



American Legion Scholars recognized for achievements in nation's capital

The American Legion | February 29, 2024



Jennifer Blohm/The American Legion

The 2023 [Samsung American Legion scholars](#) were honored for their achievement in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with The American Legion's annual Washington Conference. to be recognized by American Legion Family members for their achievement.

During their stay in the nation's capital Feb. 24-27, the scholars toured the National Mall and Arlington National Cemetery with Legion Family members and attended a special recognition dinner with National American Legion Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, National Sons of The American Legion Commander Donald "JR" Hall Jr., and Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson, and their state senators.

The 10 scholars were eligible for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship for their participation in either American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State in 2023, being the direct descendant (or legally adopted child) of a U.S. military veteran, and for their academic achievement and community service.

"I am extremely grateful to be here. We've had the opportunity to explore D.C. and meet with delegates of The American Legion," said Charles Hiatt of San Diego, Calif., whose late great-grandfather, a World War II bomber pilot, made him eligible for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. A favorite story of Hiatt's that his great-grandfather would share was about flying in formation and watching his fellow soldiers get shot down. But he stayed in formation. "He decided to continue onward. His dedication and bravery to his country continues to inspire me today. He showed that it's important to do the right thing, even when it's difficult. I was more than happy to write about him in my scholarship application."

When Sydney Kirages of Lake Forest, Ill, answered her high school and local Legion post's competition of "What Does Veterans Day Mean to You?," she formed a relationship with the post. "I absolutely fell in love with everything the Legion is and does, and from there I became super involved in my Legion (Post 264)," she said. "I've been able to create amazing connections with my Legionnaires, and they sponsored me to Girls State."

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship honors her "Pop Pop," who served in the Army during the Vietnam War. "He never spoke of his military experience until I became close with my Legion," Kirages said. "When we visited the Vietnam War Memorial (on Feb. 25), he asked me if I would find one of his ROTC friends. When he visited the Vietnam memorial he walked up, saw all the names, and had to step away. For him to ask me, it was honestly one of the biggest honors and a big jump for him."

see **SCHOLARS** page 23

Round-Up

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

Christopher Carlton (IN)
Immediate Past National Commander

Joseph Navarrete (NM)
Leading Candidate for National Commander

William Clancy III (NY)
Trailing Candidate for National Commander

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

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

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

All information must be submitted by noon each Friday.

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

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Donald "JR" Hall, Jr.

National Commander

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

NJ Squadron hosts blood drive

Rusty Myers | February 22, 2024

Belleville, NJ – A blood drive, the third since July, was hosted at Belleville American Legion Post 105 by their Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Squadron in coordination with the New York Blood Center (NYBC)

In a letter written by the NYBC to Squadron 105, they said that at the first two blood drives held on 29 June and 09 October "...we collected a total of 67 units of blood which may help save the lives of 201 patients!"

A third blood drive was held most recently on Thursday, February 22, where an additional 32 units of blood were collected.

In their letter, they continued by saying that "By sponsoring a blood drive you have made an important contribution to maintain a stable blood supply. A blood drive is a life-saving event, providing a unique opportunity for people to come together and do a good deed. By creating not only a space for the blood drive but actively supporting the cause, you have helped not just those in need of blood now but the community as well."

The coordinator from the Sons is Blood Drive Chairman Steve Donald, who became a member about a year ago.

Blood drives are an important way the American Legion fulfills its commitment to one of its four core pillars – National Security – which stands among their other “Four Pillars” of Americanism, Children and Youth, and Veterans Affairs. Community Service is a critical element of building a strong national security, and the American Legion’s blood donor initiatives reach all the way back to the days after the attack on Pearl Harbor when World War I veteran members of “The Legion” organized blood drives to support elements of a much needed civil defense program.



Squadron 105 First Vice-Commander James Elsmore
American Legion Post 135, Belleville, NJ

The organization had even passed a resolution in May 1967 designating the week of December 7th each year as “National American Legion Blood Donor Week,” in remembrance of the attack that sent the nation into World War II and gave birth to the program.

Be on the lookout for future blood drives at the Post through public announcements or posts on the Squadrons Facebook page at @SAL105NJ.

