

Nebraska squadron shares flag etiquette with fifth graders

The American Legion | November 27, 2023



In his role as national chairman of the Sons of The American Legion's Americanism Commission, Chris Casey challenged the SAL National Executive Committee to take the commission's goals back to their respective detachments.

It's a challenge Casey and the rest of the Legion Family at Benson (Neb.) Post 112 is meeting.

Members of SAL Squadron 112 led a flag etiquette ceremony at Pawnee Elementary School on Nov. 18. The event allowed fifth graders at the school to learn how to properly fold a flag as well as what the American flag represents.

"These classes assist in driving home Americanism for these young people," said Casey, who is also adjutant for Squadron 112 and the Detachment of Nebraska. "The American Legion has urged Congress to approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the U.S. flag. That amendment has not progressed and may never do so in today's political climate," Casey added. "These classes help shape the view of young people and develop their reverence for the flag. When these young students become the elected representatives of the people, they will get a flag protection amendment passed. They will do so because of the great respect that was instilled in them by The American Legion."

"We have had our security officer working with our students to raise and lower the flag each day, but I don't think that our students truly understood the significance and the meaning behind the raising and lowering of the flag, and how we fold and store the flag," Pawnee Elementary Principal Cheryl Prine [told KMTV](#). "... This opportunity not only educates the students but will bring about some reverence and respect for what they are doing."

Round-Up

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Donald "JR" Hall, Jr.

National Commander

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THAN ME

Remembering the Greatest Generation

Henry Kissinger, who shaped world affairs under two presidents, dies at 100

[Thomas W. Lippman](#) | November 29, 2023

The diplomat exercised an unparalleled control over U.S. international affairs and policymaking. He was also the target of relentless critics, who deemed him unprincipled and amoral.



Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger in June 1972, before leaving on his fourth trip to the People's Republic of China.

James Palmer/AP

Henry A. Kissinger, a scholar, statesman and celebrity diplomat who wielded unparalleled power over U.S. foreign policy throughout the administrations of

Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford, and who for decades afterward, as a consultant and writer, proffered opinions that shaped global politics and business, died Nov. 29 at his home in Connecticut. He was 100.

His death was announced in a statement by his consulting firm, which did not give a cause.

As a Jewish immigrant fleeing Nazi Germany, Dr. Kissinger spoke little English when he arrived in the United States as a teenager in 1938. But he harnessed a keen intellect, a mastery of history and his skill as a writer to rise quickly from Harvard undergraduate to Harvard faculty member before establishing himself in Washington.

As the only person ever to be White House national security adviser and secretary of state at the same time, he exercised a control over U.S. foreign policy that has rarely been equaled by anyone who was not president.

He and Vietnam's [Le Duc Tho](#) shared the Nobel Peace Prize for the secret negotiations that produced the 1973 Paris agreement and ended U.S. military participation in the Vietnam War. His famous "shuttle diplomacy" after the 1973 Middle East war helped stabilize relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

As the impresario of Nixon's historic opening to China and as the theoretician of détente with the Soviet Union, Dr. Kissinger earned much of the credit for seismic policy shifts that redirected the course of world affairs.

With his German accent, incisive wit, owl-like looks, and zest for socializing in Hollywood and dating movie stars, he was instantly recognized all over the world, in stark contrast to most of his understated predecessors. Shamelessly courting publicity, he was as much a star of the tabloids as he was of the heavy-duty quarterlies that ruminated over his ideas about geostrategy. When he was appointed secretary of state, a Gallup poll found him to be the most admired person in the country.

But he also became the target of relentless critics who deemed him amoral. He refrained from traveling to Oslo to accept the Nobel award for fear of hostile demonstrations — Tho rejected the prize outright — and in later years the animosity he inspired would intensify.

What he viewed as pragmatic, many writers and analysts regarded as unprincipled maneuvering,

unguided by respect for human rights or even human life. Dr. Kissinger achieved power, fame, and wealth beyond the dreams of most people in public life, yet he spent his final decades defending himself and his place in history, explaining that he did what he had to do.

Ronald Reagan and other conservatives blasted Dr. Kissinger's quest for accommodation with Moscow as a sellout of countries then in the Warsaw Pact, and of American values. On the other hand, President George W. Bush called him "one of our nation's most accomplished and respected public servants," and senior officials of the Bush administration consulted him frequently about international affairs.

On the left, loud voices accused him of a cold-blooded pragmatism that put strategic gains ahead of human rights. Some of his critics said the Paris agreement left a longtime ally, the government of South Vietnam, to a dark fate as the North Vietnamese seized control. Others accused him of letting the war continue for three years while he negotiated a deal that he could have had from the beginning.

Critics held Dr. Kissinger responsible for the 1969 "secret bombing" of neutral Cambodia and for the American ground invasion of that country the following year, which expanded the conflict in Southeast Asia and led to a takeover of the country by the murderous Khmer Rouge.

They said his policy of promoting the shah of Iran as the anchor of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf encouraged the shah to raise oil prices and fed the megalomania that led to the Iranian revolution. They accused him of conniving at the 1974 coup that overthrew the government of Cyprus, and of supporting Pakistan's brutal campaign to quash a secessionist rebellion in what is now Bangladesh because Pakistan was his secret conduit to the Chinese.

And they said Dr. Kissinger was at least indirectly responsible for the CIA-inspired coup that overthrew the legally elected socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile — as well as the earlier murder of Gen. René Schneider, commander in chief of Chile's armed forces, who staunchly opposed a coup.

Two of the most vociferous critics, [Christopher Hitchens](#) and William Shawcross, branded Dr. Kissinger a war criminal. Journalist Seymour M. Hersh, in "The Price of Power," said Dr. Kissinger and Nixon were basically two of a kind: They "remained blind to the human costs of their actions. The dead and maimed in Vietnam and Cambodia — as in Chile, Bangladesh,

Biafra, and the Middle East — seemed not to count as the President and his national security adviser battled the Soviet Union, their misconceptions, their political enemies, and each other.”

At the very least, those who did not admire Dr. Kissinger felt that his focus on Cold War realities and his willingness to use force — openly or covertly — to advance U.S. objectives blinded him to humanitarian and human rights considerations.

As one example, they cited his opposition to the Jackson-Vanik amendment, legislation that conditioned normal trade relations with the Soviet Union on Moscow’s allowing Soviet Jews to emigrate. Dr. Kissinger, himself a Jewish refugee from persecution, considered the amendment a hindrance to his pursuit of détente.

His willingness to place strategic interest ahead of high-minded values was demonstrated in July 1975, when he persuaded Ford not to meet exiled Russian author [Alexander Solzhenitsyn](#) at the White House. Solzhenitsyn was a living symbol of courageous resistance to Soviet oppression, but Dr. Kissinger feared a negative impact on his policy of détente with Moscow.

He was operating, he said, “in a world where power remains the ultimate arbiter.” Reagan, then governor of California, made an issue of the Solzhenitsyn affair when he challenged Ford for the Republican presidential nomination the next year.

In his comprehensive biography of Dr. Kissinger, journalist Walter Isaacson came to the conclusion that he “had an instinctive feel for power and for creating a new global balance that could help America cope with its withdrawal syndrome after Vietnam. But it was not matched by a similar feel for the strength to be derived from the openness of America’s democratic system or for the moral values that are the true source of its global influence.”

Isaacson, who had full access to Dr. Kissinger and many of his friends, described him as “brilliant, conspiratorial, furtive, sensitive to linkages and nuances, prone to rivalries and power struggles, charming yet at times deceitful.”

Dr. Kissinger, responding to his critics, ascribed to realpolitik a moral imperative of its own.

“History presents unambiguous alternatives only in the rarest of circumstances,” he wrote in “Ending the Vietnam War,” published in 2003. “Most of the time,

statesmen must strike a balance between their values and their necessities, or to put it another way, they are obliged to approach their goals not in one leap but in stages, each by definition imperfect by absolute standards. It is always possible to invoke that imperfection as an excuse to recoil before responsibilities, or as a pretext to indict one’s own society.”

Or as he put it more bluntly in another context, “Covert action should not be confused with missionary work.”

Thomas A. Schwartz of Vanderbilt University, who interviewed Dr. Kissinger late in life for his 2020 biography, found that even after decades of criticism, the former policymaker adhered to “his own philosophy of international relations, [which] held that in a tragic world, a statesman was not able to choose between good and evil but only among different forms of evil.”

Immigrant from Germany

Heinz Alfred Kissinger was born in Furth, Germany, on May 27, 1923. He became Henry after he moved with his family to the United States.

His parents, Louis and Paula, were respectable middle-class Jews of the type who thought of themselves as entirely German until Adolf Hitler taught them otherwise. Young Heinz loved soccer and excelled at his lessons, but throughout his school years he and his friends were bullied by Nazi gangs as the Jews of Furth were increasingly restricted and ostracized from German life.

He was 12 when the Nuremberg Laws stripped Germany’s Jews of their citizenship. His father lost his teaching job. Sponsored by a relative in New York, the Kissinger family packed the few things they were allowed to keep and left Germany for the United States in August 1938, three months before the rampage of Kristallnacht sealed the fate of most Jews who stayed. Dr. Kissinger said later in life that this experience had left no permanent mark on his psyche, but friends and relatives interviewed by Isaacson said otherwise. “Dr. Kissinger is a strong man, but the Nazis were able to damage his soul,” said Fritz Kraemer, a Kissinger intimate quoted by Isaacson.

The humiliation of his father and the destruction of their community, Isaacson wrote, “made him seek order, and it led him to hunger for acceptance, even if it meant trying to please those he considered his intellectual inferiors.”

Those traits would surface years later in Dr. Kissinger’s relationship with Nixon. Many who knew him in

the U.S. Army, academic life and government said his desire to please everyone and his craving for praise derived from an outcast's desire for acceptance.

In New York, the Kissingers settled in Washington Heights on Manhattan's Upper West Side, a largely Jewish neighborhood. Dr. Kissinger enrolled in the local public high school, George Washington, where he quickly mastered English and excelled in other subjects. He worked in a shaving-brush factory to earn extra cash and enrolled in accounting classes at City College of New York.

Before he could get his degree, he was drafted into the Army in 1943, during World War II. He studied engineering before being assigned, just after D-Day in June 1944, to the 84th Infantry Division at swampy Camp Claiborne, La. He impressed another German-speaking soldier, Kraemer — later known as “the man who discovered Kissinger” — and through his influence was assigned to intelligence duties.

When the 84th deployed to Germany after the Battle of the Bulge, he found himself a conquering occupier of the people who had persecuted his family into exile just a few years earlier. He received the Bronze Star medal and was promoted to sergeant for his work in organizing a local government and ferreting out members of the Gestapo.

Swift rise in academia

When he returned to civilian life in 1947, the nation's colleges, even the most elite, were reaching out to young veterans. He joined Harvard's class of 1950 as a 24-year-old sophomore, beginning the academic career that would propel him to the pinnacle of American life.

While still an undergraduate, he married his high school girlfriend, Anneliese “Ann” Fleischer, a fellow refugee who was working as a bookkeeper. They had two children, Elizabeth and David, before divorcing in 1964.

At Harvard, he avoided student social life, studied hard and sought the favor of powerhouse members of the Harvard faculty such as scientist George Kistiaowsky and historian William Yandell Elliott.

Through such connections, he was able as a graduate student to start a quarterly magazine of world affairs, *Confluence*, which attracted as contributors such luminaries as [McGeorge Bundy](#), [Walt Rostow](#), Hannah Arendt, [Arthur Schlesinger Jr.](#) and [Paul Nitze](#). While young and still unknown, Kissinger was moving into

the world of foreign policy heavyweights, a world he would come to dominate.

His PhD thesis was written as the United States was extricating itself from the Korean War and when the Cold War with the Soviet Union dominated policy discussion. Looking for applicable lessons, he analyzed how Austria's Prince Metternich and Britain's Viscount Castlereagh restored order in Europe after the Napoleonic wars.

Titled “A World Restored,” the thesis was soon published in book form. That and an article in *Foreign Affairs* — in which he challenged the value of a policy of massive retaliation in nuclear war — launched him on a path to academic stardom.

He took a leave from Harvard to accept a job at the Council on Foreign Relations as staff director of a study group examining the topic of nuclear weapons and foreign policy. In the group were such prominent people as banker David Rockefeller, Army Lt. Gen. [James Gavin](#) and Nitze, former policy planning director at the State Department.

In a maneuver that anticipated his style as a high-level government official, he converted this prestigious panel's staff into a research team for a book that became his own. He was 31 when he produced a 450-page tome, “Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy,” that argued for a policy of limited use of nuclear weapons.

At about that time, Dr. Kissinger met David Rockefeller's brother Nelson, who was then a foreign policy adviser to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and who would soon be elected governor of New York. Nelson Rockefeller, a backslapping optimist, became Dr. Kissinger's patron and his mentor in the world of Republican politics, despite their very different personalities.

Dr. Kissinger continued to teach at Harvard and write, but by the time John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1960, he wanted to join the ranks of men who actually wielded power in international affairs, and the place to do that was Washington, not Cambridge. He became a part-time consultant to Kennedy and later to President Lyndon B. Johnson, but his political loyalties remained with Rockefeller.

After Nixon was elected in 1968, according to Dr. Kissinger, he received a call from a Nixon aide with a job offer. Nixon and Dr. Kissinger barely knew each other, but former senator [Henry Cabot Lodge](#) (R-Mass.), who had been Nixon's running mate in 1960

and became an influential U.S. ambassador in Vietnam and elsewhere, recommended Dr. Kissinger for national security adviser.

Working for Nixon

In Nixon's White House, Dr. Kissinger was a complicated, ambitious, often devious man serving a complicated, erratic, and often devious president. Their intimate but uneasy relationship was intensified by the magnitude of the history-making events that erupted in rapid succession during Nixon's first term.

A single week in September 1970, for example, brought Syria's invasion of Jordan, the discovery that the Soviet Union had sent a nuclear-armed submarine and other warships to Cuba, Nixon's order to the CIA to block the installation of Allende as president of Chile, and the resumption of the secret Paris talks with the North Vietnamese after a five-month hiatus. At such times Nixon would stay awake through most of the night, calling Dr. Kissinger and other senior officials at all hours to issue bizarre orders that they could not or would not carry out, and Dr. Kissinger would rage at staff members as tensions and voices rose.

In one extreme example, Dr. Kissinger was in Moscow trying to negotiate a cease-fire in the 1973 Middle East war when he received instructions from Nixon to hand Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev a letter saying that the United States wanted a long-term partnership with Moscow to establish peace in the region.

Dr. Kissinger — who had his hands full trying to achieve a cease-fire and who knew that Nixon was grappling with a crisis in the White House because of the Watergate scandal — not only refused to give the letter to Brezhnev, he also rejected the instructions as “unacceptable.”

He fired off a letter to his deputy, [Brent Scowcroft](#), saying he was “shocked at the tone of the instructions, the poor judgment in the context of the Brezhnev letter and the failure to let me know in advance that a press statement would be issued.” Soviet influence was diminishing in the Middle East; the last thing Dr. Kissinger wanted was to bolster it with an arrangement such as Nixon was seeking.

