

## American Legion multiyear membership is here

The American Legion | December 4, 2023

Eliminate the yearly hassle of remembering to renew your American Legion membership by taking advantage of the new multiyear membership available to current and potential members. Legionnaires needing to renew for 2024 or veterans joining the organization for the first time can lock-in a three-year membership by visiting [legion.org/renew](https://legion.org/renew) or [legion.org/join](https://legion.org/join).

A multiyear membership was approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion during the organization's Spring Meetings last May. Resolution 1: Purchase of Multiple Years of Membership approves "a five-year pilot program offering the purchase of three consecutive 12-month member terms at the then current dues rate."

### Here is what you need to know about the three-year membership:

- Multiyear membership sign-up is only available on the national American Legion website. Current or potential members cannot renew or join for a three-year membership at the post level or through MyLegion.org.
- Renew now with a three-year membership by visiting [legion.org/renew](https://legion.org/renew).

- Join now with a three-year membership by visiting [legion.org/join](https://legion.org/join).
- Legionnaires already renewed for 2024 will soon be able to renew under the multi-year membership starting with the 2025 membership year.
- Payment for the three-year membership will be upfront.
- There is not a discounted rate with the three-year membership.

- Membership cards will still be sent annually by Legion posts.

- Those who sign up for a multiyear membership will not receive a renewal notice during the time they have signed up for the multiyear membership.

Please note that the multiyear membership will work just like PUFL. Whatever rate the member renews at is the what the post/department/national will receive for the duration of that timeframe. For example, if a member renews today (before national per capita \$5 dues increase come July 1, 2024), National will receive \$18.50 for the next three years. Let's say the department's per capita is currently \$10 and is going to raise to \$15 come July 1, 2024. The department will receive the \$10 for the next three years. Once the member renews after the three year renewal is up, the renewal rate will adjust to the rate at that time.

# Round-Up

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Donald "JR" Hall, Jr.

National Commander

# REPRESENTING

# More

# THAN ME

## Remembering the Greatest Generation

**Norman Lear, whose comedies changed the face of TV, is dead at 101**

*As the producer of "All in the Family" and many other shows, Mr. Lear showed that it was possible to be topical, funny, and immensely popular.*

Richard Severo and Peter Keepnews  
[The New York Times](#) | December 6, 2023

Norman Lear, the television writer, and producer who introduced political and social commentary into situation comedy with "All in the Family" and other shows, proving that it was possible to be topical as well as funny while attracting millions of viewers, died on Tuesday at his home in Los Angeles. He was 101.

A spokeswoman for the family, Lara Bergthold, confirmed the death.

Mr. Lear reigned at the top of the television world through the 1970s and into the early '80s, leaving a lasting mark with shows that brought the sitcom into the real world.

"The Jeffersons" looked at the struggles faced by an upwardly mobile Black family; a very different Black family on "Good Times" dealt with poverty and discrimination. The protagonist of "Maude" was an outspoken feminist; the heroine of "Mary Hartman, Mary

Hartman” was plagued by all manner of modern-day problems, not least her own neurosis.

“You looked around television in those years,” Mr. Lear said in [a 2012 New York Times interview](#), referring to the middle and late 1960s, “and the biggest problem any family faced was ‘Mother dented the car, and how do you keep Dad from finding out’; ‘the boss is coming to dinner, and the roast’s ruined.’ The message that was sending out was that we didn’t have any problems.”

Mr. Lear’s shows sent different messages, far more in tune with what was actually happening in those turbulent times. His crowning achievement was “All in the Family,” and his greatest creation was Archie Bunker, the focus of that show and one of the most enduring characters in television history.

An unapologetic bigot who was seemingly always angry at one minority group or another (and usually at least one family member as well), Archie, memorably portrayed by [Carroll O’Connor](#), was also, with his malaprops, his mangled syntax and his misguided enthusiasm, strangely likable.

**A Sitcom Shockwave.** “All in the Family” sent a shock through the sleepy world of the sitcom with one tart, topical episode after another from the moment it premiered on CBS on Jan. 12, 1971.

Even now, more than 50 years later, there are critics who say that this date should live in infamy, that ABC was right when it turned down the show out of fear that it would offend too many people. Archie, in this view, was a fanatic who made narrow-mindedness seem appealing.

But Mr. Lear, who adapted “All in the Family” from a British sitcom and based Archie in part on his own father, saw it differently. “I’ve never known a bigot who didn’t have something endearing,” he once said.

Mr. Lear went on to create a television empire and to become politically active, notably with his founding of the liberal advocacy organization People for the American Way, the kind of organization that Archie Bunker would have enjoyed sneering at.

Archie had choice words for all races, creeds and sexual orientations (except his own), and he didn’t spare his family. His sweet and dignified wife, Edith ([Jean Stapleton](#)), was a “dingbat”; his daughter, Gloria (Sally Struthers), was “a weepin’ Nellie”; his liberal son-in-law, Michael Stivic (Rob Reiner), was a “meathead” and, on occasion, a “dumb Polack.” Strictly a law-and-order guy, Archie also voiced strong reservations about what he saw as campus subversives, welfare chiselers and bleeding hearts.

Such pronouncements were scandalous in the prime-time television world of the day. But Mr. Lear had found a gold mine.

“All in the Family” ran until 1979 and dominated the ratings for most of that time. More important, it established a template for television comedy by mixing political and social messages, as well as moments of serious drama, with the laughter.

The Lear philosophy was further developed in two shows built around characters who originally appeared on “All in the Family”: “Maude” and “The Jeffersons.”

“Maude,” which ran from 1972 to 1978 on CBS, centered on Edith Bunker’s cousin Maude Findlay ([Bea Arthur](#)), who was as much a doctrinaire liberal as Archie was a determined denizen of

the far, far right. The show dealt with alcoholism, pot smoking, abortion (Maude herself had one, in a two-part episode that [generated outrage](#) as well as applause) and other subjects to which that quick-tongued title character could apply her shrill wisdom.

George Jefferson ([Sherman Hemsley](#)), the central character of “The Jeffersons,” was a Black man who ran a successful dry-cleaning business in Archie’s neighborhood and whose disdain for white people rivaled Archie’s for Black people. “The Jeffersons,” the story of George’s life with his newly moneyed family after they moved to the East Side of Manhattan, ran on CBS from 1975 to 1985.

Not all of Mr. Lear’s shows grew out of Archie’s universe. One that did not, “Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman,” raised as many eyebrows as “All in the Family.” A five-episodes-a-week spoof of soap operas, “Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman” was the story of a





television-obsessed housewife (Louise Lasser in the title role) in the fictional small town of Fernwood, Ohio, who had more than her share of calamity: Her grandfather was a flasher, her mother was a flake, her husband was cheating on her, their daughter was kidnapped, and Mary herself had a breakdown on live TV.

“Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman” was too hot for the networks. Mr. Lear syndicated it himself, and in most markets, it was on after the late news.

He said he thought of the show as “affirmative” and its characters as “survivors.” But for all the waves they made, they did not survive long.

The show made its debut in 1976, Ms. Lasser left the next year, and, after being replaced for the summer by the talk-show parody “Fernwood 2-Night” (which later morphed into “America 2-Night”) and then returning without her as “Forever Fernwood,” it was gone by early 1978.

Other Lear shows had longer lives. “Sanford and Son,” starring the longtime Black comedian [Redd Foxx](#) as an irascible junk dealer — and, like “All in the Family,” based on a successful British sitcom — ran on NBC from 1972 to 1977. “One Day at a Time” (CBS, 1975-84) concerned a divorced woman ([Bonnie Franklin](#)) living on her own with two teenage daughters. “Good Times” (CBS, 1974-79), a spinoff of “Maude,” was the story of a hard-working Black woman ([Esther Rolle](#)) struggling to raise a family in a Chicago housing project — at first with her husband (John Amos) and then, when Mr. Amos was let go, as a widow. (Ms. Rolle herself left the show after the fourth season, unhappy with the direction it had taken, but returned a year later.)

**Son of a Salesman.** Norman Milton Lear was born on July 27, 1922, in New Haven, Conn., to Herman and Jeanette (Seicol) Lear. His father was a salesman of various products who was not very good at selling much of anything, who sometimes ran afoul of the law, and who had, his son later recalled, more than a hint of Archie in him. He would tell his wife to “stifle” herself, just as Archie would with Edith, and more than once told Norman, “You are the laziest white kid I ever saw.”

Raised mostly in Hartford, Norman graduated from Weaver High School there in 1940 and attended Emerson College in Boston but left shortly after the United States entered World War II to enlist in the Army Air Forces. He rose to technical sergeant and flew 52 missions as a radioman, most from a base near

Foggia, Italy. He received the Air Medal with four oak-leaf clusters.



photo courtesy Pinterest

After the war, millions of servicemen and women took advantage of the G.I. Bill of Rights to attend college, but Mr. Lear decided he would not return to Emerson. With the help of an uncle who was a press agent, he got a job with the publicity firm of George and Dorothy Ross, who had many clients in the theater. He lasted a year before being fired for planting one too many items that were demonstrably false.

He found a way to put his imagination to better use after he and his first wife, Charlotte, moved to Los Angeles in 1949. For a while he and a friend, Ed Simmons, worked as door-to-door salesmen. Eventually they started to write comedy routines together.

Their break came when Mr. Lear called the agent for the popular nightclub entertainer [Danny Thomas](#), who would later become a TV star, and got his home phone number by pretending to be a New York Times reporter. Mr. Thomas appreciated the boldness of the ploy. He also liked the routine the two men wrote for him and purchased it.

Television in its infancy needed material of all kinds, and Mr. Lear and Mr. Simmons soon became writers for [Dean Martin](#) and [Jerry Lewis](#), who were among the rotating hosts of “The Colgate Comedy Hour.” They went on to write for “[The Martha Raye Show](#)” (which Mr. Lear directed as well), after which they went their separate ways. Mr. Lear wrote and produced “The George Gobel Show.”

In 1958, Mr. Lear and his fellow writer [Bud Yorkin](#) formed Tandem Productions — so named, they said, because they thought of themselves as not unlike two men going uphill on a tandem bicycle. The company produced the singer [Andy Williams](#)’s long-running variety show, as well as many television specials and several movies.

Mr. Lear wrote the screenplay for the Tandem film [“Come Blow Your Horn”](#) (1963), starring Frank Sinatra, directed by Mr. Yorkin and based on a [Neil Simon](#) play. His script for [“Divorce, American Style”](#) (1967), starring Dick Van Dyke and [Debbie Reynolds](#) and also directed by Mr. Yorkin, was nominated for an Academy Award.

Mr. Lear was one of the writers of “The Night They Raided Minsky’s” (1968), a celebration of the glory days of burlesque directed by [William Friedkin](#). And he wrote and directed “Cold Turkey” (1971), also starring Mr. Van Dyke, about a town that quits cigarettes en masse to win a \$25 million prize. He might have remained a reasonably successful but relatively obscure screenwriter and occasional director had he and Mr. Yorkin not learned about a BBC series called “Till Death Us Do Part.”

That show, about an outspoken bigot and his family, was a hit in England. They thought they could adapt it for an American audience.

Mr. Lear wrote a script modeled on “Till Death Us Do Part,” and he and Mr. Yorkin shot two pilot episodes for ABC. The network, however, rejected the show, originally titled “Justice for All” (the lead character was originally named Archie Justice), and CBS almost did, too, but [Robert D. Wood](#), the president of CBS Television at the time, had faith in the idea. He fought for it and put the show, by then named “All in the Family,” on the air.

**A Hot-Button Hit.** Some critics embraced the show; many did not. [John Leonard](#), writing in Life magazine under his pen name Cyclops, called it “wretched.” [Fred Ferretti](#) of The New York Times wrote that its ethnic slurs “shock because one is not used to hearing them shouted from the television tube during prime-time family programs.” They “don’t make one laugh,” he added, “so much as they force self-conscious, semi-amused gasps.”

But the public liked it. After being moved from Tuesday to Saturday, it became the top-rated show on television, and while moving in and out of different spots on the schedule, it remained at the top for five consecutive seasons. In March 1972, The Times reported

that at 8 p.m. every Saturday, 60 percent of all television sets in America were turned to it, and from 50 million to 60 million viewers were watching — among them [Sammy Davis Jr.](#), who rearranged his performing schedule so that he could watch in his dressing room. Mr. Davis made a memorable [guest appearance](#), as himself, on an episode of the show that year, in which he famously took Archie by surprise by kissing him on the cheek.

