slipping into homelessness, she learned through others how big of an issue it is within the women veteran community.

That’s what drove Grenier into the [Ms. Veteran American](#) competition, in which she’ll compete in the finals Sunday night in Orlando, Fla. The winner of the Ms. Veteran America competition serves as an ambassador for Final Salute Inc., a nonprofit that provides

homeless women veterans and their children safe housing, along with food, clothing, and supportive services.

“Even in the back of my head, I could have easily been homeless,” Grenier said. “If my parents didn’t have a house, I would have been homeless. One thing can trickle and lead to something else.”

Campaigning for Ms. Veteran America has given Grenier an opportunity to raise awareness about homeless women veterans and the issues that face them – and herself learn more about the issue. “When I started my campaign, I had four of my friends – one I’d served with and a few I know had served – and they came forward and told me they had experienced homelessness at one point. I had no idea. They’d always been well put together, well dressed, employed. They never let that show that they were in trouble or needed help or anything, which blew my mind.”

Grenier also is an advocate for raising awareness about veteran suicide and sees a connection between The American Legion’s Be the One mission and how issues such as homelessness and financial insecurity can play into suicidal thoughts and actions.

“In my hometown during the pandemic, we had a huge increase in suicides,” she said. “A lot of it was financial distress, not having a job, not having a purpose. I lost three people I served with during the course of the pandemic.”

“So, I started having people come in and speak to our (Sherman Veterans Association) – especially to our Vietnam-era vets,” she said. “Having someone else come in and talk about (suicide) ... as soon as I had our speaker come in ... all of the sudden (the veterans) started talking. They never knew about survivor’s remorse, that guilt.”

“When so much else is going wrong, suicide can easily come up. And it’s how can we prevent that? We can give all the resources and information, but it’s being in the right place at the right time that’s really the key.”

New Jersey Legion Family celebrates day for autistic children

The American Legion | October 6, 2023

When Nicholas Wingler’s son, Kieran, was diagnosed with autism at age 5, he turned to the nonprofit founded by Legionnaire Gary Weitzen, Parents of Autistic Children (POAC), for guidance and resources. “When your child is diagnosed as being autistic, you

don’t know which way to go or what to do,” said Wingler, a past New Jersey Sons of The American Legion detachment commander. “So you rely on people willing to help you, and this organization was fantastic in helping us.”

Following his son’s diagnosis, Wingler realized there wasn’t a lot of activities in the community of Brick, N.J., for autistic children to do. This sparked an idea – to host a fun, safe event for children with autism and their families.

On Sept. 9, the Ocean County American Legion Family held its eighth annual picnic with POAC for children with autism and their families. A record attendance of over 680 autistic children and their families spent the day eating, jumping on inflatables, playing carnival games, winning prizes, having their picture taken with costumed characters like Mickey Mouse and Bluey and Star Wars characters dressed up by the 501st Legion, eating ice cream, interacting with firefighters, fire-trucks and police officers, listening to live music and more. All at no-cost to the families.

“Every year that this event goes on it truly hits me in my heart,” Wingler said. “At times I’ve cried, and I teared up seeing the event that we’ve done because I know it’s our Legion Family. It’s what we do here in Ocean County. We believe in helping, we believe in what we do.”

The event is held at VFW Post 8867 in Brick, N.J., because it sits on over two acres of land that’s fenced-in for safety and has a pavilion to feed the families under. “If there ever were to be a situation where a kid would get spooked or scared and they decide to run, the only thing they’re going to is the fence,” Wingler said. “They can’t get any further than the fence, and the only way in and out of the property is through the front gate which is manned by (Legion Family) volunteers to make sure nobody goes out that isn’t supposed to.” And for liability purposes, Wingler said POAC provides the liability insurance.

The day of celebration is open to any family in the state with an autistic child, a reason the event has grown from around 300 children its first year to 685. This year “is the first time we have ever ran out of supplies and had to run to the store to buy more stuff. It’s a fantastic problem to have, I tell you.”

Wingler emphasized that the event is truly for the entire family. “The one thing that we do encourage is it’s not solely for the autistic child. It’s a day for the family to be able to come out and enjoy the day together because there’s not always a lot of venues where the

autistic child and the neurotypical child can go and do the same event and play together and do the same thing. So we highly encourage that if you have an autistic child in your family and you're coming, that you don't exclude your neurotypical child. We encourage you to bring them as well."