Throughout those tense episodes, Dr. Kissinger found time for meals and long conversations with favored members of the news media, including [Walter Cronkite](#) of CBS, [C.L. Sulzberger](#) of the New York Times, [Hugh Sidey](#) of Time, his longtime friend and conservative author [William F. Buckley Jr.](#), and even the humor columnist [Art Buchwald](#).

He won plaudits from the press even though his most important work was done in total secrecy — he often visited foreign capitals on critical missions without informing even the U.S. ambassadors there — and he manipulated journalists the way he manipulated everyone else.

In the peak years of his power, most of the coverage in the mainstream media was little short of adulatory. Asked by a reporter whether he preferred to be addressed as “Mr. Secretary” or “Dr. Kissinger,” he replied, “Excellency will do.”

The fame produced by saturation media coverage contributed to his power and to the wealth of his later years. But the quest for celebrity and popular adulation also led him into some embarrassing moments, in particular a 1972 interview with the Italian writer [Oriana Fallaci](#). Fallaci asked if he thought of himself as a diplomatic chess player, but he offered a different analogy.

“Americans,” he said, “like the cowboy who leads the wagon train by riding ahead alone on his horse, the cowboy who rides all alone into the town, the village, with his horse and nothing else. This cowboy doesn't have to be courageous. All he needs is to be alone, to show others that he rides into the town and does everything by himself.”

This “lone cowboy” image of the short, bespectacled, owlish, accented Dr. Kissinger provoked widespread ridicule. There was more of the same when The Washington Post's Sally Quinn, at a Georgetown party, asked him if he was a “swinger.” “Well, you couldn't call me a swinger because of my job,” he replied. “Why don't you just assume I'm a secret swinger.” Like “lone cowboy,” his “secret swinger” description of himself immediately entered Kissinger lore.

As much as Dr. Kissinger courted the press, his boss Nixon loathed reporters and was infuriated when the media broke news stories that clearly came from individuals inside the administration — especially the Pentagon Papers, a history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam that detailed government deception spanning several administrations.

In an effort to stop the “leaks,” Nixon ordered the FBI to tap the telephones of certain reporters and their suspected sources. Dr. Kissinger, who flew into a rage exceeding even Nixon's when the New York Times began publishing the Pentagon Papers in 1971, collaborated with this illegal program, giving the FBI names of people whose phones were to be wiretapped. The targets included journalists, State and Defense

department officials, members of Kissinger's staff and presidential speechwriter William Safire.

Dr. Kissinger did not deny afterward that he abetted the wiretapping but said in his memoirs that "I simply went along with what I had no reason to doubt was legal." He also denounced "the immorality of those who, in their contempt for their trust, attempted to sabotage national policies and risked American lives." Nixon's chief of staff, [H.R. Haldeman](#), said the wiretapping program "began with Henry's anger" over media exposure of the secret bombing of Cambodia.

The airstrikes on neutral Cambodia and the subsequent ground invasion by U.S. troops stirred fury across the United States and prompted the resignations of some of Dr. Kissinger's most accomplished staff members, including Anthony Lake, who later became national security adviser to President Bill Clinton.

But Dr. Kissinger was unapologetic. He argued that Cambodia's neutrality was first violated by North Vietnam and that the United States had no obligation to allow Hanoi to use Cambodia as a sanctuary for attacks on Americans.

That U.S. actions made Cambodia a participant in a war for which it was woefully ill equipped and opened the door to the takeover of the country by the murderous Khmer Rouge, may have been unfortunate, but to Dr. Kissinger it was not his problem.

In addition to the wiretaps, Nixon's obsession with leaks led to creation of the White House unit assigned to stop them known as "the Plumbers." Thus was planted the seed of [Watergate political scandal](#) and White House coverup that would destroy Nixon's presidency. Because Dr. Kissinger did not order any illegal break-ins or participate in coverups, he — almost alone among Nixon's senior advisers — emerged unscathed from Watergate to continue his government career.

Nixon was elected to end the unpopular war in Vietnam, but Dr. Kissinger convinced him that the United States would lose all credibility in world affairs if it simply walked away. Thus, the war continued, and widened into Cambodia, throughout Nixon's first term, even though the number of U.S. ground troops was steadily reduced.

As Nixon and Dr. Kissinger reduced tensions with China and the Soviet Union and a major North Vietnamese military offensive stalled in the spring of 1972,

Hanoi became amenable at last to a negotiated settlement.

The deal Dr. Kissinger brokered allowed the South Vietnamese government of Nguyen Van Thieu to remain in place, but it also allowed the North Vietnamese troops inside the South to remain there — and thus ensured Saigon's downfall two years later, the "decent interval" that Dr. Kissinger had hoped to achieve.

When Thieu balked at the terms, the White House had to decide what was worse: resuming the war or forcing a longtime ally to swallow a suicidal agreement. To reassure Thieu and perhaps win a few more minor concessions from Hanoi, Nixon ordered the "Christmas bombing" of the North Vietnamese capital, in which the U.S. B-52 fleet dropped bombs on civilian areas for nine days.

The bombings sparked worldwide outrage — especially when it became clear that the peace agreement to which Hanoi finally agreed contained nearly the same terms as those in the final accords that Hanoi had accepted before the nine-day aerial assault.

Brokering agreements

Unlike with the Paris agreement, there was no downside to what was probably Dr. Kissinger's single greatest achievement: the secret diplomacy that led to Nixon's visit to China in February 1972, an event that reshaped the global balance of power. Nixon, who built his political career on opposition to communism, nevertheless had long wanted to go to China, and the Chinese were willing.

On a trip to Pakistan, Dr. Kissinger evaded the traveling press corps by feigning illness and flew secretly to Beijing to secure the presidential invitation, which astonished the world when it was announced.

The trip produced, among other things, the "Shanghai Communiqué," in which the United States acknowledged that "Taiwan is a part of China." The two countries also agreed that once this principle was established, they would not do anything to change Taiwan's quasi-independent status. That is still the basis of U.S. and Chinese policy on this relentlessly discomfiting issue.

Another of Dr. Kissinger's achievements was the 1972 SALT I arms-control treaty with the Soviet Union, negotiated when the two nuclear superpowers were locked in Cold War belligerency and confronting each other in proxy wars around the globe.

The SALT agreements put limits on anti-ballistic-missile defense systems and on the deployment of offensive missiles and effectively committed the two countries to détente rather than confrontation.

The third of Dr. Kissinger's great accomplishments was the "shuttle diplomacy" that followed the 1973 Middle East war. That conflict erupted two weeks after Dr. Kissinger was sworn in as secretary of state while retaining his White House position as national security adviser.

In most administrations, the president's national security adviser has been more a coordinator than a policymaker, working with all international affairs agencies to deliver their best counsel and analysis to the commander in chief, including options for action. That was not Dr. Kissinger's style.

A skillful and ruthless bureaucratic infighter, he cut the State Department and Secretary of State [William P. Rogers](#) out of the most critical decisions and policy initiatives during Nixon's first term, and he opened secret channels to sub-Cabinet-level officials at State and the Pentagon to collect information without the knowledge of their chiefs.

Rogers, a gentleman diplomat of the old school, was not even told of the China initiative until the last minute. Then Dr. Kissinger excluded him from Nixon's historic meeting with Chinese leader Mao Zedong. That was probably the worst of the repeated humiliations suffered by Rogers as secretary of state — at least until Nixon reluctantly decided to replace him with Dr. Kissinger after winning reelection in 1972.

The 16-day war that began on Oct. 6, 1973, with coordinated attacks on Israel by Egypt and Syria would confront Dr. Kissinger with perhaps the most severe tests of his career. It threatened the existence of Israel, set off a confrontation with the Soviet Union and inspired an oil embargo by Saudi Arabia and other Arab exporters that crippled the world's flow of fuel.

Nixon had mostly kept Dr. Kissinger out of Middle East affairs because he was Jewish, but in his new job as secretary of state, his involvement in this crisis could not be avoided.

Meanwhile, Nixon was bogged down in Watergate, trying to fend off legal demands that he surrender the White House tapes. Vice President [Spiro Agnew](#) was forced to resign in a corruption scandal. Nixon fired Watergate special prosecutor [Archibald Cox](#), and then Attorney General [Elliot Richardson](#) and his deputy, [William French Smith](#), resigned in the "Saturday

Night Massacre," just as Kissinger was en route to Moscow to seek a cease-fire.

'Shuttle diplomacy'

For Dr. Kissinger, Defense Secretary [James Schlesinger](#) and [Alexander Haig](#), a four-star Army general who was White House chief of staff, the goals at the start of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war included: ensure Israel's survival, prevent another military humiliation of the Arabs if and when the war turned against them, limit opportunities for the Soviets to exploit the crisis, and do all that without appearing to further undermine what remained of Nixon's authority.

They succeeded on all counts, but barely. Dr. Kissinger's brazen defiance of the president enabled him to negotiate the outcome he sought.

Reeling from early battlefield setbacks, Israel pleaded for an emergency airlift of U.S. weapons and other equipment. Nixon was willing, but Dr. Kissinger feared that a visible U.S. rescue effort on behalf of Israel would shatter his hard-earned détente with the Soviets, who were resupplying the Arabs.

At the war's crucial moment, when Moscow threatened to send troops to save Egypt's Third Army from destruction by Israel, Dr. Kissinger and Haig ordered a worldwide alert of U.S. nuclear forces — without informing Nixon, who was distracted by a growing threat of impeachment.

In the end, the war's outcomes were mostly positive. The fighting ended when Egypt's President Anwar Sadat agreed to direct military talks with the Israelis. Israel survived, and Arab honor, shattered in 1967, was restored by Egypt's initially successful attack across the Suez Canal.

Dr. Kissinger was able to preserve the essentials of détente while cutting the Soviets out of the ensuing peace negotiations. On the other hand, the Arab oil exporters, led by Saudi Arabia, caused economic chaos by keeping in place the embargo on shipments to the United States imposed because of the U.S. resupply to Israel. And the rival armies still confronted each other along perilous, unstable cease-fire lines.

To extend the fragile cease-fire and stabilize relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Dr. Kissinger undertook what became his signature mission. Beginning in January 1974, he went to the Middle East 11 times to promote military disengagement agreements that would facilitate a new era of peace negotiations. The most celebrated of these "shuttle diplomacy" missions was a 34-day marathon that spring in which he

visited Jerusalem 16 times and Damascus 15 times. He traveled to six countries as well.

These marathons did not produce any permanent peace agreements during Dr. Kissinger's time in office, but they stabilized a volatile region and established the United States, to the exclusion of the Soviet Union, as the exclusive power broker.

Diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt, ruptured in 1967, were restored, and when the Saudis agreed to end the oil embargo, the way was open for a celebratory last hurrah visit to the region by the politically crippled Nixon, soon to be forced out of office by the Watergate crisis.

Dr. Kissinger had mixed feelings about Nixon's downfall. Although he was the architect of Nixon's greatest triumphs, owed Nixon his fame and served him through the last anguished hours of his doomed presidency, he never really liked Nixon, a solitary personality, suspicious of the Eastern intellectual elite personified by Dr. Kissinger. After leaving public life, he sought to distance himself from Nixon's many failings.

Dr. Kissinger's feelings about Nixon's personality pervaded his final, bizarre meeting with the president before his resignation, as recounted in Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's book "The Final Days." Sobbing, the president dropped to his knees to pray and demanded that Dr. Kissinger join him; he did, holding the distraught president uncomfortably in his arms.

Nixon resigned on Aug. 9, 1974, and his replacement, Vice President Ford, about a year later would install his own national security team. Ford had had enough of Defense Secretary Schlesinger, whose prickly personality and endless disputes with Dr. Kissinger rankled the amiable president. He cleaned house in late October 1975.

He fired Schlesinger, replacing him with his White House chief of staff, [Donald H. Rumsfeld](#). He promoted Rumsfeld's deputy, Dick Cheney, to chief of staff. At Dr. Kissinger's urging, he ousted William Colby as director of the CIA and brought in George H.W. Bush, then chief U.S. liaison officer to China, to replace him. And he retained Dr. Kissinger as secretary of state but removed him as national security adviser, giving that job to Dr. Kissinger's deputy, Scowcroft.

Under Ford, Dr. Kissinger's success rate dwindled. He spent many hours in an unsuccessful effort to complete a second strategic arms agreement with Moscow.

He also failed to make further progress on the Middle East peace front; every American interaction with Egypt and Israel became a domestic and foreign policy tinderbox.

A Jewish pioneer

Before Dr. Kissinger, the office of secretary of state was held exclusively by White male Christians. The country's entire foreign policy, intelligence and defense establishment was nearly devoid of Jews until after World War II.

In the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, it turned out that Dr. Kissinger had opened the door for American Jews to work in an important country from which they had been barred: Saudi Arabia. Until that time, American companies, and U.S. government agencies, including the military and the State Department, had complied with Saudi requests that no Jews be assigned there.

But the Saudis could hardly exclude a secretary of state, Jewish or not, and Dr. Kissinger went there, in 1974, accompanied by Jewish members of the press corps.

In his memoirs, Dr. Kissinger recalled that King Faisal — who loathed Jews and routinely gave important visitors a copy of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a notorious antisemitic forgery — received him with all the ceremony appropriate for such an important guest.

The welcome included a dinner at the royal palace, during which the king unloaded his standard speech about how Jews and communists were working together to destroy civilization.

Dr. Kissinger chose to be amused rather than offended, but either way he had broken a long-standing taboo that had clouded U.S.-Saudi relations for 40 years. After Faisal's assassination the next year, Jews were allowed into Saudi Arabia in increasing numbers.

Unpleasantness with the Israelis over Dr. Kissinger's efforts to induce them to withdraw from more of Sinai eventually blew over, and a new Sinai disengagement agreement was reached after another round of shuttle diplomacy late that summer. But by then the Ford administration had been tarnished by a much more serious defeat: the fall of Cambodia and South Vietnam to the communists.

April 1975 was an especially ignominious month in the history of U.S. foreign policy, and there was

essentially nothing that Ford or Dr. Kissinger could do about it. No amount of pleading with Beijing or Moscow to use their influence with Hanoi, and no amount of railing at Congress over its refusal to put up more money for military aid to South Vietnam, could stave off what was by then inevitable.

Celebrity statesman

Dr. Kissinger was already well known to foreign policy insiders and government watchers by the time he had been in the White House for two years. Then the China initiative propelled him into international celebrity seldom equaled by appointed officials — as if he were a combination movie star and war hero. The rumpled, bespectacled, divorced academic suddenly became what biographer Isaacson called “the world’s least likely sex symbol.”

Through many visits to the Rand Corp.’s think tank headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., he began to cultivate prominent personalities in the movie business, including actors Gregory Peck and [Kirk Douglas](#) and Paramount studio chief [Robert Evans](#). He also dated young actresses. (“Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes,” he once quipped. “There’s just too much fraternizing with the enemy.”)

His most prominent relationship was with Jill St. John, an actress known for her flaming red hair — through which he liked to run his fingers, even when they were at dinner with other people. Among his other dates were Shirley MacLaine, Marlo Thomas, and Candice Bergen.