Mr. Davis expressed amazement that anyone would be insulted by “All in the Family,” but over the years many groups said they were — and not just ethnic groups. Some older Americans, for instance, took offense to an episode in which two people were married in a nursing home and the bride fell asleep. Mr. Lear agreed not to permit its rebroadcast. It was one of the few occasions when he seemed to find merit in the complaints of his critics.

The debates never really stopped, but the show continued to garner high ratings into the late 1970s. Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers left after the 1977-78 season, and “All in the Family” went off the air in 1979. Mr. O’Connor continued to play Archie on “Archie Bunker’s Place,” which made its debut that fall in the same time slot, focusing on Archie as the proprietor of a neighborhood bar.

Jean Stapleton appeared on a few episodes of the new show before deciding, as she put it, that if she continued to play Edith Bunker “people will never think of me as anyone else.” When the second season began, viewers learned that Edith had died. “Archie Bunker’s Place” remained on the air until 1983.

“All in the Family” and its various cast members, writers and directors won 22 Emmy Awards, including three for Mr. Lear. In 1972, when the show won seven, [Johnny Carson](#), that year’s host, called the Emmy telecast “the Norman Lear show.” Mr. Lear’s shows were so successful for so long that [Bob Hope](#) once remarked, “We can all be proud of TV and its owner, Norman Lear.”

But Mr. Lear also had his share of flops. In 1975, his “Hot L Baltimore,” a sitcom set in a run-down hotel and based on a play by [Lanford Wilson](#), lasted 13 weeks on ABC. And after a few more short-lived shows, his hot streak was over by the mid-1980s. Some later projects — among them “704 Hauser” (1994), about a Black family living in Archie Bunker’s former home — were on the air for only a few weeks; others never got off the ground.

**Working Till the End.** Mr. Lear nevertheless kept his hand in television. In 2003, he helped write a few episodes of “South Park,” the taboo-breaking animated series that was the “All in the Family” of its day. (The show’s creators, Matt Stone and Trey Parker, have said that their bile-spewing character Eric Cartman is partly based on Archie Bunker.)

In 2009, Mr. Lear developed a series about professional wrestling for HBO, although it was not picked up. For several years he found no takers for his proposed series about retirees in Southern California, “Guess Who Died?” that changed in 2017, when NBC committed to produce a pilot, but a year later the network declined to pick up the show.

Still working into his 90s, Mr. Lear was the executive producer of a new version of “One Day at a Time,” centered on a Latino family, for Netflix. That series made its debut in 2017, to enthusiastic reviews, and lasted three seasons.

In July 2021, on his 99th birthday, TBS announced that it would develop a reboot of “Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman,” starring Emily Hampshire, with Mr. Lear as an executive producer. The show has not yet begun production, but at his death Mr. Lear had other projects in the works, including an animated version of “Good Times,” a reboot of “Who’s the Boss?” and a sitcom, starring Laverne Cox and the comedian George Wallace, about a man who learns that his adult son has transitioned.

In May 2019, Mr. Lear and Jimmy Kimmel hosted a TV special on which episodes of “All in the Family” and “The Jeffersons” were recreated live by an all-star cast, including Woody Harrelson as Archie Bunker and Jamie Foxx as George Jefferson. The special was produced by Mr. Lear, Mr. Kimmel, and others as part of a deal Mr. Lear had signed with Sony that included an option to reimagine his past shows and potentially produce reboots. A second special, recreating episodes of “All in the Family” and “Good Times,” aired that December; a third, recreating episodes of two other series Mr. Lear’s company had produced, “The Facts of Life” and “Diff’rent Strokes,” was broadcast in 2021.

“Live in Front of a Studio Audience: Norman Lear’s ‘All in the Family’ and ‘The Jeffersons’” won an Emmy Award, making Mr. Lear, at 97, the oldest Emmy winner in history. It was his fifth Emmy but his first in 46 years. (The others had all been for “All in the Family.”) He broke his own record by winning another Emmy the next year for “Live in Front of a Studio Audience: ‘All in the Family’ and ‘Good Times.’”

**Honors and Activism.** His other honors included lifetime achievement awards from the Producers Guild of America, the Television Critics Association and PEN Center USA. He was among the first inductees in the Television Academy Hall of Fame in 1984, and he won Peabody Awards in 1977 (for “All in the Family”) and 2016 (for his life’s work). In 1999, President Bill Clinton awarded him a National Medal of Arts.

Mr. Lear was named a recipient of a Kennedy Center Honor in 2017. He attended the ceremony in Washington but skipped the reception at the White House, citing his unhappiness with the policies of the Trump administration.

“This is a presidency that has chosen to neglect totally the arts and humanities — deliberately defund them — and that doesn’t rest pleasantly with me,” he said in [an interview](#) with The Times.

Mr. Lear turned his attention back to movies in 1982, when he, Mr. Yorkin and Jerry Perenchio bought Avco Embassy Pictures. The newly renamed Embassy Communications released films, including Ingmar Bergman’s “Fanny and Alexander” (1982) and the acclaimed mock documentary “This Is Spinal Tap” (1984), directed by the “All in the Family” alumnus Rob Reiner.

In 1985, after Mr. Lear acquired Mr. Yorkin’s share, he and Mr. Perenchio sold Embassy and Tandem to the Coca-Cola Company for \$485 million. That same year, Mr. Lear founded Act III Communications, named to signify the third act of his life. Act III’s most notable productions were two other Rob Reiner films, “Stand by Me” (1986) and “The Princess Bride” (1987).

Mr. Lear entered the music business in 1999, when he and a partner acquired the Concord Music Group. (The company merged with Village Roadshow Entertainment Group in 2008 and was sold to Wood Creek Capital Management in 2013.)

Mr. Lear never made a secret of his liberal leanings, but he became increasingly active politically with the founding of People for the American Way in 1980 as a response to the Moral Majority and other voices on the right. The organization’s efforts have included opposing a constitutional amendment barring desecration of the American flag, joining lawsuits on behalf of abortion rights, and publishing the book “Hostile Climate: Report on Anti-Gay Activity.”



In 1985, after almost 30 years of marriage, Mr. Lear and his second wife, Frances, reached a divorce settlement estimated at \$100 million or more, money she used to found Lear's magazine. (The magazine went out of business after six years.) He later married Lyn Davis, a psychologist, who survives him.

He is also survived by their son, Benjamin; their daughters, Brianna and Madeline Lear; a daughter from his first marriage, Ellen Lear; two daughters from his second marriage, Kate and Maggie Lear; and four grandchildren.

#### [Frances Lear died in 1996.](#)

Mr. Lear's resources remained formidable even after his divorce, and he continued to give both money and time to numerous causes.

In 1989, he founded the Business Enterprise Trust to promote socially responsible business behavior and was among the founders of the Environmental Media Association, which encourages entertainment industry efforts to educate people about environmental issues. In 2003, he founded Declare Yourself, a non-profit organization to motivate people between the ages of 18 and 29 to register to vote.

His \$5 million pledge to the University of Southern California in the 1999-2000 academic year helped establish the Norman Lear Center at the university's Annenberg School for Communication, which offers a multidisciplinary program for the study of entertainment as a central component of 21st-century life.

In 2014, he published his autobiography, "Even *This I Get to Experience*." In the process of writing it, he told The New York Times, "I began to realize how hard it had been to be a human being."

He was also the subject of a documentary, "Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You," released in 2016.

On July 27, 2022, the day he turned 100, The Times published a guest essay by Mr. Lear in which he reflected on the state of the nation and observed, "To be honest, I'm a bit worried that I may be in better shape than our democracy is."

For all his political activism, Mr. Lear knew that he would be best remembered for his work in television. Interviewed by The Los Angeles Times in 2009, he offered a measured assessment of the impact shows like "All in the Family" had on society.

"I can't honestly say I can see anywhere where we changed anything," he said. "But what I have are thousands of memories of people relating to me that we made them talk. And you know, the funny thing is, people are still talking."

*Richard Severo, a Times reporter from 1968 to 2006, [died](#) in June. Alex Traub contributed reporting.*

## Joseph Pellegrino

[Marnie Crawford Samuelson](#) | December 6, 2023

In a *Provincetown Independent* profile of Joe Pellegrino written by Amelia Roth-Dishy in honor of his 100th birthday, he reflected on his long life.



Joseph Pellegrino

Marnie Crawford Samuelson

When it's over, he said, "I'll be reunited with my wife and my son spiritually," a statement he quickly qualified by adding, "if you believe in a spiritual life, life thereafter, hereafter — whatever." His wife of 66 years, Irene, died in 2008, and his son Tom died at 78 in May 2023.

"You think about things like that," he said, and "you try to find an answer, but there is no answer." The best part of turning 100, he said, "is being alive."

Joseph A. Pellegrino died peacefully at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis on Nov. 19, 2023, surrounded by his family. He turned 100 on July 4.

Joe was born in Cambridge, the sixth of Francesco and Maria Pellegrino's eight children. He said his parents spoke Italian with their first five children, but after they became American citizens, they insisted on speaking only English with Joe and the two children who followed.

In the summer of 1938, Joe's Cambridge neighbor Louis Morea took him to the Cape for a week's

vacation and introduced him to his cousin Irene, who lived in Wellfleet. “It was love at first sight,” Joe said. “Bam. She’s the girl for me.”

The couple married at the American Legion Hall in Wellfleet on Dec. 12, 1942. The following April, Joe enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the 15th Air Corps as a supply man. He served in Naples, Italy, with some regrets for his lost opportunity to learn Italian when he was a boy, and he was in line to be deployed to Okinawa in 1945 when the atom bombs were dropped on Japan and the war ended.

After the war, Joe returned to Wellfleet, where he built his family home in 1947 at 10 Cove Road. There, he and Irene raised their four children, Thomas, Joseph, Norman, and Marie. He later built a house for each of his children, who all remained in Wellfleet. Joe found that fact “very gratifying,” Roth-Dishy wrote.

Joe lived a life committed to family and Wellfleet community life. “Joe was a home builder, carpenter, jack of all trades, Wellfleet selectman, committee member, member of the American Legion and the VFW, Little League baseball coach, Boy Scout troop leader, and he ran roller skating at the old American Legion Hall,” his son Norman said.

He would raise money for the American Legion every year by selling American flags before the Fourth of July parade. “The Legion honored Joe for 70 years of membership and service,” Norman said, and on June 20 of this year, Roth-Dishy wrote, “the Wellfleet Select Board voted unanimously to honor Joe Pellegrino, ‘an exemplary Volunteer, Resident and Human for the Town of Wellfleet.’” He was invited to serve as marshal for the 2023 Fourth of July parade, but he had to decline to attend his 100th birthday party.

His service as a Wellfleet selectman ran from 1967 to 1970. He had earlier served on the town’s zoning board of appeals. He enjoyed town service, he told Roth-Dishy, “but it took a lot of time away from my job, and my wife wasn’t happy.”

Joe lived a long life in retirement. “He enjoyed gardening, feeding the birds, and his pet rabbits,” Norman said.

“My worst problem is the squirrel,” Joe told Roth-Dishy. “I figure he’s God’s creature; he’s got to eat. But he raises hell with my bird seed. Eats it up in a hurry.”

Word searches and jigsaw puzzles filled up some of Joe’s time, and he was a lifelong Red Sox fan, win or

lose. He also followed the Patriots, especially during their years of success when Tom Brady was quarterback. “When Tom Brady abandoned the Patriots for Tampa Bay,” Roth-Dishy wrote, Joe cried.

Joe is survived by his sons Joseph and Norman Pellegrino and daughter Marie Pellegrino, all of Wellfleet; grandchildren Kevin Pellegrino, Tommy Pellegrino, Tina Miller, and Jason Higgins of Wellfleet; great-grandchildren Kailey, Leila, Thomas, Ryder, Giuliana, Austin, and Jason Jr.; and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews.

Visiting hours will be from 4 to 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 15 at the Nickerson Funeral Home at 340 Main St. in Wellfleet.

Burial will take place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may go to the Wounded Warrior Project at [support.woundedwarriorproject.org](https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org).

# 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 Vlabel, Sr., Editor

[jeffvlabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvlabelsr@gmail.com) | [Team Vlabel](#)

click a button below for more information





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## Robert L. Bristo

Central National Vice-Commander

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### 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

For the Commander, **“Believe and Succeed”**

Butch Ray, Central Region Membership Chairman

***“I’m the ONE, You’re the ONE, BE the ONE!”***

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## John R. Cook

Northeast National Vice-Commander

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### 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

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## James R. Fischer

Western National Vice-Commander

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### 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!