Legiontown photo

Kieran, who is now 20 and a Sons of The American Legion life member, looks forward to the event every year and calls it "daddy's carnival," Wingler said. "My son absolutely loves it. He loves seeing the people he knows through POAC."

The funds for the picnic are raised every year through donations from American Legion posts, Auxiliary units, and Sons squadrons from Ocean County and throughout New Jersey. "This is nice as more and more people see what we're doing," Wingler said, adding that the Department of New Jersey commander, detachment commander and Auxiliary president are always invited to the event. "The more people I keep inviting to see what's going on, they're just truly amazed at what we're doing."

Any funds or food left over from putting on the picnic go to support the families of autistic children who are financially in need. "We are totally about giving back what we have," Wingler said. "We don't make a single dime. Anything that's brought in, 100 percent of it goes directly to taking care of these kids and the event every single year."

For an event that was supposed to be one-and-done eight years ago but has remained thanks to the persistence and dedication of the Ocean County Legion Family, Wingler is looking forward to the ninth annual picnic for children with autism next September, where he hopes to incorporate rides like spinning teacups and electronic rides.

"During the event every year when people make their speeches, they always say it's because of me," Wingler

said, referring to the day of celebration for children with autism. "I always tell them it's not because of me. I'm the man who had the idea that said, 'let's do this.' It's because of the people that volunteer every year to come out and do it is the reason why we're able to do it. If I didn't have the backing of the Ocean County Legion Family, the event would have never happened."

'Free world defense' strategy strikes balance between U.S. overextension, disengagement

Alan W. Dowd | October 5, 2023

The [previous](#) Landing Zone column discussed why, after decades marked by hyperactivity on the world stage, America drifted into a period of disengagement. This month's column explores how policymakers might make a new and better case for engagement by embracing a national security strategy of "free world defense."

More restrained A national security strategy of "free world defense" would be premised on restraint. It would focus on defending democracy, not planting democracy. In short, under a strategy of "free world defense," the United States would neither fight for the liberation of all the world's peoples, as President Woodrow Wilson [declared](#) in 1917, nor pursue "the goal of ending tyranny in our world," as President George W. Bush [declared](#) in 2005. Those are worthy goals, but as discussed in the previous column, they simply don't have broad public support today.

While a strategy of "free world defense" would avoid hyperactivity and hyperextension, it would require America to stand with established and emerging democracies. The policies of President Harry Truman and President Ronald Reagan serve as a helpful model here.

Truman didn't try to plant democracy in East Germany. But he did support European democracies under assault from Moscow, launch NATO to defend the community of transatlantic democracies, and support fledgling democracies in Japan and West Germany. Likewise, Reagan didn't dispatch the Marines to plant democracy in Warsaw or Kabul. But he did welcome a democratic Spain into NATO, supported South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines as they walked the path from dictatorship to democracy, and shored up what he [called](#) "the infrastructure of democracy" around the world.

Concluding that promoting the ideal of spreading democracy was too costly, the American people didn't

follow the Truman-Reagan model in Iraq and Afghanistan or perhaps more accurately, didn't have the patience for an open-ended commitment to those broken lands. Yet what followed the Iraq and Afghanistan pullouts would highlight how America's ideals and interests are linked: [Backstopping](#) Iraq's democratic experiment -- even one marred by corruption and low-grade sectarian strife -- was far more manageable and far less dangerous than uprooting the [Islamic State's death-cult caliphate](#) in the heart of the Middle East. And leaving Afghanistan's fledgling democracy to the tender mercies of the Taliban sent a terrible signal to Xi and Putin.



Eric Lee

More prepared Under a strategy of “free world defense,” America would not go “in search of monsters to destroy,” to borrow President John Quincy Adams’s famous phrase, but it would marshal and maintain the resources necessary to deter the monsters. Truman did exactly that, laying the groundwork for containment of the Soviet empire and deterrence of Moscow’s aggressive impulses. Reagan revived that proven peace-through-strength doctrine, rebuilt America’s deterrent capabilities and reinvested in the free world’s greatest defender: the U.S. military.