Naturally the press ate this up, but unbeknownst to reporters, Dr. Kissinger was seriously interested in only one woman, about whom most of them knew nothing. This was Nancy Maginnes, a foreign policy researcher on the staff of Nelson Rockefeller.

With a Social Register pedigree and a country-club social life, she was as different as could be from Dr. Kissinger. She lived in New York but was a discreet visitor to Washington on many weekends when he was in town. They married in 1974.

In addition to his wife, survivors include two children from his first marriage, David and Elizabeth, as well as five grandchildren.

Dr. Kissinger had met Maginnes at the 1964 Republican National Convention, which both had attended through their connections to Rockefeller. A Democrat as a young man, Dr. Kissinger became a nominal Republican when he entered public life. But his disdain for ideology as a foundation of foreign policy

inevitably created tensions with GOP policymakers who believed that he had given up too much ground in pursuing détente with Moscow and peace in Indochina.

His later relations with both presidents Bush were at best ambivalent, as they were with Cheney and Rumsfeld, architects of the U.S.-led Iraq War invasion in 2003.

Life after government

After leaving the government at the end of the Ford administration, Dr. Kissinger accepted lucrative consulting positions, but he spent most of the first few years working on the first two volumes of his massive memoirs — nearly 2,700 pages, written with the help of British editor Harold Evans. They were bestsellers. A third hefty volume appeared several years later.

Harvard and Columbia offered him professorships, but the Kissingers’ lifestyle — which reportedly included \$150,000 a month for private security guards and a preference for private airplanes — was not sustainable on an academic salary.

He went into business advising blue-chip corporate clients on international policy. He used his name, his fame, and his network to solve problems and make contacts around the world for banks, insurance companies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and automakers.

The business made Dr. Kissinger wealthy, but it also truncated his last official position in government service.

President George W. Bush appointed him chairman of the commission to investigate the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. The selection ignited fierce criticism from members of Congress and victims’ relatives who demanded that Dr. Kissinger make public his client list to disclose possible conflicts of interest. He declined to do so, or to liquidate his firm, and resigned after a few weeks.

In addition to his consulting work, Dr. Kissinger wrote a syndicated column about international affairs and appeared frequently on “Nightline” and other television news programs.

Even in his final years, when age was slowing him down and reducing his travel schedule, he continued to write books and his personality and reputation made him a prized participant in conferences and a prized guest at parties. He wrote opinion pieces for newspapers well into his 90s. President [Donald](#)

[Trump](#) consulted him, and he was a frequent guest on Stephen Colbert's comedy show.

In July 2023, at the age of 100, Dr. Kissinger was in Beijing and received an effusive welcome from senior Chinese officials, who hailed him as a statesman unrivaled in the United States.

Throughout his life, Dr. Kissinger ruminated on power and strategy in philosophical and even existential terms, but he always described himself as a realist, able to see which risks were worth taking.

"Policy is the art of weighing probabilities; mastery of it lies in grasping the nuances of possibilities," he wrote as a young man. "To attempt to conduct it as a science must lead to rigidity. For only the risks are certain; the opportunities are conjectural."

Lippman is a former Washington Post reporter who covered Dr. Kissinger's diplomatic activities in Vietnam and the Middle East.

From the Editor

Please make sure to sign up for *The Millennium*, the organization's new national monthly newsletter. Instructions for how to sign-up appear later in this issue.

Honor the Veteran Who Made You Eligible.

RENEW TODAY!

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., Editor

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

click a button below for more information

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Thank you to our Round-Up sponsors

Juan Cruz Rodriguez, Department of Puerto Rico

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

A. C. T. - Action - Changes - Things!

The distance between dreams and reality is called Action.

Steve Maraboli (An author and motivational speaker) once said... **"Tack Action! An inch of movement will bring you closer to your goals than a mile of Intention."**

As I have stated before, Action is Momentum! Actions prove who we are. Words just prove who we want to be! High ambition without action is nothing but a fancy dream and wishful thinking. Nothing will change in our lives unless we take action and execute our plan to reach our goals.

Central Region, we need to **ACT NOW!** Let's take a look at our numbers and you'll see why!

Since our last report, the Central region has jumped up 5.80% to 50.50%. This is great movement but if we want to move forward and get out of 3rd place we need to turn in more cards! **The Midwest Region is only .33% behind us!** We are dangerously close to falling into 4th place!

The largest gain was made by the Detachment of Ohio which climbed up 8.00%. They were followed by Illinois with an equally impressive gain of 7.93%. Michigan, Kentucky, and Minnesota were

next with gains of 6.65%, 5.96%, and 5.49% respectively. Indiana moved up by 4.65% with Wisconsin (+3.55%) and West Virginia (+1.89%) closing out the region.

"Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but GREAT ACTIONS speak to all mankind." - Theodore Roosevelt

Central Region, let our actions pave the way and prove we are a force that cannot be stopped or slowed down!

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!



It's simple. The more members we have, the more people we can help. A stronger membership base will result in stronger organization. Let's get the membership in and don't forget to have some fun.

"One Team, One Goal, One Heart, One Soul. Be the One!"

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

Gentlemen,

A nice improvement from Tuesday's report as we added over 1000 members to the Southeast region, taking our total percentage up 2% to 56.73%, keeping a strong hold on first place!

On the National level, the Sons are 19,578 members ahead of this time last year, which is a 3.44% increase. The fact that we have such strong numbers is a testament to the importance of reaching out to our members and pushing renewals before December 31. If we can just get our members to realize that dues are collected for the upcoming year starting July 1 (the most up to date membership card reads **2024**) and that those dues SHOULD be paid PRIOR to the actual start of the 2024 calendar year, there is no telling how far ahead of the game we would be!! Some will say that "I just paid my dues a few months ago, why do you want them again?" and they may be correct, but the dues

they may have just paid were to catch them up on 2023. Once they are on schedule, dues will only be paid once a year, as it should be.

Please take time to join NVC Moore on our quarterly regional zoom meeting on December 6th at 8pm est. You can access the meeting via the link below. Until then, keep the faith, keep up the great work and keep that membership rolling in!!

<https://legion.zoom.us/join/tJAodu6qrTooGdQ-FSvsze5YDk3yRUz8MXWN/ics?ic-sToken=98tyKuCsqzot-GNeUshqHRowIGYj4KOrztn5BjadsoTnWFT-NJZ1bPEukRK4BKCoD9>

Thom Skelly,
Southeast Region Membership Chairman

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.

Kentucky Legion post looking to expand its Be the One outreach

The American Legion | November 29, 2023

After returning to Kentucky from the 2023 American Legion National Convention, Sons of The American Legion National Executive Committeeman Brandon Curry approached Hardin Post 113 Legionnaire Tom Folsom about getting more involved in the Legion's [Be the One](#) suicide-prevention program.

VA S.A.V.E. Training

- S** Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized
- A** Ask the most important question of all —
"Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- V** Validate the Veteran's experience
- E** Encourage treatment and *Expedite* getting help



"The post really hadn't done anything with it, so Tom and I took it upon ourselves to get this mission and the

awareness out there," said Curry, commander of Squadron 113 in Elizabethtown. "And then Tom reached out to someone from (the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)."

The result is Post 113 will host VA S.A.V.E. Training at 6 p.m. on Dec. 5 that is open to the community. The training will focus on reducing the stigma about asking for mental health help, how to talk to the person and ask tough questions and provide information on where to get help.

"(S.A.V.E. Training) and Be the One are very, very close," said Folsom, the safety director for the Department of Kentucky American Legion Riders. "This was an opportunity to get a professional to come down and teach this. And then he'll stay around and answer questions if people have them, which is huge. Brandon and I, we're not professionals, but we'll have someone on hand who is."

In October during the Legion's Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, the organization's National Executive Committee passed [Resolution No. 9](#), which 9 strongly encourages American Legion posts to host VA S.A.V.E. training classes and to invite local community, government agencies, not-for-profits and businesses to participate in the training.

[S.A.V.E. Training](#) focus on four key facets:

- S - Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
- A - Ask the most important question of all, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- V - Validate the veteran's experience.
- E - Encourage treatment and expedite getting help.

"Hardin County and Elizabethtown, we're right there in Fort Knox's backyard, so we're a very veteran-friendly community," Curry said. "A lot of people who were stationed at Fort Knox ... will come back after they retire and stay in Hardin County. We want to be able to get our folks – our post members and our veterans in the community – and let them know, 'Hey, there is something out there. There is assistance. There are programs if you know of somebody who needs assistance.'"

American Legion posts interested in hosting a VA S.A.V.E. training class can facilitate it through their local VA Medical Center's suicide-prevention team. A post can locate contact information for their local suicide prevention team through the [Veterans Crisis Line Resource using this link](#). Once on the website, enter a

ZIP code and press search. Then select the box next to Suicide Prevention Coordinators and press search again. Once completed, you will be provided with the closest suicide prevention coordinator and their contact information.

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.

Americanism Commission

Chris Casey, 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

Joe Gladden, Chairman

Second Tuesday Bi-Monthly

October 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



BUDDY CHECK

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

Child Welfare Foundation Committee

Mark Nave, 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, 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, Chairman

Third Thursday as scheduled

September 21, 2023 | February 15, 2024

April 10, 2024 | July 18, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 966 1733 0121 | Passcode: 463 702

ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP



Internal Affairs Commission

Christopher Michel, 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, 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, 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 & Squadron Activities Committee

Daryl VerStreate Jr., 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](#).

2023 SAL Membership Stats	11/30/23
Total Actual Membership	379,812
Percentage of Goal	103.27
Renewal Percentage	89.16
Quota Detachments	45

California Legion post hoping gaming PCs lead to esports league

The American Legion | November 27, 2023

At its 2023 state convention, The American Legion Department of California [established a department Gaming Committee](#) to, in part, help promote camaraderie, improve mental health and aid recruiting efforts.

Immediate Past Department of California Commander Jere Romano, now the adjutant at Post 46 in Culver City, has taken that mission to heart. And with an assist from the non-profit [Stack Up](#), he hopes to now create an esports league among fellow American Legion posts and other veteran service organizations. Post 46 recently was the recipient of four gaming PCs through Stack Up, which was gifted with 150 gaming

PCs from game developer/publisher and esports organizer Riot Games earlier this year to distribute.



Stack Up Twitter photo

Romano didn't hesitate to accept the PCs, noting that Stack Up founder/CEO Steve Machuga shared with him that after serving in Iraq in the U.S. Army's 2nd Infantry, he found when he came home that it was the gaming community that "kept him going," Romano said. "Coming out of the pandemic, a lot of the younger veterans were struggling with isolation and all that. What better way to address that and be that ... suicide intervention. If we can create that gaming community within our posts, not only is it going to attract members to our posts, but it's also going to possibly stop one veteran from taking their lives."

Machuga, a member of American Legion Post 283 in Pacific Palisades, Calif., said Stack Up has been donating PCs to Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts with the hopes of creating "a sibling rivalry. And Jere is one of those guys that when he says he's going to do something, he does it. If I'm handing these machines to anyone, he's definitely somebody who I can rely on to make it happen."

Romano, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Reserve from 1986 to 1996, said seeing The American Legion become involved in the gaming community [through its relationship with REGIMENT Gaming](#) and its [past work with Stack Up](#) "is incredible. I've been tracking it, especially since REGIMENT Gaming came on board. We had to evolve as an organization with our newer membership coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan. This is our ... that one bridge, that one connectivity that we have to not only introduce them to The American Legion, but also bring them into our extended family."

Both Machuga and Romano would like to see American Legion posts with gaming equipment join

together to form an esports league that could possibly also include VFW posts and other VSOs.

"I believe in that vision," Romano said. "We talk about just simple competitiveness between posts, and that's where the conversation started. It's just something to bring the posts together. This is that new evolution of bringing everybody together. And simple competitiveness I think, will actually start bringing more and more cooperation between posts, and then areas and hopefully departments."

National Convention Committee

Christopher Byrd, 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

Public & Media Communications Committee

Kevin Chaplin, Chairman

Fourth Tuesday Bi-Monthly

October 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

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Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Bruno Williamson, 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

Wisconsin posts help fully fund service dog for local veteran

The American Legion | November 27, 2023

Wisconsin nonprofit Custom Canines trains and provides service dogs to veterans at no charge. With the cost of training a service dog reaching upwards of \$26,000, the nonprofit asked The American Legion in La Crosse County if they could help in funding.



Photo provided by Post 51 Commander Benjamin VanHorn of West Salem, WI

The seven Legion posts in the county got behind the mission and made a competition out of it. The post that raised the most money for Custom Canines would win naming rights for the next service dog and present the canine to the recipient veteran during a ceremony at the respective post. Fundraising efforts got underway over the summer and ended this past Veterans Day.

The Legion posts in La Crosse County fully funded a service dog with \$30,000 raised. And American

Legion Post 51 in West Salem, Wis., won the competition with the largest donation of \$13,000.

Post 51 Commander Benjamin VanHorn said it was easy for everyone to get behind Custom Canines' ask. "It's a local Wisconsin nonprofit trying to help local veterans. And that's our post. If we are going to help, there's no questions asked from the Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion."

VanHorn added that the post has honorary members who are ineligible for membership in the Legion but still support Post 51's missions. "We treat them like family. And when you tell them that, 'Hey, we are going to raise money to support the fully funding of a dog to help a local veteran,' there's no question involved. They are all in. They're behind the mission 100 percent, and it makes fundraising much easier."

Post 51 held dinners every Monday evening to raise funds for the service dog that were spearheaded by Jim Gilbertson, the post service officer. When VanHorn presented the fundraising effort to post members, Gilbertson "loved it. He took that and ran," VanHorn said. Gilbertson passed away unexpectedly in September. But the dinners continued in his honor. "We all pitched in and kept those dinners going," VanHorn said.

Post 51 presented Custom Canines with a check on Nov. 20 during a ceremony held at the post. During the presentation, post members announced that they are going to name the service dog Gilby in honor of their friend and service officer, Jim Gilbertson.

"I think he (Gilbertson) would be proud," VanHorn said.

VanHorn is appreciative of the fundraising success that was made possible by Post 51's Legion Family and community. The success "boils down to the four pillars" of The American Legion, he said. "If you have the four pillars of The American Legion in place, the community involvement and membership will be there. And the post has been very good about pushing the pillars and that's the reason why we have such good community support."

And now, a financial burden has been lifted off Custom Canines thanks to the La Crosse County American Legion and its community. The \$30,000 donation "was pretty amazing. It was a big thing," VanHorn said.



VA exceeds goal of permanently housing homeless veterans two months early

The American Legion | November 29, 2023

Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has permanently housed 38,847 homeless veterans through October of 2023 — surpassing [the calendar year goal to house 38,000 Veterans](#) two months early.

Through October, VA has also engaged with 34,498 unsheltered veterans to connect them with the housing and resources they need, exceeding the Department's [calendar year goal](#) by 123%; ensured that 96.2% of veterans housed have remained in housing, exceeding the department's [calendar year goal](#) by 1.2%; and ensured that 93.1% of the veterans who returned to homelessness have been rehoused or are on a pathway to rehousing, exceeding the Department's [calendar year goal](#) by 3.1%.