Great job keeping the momentum going all. Ray Kroc said “Momentum is like a snowball. As it gains speed, it gets bigger and bigger.” Heck Yeah it does and so does our numbers for the Westside. Great job to

everyone in Western Region, I am super stoked how great you are doing and making us shine. Let’s keep this snowball going! One day at a time is the secret to building momentum.

Momentum is the spark that ignites the fire of success. Momentum is also one of the most powerful and most enigmatic attributes of success. Thanks again for all you do for this Amazing Organization.

**“One Team, One Goal, One Heart, One Soul. Be the One!”**

Respectfully For God and Country,

Dan Ashley, Western Region Membership Chairman

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## Terry A. Harris

Midwest National Vice-Commander

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### 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

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## Linwood A. Moore

Southeast National Vice-Commander

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### REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

First Wednesday Quarterly

September 6, 2023 | December 6, 2023

March 26 2024 | June 5, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 945 1723 1230 | Passcode: 58543



# BE THE ONE

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

## A major effort to promote Be the One

[Henry Howard](#) | December 5, 2023

There is nothing minor about the support the American Legion Department of Massachusetts receives from the Springfield Thunderbirds.

For years the Thunderbirds, the American Hockey League affiliate of the St. Louis Blues, have supported Massachusetts Legion programs such as Boys State, Junior Law Cadet, American Legion Baseball, and the developing softball program. The team honors a "Veteran of the Game" and regularly conducts a jersey raffle with proceeds going to a Legion program.

Department of Massachusetts NECman Jodie Pajak raves about the support.

**WATCH ON**  YouTube

"There's no question, no feedback, no static when we ask them for anything," she said. "There is no hesitation from anybody on their staff. I've never been to any establishment where they are that welcoming. They want to be part of the community and it definitely shows. The relationship is phenomenal."

The Legion-Thunderbirds partnership was on full display on Dec. 1, The American Legion's Be the One Day. American Legion members set up a booth inside the arena to educate fans about the organization's primary mission to reduce the number of veteran suicides. Legion Family members handed out customized brochures to thousands of fans.

[Video: how to modify and use this trifold at your Be the One event.](#)

Additionally, a special Be the One jersey, signed by the entire team, was revealed. It will be raffled off at the end of the season with proceeds going to the Veterans & Children Foundation to support Be the One.

During a break in the action, Jodie presented a coin to the "Veteran of the Game" on the ice. Every single member of the Thunderbirds tapped their hockey sticks on the ice, which is how players applaud.

The Be the One mission is especially meaningful for Jodie.

"Veterans suicide is a cancer that should not be," she said. "There are way too many resources, way too many programs to help veterans and their families, to help combat these needs and feelings that these veterans develop in their military careers and come across as they try to transition out of service and back to civilian life. You can't just flip a switch and go from structured to unstructured. You have to have some help. After a few years, you find you just can't cope. With this program we hope that they see us and seek us out."

One key, she pointed out, was having resources available.

"To be able to save one life is critical," she said. "The more that people are willing to step up and help — and not being afraid to step up and help — may make the difference between life and death."

Be the One was a natural tie-in this season for the Thunderbirds, which have regularly honored veterans. Their nickname, appropriately enough, is related to the Air Force Thunderbirds.

The team "wanted to get more involved with the community and they are wonderful to work with," said Jodie, who along with her husband, Drew, are members of Post 185 in Agawam. "They felt the need and they did want to help. They have been phenomenal in promoting this as a way to reduce the stigma. We have a partner that loves putting the Legion first."

The relationship began soon after the Pajaks, both of whom are Navy veterans, moved to Springfield where Drew's family has been longtime supporters of their hometown team. In fact, they have had season tickets since 1936.

"They have been such strong supporters of every program we have," Drew said. "On a smaller level, it mimics what we do with Chip Ganassi Racing. Jodie is the driving force for Legion softball here in Massachusetts. The minute the team heard about it, they immediately donated to Massachusetts Legion softball because it is for the kids. Anytime we have asked this team for support, promoting what the Legion is, they have always been there. It's a great partnership."

The Thunderbirds highlight The American Legion at all 36 home games. The Legion staffs a table inside the arena, promoting timely programs and initiatives. Over the course of a season, that outreach connects the Legion with at least 220,000 fans.

“At this level, specifically, I thought it was crucially important for us to build our business to open our doors to community projects and give it back to a number of programs, specifically the Legion,” said Nathan Costa, Thunderbirds team president. “Part of the vision from the very beginning was how we can do things to make an impact on the community while also trying to do the right thing.”

Ryan Smith, who manages the team’s media, community relations and broadcasting, said his grandfather served in World War II. “It’s wrenching for me that there are so many of these military folks who come back and for a variety of reasons and are not able to reacclimate to society,” he said.

Smith is thankful for the freedom he enjoys thanks to generations of veterans.

“This is a chance to thank them for all that they do,” he said. “Because without them, who knows what we could be doing on a day-to-day basis. There is no amount of thanks that we can give them for all that they do for us.”

Strong community partners embolden the Be the One mission.

“It should be important to everybody,” Jodie said. “Everybody should be aware. The Thunderbirds are family-oriented and community-oriented. It’s not only veterans. It’s the community itself. It could be your neighbor. It could be your friend. It could be your coworker that might need some help. They are willing to help us spread the word and make sure that it is known that it is OK to not be OK.”

Drew believes other American Legion departments and posts can forge similar partnerships with their local sports teams or other organizations.

“Just reach out,” he said. “Most of the time these groups are just waiting for you to ask. Don’t ask them to do something and then expect them to do it all for you. Make sure you are there to do it with them.”

## Kentucky Legion post hoping Be the One event can be ‘a prayer answered’

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | December 7, 2023

A few years ago, U.S. Air Force retiree Brandon Curry said a fellow airman had died, and though it wasn’t classified as a suicide, Curry felt otherwise. The man, Curry said, had drank himself to death. And Curry said he and others said they’d missed the signs the man was in crisis, which is why Curry is so passionate about The American Legion’s Be the One mission to reduce veteran suicide.

Curry – a member of Hardin Post 113 in Elizabethtown, Ky., where he also serves as Sons of The American Legion Squadron 113 commander – was a co-coordinator of a Be the One event Dec. 5 at the post. A U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs staffer was on hand to present VA’s S.A.V.E. Training to a group of around 70 Legion Family members and others at the end.

“After going through some suicide-prevention classes through the military, and now, being a part of (Be the One), there were some signs there that some of us did not catch,” said Curry, who serves as Kentucky’s SAL National Executive Committeeman. “He was actually crying for help, but nobody caught onto it.

“I feel very grateful and honored to be a part of (Be the One). All three (national Legion Family leaders) have taken this mission on to be their project to see it succeed. That’s given me a great sense of pride.”

Curry said that Be the One “became an initiative that turned into a mission. And like any of us that served in the military, when a mission’s handed down, we take the full pledge of it, and we’ll run with it and make sure the mission is successful.”

**WATCH ON**  **YouTube**

“It’s important for us to get the awareness out there. Hardin County is very mili-

tary strong. We’re in Fort Knox’s backyard. We just want to be able to (provide area veterans) tools to help them or to help somebody else if they might need assistance.”

Post 113 member Tom Folsom, who worked with Curry to organize the event, said the timing couldn’t be better for such an event, and that having an expert to provide the training is critical.



“It appears, according to the statistics that we have, that veteran suicides are on the rise again,” Folsom said. “If we can save one life by doing this, it’s absolutely worth it. To have the trained professional here to do this, to help us answer questions ... I’m not a training professional, obviously, so I couldn’t help answer some of the questions that people might have. Their program mirrors (Be the One), in my opinion.” The training was provided by National Guard veteran Kelly Marcum, who deployed to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and is now 50-percent service connected for post-traumatic stress disorder. Marcum now is a mental health social worker who serves as Community Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville. Marcum said that teaming with organizations such as The American Legion is valuable as VA continues to work to reduce veteran suicides – especially among those not in the health-care system.

“Anecdotally and statistically, it’s of the upmost importance now for (VA) to involve the community in suicide prevention,” Marcum said. “The VA has been somewhat successful with being able to counter suicide with a lot of clinical interventions, evidence-based practices. But at the same time, there are a lot of veterans that are not utilizing VA health care, or maybe not even seeing a veteran service officer.

“So, being able to train community members, have relationships with people like The American Legion – who can now interact with those veterans in a way that we talked about today – is going to prevent suicide for those folks who are maybe coming to a Legion (post) where they feel comfortable ... or any other community where they feel comfortable going in and asking for help.”

Marcum, who admitted to having suicidal thoughts in the past, said that while VA has several successful suicide-prevention programs, more than half of the nation’s veterans don’t use VA. The result: “Those veterans are dying by suicide at a continually rising rate,” he said, noting the number of suicides by veterans utilizing VA services is starting to drop. “So, what we need to do with you guys is get out in the community. That Be the One attitude is the same thing we’re trying to do. Everybody needs to be a suicide preventionist. Everybody needs to have a little bit of training and a little bit of comfortability to see someone ... and they look a little vulnerable to you, and be able to go up and say, ‘Hey, are you OK?’”

That’s one of the main components of VA’s [S.A.V.E. Training](#), which focuses 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.

Marcum admitted it can be difficult to identify someone contemplating suicide, even those who verbalize their thoughts. “The people who talk a lot about suicide kill themselves. The people that don’t say anything about suicide kill themselves,” he said. “I’ve never seen any kind of pattern where I can pin them down and say, ‘Oh yeah, that’s the person I should have really worried about.’”

That’s why asking if someone is OK is so critical, and that anyone can fill that role. “I hope that this is the biggest takeaway that you guys have today,” Marcum said. “This is basic life-saving skills for mental health. Just like if someone grabs their chest and falls down ... you’re going to yell for someone to call 911. You’re going to check for breathing ... all the things you would do for CPR. You know a little bit to get them to that next level of care.

“That’s all you’re here to do today. Just know that little bit about how to get them to the next level of care.”

In October during the Legion’s Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, the organization’s National Executive Committee passed [Resolution No. 9](#), which 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.

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.

Marcum said he was pleased with the event’s turnout. “It was huge. To see that many people in the parking lot when I first came in was very exciting,” he said. “And the fact most of them are veterans or veteran-affiliated ... is really important, too, because they also

know a ton of other veterans. There's something about us as veterans, we gravitate to other veterans. We find them in the community we live in. So, I think it's much more effective ... with this group because they're going to be able to have that effect on pretty much their entire environment they go back out to."

That's the hope for Folsom: That the training provided at Post 113 can save a life. "To me, that's the reason we're doing it," he said. "And if that could possibly happen, that would be a miracle. A prayer answered. It would be fantastic."

## Thank you to our Round-Up sponsors

Juan Cruz Rodriguez, Department of Puerto Rico

## National Commissions and Committees

Chairmen wishing to have reports published should email them to [jeffvabelsr@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvabelsr@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

## 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

## 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](http://www.legion.org/membership/standings).

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

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

2023 SAL Membership Stats	12/07/23
Total Actual Membership	380,056
Percentage of Goal	103.33
Renewal Percentage	89.22
Quota Detachments	45



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## National Convention Committee

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*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

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## Public & Media Communications Committee

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*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

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*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

### What's next for VA's MVP program?

The American Legion | December 5, 2023

A primary Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research program hit its goal, but it is not stopping there.

[The Million Veterans Project \(MVP\)](#) reached its milestone on Nov. 8 when the one millionth veteran was added to the research program, which was launched in 2011. The goal of MVP is to collect information from veterans and analyze it to improve VA health care and services.



Jennifer Deen, associate director of Cohort and Public Relations in VA's Office of Research and Development, talked about goals moving forward.

"So, what's next?" Deen said. "We have a lot more work to do. A couple of our high impact goals for the cohort in general is making MVP more accessible and bringing MVP to the veteran through the ways that are most convenient to them."

Those include sending a kit to the veteran, opening new locations and more.

Deen also said VA wants to increase the numbers of the underrepresented populations. Of those already signed up:

- 90% are male.
- Three in four are white.
- 18% of participants are black and 8% are Hispanic, including some who identified as being multiracial.

The average age is 67, with more than one in three between the ages of 70 and 79. Overall, 81% are 50 or older.

By diversifying those numbers, it would help create better health-care solutions for all veterans. So, VA is encouraging veterans with diverse backgrounds to sign up for MVP.