With an [\\$886 billion](#) defense budget planned for 2024, it might look like America is fully funding its military. But looks can be deceiving. Undersized and overstretched, the [Army](#) is trying to deter war in Europe with [one-third the soldiers](#) it deployed during the Cold War. [Navy leaders](#) report they need 500+ ships; they have 296. The Air Force is [undermanned](#), [undersized](#) and [old](#). The average age of the B-52 fleet is 60+. With only 20 stealth bombers in service, just [14%](#) of the current bomber fleet would be able to penetrate and survive a peer adversary’s air defenses.

The cause of these self-inflicted wounds: For more than a decade, America has invested just over 3% of GDP in defense. The average during the Cold War was

more than twice that. All the while, [Beijing](#) has been engaged in the largest peacetime buildup in history, and Moscow has been engaged in a crusade to reconstitute the Russian Empire.

As we enter what Henry Kissinger calls the “foothills” of a new Cold War, a strategy of “free world defense” would shift toward Cold War-levels of investment in the armed forces. The aim would be to deploy sufficient military capability to deter war, not wage war. As President Dwight Eisenhower explained, “Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk its own destruction.” Shifting to a Cold War defense posture will demand bipartisan cooperation and fiscal discipline. Fueled by torrents of [domestic spending](#), the annual deficit approaches \$2 trillion; the national debt is a staggering \$32 trillion. Defense spending is not to blame for these fiscal challenges. In fact, we could eliminate the entire defense budget and turn the Pentagon into a megamall, and we would still face a budget deficit – and wouldn’t even put a dent into the debt.

Some will argue that investing more in deterrence is costly. They’re right. But there’s something far more costly than deterring war – and that’s waging war.

More sustained A strategy of “free world defense” would deliver a sustained supply of defensive arms to at-risk democracies.

“Freedom must be armed better than tyranny,” as President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine observes. When it’s not, the result is Ukraine 2022, Georgia 2008, Korea 1950, Pearl Harbor 1941, Poland 1939, Czechoslovakia 1938. “Free world defense” would aim to ensure that Taiwan, the Philippines, the Baltics, Moldova, and other free nations aren’t added to that list.

Russia’s rampage through Ukraine reminds us that helping free nations harden their territory against invasion – which sometimes means deploying U.S. forces as a deterrent – is wiser and less costly in the long term than scrambling to help them try to claw it back. As Reagan declared at Normandy, “It is better to be here, ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost.”

To prevent Taiwan from going the way of Hong Kong and Crimea, to keep the vital waterways of the South China Sea and the Persian Gulf and the [Arctic](#) open, to avoid a replay of 1938-1941, the free world must make sustained investments in deterrent military strength.

More partners A “free world defense” strategy would, by definition, enlist the entire free world to deter the axis of autocracy. America cannot bear this burden alone, and the American people have made it clear that there’s no longer any room in the free world for free-riders.

The free world is getting the message.

NATO held its [largest-ever air exercises](#) last June 2023 and will hold its largest [war games](#) since the end of the Cold War in February. Twenty-seven NATO allies have increased defense spending. Poland – the new center of gravity in Europe – is devoting 4% of GDP to defense. Germany is nearly doubling defense spending. Japan will soon boast the [third largest defense budget](#) in the world. South Korea’s [defense budget](#) has jumped 37% in recent years, Australia’s 47%.

More tools “Free world defense” means reinvigorating the free world’s [industrial base](#).

The bad news is that America’s defense industrial base is a shell of what it was before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Where dozens of defense contractors once served as the arsenal of democracy, only a [handful](#) remain. For example, the United States has just [seven](#) Navy shipyards. As retired Navy Capt. Jerry Hendrix [reports](#), “One of China’s shipyards is so large that its capacity surpasses that of all U.S. shipbuilders combined.”

The good news is that the Pentagon is [finalizing](#) a new “national defense industrial strategy.” Congress is [authorizing](#) new munitions-acquisition funds, [multiyear contracting](#) to incentivize arms manufacturers to make long-term investments, [fresh funding](#) for munitions production, and new [resources](#) to replenish key weapons systems. U.S. and allied nations are collaborating on [joint weapons production](#). [NATO members](#) are streamlining purchasing cooperation and mitigating supply-chain constraints; some European arms manufacturers are even [merging](#) to boost production.

The investments are starting to pay dividends: U.S. industry is [increasing](#) artillery shell production from 14,000 a month before Putin’s war to 70,000 per month by 2025 – and 85,000 per month by 2028. [Germany](#) has quadrupled tank-shell production to 240,000 rounds per year. Sweden is [quadrupling](#) production of NLAW anti-tank systems.