From the Editor

With so many Detachments at or above the 80% mark, let’s see how fast we can get to 90%. The quota target date will be here before we know it. How many more quota detachments will we have by then? Your hard work will show us.

Who’s next?

Don’t forget, when you are celebrating the birthday of The American Legion, please take pictures of your

event, write up a short description, and send in to be included in *Round-Up* or *The Millennium*

Thanks for your continued support!

Honor the Veteran Who Made You Eligible.

RENEW TODAY!

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., Editor

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

click a button below for more information

JOIN THE SAL

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BE THE ONE

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VRABEL

Robert L. Bristo

Central National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

Second Wednesday Quarterly

September 13, 2023 | December 13, 2023

March 13, 2024 | June 12, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 930 6046 3298 | Passcode: 140 802

Hey Central Region! Welcome to the Month of March!

P.U.S.H - Persist Until Something Happens

Do you know what has happened? According to the February 26th membership report, **the SAL is 19,665 members ahead of where we were last year at the same time!** That is a full 1.71% improvement. We also show a 2.43% gain in retention this year over last year's numbers! Believe me friends, this makes reaching our 105% goal and the 400,000 member mark within our grasp. All we have to do is to continue to **PUSH** on working our membership! Remember, working hard for something we don't care for is called stress! Working hard for something we LOVE is called Passion!

As we move into the Spring Season, I want you to consider a quote from author Austin Kleon... **"Every day is a potential seed that we can grow into something beautiful"** That is us! That is the Sons of the American Legion! Every time we recruit a new member, that new SON is our attempt to grow a new viable, active, and engaging member! We need to remember when we sign up a new member we need to mentor him as well. We need to tend to our garden if you will, to be sure the **"membership"** seeds we have planted grow! This takes time and effort.

"The day you plant the seed is not the day you eat the fruit" - Author Unknown We, the SAL want to grow! We want to be better. If you grow, we all grow, as we are made to grow together to continue our work, our mission and to the service of our veterans! Our strength and growth come only from our continuous effort! **My comrades, WE Can Do This!**

And now for our numbers...

The Central Region improved by 1.43% since the February 22nd report! This puts us a scant 1.96% behind the Southeast Region and a very little .16% and .96% ahead of the Northeast and Midwest Regions!

The Detachment with the largest gain since the last report was the Detachment of Illinois with a bump of 2.61% moving them back into 2nd place in the region. **Good Job Illinois!** They were followed by Indiana who improved by 1.67%, Michigan who moved up 1.47% and Ohio who added 1.08%! The region closed out with the remaining detachment all moving forward with Minnesota (.82%), Kentucky (.67%) and West Virginia (.58%).

Please continue to send me your IRA forms as I have not received any for a while!

Come on my fellow SONS! **Keep going, Keep Growing!** The whole point of life and our organization is to continue to change, to evolve, and to grow!

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

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

Butch Ray, Central Region Membership Chairman



John R. Cook

Northeast National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

THIRD Wednesday Quarterly

September 20, 2023 | December 20, 2023

March 20, 2024 | June 19, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 980 7046 7820 | Passcode: 469 153

James R. Fischer

Western National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

THIRD Wednesday Quarterly

September 20, 2023 | December 20, 2023

March 20, 2024 | June 19, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 964 2285 1563 | Passcode: 433 552

What's up Westside?

A definition of success. To laugh often and much. To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children. To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends. To appreciate beauty. To find the best in others. To leave the world a bit better, weather by a child, a garden patch or redeemed social condition. To know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. Thank you for all your success this year.

May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions. Thanks again for everything you do for this great organization.

Membership fosters a sense of camaraderie, where individuals uplift one another, pushing each other to new heights. Come on Westside, this is the time to start pushing our way to first place in the region.

The Westside report. We improved by 0.91%, currently at 83.22% total from last report. We are now 5th in the nation and right behind Midwest Region by 2.73%. Our next goal is to be at 80%

by 02/13/24. Amazing job Hawaii at 100.83%, Oregon at 90.22%, Arizona at 88.45%, New Mexico at 85.59%, Wyoming at 83.17%, Idaho at 81.18%, Washington at 81.17%, California at 80.82% and Alaska at 80.34% for already achieving this goal. Coming on in a big way is Colorado at 79.95%, Montana at 79.74%, Utah at 78.70%, Latin America at 75.76%, Nevada at 70.80% and Philippines at 56.96%. Membership requires active participation and engagement, as it is through involvement that true connections are made. Thanks again for everything you do for this great organization.