“We want to bring that value back to the veteran at the point of care,” Deen summarized. “The future looks really bright for MVP. We want to increase diversity and bring MVP to the veteran to let all veterans be a part of this. Expanding that data access so researchers, inside and outside VA, have the ability to impact research and help us with our next goal and scope of the project. And it will be something our physicians can use in the real world.”

## Phoenix Post 117 sends holiday cheer to over 21,000 deployed servicemembers

The American Legion | December 7, 2023



American Legion Family members of Pat Tillman Post 117 in Phoenix, Ariz., are delivering Christmas cheer by mail to deployed servicemembers. Over

21,000 Christmas cards are on their way to military men and women who will be away from their loved ones this holiday season.

“We want them to know that there’s an American Legion here in Phoenix, Arizona, that really cares for them,” said Auxiliary Unit 117 President Christine Rodriguez, who organizes the card signing, now in its sixth year. “That each message on the card is heartfelt and that we do appreciate them, and we do hope that they know they’re loved, even though they don’t know us, America does love them. We specifically love them here at the Post 117.”

That’s not all. There’s more holiday cheer from the Post 117 Legion Family – a shipment of 40 care packages filled with toiletries, chocolate, gum, granola bars, the Christmas cards, spices and more are also on their way to deployed servicemembers.

“We are trying to let them know that we love them, and we appreciate them. They’re putting their lives on the line for us,” said Unit 117 2nd Vice President Char Myrick, who organizes the care packages and understands sacrifice coming from a military family and a father who was in law enforcement. “Their families are also sacrificing for us. If we send some packages, it makes life easier for them. I just want to make life easier for them because of what they’re doing for us.”

The Christmas cards and care packages “makes my heart soar,” said Post 117 Commander Mark Burton. “It’s action. It’s not just words. We have a little saying, well done is greater than well said. Our American Legion post family, and I accent the word family – our Auxiliary, our Sons, our Riders – make it a commitment to do things, not say things.”

The Christmas card signing kicked off in July at the post with a potluck meal and raffle drawing. Post 117 Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members have signed cards for the past five months, along with other Legion posts in the 12th District and community members who saw the good the post was doing on the news and social media. “It’s an hour or two of (community members coming in and) signing cards, and it will be very impactful for the people that are going to be receiving those cards,” said Rodriguez, adding that each card has up to 10 signatures. For District 12, Rodriguez put forth a challenge – the post that signed the most cards would receive \$100 from Auxiliary Unit 117. Post 65 “stepped up big time and they gave us 4,000 cards signed,” she said, which helped the post surpass its goal of 17,117 cards to over 21,000. “So other posts are really stepping up and helping us as well, and I appreciate each and everyone.”

The Post 117 Legion Family knows the impact the cards have on deployed servicemembers. A recipient of a card several years ago, Todd Struble, is now the director of Post 117’s Legion Riders chapter. He moved to Phoenix following service and joined Post 117 because of the card. “He said it was something that he never forgot,” Rodriguez said.

The Legion Family too sees the impact the care packages, now in its second year, have as they have received photos of servicemembers holding care items in appreciation. One recipient is a post member’s son who is stationed in Germany and shares items from the care packages with others in his platoon. And two post members have a granddaughter stationed on the USS Gerald Ford who is looking forward to the care packages along with her shipmates.

Items are collected from Legion Family members and the community thanks to the creative efforts of Myrick's daughter, Victoria, who helped create a flyer and promotes it on social media.

Burton, Rodriguez, and Myrick each say that it takes the entire Legion Family to make the cards and care packages possible. "We want to see our veterans put up where they should be and that's in the forefront. This brings the family together because it brings everybody together, our Riders, our Sons of The American Legion, our Axillary unit, all get behind this."

"It's not just an Auxiliary thing. We have the backing of each and every one that's in this post," Rodriguez said.

Last year when Myrick brought the care package idea to the post, worst case scenario was that "we would be able to send out items and help a lot of our military, and it's going to make our family be that much stronger. I wanted to have something that was not for one entity of the post, that it was for everybody to come together and work together as a family because our post really is one big family. We look out for each other, and we try to help each other. I just thought this (care packages) is something that affects all of us in one shape or form."

## 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  
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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.



AMERICAN  
LEGION  
RIDERS







AMERICAN  
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AUXILIARY



Lisa Williamson,  
National President  
The American Legion Auxiliary

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## Sports

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### Leyland latest Legion Baseball alum to Hall of Fame

The American Legion | December 4, 2023



The number of American Legion Baseball alumni enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame will increase to 86 — at least — when Jim Leyland joins the Hall next July.

Leyland, who played Legion Baseball for Post 183 in Pemberville, Ohio, was the sole selection to the Hall of Fame by the Contemporary Baseball Era Committee for the Class of 2024. Leyland's selection was announced Dec. 3 at Major League Baseball's Winter Meetings in Nashville, Tenn.

Leyland could be joined by two more Legion Baseball alumni in the Class of 2024 if Matt Holliday (Stillwater, Okla.) and Gary Sheffield (Post 248/Tampa, Fla.) are selected by the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA) on their ballot. Voting results for the writers' ballot will be announced Jan. 23, with the induction ceremony taking place during Hall of Fame Weekend in Cooperstown, N.Y., July 21, 2024.

Leyland was one of eight former managers, executives, and umpires on the ballot for consideration by the 16-member Contemporary Baseball Era Committee. Leyland appeared on 15 of the 16 ballots; 12 votes were needed for enshrinement.

Another Legion Baseball alumnus, Lou Piniella (West Tampa), came up one vote shy of joining Leyland in the Hall of Fame. Former National League President Bill White was the only other candidate to receive double-digit votes, with 10.

Also on the ballot were managers Cito Gaston and Davey Johnson; umpires Ed Montague and Joe West; and former general manager Hank Peters.

The eight candidates were selected by the BBWAA-appointed Historical Overview Committee from a pool of eligible candidates whose most significant career impact occurred after 1980.

Leyland [told](#) MLB Network, "It's the highest honor you can get in our business, and I'm just thrilled, excited, surprised, flattered. All those words come into play when you're thinking about this."

Leyland won 1,769 games in 22 seasons as a manager with the Pirates, Marlins, Rockies, and Tigers, winning the 1997 World Series in the Marlins' fifth year of existence. He also managed Team USA to the 2017 World Baseball Classic title — four years after retiring from major league managing. Leyland was a three-time Manager of the Year, with Pittsburgh in 1990 and 1992 and with Detroit in 2006.

### 124th edition of Army-Navy on display in new venue

John Chuhuran | December 7, 2023

It's hard to believe that anything new can happen in the 124th edition of the Army-Navy Game, but a significant first will occur the moment Saturday's opening kickoff sails into the air.

For the first time, the game (3 p.m. kickoff, CBS TV network) will be played in New England — Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass. — and fans might be expecting a classic, close-fought, ground battle. But that might not happen.

With Air Force topping Navy 17-6 in October and Army upsetting Air Force 23-3 last month, Army (5-6) is in position to win the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy outright for the first time since 2020 if the Black Knights can top the Midshipmen. If Navy (5-6) wins,

the round-robin competition will end in a tie and the 170-pound, 2.5-foot-tall, silver and black prize will be retained by Air Force, which won the trophy last year. The 2023 football season saw some significant changes for both squads. Army, which had been the most run-centric team in the nation, added a shotgun-set passing attack about 15 percent of the time – far less than most opponents, but still a significant increase for the cadets. The new style of play produced inconsistent results, as Army stumbled to a 2-6 record entering the Air Force game. Brilliant Army defense forced six Air Force turnovers and held then- 8-0 Falcons to 155 yards on the ground and just 259 total yards. But the offense still struggled. Through 10 games, Army was averaging 192.8 yards per game on the ground and 112 through the air.



Everything changed in Army's most recent game against Coastal Carolina. The shotgun was abandoned, quarterbacks Bryson Dailey and Champ Harris returned to starting behind center Brady Small, and the "triple option" was resurrected from the Army bag of tricks. This was old-school Army football – 348 rushing yards, zero passing yards and a strangling 39:51 minutes of ball possession that forced the visitors to rely on trying low-percentage big plays.

"We felt like we needed to run the football, and so we've been kind of working on some of the under-center stuff and having it ready and having it prepared and felt like this was going to be the best approach to start the game," said Army Head Coach Jeff Monken after the win. "I don't know that I anticipated we were going to stay in it the entire game, but we were moving the football and controlling the clock and scoring, and so we stuck with it."

Navy also adjusted to a new style of play this year, as first-year Head Coach Brian Newberry brought some changes to a team that had failed to win more than four games in any year since 2019. The Midshipmen have won two of their last three outings and are

gaining confidence with each contest. The chance to deny Army the CIC Trophy is extra motivation.

"I think our players' mindsets are so important, that their psyche is in the right place," Newberry said. "You don't want your kids to get uptight or to press. You want to be laser focused and dialed in. My job as head coach is to make sure we're in the right state of mind. There's a lot of similarities between our two teams – just look at their defense and look at ours. They play extremely hard. They're extremely physical. They fly around. They know what they're doing. They're well coached. They play fast. I have lot of respect for how they play the game."

Army's strengths start with a defense led by senior linebacker Leo Lowin, who has 83 tackles and is third in the nation with four forced fumbles: linebacker Jimmy Ciarlo (51 tackles) and safety Quindrelin Hammonds (58 tackles).

Offensively, Dailey leads Army in rushing with 817 yards and seven touchdowns on 188 carries. He has also completed 53 of 106 pass attempts for 859 yards with six touchdowns and 6 interceptions.

The Navy offense is led by senior quarterback Xavier Arline (23-42 for 320 yards and two scores), with another senior, Tai Lavatai (40-75 for 522 yards and five TDs), questionable after missing the last 4 games with an injury. The Midshipman are led on the ground by sophomore fullback Alex Tacza (724 yards).

The Navy defense features seven players with at least 40 tackles, led by Colin Ramos (94 Tackles) linebacker Will Harbour (76) and junior free safety Rayuan Lane III (62).

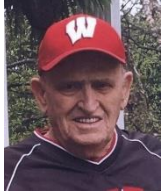




# Squadron Everlasting

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

## Gerald Spurlock



Gerald Spurlock, 83, of Dale, Ind. passed away on Nov. 26, while visiting his daughter in Wadsworth, Ill.

Gerald was born in Gentryville to Clell and Mary (Wangler) Spurlock and married Betty Jean Lindsey. He participated in many sports throughout his life, in August 2023 he was able to go watch his favorite team, The Dodgers! Gerald also enjoyed playing Euchre and golfing. Gerald had a knack for growing many tomatoes and liked to share them. He drove a semi for over 45 years before retiring from The Connection Trucking and was a member of the Sons of the American Legion. His pride and joy were his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

He is survived by his longtime companion, Virlee Waninger, his daughters, Kristy (Tim) Schuetter, Lisa Spurlock, and Carol (Michael) Smith. Grandsons, Zach and Noah Schuetter, great grandchildren, Skylar, Lindsey, and Landon Smith. His siblings, Ben (Mary) Spurlock, Mae Cooper, Eleanor (Basil) Cook and Joann Kapp.

He was preceded in death by his wife Bettye (Lindsey) Spurlock, brothers, James, Loren, Elwood and LeRoy Spurlock and a granddaughter Dacia Smith.

Funeral Services are planned for Saturday Dec. 9, 2023 at 11 AM CST at the Fuller Funeral Home in Dale, Ind. Burial to follow in Hackleman Cemetery.

Visitation will be Friday Dec. 8, from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m. CST at the Fuller Funeral Home in Dale.

Fuller Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

## 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 in many different places in his career with some including, the Hollins Truck Stop in Flora and the Flora Elks. Gerald was a caregiver, 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 David Bonham 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. To sign the guestbook online or share a memory of Gerald, please visit [by clicking here](#).

## David J. Hulslander



David J. Hulslander, 82, of Harford, NY passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, November 28th, 2023.

He was born June 1, 1941 in Cortland, a son of the late Roy and Bernice (Hutchings) Hulslander.