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

VA's efforts to combat veteran homelessness are grounded in reaching out to homeless veterans, understanding their unique needs, and addressing them. These efforts are built on the evidence-based "[Housing First](#)" approach, which prioritizes getting a veteran into housing, then providing them with the wrap-around support they need to stay housed, including health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more. This initiative is part of the Biden-

Harris Administration's broader efforts to [reduce homelessness](#).

VA has also made progress in combating veteran homelessness in the Greater Los Angeles area, providing 1,464 homeless Veterans with permanent housing thus far this year — which is the most of any city in America and on pace to exceed VA's [calendar year goal](#) for 2023. Last year, VA provided 1,301 permanent housing placements to formerly homeless Veterans in LA, the most of any city in America.

VA staff and its community partners nationwide help veterans find [permanent housing](#) such as apartments or houses to rent or own, often with subsidies to help make the housing affordable. In some cases, VA staff and partners help Veterans end their homelessness by reuniting them with family and friends.

For more information about VA's comprehensive efforts to end Veteran homelessness, visit [VA.gov/homeless](#).

If you are a veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838). Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for veterans exiting homelessness.

Veterans Employment & Education Commission

Jim Coates, 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

Season of Giving

Rusty Myers | November, 2023

Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Squadron 105 began what is being called their “Season of Giving” in the beginning of November this year. From handing out checks to local charities which operate out of Belleville, to donations to national veterans as well as children and youth organizations, to hosting a huge all-out Toy and Clothes Drive, and ending with an annual raffle supporting the Fisher House Foundation, the Sons are doing their very best to spread the spirit of the holidays to our veterans and our kids.

Planning for the first donation began in September, at the Post 105 Picnic, with an annual cancer charity fundraiser. A member of the Sons, a cancer survivor himself, has passionately run this fundraiser for the past few years. Selling tickets ahead of time, plus soliciting donations, he and his wife handed out pink ribbons and buttons at the picnic to anyone who donated. Though the first two years of the fundraiser benefitted the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the American Cancer Society, starting in 2022 the squadron adopted Gail’s Angels as the foundation to donate to. Gail’s Angels is Belleville-based non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to providing support to families that have a mom with breast cancer, who also care for an autistic or special needs child.



Jim Babai, President of Gail’s Angels

With donations above and beyond the funds raised made by the Squadron itself, plus the Post and its new Auxiliary Unit, a total of \$2,273 was dropped off with the ‘big check’ to James Babai, president of Gail’s Angels and owner of Essex Cigar Lounge on Washington Avenue in Belleville.

“Your love and generosity will help our special families achieve the same dreams and desires we all share ... “the people from 105 feel like family....”, stated Babai.

At the following general meeting in November, the “Season of Giving” continued with the membership making \$250 donations to the Children’s Organ Transplant Association (COTA), the American Legion Children’s Welfare Foundation (CWF), and Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW). In supporting two of the Pillars of the American Legion – Children and Youth, and Veteran’s Affairs – SAL 105 chose those three organizations to highlight their commitment to our vets and our kids.

COTA helps – in providing 100% of its funds - to remove the financial barriers to a life-saving transplant by providing fundraising assistance and family support, working with families whose children and young adults are on a transplant journey. In the same vein was a donation to CWF – whose “philanthropic priority to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth” by providing grants to other children based organizations has allowed upwards of \$10 million dollars to make its way to helping kids. Lastly, OCW received a donation from 105, promoting their goal of helping provide veterans’ “nonessentials” - items that help wounded warriors’ recovery but don’t usually show up as a budget line on government spreadsheets. The Legion then contacts officials and obtains lists to determine which items are needed by wounded, injured or ill service-members; once a need is identified, the items are ordered by the Legion and delivered in an expeditious manner. “It’s as simple as that. No red tape,” per the OCW.

Keeping the “Season of Giving” going, the SAL and Legion Family at 105 are managing a Toy and Clothing Drive, with the date to give things out being set for Thursday 14 December. Using funds raised nice their “Christmas in July” event, around \$4,000 of toys and clothes have been ordered, with the goal of handing everything out on that December Thursday. We have also been accepting donations since then and will be doing so until the 14th. Anyone in need, from anywhere, can drop by the Post that day, or let the SAL know their specific needs. Anything left over will be

distributed to the needy in the community in the days and weeks afterward.



Abigail, Jake, and Grace Myers

Rounding out our plans, we will be running a raffle to benefit the Fisher House Foundation, as we have for the past four years, giving them \$6,000 to date. The Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military and veteran's families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital, with homes located at military and VA medical centers around the world. SAL 105 will begin accepting donations for tickets shortly after Thanksgiving, with the final drawing on Superbowl Sunday on 11 February. Inquire at the Post to find out how to participate.



Donald Keddell and Steve Sangemino

So, when you see us wearing our uniforms shaking cans and collecting money over the week of Veterans Day every year at the ShopRite, all of the above is in just one small part of how what we collect goes to doing good things. Last year, for example, Sons of the

American Legion Squadron 105 donated almost \$26,000 back to the Post's veterans programs, to our kids, and to our community, state, and nation – in every way a product of the generosity of the Belleville Community. So that small American flag on a stick that we hand out asking for a small donation each year goes to changing lives – here at home, as well as throughout our country.



Make sure you're subscribed to *The Millennium*

Don't miss out on any of the news from the Sons of The American Legion and the Legion Family. To receive the monthly national SAL e-newsletter, go to Legion.org/Newsletters and log in to subscribe. You'll need your MyLegion account to do so; that gives you access to not only the SAL e-newsletter, but the national American Legion e-newsletters, the Digital Dispatch, membership discounts and much more!

MyLegion.org accounts are to be registered with the email address on your individual membership record that National Headquarters has on file. Registering with an email not listed as your primary email will not provide access to membership details, leadership resources or permissions.

To register an account

1. Go to MyLegion.org
2. Click "Register" in the upper right-hand corner
3. Enter your email in the Register window and click Next. A Verify Account window opens. Leave this page open. Go to your email and retrieve the OTP (One Time Password).
4. Enter the OTP and click Verify.
5. Click Next and you will be logged in.
6. Go to My Account to view membership details.



Lisa Williamson,
National President
The American Legion Auxiliary

Sports



Linus Lundqvist to drive No. 8 American Legion Honda in 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES

The American Legion | November 27, 2023

Chip Ganassi Racing announced today that [Linus Lundqvist](#) will pilot the No. 8 American Legion Honda throughout the 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES season. Lundqvist, 24, signed a multi-year deal with Chip Ganassi Racing on Aug. 31 after setting the fastest lap times in two of his first three INDYCAR races. Officially embarking on the 2024 season as a rookie, he is set to take on the full calendar primarily sporting The American Legion's red, white, and blue Be The One livery, including the historic 108th Running of the Indianapolis 500.

"We are thrilled to build off the championship season with Chip Ganassi Racing and form this new relationship with a talented young driver in Linus Lundqvist," American Legion Chief Marketing Officer Dean Kessel said. "Linus' enthusiasm and personality stood out to our team since day one, and I am confident that he will be a quality ambassador for our organization and the [Be The One](#) platform. Our collective focus continues to end beyond the racetrack, and we will continue to lead the charge to end veteran suicide."

"I'm incredibly excited to be partnering with The American Legion for the 2024 INDYCAR season," Linus Lundqvist said. "To move on to the next chapter and to be connected to the veteran community makes it even more special. A major thank you to Dean and The American Legion for this opportunity. I am privileged to be able to represent such an impactful organization and I am looking forward to our work together with Be The One."

"I am very much looking forward to Linus getting on the track to show the kind of driver that we all believe he will be," Chip Ganassi said. "In addition, I believe Linus' off-track presence will match well with the strong partnership we have with The American Legion. Over the last three seasons it has been a tremendous honor to work alongside The American Legion in our shared mission to save veteran lives. So, stepping into 2024 with Linus piloting the 8 car our expectations are rather high and I am very much looking forward to our first official race together in March."

The number one issue facing the veteran community is suicide, according to the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. It is estimated that 17 veterans take their lives each day. The American Legion instituted the Be The One initiative to activate a national platform aimed at reducing the rate of veteran suicide. Be The One is focused on destigmatizing asking for mental health support and providing peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities.

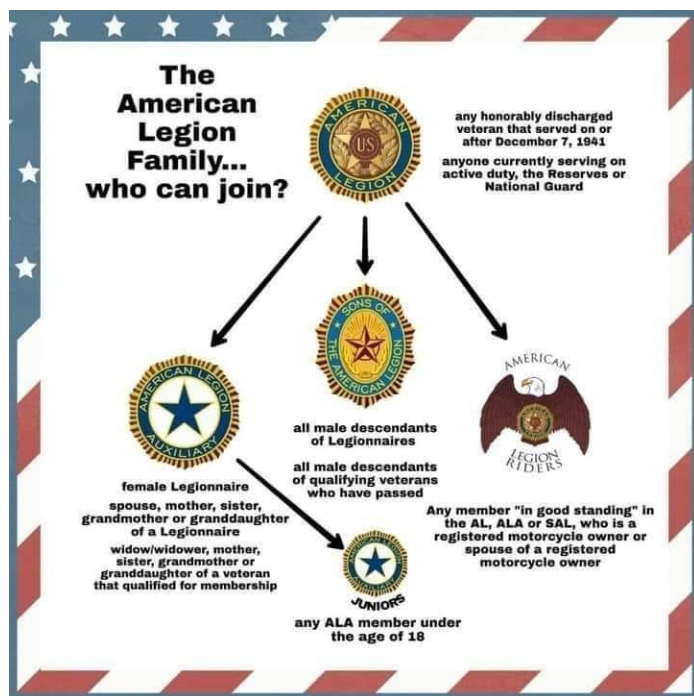
The American Legion and Chip Ganassi Racing have maintained a partnership since 2021. The team has presented The American Legion primary livery for 28 races in that span accounting for 12 podiums and four wins. Lundqvist will join a worldclass roster of drivers to have represented The American Legion behind the wheel, including defending Rookie of the Year Marcus Armstrong, seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson, Indianapolis 500 Winner Tony Kanaan and two-time INDYCAR champion Alex Palou.

The **2023 NTT INDYCAR SERIES championship** was won by Alex Palou last season, capturing his second Astor Cup adorned in The American Legion branding. “They (Chip Ganassi Racing) have rallied behind our mission, launching not only a brand last year, but also our Be The One platform, which is all about destigmatizing veterans asking for help,” said Kessel after the Astor Cup was secured. “The visibility is off the chart and for our 1.6 million members across the country, this is amazing.”

The American Legion and Chip Ganassi Racing also are teaming up for **Giving Tuesday**, a global generosity movement to help transform communities across the world on Nov. 28. Chip Ganassi Racing encourages you to think about [The American Legion as your preferred charity during this season of generosity](#).

Chip Ganassi Racing and The American Legion will be launching their “[12 Days of #VetsGiving](#)” on Giving Tuesday, where 12 unique prize packages will be listed for auction with a buy-it-now option, as well. #VetsGiving was first launched by the team in 2022, where nearly \$40,000 was raised. All proceeds will go directly to The American Legion.

Click [here](#) to watch Linus Lundqvist’s recent visit to American Legion National Headquarters.



Sons of The American Legion Membership Application

Detachment of _____ Squadron No. _____ Birth Date _____ Date _____

Name _____ Recruited by _____ (First) _____ (Initial) _____ (Last) _____ (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)

For God and Country

RECEIPT

Date _____

Received of _____

\$ _____ in payment of dues for 20 _____ in

Squadron _____, Detachment of _____

By _____

Squadron Everlasting

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

Dean L. Parmeter



Dean L. Parmeter, 68, Park Street, Peterboro, died Friday afternoon, surrounded by his loving and caring family, in

Geisenger Medical Center, Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, following a lengthy illness.

Born in Oneida, on November 4, 1955, he was the son of Jonas W. and Dora Page Parmeter. Dean was a graduate of Stockbridge Valley High School, Class of 1973. He married Kathleen Mennig, in Peterboro, on August 15, 1997.

Prior to his retirement, Dean was employed, with over ten years of service, as a welder with Ferris Industries and previously had been employed with various manufacturing companies. He was a member of the Sons of the American Legion, Munsville Post # 54, loved motorcycles, especially Harley Davidsons, loved history especially the various American wars and the Titanic's fate and animals.

Surviving besides his wife, Kathy, are his three daughters, Amanda Whipple of Munsville, Cheyanne Parmeter of Canastota, and Hope Parmeter of Smyrna; his son, Jonas (Laura) Parmeter of Wampsville; his grandchildren, Neveah, Lavella, Zoey, Savannah, Elizabeth, Trapper John, Remington, Oakley, Jasmyne and Memphis; his sister, Jody (Don) Doxtater of Morrisville; his two half brothers, William (Laura) Parmeter of Hamilton and Donald Parmeter of Fayetteville, North Carolina; a special niece, Sarah Grow of Morrisville as well as several other nieces and nephews; and his two dogs, Sadie and Sonny. He was predeceased by his parents and two sisters, Geraldine Huccul and Ruth Abbott.

Funeral services will be 2 PM, Thursday from the Campbell-Dean Funeral Home, Inc., 260 Main Street, Oneida, with the Reverend William Wilcox, officiating. Friends may call the funeral home,

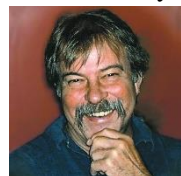
12 Noon - 2 PM, Thursday. Contributions, in his memory, may be made to Wanderers Rest, Box 535, Canastota, NY 13032.

To leave a word of condolence, visit www.campbell-dean.com. <https://www.lastingmemories.com/dean-l-parmeter>.

Published by Oneida Daily Dispatch from Nov. 26 to Nov. 28, 2023.

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

Charles R. Bayer



Charlie Bayer of Washington, DC, passed away at Washington Hospital Center on November 15,

2023, with family by his side. Born May 13, 1949, in Washington, DC, Charlie was the son of the late Audrey and Philip Bayer. He is survived by his long-time partner, Patty McHugh; sons Charlie Bayer (Chandelle) and Chris Bayer (Jackie); their mother, Kathy Bayer; sons Justin Bayer and Sanders Bayer; and five beloved grandchildren. Brother of the late Joanna Callanan, he is also survived by sisters Carolyn Bayer-Broring (Tom), Barbara Means (Jim); and brother Philip Bayer (Linda); as well as a number of nieces and nephews.

After 33 years of service, Charlie retired from the office of the Architect of the Capitol in 2005. He was a former Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, Post 8, on Capitol Hill, where he volunteered and worked as a bartender and bar manager for many years until the Pandemic. A competitive pool player, Charlie enjoyed time with family and friends, and watching dolphins from Dewey Beach and many islands in the Caribbean over the years.

A funeral mass is planned for Friday, January 5, 2024, at 2 p.m. at St. Peter's Church, 313 2nd St. SE, Washington, DC 20003, followed by a reception at the American Legion, 224 D St. SE, Washington, DC 20003. Interment is private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may

be made to [The American Cancer Society](#) or a [charity of your choice](#). Published by The Washington Post on Nov. 26, 2023.

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

Larry Opat



EAST CHICAGO, IN - Larry Opat age 62, of East Chicago, IN passed away suddenly at his home Wednesday, November 22.

Larry was born and raised in East Chicago to parents Stanley and Theresa Opatkiewicz. Larry was a 1980 graduate of East Chicago Roosevelt. He was an employee of School City of East Chicago.