A policy of “free world defense” would harness far more than defense capabilities. Nineteen of the 20 largest tech companies are headquartered in the free world. Eight of the 10 largest 5G providers are

headquartered in the free world. Without [essential materials](#) from Japan, South Korea, North America and Europe, China cannot produce scores of [dual-use goods](#). The United States alone [possesses](#) more [untapped oil](#) than OPEC’s combined reserves, along with [vast stores of natural gas](#). Leveraging these advantages to defend the free world and weaken the axis of autocrats is a matter of will.

More cooperation and more clarity A national security strategy of “free world defense” would engage our allies and draw clear lines for our adversaries.

Washington is starting to do the former, as highlighted by a growing list of new initiatives: the creation of [AUKUS](#), the [modernization](#) of the U.S.-Japan alliance, the [establishment](#) of the U.S.-South Korea Nuclear Consultative Group, the [development](#) with Tokyo and Seoul of a “trilateral vision for addressing global and regional security challenges,” the move toward annual U.S.-Japan-ROK multidomain [exercises](#) and U.S.-Philippines [joint patrols](#), the elevation of the [Quad](#) partnership, the reinvigoration of NATO and reinforcement of [NATO’s eastern flank](#), and the hardening of strategic nodes key to defending the free world in [Guam](#) and on East China Sea [islands](#), along the [Suwałki Gap](#) and around the [Baltic basin](#), [in space and cyberspace](#).

Next, America and its free world allies must draw the line against authoritarian aggression. A strategy premised on “free world defense” would make clear by word and deed that Moscow won’t be permitted to resurrect a dead empire, that Beijing won’t be permitted to build a new empire, that this axis of autocracy won’t be permitted to roll back free government.

“Free world defense” is not perfect. But it represents a happy medium between “ending tyranny in our world” and “focusing on nation-building here at home” – and a framework for explaining and understanding national security in this dangerous new era.

Sen. Hawley says he will block Army civilian promotions over Fort Leonard Wood housing

Svetlana Shkolnikova/Stars and Stripes | October 6, 2023

Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri said Thursday that he will put a hold on Army civilian nominations that require Senate approval until the service earmarks \$41 million for new housing at Fort Leonard Wood.

Hawley informed Army Secretary Christine Wormuth of his intentions in a letter, writing he was left with no other choice after years of pressing the Army to replace aging homes at the 83-year-old garrison in Missouri's Ozark Mountain region.

"The Army's inability to meet its own deadlines is unacceptable, and I will wait no longer," Hawley wrote. "The soldiers and families at Fort Leonard Wood deserve better, and it is your responsibility to deliver for them."

Hawley's hold would add Army civilians to the 300-plus senior military officer nominees being [blocked from promotion by Sen. Tommy Tuberville](#), R-Ala. Tuberville is preventing the Senate from proceeding with unanimous confirmation votes on groups of nominees due to the Pentagon's abortion access policies.

The Senate last month bypassed Tuberville's blockade by confirming top nominees for the Joint Chiefs of Staff one by one.

Hawley said he is instituting his hold because Army leaders did not keep their promises to spend \$41.4 million on improving Fort Leonard Wood housing in fiscal 2023, which ended Sept. 30. The Army has identified 1,142 family homes at the post that require repair, Hawley said.

now come and gone and given your record I have real doubts that Fort Leonard Wood will receive this investment before the end of the calendar year."

The Army said it would not comment on correspondence between a member of Congress and Wormuth.

"The secretary will respond back to the senator directly as appropriate," an Army spokesperson said.

Hawley would be the latest senator to leverage the Senate's process for confirming military nominees to demand policy changes and extract concessions from the Pentagon.

In 2020, Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., put a hold on 1,000 military nominees until the Pentagon provided assurances Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman would not be blocked from a promotion due to his testimony against former President Donald Trump. Her hold lasted two weeks.

Tuberville announced his block on senior general and flag officer promotions in February. Eight months later, he continues to insist he will only lift his hold after the Pentagon rescinds a policy that ensures service member access to abortions and other reproductive health care.



U.S. Army photo

He accused Wormuth of offering her commitment to the expenditure months ago and failing to produce a housing replacement plan. Hawley said the Army told his office no funds will be available for the project until Dec. 15 at the earliest.