A lifelong area resident, David was a member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America Union since 1965 and retired in 2003. He was a member of the Harford Volunteer Fire Department for 57 years and served as Fire Chief. He was also a member of the Sons of the American Legion in Dryden serving as chaplain and historian. He thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the ritual team and felt this was a way he could give back since never serving in the armed forces. There couldn't have been a better husband or father. He was a talented carpenter, handy man, and all around problem solver. He enjoyed the outdoors and held a lifetime sporting license for hunting and fishing. He was also an avid NASCAR fan, rarely missing a race. He was funny and kind to all that knew him.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Nancy (Welch) Hulslander; his sons: Mark Hulslander of Candor, (Kelli of Dryden), Brian Hulslander (Brandi) of Dryden, Keith Hulslander (Cheryl) of Daytona Beach, FL; Daughters: Sara Diamond (John) of Dryden, and Brenda Bush (John) of Daytona Beach; Grandchildren, Lindsay Bomysoad (Dan) of Dryden, Lacey Brown (Rob) of Dryden, Emily Haflett (Devin) of Horseheads, Hannah Diamond (Merritt) of Dryden, Shy Bleck, Dennis Bleck & Travis Hill; Great Grandchildren: Kinsley Bomysoad & Graelyn Brown of Dryden. Sister: Freda (Stephen) Lucas of Groton and brother: Robert "Bob" (Shirley) Hulslander of Freeville.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brothers Roy "Bud" Hulslander, James "Jim" Hulslander and sisters Beverly Passalugo, Arlene Ward, & Mary Williams, along with numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins.

A celebration of life will be held at 1pm on Saturday, January 27, 2024 at the Dryden Veterans Memorial Home, 2272 Dryden Rd, Dryden. Private interment will be held at a later time in the Green Hills Cemetery. Memorial contributions in David's name can be directed to the Dryden Veterans Memorial Home Ritual Team.



## Todd Reed



Todd A. Reed, 57, of Malvern, passed away Thursday, Nov. 30, in the Aultman Hospital.

He was born May 2, 1966, in Canton. Todd worked for over 35 years as a journalist, sportswriter, and photographer. He spent most of his career at The Malvern Community News and The News Leader until its closing. He then worked for eight months for Jordan Miller-News until he was unable. He loved covering his community, adding heartfelt coverage and a personal touch. Todd was an undying fan of high school athletes, and he did his best to allow each one to shine. He was gracious and generous in his support of their hard work and dedication. In his early career, he was a photographer for Aardvark Studio, traveling the country shooting at college graduations. He also photographed local little league teams and weddings for over 25 years.

He graduated from Malvern High School in 1984 and attended The Ohio State University and the University of Akron. He was proud to be a co-founder of the Malvern Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012. He was a Sons of the American Legion member for 34 years. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the OATCCC and the East District OIAAA Media Award.

Todd was also passionate about his professional sport teams, go Zips, Vikings, Reds, Oilers, and USA Soccer. He loved camping with friends and his nephew in the little Scamp trailer he refurbished. And he was so very grateful for his friendship with Jeff Tucci and Matt Blair and their support over the years. His wife and he shared the love and companionship from their dogs Maddie, Cassidy, Cooper, and Annie.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Michelle Bocki Reed; sister and brother-in-law, Rhonda and Michael Churco; nephew, Nathan Churco; and an aunt, Sonia Strock. He was preceded in death by his parents, Wayne "Hap" and Patricia Reed; mother-in-law Phyllis Bocki; and father-in-law Anthony "Tony" Bocki.

A memorial service will be held Dec. 6 at 6:30 pm in the Minerva First Presbyterian Church with Rev. Kathryn Ophardt officiating. A private family graveside service



will be held at Bethlehem Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Malvern Athletic Booster Club or the Carroll County Animal Protection League. Those wishing to send condolences may sign the online register at [www.gotschallfuneralhome.com](http://www.gotschallfuneralhome.com).

#### **Kenneth Wright**

Kenny took his last breath to Amazing Grace on Friday, November 24, 2023 at 8:50 pm. His wife of 31 years, Juddi was by his bedside as was his longtime good friend Dottie Moore.

Kenny worked in construction most of his life and drove trucks hauling large equipment and machinery from one job site to another. He built many homes and was proud of building Woody Hayes' log cabin retreat.

After retirement he resided in Bradenton, Florida and spent his summers in Akron, Ohio where he was born.

He is preceded in death by his loving parents, Mack and Sylvia; 2 brothers, Cal and Chuck Jones; and sister, Gladys.

He leaves behind his daughter, Nicole Huntsman; son in law, Michael; and grandson, Luke; his wife, Juddi; and cat, Boo Boo. Also surviving are his brother and sister in law, John and Dorita Sondereker, and a niece, Elaine.

Kenny lived a good life. He belonged to a Van Club in Ohio in the 60's. He loved Indy Car and Nascar Racing and attended many events in his motorhome over the years.

After retirement, Kenny spent several years doing race recovery for Miller Industries at Daytona, Sebring, St. Pete, and Homestead. He was first one on the track in the morning and last one off the track at night.

He enjoyed watching his brother in law's Thoroughbred Horses race at Delmar, CA, and San Anita Park. Win or lose, it was always exciting. Kenny was a longtime member of F.O.P. Lodge #6 in Akron, Ohio; Eagles 555 and 3171; Bradenton Moose Lodge #1223; and Son's of American Legion Posts 19, 24, and 312.

He will be missed by his close friends, Pete and Ronnee, Bob, Dottie, Bill and Marie, Mark, Tom, and Larry and so many more too numerous to mention.

Kenny was blessed to have such caring and loving friends in his life.

A Celebration of Life will take place in Bradenton in the near future and again in Akron in the Summer.

#### **Mark A. Bidlack**



GROVER HILL – Mark A. Bidlack, 71, of Grover Hill, died 1:50 a.m., Saturday, December 2, 2023 at Van Wert Hospital. He was born April 22, 1952 in

Fremont to the late Marion and Doris (Bowling) Bidlack. On August 11, 1973, he married Helen Bendele, and she survives in Grover Hill.

Other survivors include two sons: Tim (Jenny) Bidlack of Defiance and Heath (Jennifer) Bidlack of San Tan Valley; six grandchildren: Austin, Hannah, Katie and Ethan Bidlack and Jessica and Haley Bidlack; a great-grandson, Asher; two siblings: Jill (David) Bauer of Grover Hill and Dean (Betty) Bidlack of Continental; and a sister-in-law, Karen Bidlack of Fort Jennings.

He was also preceded in death by a grandson, Aaron Scott Bidlack and a brother, Todd Bidlack.

Mark retired in 2007 after 37 years with BF Goodrich, Woodburn, IN. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Ottoville, Continental Sons of the American Legion, and social member of Grover Hill VFW. Mark was a 1970 graduate of Grover Hill High School and had been a youth group leader at the former St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Paulding. He was an avid coin collector, car enthusiast, OSU Buckeye fan and enjoyed garage sales and mowing. He was a fan of any sporting event played by his sons, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews.

Funeral mass will begin at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Ottoville with Fr. George Mahas officiating. Burial will follow in Middle Creek Cemetery, Grover Hill. Visitation will be from 2 to 7 p.m. Tuesday and one hour prior to the funeral Wednesday at LOVE HEITMEYER FUNERAL HOME, Jackson Twp. 16085 St. Rt. 634, Ft. Jennings, Ohio 45844.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be given to the American Heart Association.

Condolences may be expressed at [www.lovefuneralhome.com](http://www.lovefuneralhome.com)

#### **John B. Wenninghoff IV**

John Wenninghoff IV, age 76, passed away in Bellevue, NE, on November 28, 2023. He was born to the late John III and Marie Wenninghoff, in Omaha, NE, on November 30, 1946. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou; children, Renee (Joe) Hylok and Ken (Abby) Wenninghoff; eight grandchildren; siblings, Mary Ann (Dave) Decker, Jimmy Wenninghoff, Kathleen (Terry) Foust, and Betty (Joe) Jasnowski.

John was a member of Sons of The American Legion.

A Visitation will be held Friday, December 1, 2023, from 10 to 11 a.m., at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 7308 S 42nd St, Bellevue, NE 68147, with Memorial Service to follow at 11 a.m. Private family burial at Omaha National Cemetery.

Good Shepherd Funeral Home  
L Street Chapel  
4712 S. 82nd St.  
Omaha, NE 68127  
[gsfuneral.com](http://gsfuneral.com)  
402-505-9260

Published by Omaha World-Herald on Nov. 30, 2023.

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

#### **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](http://www.GedonFuneralHomes.com) and the Gedon Funeral Homes Facebook page.

#### **Robert LeRoy Wiegand**



Robert LeRoy Wiegand, 62, of South Hutchinson, KS, died December 2, 2023, at his home. He was

born July 10, 1961, in Denver, CO, to LeRoy R. and Helena A. (Thiele) Wiegand.

Robert graduated from Beloit High School and North Central Kansas Technical College with a degree in electronics. He was the owner of Advantage Siding & Windows. Robert loved hunting and fishing and was an avid Nebraska Cornhuskers and Kansas City Chiefs fan and followed NASCAR racing as well. Robert's other interests included riding his Harley Davidson and participating in league and tournament pool play. He also embraced golf later in life and enjoyed Wii bowling and solving crossword and cryptquip puzzles.

Robert lived life in the moment and to the fullest. He was always there to help anyone in need and gave generously of his time and talents. Robert was a member of the Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Lysle Rishel Post #68, where he served for 10 years most recently as the American Legion Riders Road Captain. He was the recipient of the Kansas American Legion Rider Excellence Award in 2022, served as Auxiliary President of the Bob Campbell VFW Post #1361, and as former Vice-chair of the South Hutch Planning Commission.

Robert is survived by: his daughter, Cerness Sanders (Sammy) of Newberg, OR, and their children, Lenora and Theodore; sister, Roberta Schonher (Alan) of Castle Rock, CO, and their children, Paige Schonher of Littleton, CO, and Wade Schonher of Highlands Ranch, CO, and many extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation has taken place. Rosary will be 6 p.m. Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at Elliott Chapel, with the family present to receive friends until 8 p.m. Memorial service will be 10:00 a.m. Thursday, December 14, 2023, at Elliott Chapel.

The service will be livestreamed and the link below to view it will be available beginning at 9:45 a.m. the day of the service.

Friends may sign his memorial book from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily until the service at Elliott Mortuary. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Kansas Honor Flight, Legion Riders at American Legion Lyle Rishel Post #68, or V.F.W. Bob Campbell Post #1361, in care of Elliott Mortuary, 1219 N. Main, [Hutchinson, KS 67501](#).

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

#### Donald J. Ray Jr.



was 67.

Donald J. Ray, Jr. of Lebanon, passed away on Monday, December 4, 2023 at Hartford Hospital, following a brief illness. He

Known by his friends as Donnie, Don Juan, and Donzo, he was born April 9, 1956 in Hartford. He was the son of the late Donald J. Ray, Sr., and Nancy (Clement) Ray. Don grew up on Amston Lake in Hebron. He spent his adult life in a variety of professions, including work as a welder at Electric Boat in Groton, carpentry, and excavation. In 1982 while working on an excavation site in Danielson, Don was buried alive in a trench collapse. He was air lifted to Worcester Medical Center with life threatening injuries. His family and friends were called to his bedside to say goodbye, but Don, exhibiting a trait that would serve him well, fought for his life and after several months in the hospital, he was able to return home to Amston, where he was a member of the Scorpions softball team in the Hebron Men's Softball League and was a part of the Sons of the American Legion in Hebron.

On October 11, 1986, Don married his wife, LaurieAnn Sola. The couple went on to settle on the Lebanon side of the lake and raise their two daughters. While there, Don was also a founding member of the Amston Lake Tax District. He also pursued his lifelong love for motor-sports, including NASCAR and Formula One, while building and

customizing several cars, vans, and trucks of his own. Don was also an avid UCONN basketball fan. He will be remembered for his stubborn willingness to fight every obstacle presented to him and his loyalty to family and friends.

Don is survived by LaurieAnn Ray of Lebanon; daughters Carrie (Jake) Kvasnik of Maryland and Lindsay Ray and Patrick Geneau of [Manhattan, New York](#); brothers Michael (Joyce) Ray of Cape Cod and Amston and Patrick of Hampton, CT, sister Lori Dumas-Ray, of Florida and brother-in-law Donald Pigan of Colchester. He is also survived by his mother-in-law Janet Sola of North Haven; brothers-in-law Raymond (Pam) Sola of North Haven, and John (Jen) sola of north Haven; sisters-in-law Natalie (Chris) Stock of North Haven, Janet (Rev. George) Manukas of Hamden, and Helene (Rigo) Smith-Sola of Brooklyn, New York; special friends Steve Goode and Henry Meckl; and many nieces, nephews, and extended family members. In addition to his parents, Don was predeceased by his sister Brenda Pigan, father-in-law Raymond Sola and former brother-in-law Joseph Belisle.