For God and Country,

*Dan Ashley,
Western Region Membership Chairman*

Terry A. Harris

Midwest National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

Fourth Wednesday Quarterly

September 27, 2023 | December 27, 2023

March 27, 2024 | June 26, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 924 0402 2733 | Passcode: 371 685

Linwood A. Moore

Southeast National Vice-Commander

REGIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

First Wednesday Quarterly

September 6, 2023 | December 6, 2023

March 6, 2024 | June 5, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 945 1723 1230 | Passcode: 58543

We are over the 80% mark by 6.82% two weeks early.
Let's keep up the great work everyone.

BE THE ONE

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

How VA is leveraging innovation to Be the One

[Cameran Richardson](#) | February 27, 2024

Members of The American Legion's Veterans Affairs & Commission heard how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is addressing veteran suicide, a top priority of The American Legion's, through innovation.

Matthew Rowley, an Air Force veteran of the Iraq war and community builder for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL), addressed the commission Feb. 26 during the Legion's 64th Washington Conference. He provided a few examples of where VA is using innovation to prevent veteran suicide that aligns with the Legion's [Be the One](#) mission.

VHA OHIL has a program called Senior Innovation Fellows where "we find our best and brightest VA innovators, and we support them for a year while they work on an innovation project," Rowley said. There are two current projects that relate to social connection, "very much like what Be the One is doing to prevent and end veteran suicides."

One of the projects is Compassionate Compact Corps, which pairs trained volunteers with veterans experiencing social isolation and loneliness for weekly phone calls. Since 2021, there have been 13,000 support calls.

"Over 80 percent of the (VA) veteran patients who were experiencing isolation felt that compassionate contact, or that weekly call, decreased their social isolation and loneliness," Rowley said. "Over 80 percent of the volunteers said, 'This has improved my quality of life as well.' Just like Be the One, that is good for the person that you are reaching out to, it's also good for your heart."

The other project is veteran socials that are community-based events that foster interpersonal connections and social support among veterans and

community members. Rowley said there are four Legion posts in Massachusetts that hold veteran socials and encourage others to do the same by connecting with your VA. And there's Mission Daybreak, a VA challenge launched in 2022 that awarded \$20 million to suicide prevention solutions to meet the diverse needs of veterans. The competition resulted in 1,300 submissions and 10 finalists. See the finalists.



Matthew Rowley, community builder for the VHA Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning, addressed the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission during the Legion's Washington Conference, Feb. 26.

Jennifer Blohm/The American Legion

"What I love so much about the Be the One (mission) is that it's not just suicide prevention, it's person-to-person, social connection, as a means to prevent suicide. It's person-to-person. That means a lot to me," added Rowley, who has lost friends to suicide, including a close one last month. "Be the One is a fantastic mission."

Along with suicide prevention and social connectiveness efforts, Rowley spoke of what the VA is doing to push health care forward for veterans by developing processes and products that will make health care better. As a result of VA innovation, providers now have the ability to take CT scans of a veteran going into surgery and create a 3-D life-size model of their anatomy that the provider will use to plan for the surgery and explain to the veteran what exactly will happen in surgery.

"This is the future of veteran care," Rowley said. "This is the office of advanced manufacturing. We are really excited to expand these offerings throughout VA."

A pilot program currently going on at all VA medical centers upon request by the patient is Pharmacogenomics (PGx) – a blood test that studies how genetic variations affect individual responses to medications, like chemo treatment or cholesterol medicine. "We find out ahead of time (how a veteran will

respond to medication), so we don't put veterans at risk," Rowley said, noting that there are 200,000 tests left until the pilot funds run out. "Talk to your provider and let your fellow veterans know about this. On a larger scale, if this is something you would like to see VA continue, your voice needs to be heard. Because there is no guarantee that this will exist after those 200,000 tests."

American Legion members can visit the [VHA OHIL marketplace](#) to see the many innovations underway.