"Beyond your inability to even produce your plan, what investment you have promised has now failed to materialize," Hawley wrote to Wormuth. "The deadline has



2024 SAL Membership Report as of: October 5, 2023

#	DETACHMENT	2024 DET. YEAR END GOAL	NEEDED TO MEET 25% TARGET 10/18/2023	2024 ACTUAL MBRSHP	% OF YEAR END GOAL	2024 RENEWAL %
1	HAWAII	120	-54	84	70.00%	63.87
2	FRANCE	168	-62	104	61.90%	55.76
3	LOUISIANA	1,821	-535	990	54.37%	50.20
4	GEORGIA	4,887	-1,265	2,487	50.89%	45.82
5	PUERTO RICO	156	-38	77	49.36%	47.71
6	SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	-311	714	44.32%	38.94
7	WISCONSIN	4,398	-769	1,868	42.47%	39.13
8	IDAHO	659	-113	278	42.19%	34.25
9	UTAH	460	-73	188	40.87%	39.14
10	ALABAMA	2,100	-301	826	39.33%	34.24
11	NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	-390	1,082	39.06%	32.88
12	MISSISSIPPI	736	-89	273	37.09%	35.17
13	MONTANA	1,091	-116	389	35.66%	33.05
14	ILLINOIS	13,716	-1,387	4,816	35.11%	33.98
15	NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	-83	352	32.74%	29.01
16	WYOMING	1,248	-94	406	32.53%	28.99
17	IOWA	4,914	-314	1,542	31.38%	29.85
18	FLORIDA	23,066	-1,058	6,824	29.58%	23.49
19	SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	-55	447	28.47%	21.37
20	TENNESSEE	1,792	-62	510	28.46%	24.10
21	OREGON	1,534	-52	435	28.36%	22.43
22	TEXAS	5,783	-183	1,629	28.17%	24.95
23	VIRGINIA	4,367	-121	1,213	27.78%	22.78
24	KANSAS	6,055	-159	1,673	27.63%	25.48
25	MARYLAND	16,803	-251	4,452	26.50%	23.38
26	RHODE ISLAND	348	-4	91	26.15%	21.80
27	MISSOURI	3,337	-19	853	25.56%	22.16
28	NEVADA	387	-1	98	25.32%	21.12
29	CALIFORNIA	11,292	-14	2,837	25.12%	21.55
30	INDIANA	37,244	346	8,965	24.07%	21.87
31	CONNECTICUT	1,865	23	443	23.75%	19.65
32	ARKANSAS	406	10	92	22.66%	16.75
33	KENTUCKY	2,399	60	540	22.51%	19.07
34	MINNESOTA	11,435	293	2,566	22.44%	20.87
35	OKLAHOMA	1,430	43	315	22.03%	18.71
36	MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	164	1,194	21.98%	19.62
37	VERMONT	3,920	155	825	21.05%	19.40
38	DELAWARE	2,596	107	542	20.88%	16.22
39	NEW JERSEY	9,662	418	1,998	20.68%	18.72
40	COLORADO	2,952	138	600	20.33%	17.93
41	NEW YORK	30,663	1,511	6,155	20.07%	18.08
42	OHIO	31,690	1,632	6,291	19.85%	17.70
43	NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	317	1,190	19.74%	18.08
44	NEBRASKA	6,992	403	1,345	19.24%	18.13
45	MICHIGAN	26,236	1,792	4,767	18.17%	15.06
46	ARIZONA	8,595	726	1,423	16.56%	12.98
47	WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	239	409	15.77%	12.43
48	WASHINGTON	2,682	268	403	15.03%	10.23
49	ALASKA	1,740	210	225	12.93%	10.27
50	PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	7,782	7,905	12.60%	10.86
51	NEW MEXICO	1,582	214	182	11.50%	8.53
52	MAINE	2,757	486	203	7.36%	5.76
53	MEXICO	33	6	2	6.06%	6.25
54	PHILIPPINES	79	17	3	3.80%	2.53
55	DIST OF COL	91	21	2	2.20%	1.14
Grand Totals:		382,111	9,405	86,123	22.54%	19.80