He was a member of St. Stanislaus Church, Sons of the American Legion post 369 (where he worked Bingo for many years), and EC Goodfellows Club.

Larry is survived by brothers, Mark (Kristine Klus), Jeff (Jan) and Jim (Ellen). Uncle to Kirsten, Kurt, Keith, Kevin, Jacob, Andrew, Mathew, James and Mary. Dear devoted friend to many!!

A visitation will be held Thursday, November 30, 2023 from 3:00-8:00 p.m. at ACEVEZ FUNERAL HOME, HAMMOND location 4404 Cameron Ave. (formerly Anthony & Dziadowicz)

A Funeral Mass will be Friday, December 1, 2023 at St. Stanislaus Church East Chicago at 10:00 a.m. with Msgr. John J. Siekierski officiating.

Closing Prayers and final viewing will be Friday prior to Mass at Acevez Funeral Home, East Chicago location 4918 Magoun Ave. starting at 9:00 a.m.

A private cremation will follow Mass.

For more information, please visit www.acevezfuneralhome.com.

Published by The Times on Nov. 29, 2023.

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

Thomas A. McIntyre Jr.

Thomas A. "Big Mac" McIntyre Jr., 64, of Front Royal, Virginia, passed away at home on Wednesday, November 22, 2023.

A funeral service will be held on Friday, December 1, 2023, at 12

p.m. at Maddox Funeral Home, 105 West Main Street, Front Royal, with Reverend Doug Lowell officiating. Burial will follow at Panorama Memorial Gardens.

Big Mac was born in Front Royal on April 10, 1959, to the late Thomas Sr. and Mazie Henry McIntyre. He was also preceded in death by his sister, Shirley McIntyre Printz.

He retired from the Front Royal Police Department in 2009 and was a member of the Front Royal Sons of the American Legion and an honorary member of the Front Royal VFW.

Survivors include his wife of 43 years, Tammie M. McIntyre; two sons, Thomas A. "Little Mac" III (Crystal) and Kevin Lee McIntyre; sister, Janet McIntyre Hill; and five grandchildren, Hunter Allen McIntyre, Mackenzie Nicole McIntyre, Logan Thomas McIntyre, Camden Lucas McIntyre and Jaisden Ray McIntyre.

Pallbearers will be Hunter McIntyre, Dave Lamb, Tom Ratigan, Dylan Hill, Kent Printz and Andrew Feldhauser.

Honorary pallbearers are Andrew Printz, Adam Printz, Ashton Prince, Ashlee Perry, Mackenzie McIntyre, Logan McIntyre, Camden McIntyre, Jaisden McIntyre, and Christopher Wigington. The honorary pallbearers are listed to honor Big Mac and are not required to assist with the services.

The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

Robert Dale Petrimoulx



Robert Dale "NAPA Bob" Petrimoulx, age 58 of Lake City, passed away November 23, 2023 at home. Bob was born April 29, 1965 in

Cadillac.

Bob graduated from Lake City High School in 1983 and was employed with NAPA in Lake City and Cadillac for thirty years. He actively explored for morels in the spring and enjoyed fishing and hunting. Bob was a member of the Lake City Eagles Lodge and the Sons of the American Legion Post 300 of Lake City.

He is survived by a son, RJ Petrimoulx, his mother, Vicky Ford and father, Robert (Connie) Petrimoulx, a sister, Kelly (Kim) Petrimoulx and a brother, Chris

Petrimoulx. He is also survived by his aunts, uncles, cousins and special friends, Craig (Kathy) Takacs, Amador Valdez, Bob Hager, and his NAPA family.

Bob was preceded in death by his brothers, Tony Crank and Kyle Petrimoulx and his significant other, Brenda Morrissey.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date and burial will take place in the Lake City Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be directed to Hospice of Michigan. The family is being served by the Young-Hold ship Funeral Home in Lake City. Words of comfort and memories may be shared on www.holdshipfuneralhomes.com.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](http://SympathyStore).

Gerald W. Rutger

Gerald W. Rutger, 62, of Flora passed away at 9:25 pm, Sunday, November 26, 2023 at his home in Flora.

Gerald was born on July 19, 1961, in Fairfield, Illinois, the son of Veryl and Faye (Bowlin) Rutger. Gerald had worked many different places in his career with some including, the Hollins Truck Stop in Flora and the Flora Elks. Gerald was a care giver, him and his brother Phillip took care of their parents for many years until they passed away. Gerald and Phillip liked to go fishing and he loved nature, going to Charlie Brown Park in Flora and walking all around it as often as he could. Gerald was a member of the Sons of The American Legion in Flora and had been attending the Flora Assembly of God Church in Flora.

Gerald is survived by 2 brothers: Phillip Rutger of Flora, Veryl (Janet) Rutger, Jr. of Flora; a niece and nephew: Jeffery and Erin Rutger; step-niece: Sarah Skidmore; and many aunts, uncles, and friends.

Gerald was preceded in death by his parents; a sister: Connie Rutger.

Memorial services to celebrate Gerald's life will be held at 12:00 pm, Monday, December 11, 2023 at the McGriff Funeral Home in Louisville with Steve Prather officiating. Burial will follow at the Floral Gardens of Memories Cemetery, Flora. Visitation will be held on Monday morning at the funeral home where friends may call from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the family to help assist with the final expenses.

Larry J. Tiedemann

Larry J. Tiedemann, 74 of Machias, NY and formerly of the City of Tonawanda. Husband of the late Sandra Ann (nee Terranova) Tiedemann who died in 2004, father of Tracie (Jeffery) Blackman, Tina (Robert) Wittmann and Thomas (Jenna) Tiedemann, grandfather of Mackenzie (Harrison), Quinten, Skylar, Hannah, Lydia, Madeline and Julianna and great-grandfather of Maverick, Son of the late Gerald and Madeline Tiedemann, brother of Pamela (late Michael) Sanders, Jerry (Gail), Mark (Janice) and John Tiedemann and the late Michael (living spouse Patricia) Tiedemann. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. Larry was a 1969 graduate of Kenmore West High School.

He was employed by the Williams-ville School Bus Garage for more than 35 years. He was a member of Sons of the American Legion in Machias, NY, the Moose Club in North Tonawanda and was a Life Member of the Delaware Hose Volunteer Fire Co. in Tonawanda.

Calling hours will be held on Tuesday Dec. 5, 2023 from 4-8 PM at JOHN O. ROTH FUNERAL HOME, INC., 25 William St. (between Morgan & Broad Streets) in Tonawanda, where a Funeral Service will be conducted on Wednesday Dec. 6, 2023 at 11 AM. Everyone welcome to attend. Burial will be in Elmlawn Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in memory of Larry may be made to the charity of your choice. Memories and condolences may be shared at www.ROTHFUNERAL.com.

Published by Buffalo News on Dec. 3, 2023.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](http://SympathyStore).

David T. Murray



David T. Murray, 89, of Chillicothe, passed at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, November 30, 2023 at his residence.

He was born March 30, 1934, in Ross County, Ohio to the late George E. and Ethel M. Miller Murray. On June 5, 1954, he married the former Wanda Carol Limle who passed May 3, 2012.

Surviving are children, David A. Murray and his companion, Teresa L. Howard, both of Frankfort and Cheryl E. Murray and life companion, Jennifer Hoover, both of Chillicothe; grandchildren, Bryan

Murray, of Stillwater, OK, Bradley Murray, of Columbus, OH and Paul David Fairbanks, of Portland, OR; great grandchildren, Calvin Murray, and Juliana Murray; and many nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by siblings, Edward Murray, Sadie Murray, Everett Murray, Mildred Smith, Robert Murray, Ruth Cornwell, Violet Clark, Viola Williamson, Dorothy Voytko, Jesse Murray and Lawrence Murray, and a special friend, Barbara Johnson.

David was a 1952 graduate of Twin High School. In 1996, he retired from Mead Paper where he had worked as a Machinist for over 40 years and where he was a member of U.P.I.U. Local 731. David attended First Freewill Baptist Church and also Hilltop Mission. He had served, for many years, as the Chaplain for the Sons of the American Legion at Post 62. David loved attending bluegrass festivals, especially with his close friends, Bill and Jenny Knox and Tim Carle. He also enjoyed hunting, camping, traveling to Texas during the winter months and tinkering in his garage.

Funeral services will be held 12 Noon Wednesday, December 6, 2023 in the WARE FUNERAL HOME with Pastor Mitch Salyers officiating. He will be laid to rest in Floral Hills Memory Gardens by his wife. Family and friends may call at the WARE FUNERAL HOME from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

You may sign his online register at www.warefh.com.

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

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](http://SympathyStore).

Howard L. Spangler

Howard L. Spangler, 79, of Beech Creek, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2023, at the UPMC Williamsport Hospital. Known to all his family and friends as Cork, he was born on Dec. 6, 1943 to Russell L. and Hulda Rhine Spangler.

Howard was a lead bartender at the Castanea Fire Hall for many years and had been an avid Eagles and Phillies fan. He enjoyed collecting \$2 bills and bi-centennial coins.

Howard had served as treasurer for the Sons of the American Legion in Lock Haven for several years. He enjoyed watching old western TV shows and liked older style country music.

He is survived by two sons, Gary L. (Melissa) Spangler and Kevin L.

Spangler; a daughter, Brenda K. (James) Stonerook; a brother, Lewis (Donna) Spangler; and a sister, Shirley Rupert. Also surviving are several grandchildren, great-grandchildren and a number of nieces and nephews.

Howard was preceded in death by a daughter, Lori A. Spangler; and three brothers, Frank, Ron, and James Spangler.

Family and friends will be received in the Gedon Funeral Homes & Cremation Services, LLC, 121 W. Main St., Lock Haven, on Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, from 5-8 p.m. Interment will be at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, memorials will be accepted to the Clinton County SPCA, 33 Mill Hill Road, Lock Haven, PA 17745.

Online thoughts and memories can be made at www.GedonFuneralHomes.com and the Gedon Funeral Homes Facebook page.

RENEW



DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES DECEMBER 31

**RENEW
TODAY!!!**

Don't let the Grinch steal your membership



Daniel J. Seehafer,
National Commander
The American Legion

Dear American Legion Family Members and Friends,

Let me say this in the clearest terms possible: Veterans should feel safe and confident when filing for claims, knowing that no matter who they choose for representation, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reviewed, approved, and accredited that party.

That is why The American Legion opposes the PLUS (Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans) Act. If enacted, the PLUS Act would transition our system of securing benefits for disabled veterans to an unregulated profit-driven industry.

Currently, there are unaccredited third parties that present themselves to veterans as legitimate claims service companies to assist veterans in obtaining their earned benefits. The PLUS Act aims to legalize these companies by allowing automatic accreditation after 90 days regardless of whether VA has completed its verification process. The VA-accreditation program exists to ensure that veterans and their family members receive appropriate representation on their VA benefits claims. The American Legion wants to hold bad actors accountable, not give them a free pass to prey on veterans.

Our team is working hard to protect all veterans from the PLUS Act. In September 2023, The American Legion sent a letter of opposition to the congressional representatives sponsoring the Plus Act and I personally voiced our opposition during my congressional visits just last month.

However, there is legislation that would help veterans elude the clutches of bad actors. In an effort to protect our nation's veterans, The American Legion supports the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act. The legislation would reinstate criminal penalties for unaccredited claim representatives who charge unauthorized fees while

assisting veterans with filing a claim for VA disability compensation benefits.

The American Legion continues to muster support to protect all veterans and their families from claims sharks.

[Join us in telling Congress to support the GUARD Act.](#)

For God and Country,

Dan Seehafer, National Commander
The American Legion

The perils of probate

via Crescendo | November 26, 2023

[LEARN HOW YOUR PLANNED GIFT CAN HELP THE AMERICAN LEGION](#)

"I am an heir of the decedent and here is his will." – Potential Heir

Business Owner passed away on April 5, 1976, with an estate of \$2.5 billion. Many people appeared claiming "I am Business Owner's heir," and submitted wills with themselves as beneficiaries. The court finally determined seven years later that none of the wills were valid and split the estate among 22 of the decedent's cousins. The costs and fees paid to lawyers during administration of Business Owner's estate were in the millions.

Probate Process When a person passes away, it is important to have an organized process to transfer their property. The probate process is an organized method to gather all of the property of the individual, pay bills, determine the appropriate beneficiaries to receive the property and make the actual transfer.

The probate process can be quite easy and rapid for small estates or can last for many years with larger or more complicated estates. Most people do not spend much time thinking about probate. However, if they are potential beneficiaries, probate is a topic of great interest. To the 22 cousins who received multimillion-dollar inheritances, Business Owner's probate process was very interesting.

Probate Players There are at least four general categories of probate players. First, an executor or personal representative is the manager of the estate. Second, an estate attorney is involved to advise the

executor or personal representative on all probate and legal matters. Third, a probate judge will rule on the validity of any will, review many of the actions of the executor and approve the final distributions. Finally, heirs will be the beneficiaries of the estate.

Probate Process The probate process involves eight separate steps to ensure an orderly transfer of all property to the right individuals. Let's assume that Ed Executor and Ellen Attorney were probating the estate of Business Owner.

1. **Accept the Will:** Ed or Ellen would normally submit the will to the court for probate. Usually, there is one final will accepted. However, there are many cases in which individuals wrote their own wills or there was a question about the validity of a given will, resulting in a wills contest. Eventually, the court will determine the validity and meaning of the will. However, for Business Owner's estate, none of the wills were valid and state law determined who received the \$2.5 billion.
2. **Locate Heirs:** Because Business Owner did not have a valid will, Ed Executor needed to locate all of the heirs. However, the 22 cousins still needed to be approved by the court. Under state law, Business Owner's estate was transferred to his relatives. With \$2.5 billion at stake, all of them had attorneys to ensure each cousin received the proper share. Even if Business Owner had signed a valid will, it would have been essential to locate all the heirs. In some cases, the selected recipients had passed away, and their share of the property was distributed to their children or other relatives
3. **Determine the Estate Assets and Values:** Ed Executor was responsible for finding all of Business Owner's estate assets. These included real estate, bank accounts, securities accounts, and other property. Because Business Owner's estate was taxable, all property was valued so that federal taxes could be paid. Finally, the balance of the estate was distributed to the 22 cousins.
4. **Pay Executor and Attorney:** Not surprisingly, Ed Executor and Ellen Attorney were paid a large fee from Business Owner's estate. The costs for the probate process may be quite substantial, and the executor and attorney are always paid. Costs may be as low as 2% of the estate value or may range up to 7% or 8%. However, if there is an estate contest, costs can consume a large portion of the entire estate.
5. **Make Debt Payments:** After determining the nature of the property and the approximate value of Business Owner's estate, Ed Executor also advertised for any claims by creditors. The state probate law determines the period of time and the type

of public notice to be given. If creditors do not file claims against the estate, they risk losing their ability to collect their debts. All debts and taxes are paid before the final distribution.