"A big part of what we do is making sure we have that voice of the veteran," Rowley said. "The easiest way to get involved in VA innovation is to check out what's going on at the local level. There are 44 facilities with VA innovation specialists. Each one has projects being developed by frontline employees at the facility and they want veteran input."

Rowley encouraged American Legion members to reach out to veterans not currently enrolled in the VA health-care system to highlight VA's innovations and that innovation is driven by veteran input.

"VA wants to be the provider of choice now, 10, 20, 30 years from now. We need to be reaching those veterans out in the community. And that is where the partnership with The American Legion is so important to what we're doing. Your role in strengthening VA care is absolutely critical."

Continuing with innovation and technology, commission members heard from Eugene Luskin, CEO of SyncMD – a free app that collects, stores, and shares your medical records. SyncMD started in 2015 by former Microsoft employees and health-care providers.

"We entered the market with a personal health record solution that allows patients to securely collect, store and share their medical records anywhere, with anyone," Luskin said. "Today, we are used across the United States by many patients, providers, hospitals, strategic partners and veteran nursing homes."

SyncMD just completed integration with the VA to allow veterans to pull their records easily and securely from VA.

Users can visit [syncmd.com](#) to download the app onto their smartphones and begin requesting records from their provider, whether they receive care from or outside the VA.

Today, patients are using the app to retrieve their health records from the VA and soon, the ability to confirm their service history and eligibility. Luskin

said the app is a great tool when veterans are working with accredited service officers like The American Legion to file a claim and have access to their entire medical history.

“It’s effectively an electronic health world that allows veterans, patients, to collect their records from any sources and create a true 360-degree view of the patient. And it exceeds government requirements for securing health information,” Luskin said.

Changing lives, saving lives

[Henry Howard](#) and Hilary Ott | March 1, 2024

Editor’s note: This story touches on the topic of suicide. Through this story, the subject, and The American Legion hope to shine a light on the Be the One mission, which is dedicated to saving the lives of veterans. If you are a veteran having suicidal ideation, call the Crisis Line at 988 and press 1.



Eric “Scott” Foulks was experiencing a dark phase while at the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Fort Knox, Ky. Not only did he sustain physical injuries from being wounded by an IED during his time as an Army platoon sergeant, Foulks suffered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries.

“Thirteen of the 26 soldiers in my platoon committed suicide.”

Foulks was quickly sinking into debt. “I was losing everything we owned, I was behind on house payments, car payments. I couldn’t even afford my can of chew or water.”

At the same time, his marriage also was tanking. “I didn’t want to live anymore,” says Foulks, a combat engineer who deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan. “My family hated me. My wife and daughters were ready to leave. I was irritable, I was angry. They described it as walking on eggshells around me. They didn’t want to set me off.”

Each day he would get up around 11 a.m., play a game on his phone in his chair, eat and go back to bed. At one point, he was taking 33 prescription pills a day. Now, after waking up, “it’s a different ballgame.”

He’s awake by 7 a.m. to bring his daughter to school, then attends to assisting veterans during the day. Instead of his phone beeping game sounds, it’s ringing constantly with calls from veterans he’s helping.

“It gets busy at times but that’s fine,” says Foulks, commander at Post 21 in Rogersville, Tenn. “It keeps my mind busy. If I help this veteran, then it’s on to

the next. They know they can reach me when they need to.”

A timely intervention. Foulks’ journey from desperation to inspiration hit an initial speed bump when he mustered up the courage to seek assistance. After relocating to Georgia, the wheelchair-bound veteran went to a veterans nonprofit organization and requested assistance. The members never looked up from their card game.

“The only thing that was said to me was, ‘I fought my war. I can’t fight yours,’” he recalls. “I rolled out the door with tears in my eyes. It almost discouraged me from seeking help from veterans. I literally cried to my wife. All I could say was, ‘Wow.’”

Foulks tried again a few days later at American Legion Post 172 in Warner Robins, Ga.

“They took me in, saved my home, saved my family,” he recalls. “They got me in contact with the right people, including Operation Homefront. Within 24 hours of contacting Operation Homefront, they gave me \$15,000, and paid for my house and cars. They got me set to where I needed to be in life. That’s what brought me to the Legion. Veterans taking care of veterans.”