2024 SAL Regional Breakdown

Western Region - James R. Fischer, Sr. (CA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
HAWAII	120	84	70.00%
IDAHO	659	278	42.19%
UTAH	460	188	40.87%
MONTANA	1,091	389	35.66%
WYOMING	1,248	406	32.53%
OREGON	1,534	435	28.36%
NEVADA	387	98	25.32%
CALIFORNIA	11,292	2,837	25.12%
COLORADO	2,952	600	20.33%
ARIZONA	8,595	1,423	16.56%
WASHINGTON	2,682	403	15.03%
ALASKA	1,740	225	12.93%
NEW MEXICO	1,582	182	11.50%
MEXICO	33	2	6.06%
PHILIPPINES	79	3	3.80%
Totals:	34,454	7,553	21.92%

Southeast Region - Linwood A. Moore (VA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
LOUISIANA	1,821	990	54.37%
GEORGIA	4,887	2,487	50.89%
PUERTO RICO	156	77	49.36%
ALABAMA	2,100	826	39.33%
NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	1,082	39.06%
MISSISSIPPI	736	273	37.09%
FLORIDA	23,066	6,824	29.58%
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	447	28.47%
TENNESSEE	1,792	510	28.46%
TEXAS	5,783	1,629	28.17%
VIRGINIA	4,367	1,213	27.78%
ARKANSAS	406	92	22.66%
Totals:	49,454	16,450	33.26%

Midwest Region - Terry A. Harris (KS)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	714	44.32%
NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	352	32.74%
IOWA	4,914	1,542	31.38%
KANSAS	6,055	1,673	27.63%
MISSOURI	3,337	853	25.56%
OKLAHOMA	1,430	315	22.03%
NEBRASKA	6,992	1,345	19.24%
Totals:	25,414	6,794	26.73%

Northeast Region - John R. Cook (NH)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
FRANCE	168	104	61.90%
MARYLAND	16,803	4,452	26.50%
RHODE ISLAND	348	91	26.15%
CONNECTICUT	1,865	443	23.75%
MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	1,194	21.98%
VERMONT	3,920	825	21.05%
DELAWARE	2,596	542	20.88%
NEW JERSEY	9,662	1,998	20.68%
NEW YORK	30,663	6,155	20.07%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	1,190	19.74%
PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	7,905	12.60%
MAINE	2,757	203	7.36%
DIST OF COL	91	2	2.20%
Totals:	143,078	25,104	17.55%

Central Region - Robert L. Bristo (MN)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
WISCONSIN	4,398	1,868	42.47%
ILLINOIS	13,716	4,816	35.11%
INDIANA	37,244	8,965	24.07%
KENTUCKY	2,399	540	22.51%
MINNESOTA	11,435	2,566	22.44%
OHIO	31,690	6,291	19.85%
MICHIGAN	26,236	4,767	18.17%
WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	409	15.77%
Totals:	129,711	30,222	23.30%

10/05/23		NATIONAL Donald "JR" Hall (MD) National Commander						
	Region	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	Quota Date	105% Date
1	Southeast 1, 2	49,454	16,450	(33,004)	33.26%	450		
2	Midwest 1, 2	25,414	6,794	(18,620)	26.73%	246		
3	Central 1	129,711	30,222	(99,489)	23.30%	868		
4	Western 1	34,454	7,553	(26,901)	21.92%	243		
5	Northeast 1	143,078	25,104	(117,974)	17.55%	865		
TOTALS 1		382,111	86,123	(295,988)	22.54%	2,672		

10/05/23		CENTRAL REGION Robert L. Bristo (MN) National Vice-Commander								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	Wisconsin 1, 2, 3	4,398	1,868	(2,530)	42.47%	89	7	39.13%		
2	Illinois 1, 2, 3	13,716	4,816	(8,900)	35.11%	10	14	33.98%		
3	Indiana 1	37,244	8,965	(28,279)	24.07%	224	30	21.87%		
4	Kentucky 1	2,399	540	(1,859)	22.51%	10	33	19.07%		
5	Minnesota 1	11,435	2,566	(8,869)	22.44%	38	34	20.87%		
6	Ohio 1	31,690	6,291	(25,399)	19.85%	125	42	17.70%		
7	Michigan 1	26,236	4,767	(21,469)	18.17%	371	45	15.06%		
8	West Virginia 1	2,593	409	(2,184)	15.77%	1	47	12.43%		
TOTALS 1		129,711	30,222	(99,489)	23.30%	868				