Don's family would like to thank those who cared for him during his stay at Hartford Hospital.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday, December 10, 2023 from 3 to 6 PM at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home 167 Old Hartford, Rd, [Colchester, CT 06415](#). A chapel service will take place the following day, Monday December 11, 2023 at 10 AM at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home; burial will follow immediately after the funeral home service in the New Hebron Cemetery in Hebron, CT.

To sign the online guest book or share a memory of Donald, please visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

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

## RENEW

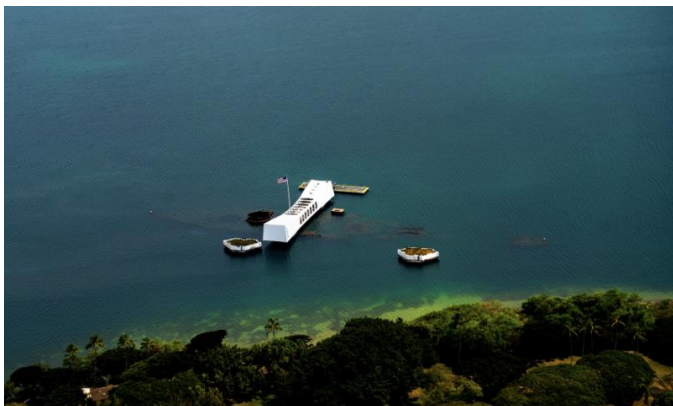




# AMERICAN LEGION



Daniel J. Seehafer,  
National Commander  
The American Legion



## Pearl Harbor: It's personal

December 7, 2023

December 7, 1941, is forever emblazoned in history as the day of infamy. But it was more than that. For Americans, the attack was personal. In the weeks that followed, recruiting offices extended operating hours to accommodate the thousands of Americans who lined up to answer their nation's call and exact retribution on those responsible. The day ushered in our nation's entry into a war that would claim more than 407,000 American lives.

It's personal for The American Legion as well. The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion directs us to "preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars." This includes remembering the 2,403 Americans killed during the attack, the thousands more wounded and the countless witnesses who were forever changed.

To this day our friends in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) continue to identify the remains of those who were killed in the attack but remained unknown due to limitations in scientific technology. One such hero was Navy Mess Attendant 1st Class Ralph M. Boudreaux of New Orleans. Stationed on the USS *Oklahoma*, Boudreaux's battleship was struck by multiple Japanese torpedoes before it capsized. The 20-year-old sailor was

among the 429 *Oklahoma* crewmen who died from the attack.

Eventually, *Oklahoma's* "unknowns" were interred at the National Cemetery of the Pacific before being exhumed in 2015 for scientific analysis by DPAA. Boudreaux will be returned to his family next month for burial in Slidell, La.

The American Legion is extremely supportive of the DPAA's mission to provide the fullest possible accounting for the missing heroes of all wars involving the United States. If you are related to someone who is MIA, [you may be able to donate a DNA specimen and assist in identification efforts.](#)

Preserving the memories of the fallen is no doubt easier when there are living eyewitnesses. The challenge is to continue the same respect when all are gone. Every veteran of World War II can rest assured that The American Legion will forever honor their sacrifice and service. I hope to convey that message to any Pearl Harbor survivor that I have the privilege to meet as I attend official observances today.

Visiting the *USS Arizona* and the other Pearl Harbor memorials is not just my duty as national commander of the nation's largest veterans organization. It's personal.

Dan Seehafer, National Commander  
The American Legion

## Illinois Post 1941 collects hundreds of toys, coats in annual holiday drive

The American Legion | December 4, 2023

Robert E. Coulter Jr. American Legion Post 1941 in La Grange, Ill., collected over 600 toys and over 200 coats at the post's annual Toys for Tots and Coat Drive.

The post has hosted a collection drive for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program each year since 2018 and added a coat collection component for The Salvation Army in 2021.

"We are fortunate to have a post with member volunteers that come out and make our Toy and Coat Drive a success each year," said Post 1941 senior vice commander Bill Kiddon, who noted that volunteers



for the four-hour drive-through collection effort on Nov. 25 included Legionnaires, Sons, and Auxiliary and family members.



“Our post commander, Mike Maher, and his wife, Patti Maher, greet cars in their Santa and Mrs. Claus attire (and) Marines in dress blues thank those who stop,” Kiddon said.

In addition to the annual toy drive, Post 1941 hosts a monthly blood drive for the Red Cross, earning recognition as a Premier Partner for those efforts, and has donated over \$60,000 in 2023 to help organizations that help others, according to finance officer Charlie Anderson.

Share your efforts. Legion Family nationwide participate each year in Toys for Tots drives. American Legion Riders Chapter 169 in Wichita Falls, Texas, [reinvigorated their area's Toys for Tots program](#) two years ago.

If your post, squadron, or unit is conducting or has already held a Toys for Tots drive this holiday season, let us know. Share your efforts on [legiontown.org](#) as we highlight how the American Legion Family is delivering holiday cheer and assistance this season.

## ‘Peace in the outdoors’

The American Legion | December 1, 2023

A Colorado Legionnaire got the opportunity to rekindle a lifelong interest in hunting in October, thanks to his post, an area ranch, and a nonprofit organization.

Matthew Dominguez, a member of Stanley Hardman Post 11 in Trinidad, Colo., is a Marine Corps veteran who served in both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. During the latter, in early February 2007, he lost most of his right leg to an IED and suffered a traumatic brain injury. He is active in post events, as well as helping oversee a youth wrestling club that runs from September to May.



Matthew Dominguez (front, center) is presented with a pair of new Danner boots prior to his trophy hunt in October.

Photo via John Mochel

For these reasons and more, Post 11 Commander John Mochel recommended Dominguez to God’s Country For Our Heroes, a nonprofit that according to its website “provides outdoor experiences to outstanding individuals.” Dominguez was surprised with the news at a dinner in his honor in July, attended by more than 120 people. He was selected because he “is a worthy individual who gave so much for his country, as many young Americans have during the OIF and OEF campaigns,” Mochel said. The hunt itself took place on the Alce Toro Ranch near Trinidad.

Mochel continued that the veteran community tends to be attracted to hunting, and not just for the hunt itself: “Most fellow veterans I know have a mutual interest in firearms and the outdoors. It is a natural commonality based upon our experiences, and possibly how we were raised ... from my experience, many of my veteran friends love the adventure of the outdoors, the adrenaline rush of seeing a large game animal in the wild, the commitment to waking up every morning to hike mile after mile glassing for deer or elk and enjoying the serenity and solitude to reflect upon life while being in the woods.”

This was not entirely new territory for Dominguez: “I grew up hunting with my father and brothers, but [the trophy hunt] was truly a first for me,” he said. “The whole experience was very enjoyable, and the outfitters and staff were beyond amazing.” Echoing Mochel’s thoughts on the pull of veterans toward hunting, he concluded, “I find peace in the outdoors.”



## **‘Every bit of what I remembered’: Iraq War veteran with terminal cancer fires tank for last time**

Corey Dickstein/Stars and Stripes | December 7, 2023



Corey Dickstein/Stars and Stripes

The first blast of the M1A2 Abrams tank’s cannon sent a 120mm round exploding into a small, green target in the distance on a remote training range at the Army base.

Inside the tank’s turret, the shot sent shockwaves through Jay Tenison’s body — something the Iraq War veteran had not felt in nearly two decades. For just a few minutes on Tuesday, he said firing that tank transported him back to his youthful Army days and back to a time long before a terminal cancer diagnosis would dominate his life.

“I was not prepared for the first boom when I fired my first round, but that’s every bit of what I remembered from before, just as awesome — the thunder of doom,” Tenison, 39, said shortly after firing the tank’s gun at Fort Moore, the former Fort Benning, where Army officials worked for weeks to grant him his dying wish of shooting a tank one last time. “I was a little bit nervous going into it ... I just wanted to make sure I did a good job engaging those targets and getting weapons fired on the right locations and killing targets.

“It felt wonderful ... knowing I had a large amount of success.”

Tenison went nine-for-nine in hitting his targets, calling his return to an Abrams tank gunner position “like riding a bike.”

“Everything is still in the same position it was before,” he said. “It’s an awesome, very functional and capable machine.”

Tenison, who is from Phoenix, served as a tank crewman on active duty from 2004 to 2008, according to the Army. He last shot a tank in 2005, while stationed in Germany with 1st Armored Division’s 1st Brigade, hitting all but one target with a tank nicknamed Bulletproof. But, as his unit prepared for a deployment to Iraq, Tenison said his days in a tank were short-lived. In 2006, he deployed, spending months fighting in volatile parts of Iraq including Tal Afar and Ramadi. After returning to Germany, Tenison served his final year on active duty at Fort Irwin, Calif., as part of the National Training Center’s opposing force, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

After leaving active duty in 2008 as a specialist, he spent five years in the Army Reserve as an engineer while earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in electrical engineering, he said.

But it was his days in a tank that proved the most significant from his time in the Army. When he was diagnosed last year with terminal, Stage IV stomach cancer, nearly a year after first experiencing pain after eating, he sat down to consider what he wanted to do with the remaining months of his life.

“I realized I really wanted to do tank gunnery,” he said. “I just really wanted to shoot a tank again.”

He turned to a popular social media chatroom for soldiers and Army veterans on Reddit — asking the Army page in October 2022 if there was a way that anyone could make his dying wish come true.

“I have 12-18 months left to live, according to my oncologist. My weight is slowly dropping, my hair is slowly falling out, and my strength is leaving me,” Tenison wrote. “Before I depart this land of the living, I’d love to feel the thunder of doom inside an Abrams [tank]. Can anybody help this former tanker?”

The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of veterans and current service members chimed in with well wishes and advice on how to make it happen. Despite some solid leads, one year later, Tenison still did not have a date to shoot a tank. He posted again in October, telling the Army webpage that his doctors had given him about three to six months left, and he still wanted to shoot a tank more than anything.

“I’m not looking for sympathy here,” Tenison wrote. “I’m looking for help.”



And help came.

Officials at Fort Moore got word of Tenison's request, and they did everything they could to make it happen, said Col. Ryan Kranc, who commands the Army post's 316th Cavalry Brigade, which trains tankers.

Kranc, who watched Tenison shoot the tank on Tuesday, said they operated under orders to "make this happen no matter what," though it had never been done previously.

"I think for a lot of us whose lives have been touched by cancer, this really spoke to us," he said. "There was a lot of effort and outreach by a lot of different people. I think it was a fantastic team effort. We often call this the ultimate team sport, and I think what you saw today was a giant touchdown by the entire team."

After getting to know Tenison on Monday, when the veteran arrived at Fort Moore to run through a tank simulator, Kranc said he was not surprised he was able to hit every target during live fire.

"He's a quick learner and there's a bit of muscle memory with it," he said.

After the shoot, Kranc inducted Tenison into the Order of St. George, an honor for high achieving tankers and cavalry scouts. St. George has long been known as the patron saint of mounted warfare, he said.

Tenison said Tuesday would go down as one of his favorite memories. He said the experience helped him remember the things that he loved about being a tanker — the feel of the trigger and the blast and the smell of a spent round.

"That's a smell I haven't smelled in a long time," he said holding one of the shells from a round that he had fired. "I love that smell."

Tenison planned to include footage of the tank shoot in a video that he is making for his 6- and 8-year-old daughters to watch when they are older. He hopes they will be proud of his military service, he said.

"I'm going to tell them that this was every bit about me being a part of the military even though I left" years ago, he said. "I hope I can explain to them that this, today, was a huge thing, and it shows what can happen when a community supports itself."

With the tank shoot crossed of his list, Tenison said he was down to two other items skydiving and piloting an ultralight airplane.

"This was something that has left me really awestruck and inspired," he said. "I feel like I owe a huge debt of gratitude to everybody that made it happen."

## **\$68,000 Legion grant supports veterans in Alabama**

The American Legion | December 5, 2023

Over the years, the American Legion Department of Alabama has supported the needs of the Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHCS) with several American Legion [Operation Comfort Warriors](#) (OCW) grants. These grants have provided veterans receiving care at an Alabama VA with recreational and rehabilitation equipment, comfort items and transportation needs, to include a five-passenger transport cart, clothing, toiletries, cornhole sets, CD players, dartboards, Samsung video players, engraving and cutting system for visually impaired veterans and more.



American Legion Department of Alabama Jr. Vice Commander Willie Rogers, right, plays a game of basketball with Tuskegee Alabama VA Medical Center resident Napoleon Anderson, in red shirt, on a Pop-a-Shot basketball game purchased through an American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors grant on Thursday, November 30.