That intervention saved Foulks, his wife, two daughters and mother from ending up homeless.

“It was a big relief; a weight being lifted off our shoulders. Me and my family could breathe. When I got that good response from The American Legion, I felt like somebody — not a number.”

Before receiving that assistance, Foulks was desperate. After his initial rejection from another veterans organization, he put a pistol to his mouth and pulled the trigger. There were other attempts, too. But his wife and fellow veterans have rallied, a demonstration of the power of Be the One.

“It didn’t go off,” he recalls of the first attempt. “To this day, there’s no reason why it shouldn’t have gone off. The only reason is that God has a purpose for me here.”

That purpose — the niche he discovered — is serving his veteran community as an American Legion member.

‘Find your niche’

After moving to Tennessee, Foulks was determined to give back and prop up his local Legion post. Just like

Post 172 in Georgia had uplifted him. He quickly became adjutant and then commander.

“You got to find your niche in life,” he says, noting his hobbies have included woodworking but now his focus is helping veterans. “The American Legion has helped me get that niche. It’s been a great opportunity.”

As commander, Foulks has elevated the post’s standing in the community. “We’ve just got to keep getting out in the community and letting people know who we are and being seen,” he said.

That also translates to the First District.

“There’s a lot of people who care about The American Legion,” he said. “We’re like a family in our district. One thing that is very important to us in the department and the district is the Be the One campaign.”

‘Just save one.’

In fact, the district is hosting its second annual Be the One Challenge 22 Walk on April 6 in Bristol.

“Be the One has been important to me, and we started it with the walk last year in Bristol to get people’s attention,” 1st District Commander James McLaughlin said. “We’ve taken it very seriously. Just save one.”

McLaughlin, who has been a mentor to Foulks, remembers him exhibiting anger when they first met. But through talking, they were able to forge solutions. “Scott has really changed the culture of this post,” said McLaughlin, an Army veteran and adjutant of Post 104 in Sevierville. “This post is constantly doing something. This post is alive. My family has figured it out because they are all members now. They want to be part of the mission at Post 21.”

Foulks has unified the district Riders, McLaughlin says, citing another example of his mentee’s leadership.

“He is red, white and blue — dyed in Legion blue.”

A shining example. During his travels to posts, American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer often talks about Be the One and how the mission “changes lives and saves lives.” Without naming Foulks, Seehafer often cites his story as an example.

While Seehafer was visiting Tennessee, Foulks shared his entire story with the commander, including the suicide attempts.

“As I’m hearing this, I’m thinking the good Lord is in control of this situation,” Seehafer recalls. “And wants you not to take your life but turn over your life and reach out. And that is what he did. He popped in to an American Legion post. They embraced him and got him back on that foundation by helping him. Out of this tragedy, we have some good news — that is what The American Legion does. That’s what we do — we change lives, and we save lives.”

Foulks is honored that his story is reaching countless American Legion Family members across the nation. “As long as we can save one, like he preaches, that’s the goal,” he says. “It’s a great feeling that he is sharing that story. He is a man of faith and a chaplain. We’re losing too many veterans a day. It’s awesome that he is using it, and I hope the message reaches some veterans.”

Moving onward. The Foulks family is much happier now. Communication has improved. Finances are under control. No more walking on eggshells.

“I still have struggles today and know that I am not alone. There are days when I do get bad. But I know I have family. That’s a big difference.”

His personal crusade to help veterans guides his daily life.

“If you need help, don’t be scared. Just ask. As long as you are still alive, that is all that matters.

“To every veteran out there, find your niche. Find your ‘why.’”

Saving Lives of Veterans, their Families, and Communities with the Columbia Protocol

March 1, 2024

As part of The American Legion Be the One mission to end veteran suicide, we have joined forces with Columbia University to develop training for those who want to learn more about interacting and responding with veterans who may be in crisis.

After the training, participants will be able to:

- Use the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale to determine at-risk individuals.
- Identify risk factors and warning signs
- Outline the types of suicidal ideation and four behaviors that indicate imminent risk.

- Communicate effectively with an individual who may be at risk of hurting themselves.