6. **Resolve Controversies:** Seven years of controversies in Business Owner's estate required continuous attention from Ed Executor and Ellen Attorney. Most of these centered on the submitted wills. If there are any controversies, such as a claim that the final will is invalid due to undue influence of a party who obtained the will, the court must determine the rights of all parties under the will and applicable state law. After seven years, the court decided that none of the wills in Business Owner's estate were valid.
7. **File Income and Estate tax Returns:** Because Business Owner's estate was \$2.5 billion and produced income each year, Ed Executor had to file the final income tax return for Business Owner and annual income tax returns for the estate. Based upon the appraised valuation, Ed and Ellen also filed the estate tax return and paid the estate tax to the IRS.
8. **Distribute Assets to Heirs:** After seven years of court proceedings, payment of estate taxes, court costs, executor fees and attorney fees, the probate judge approved the final distribution order, and the 22 cousins of Business Owner received their inheritance.

Probate problems There are several negative results for which probate has a deservedly bad reputation. First, the process is public. Anyone can obtain the will of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and read her provisions for children Caroline and John Jr.

As was true for Business Owner's estate, the probate process may be both lengthy and expensive. Both time and money can easily be wasted in the bureaucracy of the process.

Probate is also as good and as bad as the judge involved. Judges are people, with the good and bad characteristics of humanity. Some are very dedicated and capable, and some are primarily interested in an early exit to the golf course in the afternoon. Depending on the quality of the judge, the probate process can be easy or quite challenging for the executor and estate attorney.

Finally, the existence of a substantial estate (such as that of Business Owner) invites relatives to submit claims and is fertile ground for developing probate controversies. If there is any question about the validity of the will or there are conflicting methods of transfer of the same property (joint tenancy with one person and attempting to transfer the same property through

a will to a second person), a will contest and probate battle may occur.

Avoiding probate There are multiple methods used to avoid probate. These can be quite successful, but all methods must be coordinated carefully to be certain the overall plan works correctly.

1. **Joint Tenancy with Right of Survivorship:** Under property law, the surviving joint tenant owns the real estate.
2. **Designated Beneficiary:** An insurance policy, IRA, 401(k) or other qualified plan is transferred to the designated beneficiary. There is a contract with the insurance company or retirement plan custodian, and that person agrees to make the transfer to the individual or organization selected by the owner. Typical forms permit the selection of a primary beneficiary and also a contingent beneficiary.
3. **Payable-on-Death (POD) Accounts:** Most states that follow the Uniform Probate Code may allow a "POD" account. Most savings accounts, checking accounts and certificates of deposit are under state law permitted to be transferred to the "payable-on-death" recipient. Many states also permit transfer-on-death (TOD) deeds for real estate. The TOD deed is notarized and recorded. It transfers the property to the beneficiary when the owner passes away. Because real estate transfers may involve title and ownership issues, professional advice is recommended before a TOD deed is signed.
4. **Revocable Living Trust:** Perhaps the most popular method for avoiding probate is a revocable living trust. The grantor is taxable on the assets of the trust, but frequently will transfer a personal residence, securities accounts, and other major assets into the trust. The assets in the trust avoid the probate process.

The American Legion's Planned Giving program is a way of establishing your legacy of support for the organization while providing for your current financial needs. Learn more about the process, and the variety of charitable programs you can benefit, at legion.org/plannedgiving. Clicking on "Learn more" will bring up an "E-newsletter" button, where you can sign up for regular information from Planned Giving.



Post 208 Facebook photo

Legion Family delivers Thanksgiving meals to communities, soon-to-be servicemembers

The American Legion | November 28, 2023

Across the nation, members of the American Legion Family led efforts to bring Thanksgiving meals to members of their communities.

And, in some cases, they also provided a holiday experience for future U.S. servicemembers.

American Legion posts in Illinois opened their facilities to recruits going through basic training at Naval Station Great Lakes. Similar efforts took place in Florida with Navy recruits and in New Jersey with U.S. Coast Guard recruits.

In the Chicago area, American Legion Post 208 (Arlington Heights), Post 525 (Mount Prospect) and Post 974 (Franklin Park) all hosted Navy recruits, bussing them in from their training facility for a break from basic training. The recruits were provided with multi-course Thanksgiving meals, entertainment, games, and an opportunity to call family and friends back home.

Post 208 has hosted the recruits for 23 years. One of this year's guests, Indianapolis native Jason Webb, appreciated the chance to call home. "I got to hear my mother's voice, she was happy," [Webb said](#). "I told her I was going to see her soon. She knows I'm almost done."

In Pensacola, Fla., 25 sailors from NAS Pensacola Corry Station received a Thanksgiving meal from American Legion Post 340.

"I'm sure they are really missing their family. This is their first time away," [Post 340 Legion Family member](#)

[Mary Willemstein said](#). “They miss being around their family and we try to be a family to them.”

And in New Jersey, 50 cadets from the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May were Thanksgiving guests of American Legion Clark-Eliason Post 352 in Somers Point. The post provided lunch and dinner, including a traditional Thanksgiving meal, while the recruits also were able to play games and watch football. It was the 15th year Post 352 has hosted the recruits.

Recruits arrived at the American Legion at 11:30 a.m. sharp and were planning to stick around into the evening enjoying food, mingling with veterans, playing games, and watching the NFL on the three TVs behind the bar.

“Because they are away from home, we can feed them like they’re family, because we’re the closest thing to family,” [Post 352 Commander Robert Frolov said](#). “It’s nice. It lets them be much more comfortable. You’re away from home, but you’re really not away from home.”

The following are a few other examples of how the Legion Family stepped up to assist others over Thanksgiving. Posts are urged to share their stories and pictures at www.legiontown.org.

Arizona. In Safford, Swift-Murphy Post 32 continued its more than 40-year tradition of hosting a community Thanksgiving dinner. The post prepared 30 turkeys and 22 hams, serving more than 500 meals. Of those, 200 were delivered to homebound seniors, as well as first responders working on Thanksgiving.

California. In Salinas, American Legion Post 31 served more than 800 meals to the community, as well as provided to-go meals. More than 30 volunteers contributed to the effort.

Colorado. In Fountain, American Legion Post 38 hosted a free Thanksgiving dinner for the public. And earlier in the month, members of American Legion Riders Chapter 38 delivered Thanksgiving baskets to families in need.

Delaware. In Lewes, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 17 provided gift cards to 30 families in need identified by local schools.

Florida. In Delray Beach, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 65 donated five Thanksgiving dinner baskets to families in need.

Illinois. In Worth, Marrs-Meyer Post 991’s Legion Family provided 43 homes with Thanksgiving baskets that included a frozen turkey, ground beef, chicken, and non-perishables.

Iowa. In Polk City, American Legion Riders Chapter 232’s 12th annual Holiday for Heroes event delivered 450 meal boxes to local veterans. The boxes included turkeys, potatoes, vegetables, rolls and pies.

Maryland. In Cambridge, Dorchester Auxiliary Unit 91’s annual Thanksgiving dinner provided 200 dinners to post members, as well as local first responders. The unit also delivered meals to Legion Family members and other veterans who were homebound, ill or in a nursing home.

Massachusetts. In Gloucester, Capt. Lester S. Wass American Legion Post 3 prepared its annual Thanksgiving dinner that provided nearly 700 delivered meals to residents of Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, Essex, Ipswich, Wenham, and Hamilton.

New York. In Pleasant Valley, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 789 donated 25 pies to the Village Ecumenical Ministries Food Pantry to use in the pantry’s Thanksgiving basket giveaway.

Pennsylvania. In Erie, American Legion Post 571 and the Wesleyville Hose Company teamed up to provide a free Thanksgiving Day dinner to members of the community. The idea for the meal was a collaboration between Post 571 Legionnaire Frank Hall and Wesleyville Hose Company Fire Chief Pete Kloszewski.

“We have been both been deployed, and sometimes you just do not have somewhere to go, and it sure beats having to sit down and have a Hungry-Man Dinner while sitting by yourself,” [Hall said](#). “We need to have comradeship and that is what the purpose of this is.” Hall also praised all those who helped make the meal possible. “The community response has been amazing, the response by the American Legion Family, Wesleyville Hose Company, the entire Borough of Wesleyville, Harborcreek and Lawrence Park has been unbelievable,” he said. “I could not be more proud of the community right now.”

Texas. In Spring Branch, American Legion Post 654 was one of four locations taking part in Operation Turkey. In less than two hours, the post facilitated the delivery of more than 2,700 to area residents in need and first responders who worked on Thanksgiving Day.

West Virginia. In Williamstown, American Legion Post 159 hosted its 18th free Thanksgiving dinner, as

well as delivered meals to Williamstown and Waverly residents.

“It feels really heartwarming, and it feels amazing to touch so many people in the community,” [Post 159 Legion Family member Darla Van Horn said](#). “I said earlier this year that donations this year have been immense from all the sports teams, local businesses, families have just turned out in droves to turn them in. And we really feel it’s important to share this Thanksgiving with so many people in any way we can coming in, having them pick up meals, or delivering something to their area locally.”

Wyoming. In Saratoga, members of American Legion Post 54 staged its fourth late-day free potluck buffet dinner that was open to members, friends, and the public. The post provided five turkeys and one ham, while Legion Family members and others were invited to bring in a side dish. More than 60 people attended the meal.

Seehafer cites ‘common bonds’ during Taiwan visit

[John Raughter](#) | November 30, 2023

American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer met with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen in Taipei today, where the two leaders discussed national security, veterans issues and the importance of the alliance between the United States and the Republic of China.



Official Photo by Makoto Lin / Office of the President

Prior to their meeting, Seehafer was given Taiwan’s prestigious Medal of Honor award by its Veterans Affairs Council.

“There are a few signature moments from a national commander’s term in office that really stand out,” Seehafer said after receiving the honor. “I know that this is one that I will always remember.”

Alluding to the threat to the island posed by the People’s Republic of China, Seehafer referenced President Lincoln’s quote, “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

Seehafer pointed out that the Communist regime in the mainland has “might” when it comes to weapons, but that alone is not enough.

“Taiwan, on the other hand, has ‘right’ on its side,” he said. “Free speech, free elections and the freedom to worship are just a few of our common values. You also have a well-trained and dedicated military, along with powerful friends and allies.”

Seehafer’s Taiwan visit follows a three-day tour of Vietnam, where Seehafer and American Legion National Security Division staff met with U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency personnel.

The American Legion remains committed to achieving a full accounting of all U.S. servicemembers from all war eras who are either imprisoned or listed as missing in action. As part of this commitment, it encourages a return of living POWs, repatriation of the remains of the fallen from war zones abroad, or a determination through convincing evidence that neither is possible, as per [Resolution 22](#) from the 99th National Convention.

Seehafer’s delegation heads to South Korea Saturday, where they will visit U.S. troops before going to Hawaii for memorial observances of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Host a holiday blood drive

The American Legion | November 27, 2023

The American Legion’s annual Holiday Blood Donor Drive is currently underway and runs through Dec. 31. During this time, American Legion Family members are encouraged to give blood and host blood drives as part of the American Legion Blood Donor Program – an organizational effort that has existed since 1946 to help a lifesaving cause. Learn more at legion.org/security/blood.

In 2022, American Legion posts had 59,835 donors donate 100,786 pints of blood.

If your American Legion post, district or department is interested in hosting a blood drive in your community, the American Red Cross recommends [visiting this link](#) to learn more about how to start the process. Additional information about blood donations can also be found at:

- American Red Cross, redcrossblood.org
- American Association of Blood Banks, aabb.org
- Council of Community Blood Centers, givingblood.org



[The American Legion Blood Donor Program](#) recognizes departments in two areas for blood donation efforts: post participation and individual Legionnaire participation. Post participation awards are given to departments with the highest number of participating posts. Individual participation awards are given to departments with the highest percentage of individuals giving blood to the program.

If not for the GI Bill

[Jeff Stoffer](#) | May 19, 2017

Their Park Avenue offices are separated by just a few blocks. Each grew up in a modest household. Both served in the U.S. Army during World War II, European theater. One enlisted; the other was drafted. Each received the Bronze Star. Maurice “Hank” Greenberg, after further service in the Korean War, led history’s largest insurance and financial corporation, American International Group. Henry Kissinger, now an international consultant and best-selling author, famously guided the U.S. State Department through the dusk of Vietnam and into the long, slow thaw of the Cold War. They are friends.

They go to work every day envisioning a bright future for America and the world. And they have something more in common: both agree that if not for the GI Bill, drafted by The American Legion, the world would be a very different place.

The American Legion Magazine recently spoke with Kissinger, whose family fled Nazi Germany in 1938, and Greenberg, now chairman and CEO of C.V. Starr & Co., Inc., a global financial services firm, in their Manhattan offices.

Describe your entry into U.S. military service and early impression of it.

Kissinger: I worked in a shaving-brush factory, and I went to city college at night, which was substantially free. I came to the United States and lived largely in a refugee environment. When I was drafted into the Army, after many different movements, I wound up in the 84th Infantry Division as a rifleman. The 84th Infantry Division came from northern Illinois and southern

Wisconsin. So, I was surrounded there by what I would consider to be fundamental Americans and readily learned day-to-day living with Americans.

Greenberg: I played football in high school, and getting gasoline to travel from one town to another to compete was cut off. So, football season ended very early. The war was on. I couldn’t wait to join. I was 17. I hitchhiked to Newburgh, N.Y., and walked into the enlistment office late in the afternoon, and they said, “Where are you going to stay tonight?” I said, “I don’t know yet.”

They gave me a ticket to New York City to some hotel they had arranged. They said, “Your mother has to sign your enlistment papers.” So, I went outside, and I signed it.

How did the Army influence you early?

Greenberg: When the war ended, I was a tech sergeant. I was 19-and-a-half years old. That’s five stripes – one below master sergeant. Pretty young. I could have gotten a field commission about three months before the war ended. I was in Patton’s Army, XX Corps, and if you got a field commission you had to leave the platoon you were with and go elsewhere. I didn’t want to leave the platoon I’d been with for months, so I refused that.

Kissinger: In the military, you are who you are. It doesn’t matter what you were before, or after. In my life, one of the interesting things was that I had – and still have, obviously – an accent. Some think it’s a trademark. But I was very self-conscious about it. When I entered the Army, nobody ever asked me about my accent in the three-and-a-half years I served. It wasn’t until I got back to Harvard that people started reminding me that I was foreign-born. So, the Army was a great Americanizing experience for me.

How did the GI Bill help you?

Kissinger: Before the war, I could never have dreamt of going to one of the elite schools because I had to work. I was admitted to Harvard and got most of my higher education there, and it was the GI Bill that made that possible.

Greenberg: I was interviewed by West Point after the war and told them I hadn't finished high school. They said they had a prep school I could go to first. I wasn't sure I wanted to start that low down after fighting through a war and being a tech sergeant. I took a commission in the reserves and came back, (but) I had to finish high school first, which was the hardest thing in my life at that time – going back to high school. I went to school in New York City, the Rhodes School. I got a room in New York on West 20th Street for \$5 a week, way over toward the river. I didn't know anybody in New York City. It was a very lonely time. It took a lot of discipline not to go back to the Army right then. I was very tempted to go back but decided to finish, and I did. And I went to college. The GI Bill paid for my high school, undergraduate and law school.

What was college like for veterans at that time?