Stew Milne/The American Legion

Thanks again to the efforts of the Department of Alabama, the biggest OCW grant ever was recently awarded to the CAVHCS of \$68,000. Leadership from the department had an opportunity to see all OCW items purchased for the Tuskegee VA Medical Center on Nov. 30 during a special presentation.

"We're veterans helping veterans, and they are helping veterans. They kind of motivated us to want to go out and help them," said Department Jr. Vice



Commander Willie Rogers who attended the presentation. “So, whatever we could do to get them some assistance is what we did. I was told that OCW was the place to go and that’s what I did.”

CAVHCS has utilized the grant to purchase a variety of essential therapeutic and recreational items at its Tuskegee VA Medical Center as part of recovery for the veterans, ranging from outpatient and inpatient mental health to geriatrics. The equipment is visible in multiple areas such as the newly renovated recreational area, the Community Living Center, and the community reintegration outdoor area.

A few recreational items purchased to help veterans decrease stress, anxiety and to socialize with other veterans included several:

- Samsung Smart TVs
- Xbox series with games
- Handheld video games
- Basketball arcade cage game

Other recreational and outdoor items included several:

- Apple iPads
- Oculus Quest 2 VR headsets
- Golf balls, putters, and other mini golf equipment for outdoor use
- Electric golf carts
- Coolers for events

“The iPads and VR games create opportunities for the veterans to explore the world from where they are,” said Erica R. Moore, chief of Alabama VA’s Development and Civic Engagement. “In return, this creates opportunities to promote community reintegration and leisure education.”

Rogers said VA leadership was very appreciative of The American Legion OCW grant.

“They showed us off and they kept The American Legion’s name in their mouth all day long, saying ‘Thank you American Legion.’

“We really believe that some of our hospitals that work with our veterans have been left out, and they can’t get some of the things that they need. We see that daily when we’re dealing with the VA. If we had never found out or got really got involved with the Operation Comfort Warriors, we wouldn’t have been able to get the things that they (CAVHCS) needed.”

OCW provides recreational, rehabilitative and comfort items to wounded, injured and ill military servicemembers and veterans. OCW provides non-essential items typically not included as a budget line on government spreadsheets. These items are medically related to adaptive sports, physical therapy, occupational therapy and therapeutic recreation, or help wounded servicemembers transition back to their community. Learn more at [legion.org/ocw](https://legion.org/ocw).

## The Cost of Freedom

I Am The USS Utah. I raised my flag December 7th, 1941 at 0800. My life was over at 0810 that morning.

I Am The USS Arizona. I lie at the bottom of Pearl Harbor, along with 1,103 of my men.  
I Am The USS Oklahoma. 20 officers and 395 enlisted died protecting me. Thank you, Julio DeCastro, for saving 32 of my men.

I Am The USS West Virginia. I received 6 torpedo hits and quickly sank. May 17, 1942, while being repaired, the bodies of 70 of my crewmen were found. I lived to fight another day.

I Am The USS Maryland. I fought back. I survived and fought in the battle of Midway and brought over 8000 men home.

I Am The USS Nevada. I lost 60 of my crew members that day. But I refloated in February, 1942 and served valiantly during the war.

I Am The USS Tennessee. I survived and fought at Iwo Jima.

I Am The USS California. I lost 98 of my crew, but I survived to fight again. I received 7 battle-ship stars for valiant service during the war.

I AM THE COST OF FREEDOM!

submitted by PDC Dave Brown, Detachment of Ohio



You are invited to join us as Wreaths Across America in Ohio Honors Veterans and Their Families at Statehouse Ceremony

**WHAT:** At a Statehouse Ceremony, Wreaths Across America volunteers from Ohio working in unity with officials, dignitaries, and special guests, will honor our nation's veterans, active military, and their families.

A 36" live, balsam wreath with flags representing each branch of the military, and a POW/MIA flag will be put on display at the Statehouse. This wreath represents each branch of the Armed Forces and honors the sacrifices of our nation's military members while celebrating their love of country, community, and family.

Ceremonies like this will take place the same day in each state across the country, marking the beginning of local efforts to place remembrance wreaths at the headstones of fallen veterans in Ohio on National Wreaths Across America Day, which takes place this year on Saturday, Dec. 16.

**WHEN:** Monday, Dec. 11, 2023  
Ceremony begins at 11:30 a.m.  
**WHERE:** 1 Capitol Square Dr.  
Columbus, OH 43215

**WHO:** Ohio Lt. Governor Jon Husted, Ohio Adjutant General Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr., Maj. Gen. (U.S. Army, retired) and ODVS Director Deborah Ashenhurst, COL Chaplain Daniel Burris, Gold Star Parents Dan and Darlene Clinger

#### About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's year-round mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at more than 4,000 participating locations in all 50 states and overseas.

For more information, please visit [www.wreath-sacrossamerica.org](http://www.wreath-sacrossamerica.org).

This year, Wreaths Across America will be distributing more than 2.8 million wreaths to more than 3,000 cemeteries. Cemetery coordinators from counties across Ohio will be in attendance at the Statehouse ceremony.

**NOTE:** The Ohio Department of Veterans Services is not affiliated with Wreaths Across America. For questions about this event, please reach out directly to Brittney McCall at Ohio Survivor Outreach Services: [brittney.s.mccall.ctr@army.mil](mailto:brittney.s.mccall.ctr@army.mil).



## 2024 SAL Membership Report as of: December 7, 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	-48	102	85.00%	76.47
2	SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	-597	1,322	82.06%	71.68
3	FRANCE	168	-54	130	77.38%	69.70
4	LOUISIANA	1,821	-526	1,345	73.86%	68.43
5	WISCONSIN	4,398	-1,231	3,210	72.99%	66.48
6	IOWA	4,914	-1,023	3,234	65.81%	61.44
7	GEORGIA	4,887	-955	3,154	64.54%	57.59
8	SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	-306	1,012	64.46%	53.40
9	ILLINOIS	13,716	-2,528	8,700	63.43%	59.85
10	FLORIDA	23,066	-4,039	14,419	62.51%	52.92
11	IDAHO	659	-105	402	61.00%	46.50
12	NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	-437	1,683	60.76%	50.75
13	ALABAMA	2,100	-326	1,271	60.52%	52.25
14	NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	-165	649	60.37%	52.79
15	PUERTO RICO	156	-24	94	60.26%	55.56
16	MISSISSIPPI	736	-109	440	59.78%	55.22
17	MONTANA	1,091	-155	646	59.21%	56.16
18	MARYLAND	16,803	-2,316	9,877	58.78%	53.78
19	OREGON	1,534	-187	877	57.17%	47.11
20	NEVADA	387	-46	220	56.85%	48.61
21	CALIFORNIA	11,292	-1,230	6,311	55.89%	49.02
22	MINNESOTA	11,435	-1,236	6,382	55.81%	52.12
23	TENNESSEE	1,792	-185	991	55.30%	46.75
24	VIRGINIA	4,367	-430	2,395	54.84%	47.65
25	ARKANSAS	406	-39	222	54.68%	43.32
26	WYOMING	1,248	-119	681	54.57%	48.59
27	RHODE ISLAND	348	-32	189	54.31%	46.40
28	INDIANA	37,244	-3,432	20,192	54.22%	50.25
29	OHIO	31,690	-2,776	17,036	53.76%	49.58
30	KANSAS	6,055	-516	3,241	53.53%	49.68
31	CONNECTICUT	1,865	-155	994	53.30%	46.19
32	UTAH	460	-38	245	53.26%	50.23
33	DELAWARE	2,596	-208	1,376	53.00%	46.47
34	NEW JERSEY	9,662	-768	5,116	52.95%	47.53
35	MICHIGAN	26,236	-1,965	13,771	52.49%	46.96
36	OKLAHOMA	1,430	-101	744	52.03%	41.45
37	NEBRASKA	6,992	-476	3,622	51.80%	49.68
38	NEW YORK	30,663	-2,000	15,798	51.52%	47.41
39	TEXAS	5,783	-328	2,930	50.67%	44.19
40	ARIZONA	8,595	-467	4,335	50.44%	41.94
41	VERMONT	3,920	-192	1,956	49.90%	46.44
42	MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	-200	2,644	48.67%	43.66
43	NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	-209	2,921	48.47%	43.39
44	MISSOURI	3,337	-77	1,579	47.32%	41.61
45	WASHINGTON	2,682	9	1,198	44.67%	34.80
46	PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	1,950	26,286	41.89%	38.50
47	COLORADO	2,952	114	1,214	41.12%	34.94
48	ALASKA	1,740	75	708	40.69%	33.48
49	KENTUCKY	2,399	117	963	40.14%	33.86
50	NEW MEXICO	1,582	96	616	38.94%	29.76
51	WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	171	996	38.41%	32.72
52	DIST OF COL	91	9	32	35.16%	31.82
53	MAINE	2,757	371	870	31.56%	28.08
54	LATIN AMERICA	33	5	10	30.30%	12.50
55	PHILIPPINES	79	31	5	6.33%	5.06
<b>Grand Totals:</b>		<b>382,111</b>	<b>-29,406</b>	<b>201,356</b>	<b>52.70%</b>	<b>47.53</b>



## 2024 SAL Regional Breakdown

Western Region - James R. Fischer, Sr. (CA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
HAWAII	120	102	85.00%
IDAHO	659	402	61.00%
MONTANA	1,091	646	59.21%
OREGON	1,534	877	57.17%
NEVADA	387	220	56.85%
CALIFORNIA	11,292	6,311	55.89%
WYOMING	1,248	681	54.57%
UTAH	460	245	53.26%
ARIZONA	8,595	4,335	50.44%
WASHINGTON	2,682	1,198	44.67%
COLORADO	2,952	1,214	41.12%
ALASKA	1,740	708	40.69%
NEW MEXICO	1,582	616	38.94%
LATIN AMERICA	33	10	30.30%
PHILIPPINES	79	5	6.33%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>34,454</b>	<b>17,570</b>	<b>51.00%</b>

Southeast Region - Linwood A. Moore (VA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
LOUISIANA	1,821	1,345	73.86%
GEORGIA	4,887	3,154	64.54%
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	1,012	64.46%
FLORIDA	23,066	14,419	62.51%
NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	1,683	60.76%
ALABAMA	2,100	1,271	60.52%
PUERTO RICO	156	94	60.26%
MISSISSIPPI	736	440	59.78%
TENNESSEE	1,792	991	55.30%
VIRGINIA	4,367	2,395	54.84%
ARKANSAS	406	222	54.68%
TEXAS	5,783	2,930	50.67%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>49,454</b>	<b>29,956</b>	<b>60.57%</b>

Midwest Region - Terry A. Harris (KS)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	1,322	82.06%
IOWA	4,914	3,234	65.81%
NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	649	60.37%
KANSAS	6,055	3,241	53.53%
OKLAHOMA	1,430	744	52.03%
NEBRASKA	6,992	3,622	51.80%
MISSOURI	3,337	1,579	47.32%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>25,414</b>	<b>14,391</b>	<b>56.63%</b>

Northeast Region - John R. Cook (NH)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
FRANCE	168	130	77.38%
MARYLAND	16,803	9,877	58.78%
RHODE ISLAND	348	189	54.31%
CONNECTICUT	1,865	994	53.30%
DELAWARE	2,596	1,376	53.00%
NEW JERSEY	9,662	5,116	52.95%
NEW YORK	30,663	15,798	51.52%
VERMONT	3,920	1,956	49.90%
MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	2,644	48.67%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	2,921	48.47%
PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	26,286	41.89%
DIST OF COL	91	32	35.16%
MAINE	2,757	870	31.56%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>143,078</b>	<b>68,189</b>	<b>47.66%</b>

Central Region - Robert L. Bristo (MN)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
WISCONSIN	4,398	3,210	72.99%
ILLINOIS	13,716	8,700	63.43%
MINNESOTA	11,435	6,382	55.81%
INDIANA	37,244	20,192	54.22%
OHIO	31,690	17,036	53.76%
MICHIGAN	26,236	13,771	52.49%
KENTUCKY	2,399	963	40.14%
WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	996	38.41%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>129,711</b>	<b>71,250</b>	<b>54.93%</b>

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**MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**



12/07/23		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, 5	49,454	29,956	(19,498)	60.57%	976		
2	Midwest 1, 2, 3, 4	25,414	14,391	(11,023)	56.63%	669		
3	Central 1, 2, 3, 4	129,711	71,250	(58,461)	54.93%	2,513		
4	Western 1, 2, 3, 4	34,454	17,570	(16,884)	51.00%	653		
5	Northeast 1, 4	143,078	68,189	(74,889)	47.66%	3,095		
	<b>TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>382,111</b>	<b>201,356</b>	<b>(180,755)</b>	<b>52.70%</b>	<b>7,906</b>		