10/05/23		WESTERN REGION James A. Fischer Sr. (CA) National Vice-Commander								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	Hawaii 1, 2, 3, 5	120	84	(36)	70.00%	2	1	63.87%		
2	Idaho 1, 2, 3	659	278	(381)	42.19%	1	8	34.25%		
3	Utah 1, 2	460	188	(272)	40.87%	58	9	39.14%		
4	Montana 1, 2, 3	1,091	389	(702)	35.66%	3	13	33.05%		
5	Wyoming 1, 2	1,248	406	(842)	32.53%	37	16	28.99%		
6	Oregon 1, 2	1,534	435	(1,099)	28.36%	21	21	22.43%		
7	Nevada 1	387	98	(289)	25.32%	6	28	21.12%		
8	California 1	11,292	2,837	(8,455)	25.12%	40	29	21.55%		
9	Colorado 1	2,952	600	(2,352)	20.33%	12	40	17.93%		
10	Arizona 1	8,595	1,423	(7,172)	16.56%	25	46	12.98%		
11	Washington	2,682	403	(2,279)	15.03%	27	48	10.23%		
12	Alaska	1,740	225	(1,515)	12.93%	-	49	10.27%		
13	New Mexico	1,582	182	(1,400)	11.50%	11	51	8.53%		
14	Mexico	33	2	(31)	6.06%	-	53	6.25%		
15	Phillippines	79	3	(76)	3.80%	-	54	2.53%		
TOTALS 1		34,454	7,553	(26,901)	21.92%	243				

10/05/23		SOUTHEAST REGION Linwood A. Moore (VA) National Vice-Commander								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	Louisiana 1, 2, 3, 4	1,821	990	(831)	54.37%	17	3	80.20%		
2	Georgia 1, 2, 3, 4	4,887	2,487	(2,400)	50.89%	85	4	45.82%		
3	Puerto Rico 1, 2, 3, 4	156	77	(79)	49.36%	-	5	47.71%		
4	Alabama 1, 2, 3	2,100	826	(1,274)	39.33%	27	10	34.24%		
5	North Carolina 1, 2, 3	2,770	1,082	(1,688)	39.06%	4	11	32.88%		
6	Mississippi 1, 2, 3	736	273	(463)	37.09%	-	12	35.17%		
7	Florida 1, 2	23,066	6,824	(16,242)	29.58%	203	18	23.49%		
8	South Carolina 1, 2	1,570	447	(1,123)	28.47%	22	19	21.37%		
9	Tennessee 1, 2	1,792	510	(1,282)	28.46%	30	20	24.10%		
10	Texas 1, 2	5,783	1,629	(4,154)	28.17%	33	22	24.95%		
12	Virginia 1, 2	4,367	1,213	(3,154)	27.78%	29	23	22.78%		
13	Arkansas 1	406	92	(314)	22.66%	-	32	16.75%		
TOTALS 1, 2		49,454	16,450	(33,004)	33.26%	450				

10/05/23		MIDWEST REGION Terry A. Harris (KS) National Vice-Commander								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	South Dakota 1, 2, 3	1,611	714	(897)	44.32%	28	6	38.94%		
2	North Dakota 1, 2	1,075	352	(723)	32.74%	32	15	29.01%		
3	Iowa 1, 2	4,914	1,542	(3,372)	31.38%	12	17	29.85%		
4	Kansas 1, 2	6,055	1,673	(4,382)	27.63%	55	24	25.48%		
5	Missouri 1, 2	3,337	853	(2,484)	25.56%	17	27	22.16%		
6	Oklahoma 1	1,430	315	(1,115)	22.03%	8	35	18.71%		
7	Nebraska 1	6,992	1,345	(5,647)	19.24%	94	44	18.13%		
TOTALS 1, 2		25,414	6,794	(18,620)	26.73%	246				