Kissinger: When I came to Harvard, I was ignorant of the procedures, so I applied in April of the year I wanted to go to Harvard, and you had to apply over a year ahead. They accepted me, but then it turned out they didn't have enough rooms. For the first three weeks, I had to sleep in beds in the gymnasium. I was 24 when I arrived at Harvard, and the (typical) freshmen were 17 or 18. Most of my friends in college were veterans, because of the age difference.

Greenberg: All the universities were jammed with vets. I got into the University of Miami. I knew some guys from my high school who were (there) so I went. I started taking business school courses, and I found that boring. I went into pre-law and then took my first year of law school there. Since I wasn't going to practice down there, I transferred up to New York Law School and graduated. Then the Korean War broke out, and I was recalled almost right away.

How did World War II veterans defy concerns that they wouldn't integrate well?

Kissinger: Veteran students at Harvard were outstanding. They were more disciplined. They had learned how to focus. They had more or less discovered who they were. Most freshmen, or many freshmen, were on a journey of self-discovery. That was natural for combat veterans.

Greenberg: Military experience rounded them out, made them different from what they were before. The discipline. The leadership skills. You have also been through a war. Life-or-death experiences every day. So, your outlook is much different. You mature very quickly, or you don't.

Did it occur to you then that the GI Bill would have such a profound effect?

Greenberg: I thought it would change *me*. I didn't think of the whole country then. I wasn't mature enough, in that way. It had tremendous influence, and I recognize that now.

Kissinger: I am afraid we took it for granted. Now, I realize the enormous impact that the GI Bill had. In those days, we sort of thought it was a benefit we were entitled to. But it was a very creative and original development. Later, I could appreciate The American Legion, not just for the GI Bill, but for keeping the spirit of comradeship alive and for the commitment to American defense, which is such an important characteristic.

Do you think the GI Bill's grass-roots origin contributed to its effectiveness?

Kissinger: It certainly was an important factor in its long-term success, that it was done by people who wanted to make up, to some extent, for the years of service that veterans had given their country. They were focused directly on their immediate necessities.

Greenberg: The number of men and women under arms during World War II was enormous. You couldn't just push them aside. And there was a feeling back home, I think, that we owed something to the people who fought that war. People back home were working in manufacturing, working at building aircraft, tanks ... you name it. The whole country was at war – some in the active war, some on the home front. The whole country mobilized to thank those who did what they had to do.

What made the GI Bill so effective?

Kissinger: The success of the first GI Bill, judging by my own life, was that it was so uncomplicated. You did not have to submit a lot of bureaucratic material. You were not judged by various achievements. You were entitled to it, as a veteran. If you flunked out, that was your problem. But it's one of the most – maybe *the* most – unbureaucratic benefits with which I am familiar ... the automaticity with which you could

form your life, from being in the service to starting your education.

Greenberg: A lot depends on the individual. You have access to education and the benefits you're entitled to, whether it's health care or whatever it may be, even pointing you in the right direction for a job with some help from the government. But a lot of it you have to do yourself. You can't become a slave to government assistance. You are trained to be self-reliant. You have educational benefits, but you have to use them. You can't sit back and say, "What else am I entitled to?" You're trained. Take advantage of it.

What did the GI Bill do for America?

Greenberg: It put us on a growth course. It took a bunch of young men and women and helped them get an education. They were all motivated. They were proud of their country. They were proud of what they had done. They sparked growth that never would have happened. The country as a whole benefited. Yes, we had to rebuild parts of the world afterwards, which created great opportunities. We knew how to manufacture. We knew how to train people. I wouldn't have had the same responsibilities at 19 years old in normal civilian life. At 19, I was 25 mentally.

Kissinger: The big challenge for America at the end of the war was to reintegrate the millions who had interrupted their lives to serve their country and, secondly, to attest American policy to a world in which we could no longer be isolated. So, the GI Bill performed two functions, at least. One, it enabled returning veterans to define a trajectory for themselves, supported by their country. And secondly, it enabled the country – on the basis of this reservoir of people who had been educated both in the war and then in the GI Bill – to perform a responsible international role.

What might have become of each of you, professionally, if not for the GI Bill?

Greenberg: Hard to say. I'd have done something. I might have played professional football.

Kissinger: If not for the GI Bill, I might have become a partner in an accounting firm, which is what I was studying before I was drafted.

What might have become of the United States if not for the GI Bill?

WATCH ON  **YouTube**

Kissinger: America without the GI Bill might have become a very divided country.

Millions of people would have had to find an occupation and an education, above all, on their own. And the consciousness that the country was taking care of us was such an important element. In my case, I know that when I left the service, I could go to college and never have to think five minutes about how I was going to pay for it.

The war involved America in the world. But the fact that our people could educate themselves about the necessities of great power existence was an important element. Before the war, we were essentially an isolationist country. After the war, we became more and more involved in world affairs as we developed an educated citizenry that shaped that relationship.

Greenberg: There is no question what (the GI Bill) did to transition from the war to civilian life and to the economy as a whole. It changed America, really, over a period of a few years. You had this influx of people ... coming back, going to school, getting married, raising families. It made the transition possible. It made the growth of the economy possible. It provided fuel for the economy. And it worked better than anybody thought it would work.

Why hasn't it been copied? We should. What about the vets coming home today? Why shouldn't they have that benefit? Who deserves it more? I think we owe the current group of veterans more than they are getting.

Clearly, many Americans – men and women who served in the military forces during World War II – were eligible for the GI Bill to further their education in one way or another. Like all students, you had to meet certain standards and maintain them, but it opened the door and was an opportunity for millions who otherwise would never have thought of pursuing higher education. Following their education, new economic opportunities presented themselves – better jobs with a brighter future than they would have had to look forward to. It also prepared them to start businesses of their own following their college education, and it was easier for them to raise money to start a new business. It made a generation of Americans more confident in themselves to achieve economic success and changed the economic growth of the United States. Better-educated Americans became a catalyst for economic growth in the country that would never have taken place.

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine



Share how you are delivering holiday cheer, assistance

The American Legion | November 30, 2023

Each year during the holiday season, members of the American Legion Family step up to assist families in need, whether it be through toy and food drives, direct donations or staging events and celebrations that provide gifts and a chance to celebrate the season. They also bring holiday celebrations to active-duty service-members, as well to their communities.

In December, we'd like to highlight some of the ways you in the American Legion Family are delivering on these efforts. Whether it's fundraising, purchasing, and delivering meals and gifts, or taking part in efforts such as Wreaths Across America or our Holiday Blood Donor Program, we'd love to hear how you're impacting your community this holiday season.

Share your efforts on legiontown.org or email them to sbrooks@legion.org. We'd like to highlight one daily through Dec. 25, whether it be on the national website or through our social media channels.

North Korea rebuffs US ambassador's offer to negotiate 'on any topic'

David Choi/Stars and Stripes | November 30, 2023

The sister of North Korea's leader has rejected a United States request for negotiations and likened the idea to a ploy by Washington to infringe on her country's power to govern itself.

Kim Yo Jong, a senior official for the Workers' Party of Korea, said the North's sovereignty "can never be an agenda item for negotiations, and therefore, [Pyongyang] will never sit face to face with the U.S. for that purpose."

Her statement came three days after the U.N. Security Council met Monday to discuss North Korea's nuclear weapons program and its repeated violations of the council's resolutions.



Office of the President of South Korea

A rocket fired Nov. 21 to place a spy satellite in orbit violated resolutions prohibiting Pyongyang from using ballistic-missile technology, deputy spokesman for the secretary-general Farhan Haq said in a news release after the launch.

Monday's meeting included U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who reiterated Washington's offer to North Korea to negotiate "on any topic" without any preconditions.

"[North Korea] can choose the time and the topic, but [it] needs to make that choice," she said.

North Korean Ambassador Kim Song defended the launch, calling it his nation's sovereign right. He said the satellite aims to provide a "clear picture of the dire military moves of the United States."

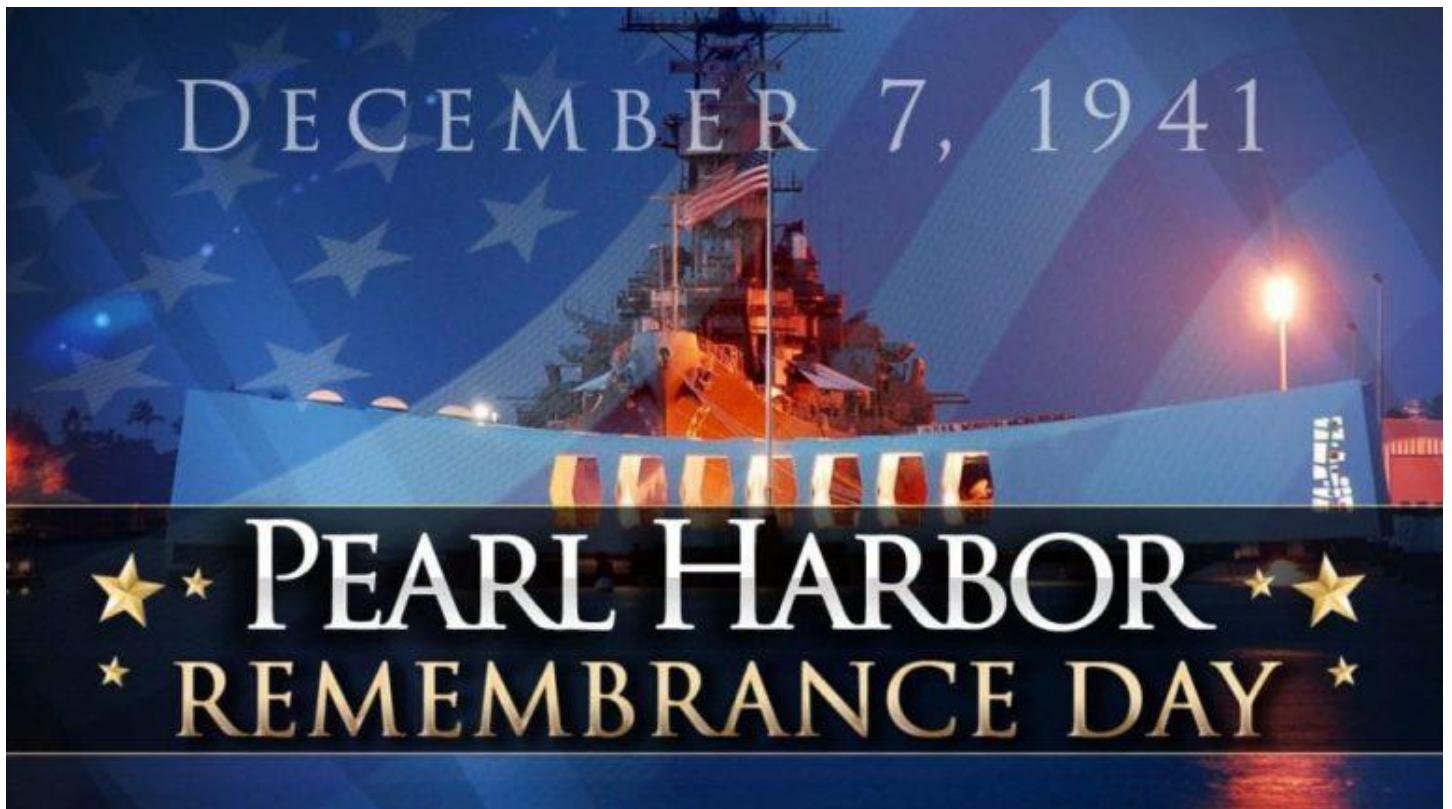
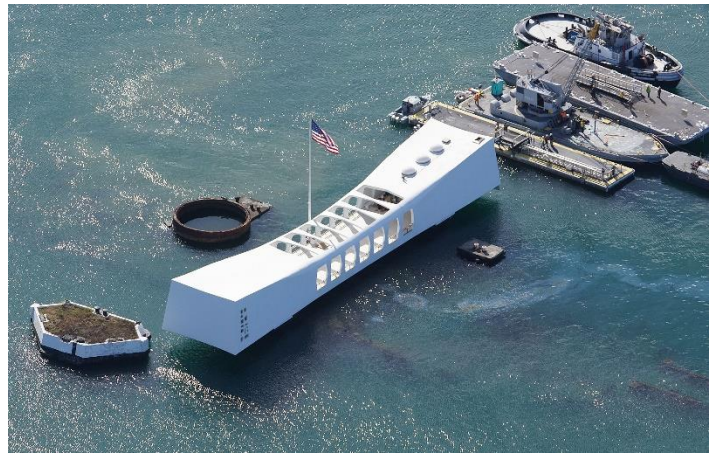
The ambassador said the North is exercising its right to (to/of?) self-defense and mentioned how the U.S. military has sent strategic assets, including aircraft carriers and B-52 bombers, to the peninsula several times this year. On Sunday, South Korean and Japanese warships trained with the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group south of Jeju Island.

Those U.S. "strategic assets are not for defense," Kim Song said.

Thomas-Greenfield replied that such military exercises "are routine and are defensive in nature; and we intentionally reduce risks and pursue transparency by announcing the exercises in advance, including the dates and the activities.

“Unlike [North Korea’s] launches using ballistic missile technology, these actions are not prohibited by U.N. Security Council resolutions,” she said. “So, we reject strongly the disingenuous [North Korean] claim that its missile launches are merely defensive in nature, in response to our bilateral and trilateral military exercises.

North Korea has fired 22 ballistic missiles in 15 days of testing so far this year. The communist regime has also launched three rockets carrying satellites this year; the first two were unsuccessful.