12/07/23		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	3,210	(1,188)	72.99%	40	5	66.48%		
2	Illinois 1, 2, 3, 5	13,716	8,700	(5,016)	63.43%	228	9	59.85%		
3	Minnesota 1, 2, 3, 4	11,435	6,382	(5,053)	55.81%	397	22	52.12%		
4	Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4	37,244	20,192	(17,052)	54.22%	450	28	50.25%		
5	Ohio 1, 3, 4	31,690	17,036	(14,654)	53.76%	573	29	49.58%		
6	Michigan 1, 3, 4	26,236	13,771	(12,465)	52.49%	592	35	46.96%		
7	Kentucky 1	2,399	963	(1,436)	40.14%	26	49	33.86%		
8	West Virginia 1	2,593	996	(1,597)	38.41%	207	51	32.72%		
	<b>TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>129,711</b>	<b>71,250</b>	<b>(58,461)</b>	<b>54.93%</b>	<b>2,513</b>				

12/07/23		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	102	(18)	85.00%	1	1	76.47%		
2	Idaho 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	659	402	(257)	61.00%	20	11	46.50%		
3	Montana 1, 2, 3, 4	1,091	646	(445)	59.21%	3	17	56.16%		
4	Oregon 1, 2, 3, 4	1,534	877	(657)	57.17%	20	19	47.11%		
5	Nevada 1, 2, 3, 4	387	220	(167)	56.85%	9	20	48.61%		
6	California 1, 2, 3, 4	11,292	6,311	(4,981)	55.89%	178	21	49.02%		
7	Wyoming 1, 2, 3, 4	1,248	681	(567)	54.57%	-	26	48.59%		
8	Utah 1, 2, 3, 4	460	245	(215)	53.26%	6	32	50.23%		
9	Arizona 1, 4	8,595	4,335	(4,260)	50.44%	310	40	41.94%		
10	Washington	2,682	1,198	(1,484)	44.67%	47	45	34.80%		
11	Colorado 1, 3	2,952	1,214	(1,738)	41.12%	9	47	34.94%		
12	Alaska 3	1,740	708	(1,032)	40.69%	10	48	33.48%		
13	New Mexico	1,582	616	(966)	38.94%	40	50	29.76%		
14	Latin America	33	10	(23)	30.30%	-	54	12.50%		
15	Philippines	79	5	(74)	6.33%	-	55	5.06%		
	<b>TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>34,454</b>	<b>17,570</b>	<b>(16,884)</b>	<b>51.00%</b>	<b>653</b>				

12/07/23		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	1,345	(476)	73.86%	23	4	68.43%		
2	Georgia 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4,887	3,154	(1,733)	64.54%	44	7	57.59%		
3	South Carolina 1, 2, 3, 5	1,570	1,012	(558)	64.46%	1	8	53.40%		
4	Florida 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	23,066	14,419	(8,647)	62.51%	634	10	52.92%		
5	North Carolina 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2,770	1,683	(1,087)	60.76%	24	12	50.75%		
6	Alabama 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2,100	1,271	(829)	60.52%	28	13	52.25%		
7	Puerto Rico 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	156	94	(62)	60.26%	11	15	55.56%		
8	Mississippi 1, 2, 3, 4	736	440	(296)	59.78%	8	16	55.22%		
9	Tennessee 1, 2, 3, 4	1,792	991	(801)	55.30%	25	23	46.75%		
10	Virginia 1, 2, 3, 4	4,367	2,395	(1,972)	54.84%	112	24	47.65%		
12	Arkansas 1, 2, 3, 4	406	222	(184)	54.68%	-	25	43.32%		
13	Texas 1, 2, 3, 4	5,783	2,930	(2,853)	50.67%	66	39	44.19%		
	<b>TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>	<b>49,454</b>	<b>29,956</b>	<b>(19,498)</b>	<b>60.57%</b>	<b>976</b>				

12/07/23		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, 7	1,611	1,322	(289)	82.06%	43	2	71.68%		
2 Iowa 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4,914	3,234	(1,680)	65.81%	345	6	61.44%		
3 North Dakota 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1,075	649	(426)	60.37%	15	14	52.79%		
4 Oklahoma 1, 2, 3, 4	1,430	744	(686)	52.03%	1	36	41.45%		
5 Nebraska 1, 2, 3, 4	6,992	3,622	(3,370)	51.80%	19	37	49.68%		
6 Kansas 1, 2, 3, 4	6,055	3,241	(2,814)	53.53%	219	30	49.68%		
7 Missouri 1, 2, 3, 4	3,337	1,579	(1,758)	47.32%	27	44	41.61%		
<b>TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>25,414</b>	<b>14,391</b>	<b>(11,023)</b>	<b>56.63%</b>	<b>669</b>				

12/07/23		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%	-	3	69.70%		
2 Maryland 1, 2, 3, 4	16,803	9,877	(6,926)	58.78%	461	18	53.78%		
3 Rhode Island 1, 2, 3, 4	348	189	(159)	54.31%	13	27	46.40%		
4 Connecticut 1, 2, 3, 4	1,865	994	(871)	53.30%	68	31	46.19%		
5 Delaware 1, 4	2,596	1,376	(1,220)	53.00%	31	33	46.47%		
6 New Jersey 1, 2, 3, 4	9,662	5,116	(4,546)	52.95%	595	34	47.53%		
7 New York 1, 3, 4	30,663	15,798	(14,865)	51.52%	311	38	47.41%		
8 Vermont 1, 2, 3, 4	3,920	1,956	(1,964)	49.90%	119	41	46.44%		
9 Massachusetts 1, 3, 4	5,432	2,644	(2,788)	48.67%	141	42	43.66%		
10 New Hampshire 1, 2, 4	6,027	2,921	(3,106)	48.47%	192	43	43.39%		
11 Pennsylvania	62,746	26,286	(36,460)	41.89%	1,163	46	38.50%		
12 Dist. of Columbia	91	32	(59)	35.16%	1	52	31.82%		
13 Maine	2,757	870	(1,887)	31.56%	-	53	28.08%		
<b>TOTALS 1, 4</b>	<b>143,078</b>	<b>68,189</b>	<b>(74,889)</b>	<b>47.66%</b>	<b>3,095</b>				

12/07/23		2024 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	14,419	(8,647)	62.51%	634	10	52.92%		
2 Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4	37,244	20,192	(17,052)	54.22%	450	28	50.25%		
3 Ohio 1, 3, 4	31,690	17,036	(14,654)	53.76%	573	29	49.58%		
4 New York 1, 3, 4	30,663	15,798	(14,865)	51.52%	311	38	47.41%		
5 Michigan 1, 4	26,236	13,771	(12,465)	52.49%	592	35	46.96%		
6 Pennsylvania	62,746	26,286	(36,460)	41.89%	1,163	46	38.50%		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>211,645</b>	<b>107,502</b>	<b>(104,143)</b>	<b>50.79%</b>	<b>3,723</b>				

<b>National Totals 1, 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>382,111</b>	<b>201,356</b>	<b>(180,755)</b>	<b>52.70%</b>	<b>7,906</b>		<b>47.53%</b>		
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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, 2024 (DSTG) 105%



**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](mailto:tom.deal@verizon.net)

## *Engaging A Potential New Member*

**Objective:** To train SAL members to confidently engage potential members and communicate our mission, benefits, and values in an “elevator speech” that will capture their attention.

SAL members should always create a warm-hearted environment while always seeking out new members. They should always promote community engagement and membership growth.

## *Sharing the “Why” – Making an Impression*

An SAL member should always be ready to express their personal “why” they belong. They must be willing to engage the public and portray an approachable demeanor. It is very important to not only start the conversation, but one must be able to continue it and effectively share the organizations values.

## *The “How”*

- Make sure your first impression is a positive one.
- Make sure to express why you joined and continue to renew.
- Make sure your why is impactful, but short.
- Make sure questions are correctly answered or promise to find the correct answer.
- Make sure to exchange contact information for further engagement.

## *Being Visible – Doing Outreach*

SAL squadrons should participate in all community events possible. There should be a recruiting/information table at these events. This also includes all American Legion family events. SAL members should be at all active military/veteran (where allowed) events to show support.

Squadrons should host events for area veterans and their families, emphasize the American Legion family and how everyone can play an important role in assisting veterans and their families.

**Keep an eye out for**

- People wearing patriotic apparel
- Patriotic vehicle plates/decals
- Homes with Patriotic décor

**New Members**

- Make sure to approach new members and engage with them.
- Inform them of the squadron and the activities it hosts.
- Know what you are talking about/Be informative and encouraging of the squadron activities.
- Find out what that new member enjoys and see if there is an area that fits that member.
- Be sure to stay in touch and communicate with that new member.

*If a potential member is involved in community activities,  
let them know the squadron may be able to help with monies  
supporting the activity.*

*This will add an active member and add to the Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR).*

## *Membership Is Everyone's Responsibility*

- Be sure to spread the word of the Sons of the American Legion
- Always speak positively.
- Be sure to exchange info to follow up with potential members.
- Continue to reach out to expired members

Be a leader and most of all, a friend.

# BE THE ONE





# BOWL SEASON™

A CELEBRATION OF  
COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## 2023-24 OFFICIAL MATCHUPS



**DEC. 16**  
Georgia Southern vs. Ohio  
11:00 AM | ESPN



**DEC. 16**  
Howard vs. Florida A&M  
12:00 PM | ABC



**DEC. 16**  
Jax St. vs. Louisiana  
2:15 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 16**  
Miami (OH) vs. App St.  
3:30 PM | ABC



**DEC. 16**  
NM St. vs. Fresno St.  
5:45 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 16**  
UCLA vs. Boise St.  
7:30 PM | ABC



**DEC. 16**  
Cal vs. Texas Tech  
9:15 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 18**  
WKU vs. Old Dominion  
2:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 19**  
UTSA vs. Marshall  
9:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 21**  
USF vs. Syracuse  
8:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 22**  
Georgia Tech vs. UCF  
6:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 23**  
Troy vs. Duke  
12:00 PM | ABC



**DEC. 23**  
Arkansas St. vs. N. Illinois  
12:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 23**  
JMU vs. Air Force  
3:30 PM | ABC



**DEC. 23**  
Georgia St. vs. Utah St.  
3:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 23**  
S. Alabama vs. E. Michigan  
7:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 23**  
Utah vs. Northwestern  
7:30 PM | ABC



**DEC. 23**  
CCU vs. San Jose St.  
10:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 26**  
BGSU vs. Minnesota  
2:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 26**  
Texas St. vs. Rice  
5:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 26**  
Kansas vs. UNLV  
9:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 27**  
Virginia Tech vs. Tulane  
2:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 27**  
UNC vs. West Virginia  
5:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 27**  
Louisville vs. USC  
8:00 PM | FOX



**DEC. 27**  
Texas A&M vs. Ok. St.  
9:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 28**  
SMU vs. Boston College  
11:00 AM | ESPN



**DEC. 28**  
Rutgers vs. Miami  
2:15 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 28**  
NC St. vs. Kansas St.  
5:45 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 28**  
Arizona vs. Oklahoma  
9:15 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 29**  
Clemson vs. Kentucky  
12:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 29**  
Oregon St. vs. Notre Dame  
2:00 PM | CBS



**DEC. 29**  
Memphis vs. Iowa St.  
3:30 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 29**  
Missouri vs. Ohio St.  
8:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 30**  
Ole Miss vs. Penn St.  
12:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 30**  
Auburn vs. Maryland  
2:00 PM | ABC



**DEC. 30**  
Georgia vs. Florida St.  
4:00 PM | ESPN



**DEC. 30**  
Toledo vs. Wyoming  
4:30 PM | BARSTOOL



**JAN. 1**  
Wisconsin vs. LSU  
12:00 PM | ESPN2



**JAN. 1**  
Iowa vs. Tennessee  
1:00 PM | ABC



**JAN. 1**  
Liberty vs. Oregon  
1:00 PM | ESPN



**JAN. 1**  
Alabama vs. Michigan  
5:00 PM | ESPN  
CFP Semifinal



**JAN. 1**  
Texas vs. Washington  
8:45 PM | ESPN  
CFP Semifinal



**JAN. 8**  
TBD vs. TBD  
7:30 PM | ESPN

\*All times ET and all Bowls subject to change.

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