10/05/23		NORTHEAST REGION John R. Cook (NH) National Vice-Commander								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	France 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	168	104	(64)	61.90%	-	2	55.76%		
2	Maryland 1, 2	16,803	4,452	(12,351)	26.50%	189	25	23.38%		
3	Rhode Island 1, 2	348	91	(257)	26.15%	2	26	21.80%		
4	Connecticut 1	1,865	443	(1,422)	23.75%	6	31	19.65%		
5	Massachusetts 1	5,432	1,194	(4,238)	21.98%	29	36	19.62%		
6	Vermont 1	3,920	825	(3,095)	21.05%	18	37	19.40%		
7	Delaware 1	2,596	542	(2,054)	20.88%	17	38	16.22%		
8	New Jersey 1	9,662	1,998	(7,664)	20.68%	23	39	18.72%		
9	New York 1	30,663	6,155	(24,508)	20.07%	184	41	18.08%		
10	New Hampshire 1	6,027	1,190	(4,837)	19.74%	43	43	18.08%		
11	Pennsylvania	62,746	7,905	(54,841)	12.60%	354	50	10.86%		
12	Maine	2,757	203	(2,554)	7.36%	-	52	5.76%		
13	Dist. of Columbia	91	2	(89)	2.20%	-	55	1.14%		
TOTALS 1		143,078	25,104	(117,974)	17.55%	865				

10/05/23		2023 SUPER SIX STANDINGS								
	Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1	Florida 1, 2	23,066	6,824	(16,242)	29.58%	203	18	23.49%		
2	Indiana 1	37,244	8,965	(28,279)	24.07%	224	30	21.87%		
3	New York 1	30,663	6,155	(24,508)	20.07%	184	41	18.08%		
4	Ohio 1	31,690	6,291	(25,399)	19.85%	125	42	17.70%		
5	Michigan 1	26,236	4,767	(21,469)	18.17%	371	45	15.06%		
6	Pennsylvania	62,746	7,905	(54,841)	12.60%	354	50	10.86%		
TOTALS		211,645	40,907	(170,738)	19.33%	1,461				

National Totals 1	382,111	86,123	(295,988)	22.54%	2,672		19.80%			
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2024 National Membership Target Dates			
1 September 13, 2023	10%	6 ♥ February 14, 2024 ♥	75%
2 October 18, 2023	25%	7 March 13, 2024	80%
3 November 15, 2023	35%	8 April 10, 2024	90%
4 December 13, 2023	45%	9 May 15, 2024	100%
5 January 18, 2024	60%	10 July 24, (DSTG)	105%



A brief word on why you should belong to the Sons of The American Legion

Your SAL membership develops a sense of belonging so you can participate in and commit to honoring your ancestors military service as a volunteer to assist veterans and their families. It is not something you just pay for; it is something that you invest in and benefit from. When you are a member of the Sons of The American Legion, you have access to a variety of benefits that we have to offer.

A SAL membership is about developing an environment for the growth of The American Legion Family and the services we provide those that have and are serving in the armed forces of The United State of America. As a SAL member, we encourage you to continue to be a part of the whole team, participate, commit, and become a solid team member. Being actively involved with the Sons of The American Legion is incredibly rewarding, both personally and professionally.

Membership gives you an opportunity to make friends with other SAL members in your local squadron, as well as across the country. In both big and small ways, your membership involvement is an integral part of your volunteer service, providing you with numerous opportunities to network and enhance your credibility as an active citizen of the country we love.

As a team, we help strengthen and teach each other, and we bring a wealth of experience to one another. With this wealth of experience, we are equipped to teach fellow members. With your SAL membership, you are not alone. You are a part of a growing network of peers in The American Legion and Veterans Service Organizations everywhere. The Sons of The American Legion brings together men of all professions and backgrounds that understand each other and that connect with other like-minded individuals to promote the exchange of ideas, the offering of personal assistance and constant interaction that leads to our growth.

As an active member, we lead and serve as the voice for veterans, their families, and our communities. We promote sound public policy and enhance positive public perception of The American Legion and all Veteran Service organizations. We encourage you to promote the Sons of The American Legion and participate in your local Squadron right where you live and share the latest updates on the good work The American Legion Family contributes as it has for over 100 years.

Your membership in the Sons of The American Legion matters, and it is very important that as an SAL member you continue to allow us to do the great work that we do. Stay invested in SAL, as we invest in you!

For GOD and Country,

Butch Ray,

Central Region Membership Chairman



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: \$
<input type="checkbox"/> Today with a single payment <input type="checkbox"/> Over the next year, beginning on (date): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Over the next _____ years, beginning on (date): _____ Please bill me <input type="checkbox"/> Annually <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT(S)

<input type="checkbox"/> Check - Make checks payable to: American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation - 1919 Society	
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit card <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/> AmEx <input type="checkbox"/> Discover	
Credit Card Number	Exp. Date
<input type="checkbox"/> 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	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
My/Our gift will be matched by	
<input type="checkbox"/> Matching gift enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> 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