2024 SAL Membership Report as of: November 30, 2023

#	DETACHMENT	2024 DET. YEAR END GOAL	NEEDED TO MEET 45% TARGET 12/13/2023	2024 ACTUAL MBRSHIP	% OF YEAR END GOAL	2024 RENEWAL %
1	HAWAII	120	-42	96	80.00%	72.27
2	FRANCE	168	-54	130	77.38%	69.70
3	SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	-508	1,233	76.54%	67.43
4	LOUISIANA	1,821	-498	1,317	72.32%	67.04
5	WISCONSIN	4,398	-1,112	3,091	70.28%	63.94
6	GEORGIA	4,887	-885	3,084	63.11%	56.36
7	ILLINOIS	13,716	-2,281	8,453	61.63%	58.18
8	SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	-233	939	59.81%	49.81
9	MONTANA	1,091	-152	643	58.94%	55.88
10	MISSISSIPPI	736	-101	432	58.70%	54.67
11	IOWA	4,914	-668	2,879	58.59%	54.61
12	NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	-361	1,607	58.01%	48.60
13	IDAHO	659	-82	379	57.51%	43.38
14	FLORIDA	23,066	-2,811	13,191	57.19%	48.09
15	ALABAMA	2,100	-247	1,192	56.76%	49.01
16	NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	-110	594	55.26%	49.39
17	ARKANSAS	406	-39	222	54.68%	43.32
18	OREGON	1,534	-148	838	54.63%	44.61
19	NEVADA	387	-36	210	54.26%	46.08
20	WYOMING	1,248	-112	674	54.01%	48.11
21	MARYLAND	16,803	-1,497	9,058	53.91%	49.19
22	PUERTO RICO	156	-13	83	53.21%	48.37
23	TENNESSEE	1,792	-144	950	53.01%	44.62
24	CALIFORNIA	11,292	-779	5,860	51.90%	45.30
25	UTAH	460	-30	237	51.52%	48.42
26	OKLAHOMA	1,430	-91	734	51.33%	40.97
27	VIRGINIA	4,367	-254	2,219	50.81%	43.89
28	MINNESOTA	11,435	-643	5,789	50.63%	47.16
29	INDIANA	37,244	-1,963	18,723	50.27%	46.47
30	DELAWARE	2,596	-100	1,268	48.84%	42.45
31	TEXAS	5,783	-217	2,819	48.75%	42.43
32	OHIO	31,690	-1,187	15,447	48.74%	44.77
33	CONNECTICUT	1,865	-64	903	48.42%	41.64
34	KANSAS	6,055	-206	2,931	48.41%	44.76
35	NEW YORK	30,663	-946	14,744	48.08%	44.20
36	RHODE ISLAND	348	-8	165	47.41%	39.48
37	MICHIGAN	26,236	-519	12,325	46.98%	41.78
38	NEW JERSEY	9,662	-84	4,432	45.87%	41.20
39	MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	-5	2,449	45.08%	40.50
40	VERMONT	3,920	-1	1,765	45.03%	41.69
41	NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	42	2,670	44.30%	39.70
42	MISSOURI	3,337	43	1,459	43.72%	38.28
43	ARIZONA	8,595	114	3,754	43.68%	35.96
44	NEBRASKA	6,992	226	2,920	41.76%	39.97
45	COLORADO	2,952	140	1,188	40.24%	34.17
46	ALASKA	1,740	95	688	39.54%	32.35
47	WASHINGTON	2,682	154	1,053	39.26%	29.99
48	KENTUCKY	2,399	163	917	38.22%	32.17
49	PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	4,475	23,761	37.87%	34.69
50	DIST OF COL	91	10	31	34.07%	30.68
51	NEW MEXICO	1,582	188	524	33.12%	24.53
52	LATIN AMERICA	33	5	10	30.30%	12.50
53	MAINE	2,757	414	827	30.00%	26.54
54	WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	406	761	29.35%	24.18
55	PHILIPPINES	79	31	5	6.33%	5.06
Grand Totals:		382,111	-12,723	184,673	48.33%	43.45

2024 SAL Regional Breakdown

Western Region - James R. Fischer, Sr. (CA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
HAWAII	120	96	80.00%
MONTANA	1,091	643	58.94%
IDAHO	659	379	57.51%
OREGON	1,534	838	54.63%
NEVADA	387	210	54.26%
WYOMING	1,248	674	54.01%
CALIFORNIA	11,292	5,860	51.90%
UTAH	460	237	51.52%
ARIZONA	8,595	3,754	43.68%
COLORADO	2,952	1,188	40.24%
ALASKA	1,740	688	39.54%
WASHINGTON	2,682	1,053	39.26%
NEW MEXICO	1,582	524	33.12%
LATIN AMERICA	33	10	30.30%
PHILIPPINES	79	5	6.33%
Totals:	34,454	16,159	46.90%

Southeast Region - Linwood A. Moore (VA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
LOUISIANA	1,821	1,317	72.32%
GEORGIA	4,887	3,084	63.11%
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	939	59.81%
MISSISSIPPI	736	432	58.70%
NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	1,607	58.01%
FLORIDA	23,066	13,191	57.19%
ALABAMA	2,100	1,192	56.76%
ARKANSAS	406	222	54.68%
PUERTO RICO	156	83	53.21%
TENNESSEE	1,792	950	53.01%
VIRGINIA	4,367	2,219	50.81%
TEXAS	5,783	2,819	48.75%
Totals:	49,454	28,055	56.73%

Midwest Region - Terry A. Harris (KS)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	1,233	76.54%
IOWA	4,914	2,879	58.59%
NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	594	55.26%
OKLAHOMA	1,430	734	51.33%
KANSAS	6,055	2,931	48.41%
MISSOURI	3,337	1,459	43.72%
NEBRASKA	6,992	2,920	41.76%
Totals:	25,414	12,750	50.17%

Northeast Region - John R. Cook (NH)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
FRANCE	168	130	77.38%
MARYLAND	16,803	9,058	53.91%
DELAWARE	2,596	1,268	48.84%
CONNECTICUT	1,865	903	48.42%
NEW YORK	30,663	14,744	48.08%
RHODE ISLAND	348	165	47.41%
NEW JERSEY	9,662	4,432	45.87%
MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	2,449	45.08%
VERMONT	3,920	1,765	45.03%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	2,670	44.30%
PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	23,761	37.87%
DIST OF COL	91	31	34.07%
MAINE	2,757	827	30.00%
Totals:	143,078	62,203	43.47%

Central Region - Robert L. Bristo (MN)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
WISCONSIN	4,398	3,091	70.28%
ILLINOIS	13,716	8,453	61.63%
MINNESOTA	11,435	5,789	50.63%
INDIANA	37,244	18,723	50.27%
OHIO	31,690	15,447	48.74%
MICHIGAN	26,236	12,325	46.98%
KENTUCKY	2,399	917	38.22%
WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	761	29.35%
Totals:	129,711	65,506	50.50%

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11/30/23		NATIONAL Donald "JR" Hall, Jr. (MD) National Commander					
Region	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	Quota Date	105% Date
1 Southeast 1, 2, 3, 4	49,454	28,055	(21,399)	56.73%	1,116		
2 Midwest 1, 2, 3, 4	25,414	12,750	(12,664)	50.17%	408		
3 Central 1, 2, 3, 4	129,711	65,506	(64,205)	50.50%	3,667		
4 Western 1, 2, 3, 4	34,454	16,159	(18,295)	46.90%	604		
5 Northeast 1	143,078	62,203	(80,875)	43.47%	4,517		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4	382,111	184,673	(197,438)	48.33%	10,312		

11/30/23		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, 5	4,398	3,091	(1,307)	70.28%	98	5	63.94%		
2 Illinois 1, 2, 3, 5	13,716	8,453	(5,263)	61.63%	472	7	58.18%		
3 Minnesota 1, 2, 3, 4	11,435	5,789	(5,646)	50.63%	97	28	47.16%		
4 Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4	37,244	18,723	(18,521)	50.27%	874	29	46.47%		
5 Ohio 1, 3, 4	31,690	15,447	(16,243)	48.74%	992	32	44.77%		
6 Michigan 1, 3, 4	26,236	12,325	(13,911)	46.98%	1,098	37	41.78%		
7 Kentucky 1	2,399	917	(1,482)	38.22%	33	48	32.17%		
8 West Virginia 1	2,593	761	(1,832)	29.35%	3	54	24.18%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4	129,711	65,506	(64,205)	50.50%	3,667				

11/30/23		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, 4, 5, 6, 7	120	96	(24)	80.00%	1	1	72.27%		
2 Montana 1, 2, 3, 4	1,091	643	(448)	58.94%	4	9	55.88%		
3 Idaho 1, 2, 3, 4	659	379	(280)	57.51%	6	13	43.38%		
4 Oregon 1, 2, 3, 4	1,534	838	(696)	54.63%	43	18	44.61%		
5 Nevada 1, 2, 3, 4	387	210	(177)	54.26%	7	19	46.08%		
6 Wyoming 1, 2, 3, 4	1,248	674	(574)	54.01%	63	20	48.11%		
7 California 1, 2, 3, 4	11,292	5,860	(5,432)	51.90%	230	24	45.30%		
8 Utah 1, 2, 3, 4	460	237	(223)	51.52%	1	25	48.42%		
9 Arizona 1	8,595	3,754	(4,841)	43.68%	156	43	35.96%		
10 Colorado 1, 3	2,952	1,188	(1,764)	40.24%	36	45	34.17%		
11 Alaska 3	1,740	688	(1,052)	39.54%	14	46	32.35%		
12 Washington	2,682	1,053	(1,629)	39.26%	18	47	29.99%		
13 New Mexico	1,582	524	(1,058)	33.12%	25	51	24.53%		
14 Latin America	33	10	(23)	30.30%	-	52	12.50%		
15 Philippines	79	5	(74)	6.33%	-	55	5.06%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4	34,454	16,159	(18,295)	46.90%	604				

11/30/23		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, 5	1,821	1,317	(504)	72.32%	5	4	67.04%		
2 Georgia 1, 2, 3, 4	4,887	3,084	(1,803)	63.11%	6	6	56.36%		
3 South Carolina 1, 2, 3	1,570	939	(631)	59.81%	39	8	49.81%		
4 Mississippi 1, 2, 3, 4	736	432	(304)	58.70%	-	10	54.67%		
5 North Carolina 1, 2, 3, 4	2,770	1,607	(1,163)	58.01%	21	12	48.60%		
6 Florida 1, 2, 3	23,066	13,191	(9,875)	57.19%	755	14	48.09%		
7 Alabama 1, 2, 3, 4	2,100	1,192	(908)	56.76%	25	15	49.01%		
8 Arkansas 1, 2, 3, 4	406	222	(184)	54.68%	23	17	43.32%		
9 Puerto Rico 1, 2, 3, 4	156	83	(73)	53.21%	2	22	48.37%		
10 Tennessee 1, 2, 3	1,792	950	(842)	53.01%	16	23	44.62%		
12 Virginia 1, 2, 3, 4	4,367	2,219	(2,148)	50.81%	143	27	43.89%		
13 Texas 1, 2, 3, 4	5,783	2,819	(2,964)	48.75%	81	31	42.43%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4	49,454	28,055	(21,399)	56.73%	1,116				

11/30/23		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, 4, 5, 6	1,611	1,233	(378)	76.54%	20	3	67.43%		
2 Iowa 1, 2, 3, 4	4,914	2,879	(2,035)	58.59%	54	11	54.61%		
3 North Dakota 1, 2, 3, 4	1,075	594	(481)	55.26%	4	16	49.39%		
4 Oklahoma 1, 2, 3, 4	1,430	734	(696)	51.33%	20	26	40.97%		
5 Kansas 1, 2, 3, 4	6,055	2,931	(3,124)	48.41%	186	34	44.76%		
6 Missouri 1, 2, 3	3,337	1,459	(1,878)	43.72%	103	42	38.28%		
7 Nebraska 1, 2, 3	6,992	2,920	(4,072)	41.76%	21	44	39.97%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4	25,414	12,750	(12,664)	50.17%	408				

11/30/23		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, 6	168	130	(38)	77.38%	4	2	69.70%		
2 Maryland 1, 2, 3, 4	16,803	9,058	(7,745)	53.91%	427	21	49.19%		
3 Delaware 1, 4	2,596	1,268	(1,328)	48.84%	110	30	42.45%		
4 Connecticut 1, 2, 3, 4	1,865	903	(962)	48.42%	74	33	41.64%		
5 New York 1, 3, 4	30,663	14,744	(15,919)	48.08%	1,634	35	44.20%		
6 Rhode Island 1, 2, 3, 4	348	165	(183)	47.41%	-	36	39.48%		
7 New Jersey 1, 2, 3, 4	9,662	4,432	(5,230)	45.87%	65	38	41.20%		
8 Massachusetts 1, 3, 4	5,432	2,449	(2,983)	45.08%	144	39	40.50%		
9 Vermont 1, 2, 3	3,920	1,765	(2,155)	45.03%	141	40	41.69%		
10 New Hampshire 1, 2	6,027	2,670	(3,357)	44.30%	205	41	39.70%		
11 Pennsylvania	62,746	23,761	(38,985)	37.87%	1,580	49	34.69%		
12 Dist. of Columbia	91	31	(60)	34.07%	6	50	30.68%		
13 Maine	2,757	827	(1,930)	30.00%	127	53	26.54%		
TOTALS 1	143,078	62,203	(80,875)	43.47%	4,517				

11/30/23		2023 SUPER SIX STANDINGS							
Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1 Florida 1, 2, 3, 4	23,066	13,191	(9,875)	57.19%	755	14	48.09%		
2 Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4	37,244	18,723	(18,521)	50.27%	874	29	46.47%		
3 Ohio 1, 3, 4	31,690	15,447	(16,243)	48.74%	992	32	44.77%		
4 New York 1, 3, 4	30,663	14,744	(15,919)	48.08%	1,634	35	44.20%		
5 Michigan 1, 4	26,236	12,325	(13,911)	46.98%	1,098	37	41.78%		
6 Pennsylvania	62,746	23,761	(38,985)	37.87%	1,580	49	34.69%		
TOTALS	211,645	98,191	(113,454)	46.39%	6,933				

National Totals 1, 2, 3, 4	382,111	184,673	(197,438)	48.33%	10,312		43.45%		
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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%



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P.O. BOX 1055, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055 * WWW.LEGION.ORG/SONS * P: 317-630-1205

Stand for the Four Pillars, stand for the Legion Family

Greetings, Sons of The American Legion,

We are off and working to make 2023-24 a great year! What an honor to be elected as your national commander and be able to represent my grandfather's service in the Army during World War II. "Representing More Than Me" is my slogan for the year because I truly believe that is what the Sons of The American Legion should be all about. As we sign the membership paper it is a commitment to pay respect to our family member's service in our military. Let's make sure that our commitment is worth the sacrifices they made.

I believe in the Four Pillars of our organization, and what they stand for. The American Legion was built believing in Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Americanism, Children & Youth and National Security and they are still the core beliefs of what the American Legion Family stands for. I have issued a commander's challenge to all Squadrons to support the Four Pillars and become a National Four Pillar Squadron. To do so, all you need to do is raise one dollar per member each for Operation Comfort Warriors (VA&R), the Child Welfare Foundation (Children & Youth) and your department's Boys State program (Americanism) and hold a blood drive (National Security). You will then receive an award for being a National Four Pillar Squadron. That is not that hard to do, if we plan and work to get it done.

I believe that the Sons of The American Legion can reach new heights and crush our records for hours volunteered and donations. It will take all of us working and believing in the work we do to help our veterans, children, and community. Aaron Tippin sang a song that said, "You've got to stand for something or you will fall for anything." Let's stand for what is right and show that our family's service is worth all of us being the best Son we can be. "Be The One" in more ways than one.

Sincerely,

Donald L. "JR" Hall, Jr.
National Commander
Sons of The American Legion

"Representing More Than Me"

**NATIONAL COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE
NATIONAL FOUR PILLAR SQUADRON CRITERIA & VALIDATION FORM**

Children and Youth

Donate \$1.00 for Squadron's membership total as of July 31, 2023 to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. *Please list check # and submission date:*

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

Donate \$1.00 for Squadron's membership total as of July 31, 2023 to The American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors. *Please list check # and submission date:*

Americanism

Donate \$1.00 for Squadron's membership total as of July 31, 2023 to your home Department's American Legion Boys State Program. *Please list check # and submission date:*

National Security

Host a blood drive or donate \$1.00 for Squadron's membership total as of July 31, 2023 payable to the hosting organization of the blood drive. *Please list date blood drive held, quantity of blood donated & recipient organization and/or list check # and submission date:*

Squadron Name:

Squadron No:

Squadron Address:

Submitted By:

Title:

Return Application to:

Thomas Deal, 1434 Clayton Street, Perryville, MD 21903
(email) tom.deal@verizon.net