Members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to take part in this training and share the training with their communities. Check back to this page or subscribe to [The American Legion Online Update newsletter](#) to receive information about new training opportunities as they become available.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All attendees will be asked to complete an online survey before the class and upon completion. These surveys help track the effectiveness of the training and allow us to plan for future development.

UPCOMING ONLINE SESSIONS

March 14, 2024
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Eastern
[Click here to register](#)

March 28, 2024
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern
[Click here to register](#)

April 17, 2024
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern
[Click here to register](#)

April 30, 2024
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern
[Click here to register](#)

May 16, 2024
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern
[Click here to register](#)
May 30, 2024
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern
[Click here to register](#)

National Commissions and Committees

Chairmen wishing to have reports published should email them to jeffvrbelsr@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 18, 2024 | July 18, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 966 1733 0121 | Passcode: 463 702

Internal Affairs Commission

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

CBD advocate asks for Legion support with legislation to create FDA regulation

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | February 25, 2024

Paige Figi first realized the benefits of cannabidiol (CBD) when she was trying to find a treatment to address Dravet Syndrome, which was causing her young daughter to suffer from hours-long seizures throughout the day. After the treatments began, her daughter's seizures dropped to less than three per month, allowing her to live a normal life.

And that prompted Figi to push to legalize the medical use of CBD nationwide through the founding of the nonprofit Coalition for Access Now. With that having been accomplished, Figi now is pushing for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate CBD as a dietary supplement – and she'd like members of The American Legion to assist her efforts.

Figi spoke during the Legion's TBI/PTSD/Suicide Prevention Committee meeting Feb. 28 during the organization's annual Washington Conference. She's hoping for, by the spring, passage of [H.R. 1629, the Hemp and Hemp-Derived CBD Consumer Protection and Market Stabilization Act of 2023](#); and S. 2451, the Hemp Act and Consumer Safety Act. She said the 45 million users of CBD – including veterans – deserve to feel confident in the product they're using.

"It needs to be regulated as a dietary supplement by the FDA," Figi said. "At the very basic what that does is we need third-party testing. We need to test what's in there. And you need labeling, so we have confidence and accuracy. That's at the base of what the dietary supplement regulation would do."

“You can’t responsively legalize something and expect the market to be responsible and do the right thing and grow this and sell these products perfectly.”



Coalition for Access Now Executive Director Paige Figi addresses the TBI/PTSD Suicide Prevention Committee.

Figi said getting hemp and CBD legalized through a 2018 agricultural law was the hard part. “But they never got that second part,” she said. “So, since 2018, it’s been the wild west. It’s been this unregulated marketplace. It’s the last mile. The big, hard part was legalizing CBD. Every day, 45 million Americans wake up and take CBD. But we don’t know what they’re taking, because the FDA has not acknowledged that they need to be regulating this.”

Figi said the necessary legislation has no organized opposition. “We are just facing inaction ... because everyone has access. We’ve lost our urgency,” she said. “The bill I’m working on are that last piece. This is a very, very simple, doable, actionable thing. What I need help with is reaching out to these legislators who are for the bill. They just need to hear from their constituents.”

In the time since CBD was legalized and now, Figi said states are now starting to add new restrictions to its use, which now also is being taken recreationally after being synthetically altered.

“That industry is ruining the whole reputation of this amazing medical product,” Figi said. “Some states are rolling back their laws. They’re working very hastily. It’s kind of frightening.

“They’re rolling back CBD laws that these veterans and these parents fought very hard for access to CBD. They’re throwing the CBD into these (synthetic) things. They’re using a sledgehammer and getting rid of all of it out of fear.”

Figi is afraid that without FDA regulation, those currently using CBD legally in their states will be forced to break the law or move to continue using it. “This is my hill that’ll I’ll die on, this issue,” she said. “And that’s why I’m here to talk to you about.”

She said veterans are probably the largest users of CBD. “We should care to support their use of it,” Figi said. “We should care what they’re taking, and we should show them we care ... by getting this done. If we don’t do this, this health product is going away.

“If you support your community using these products, if you support trying to put another tool in the toolbox that’s safe, non-intoxicating ... let’s support the people that are saying it’s successful. And let’s show them that by getting this bill done.”

The committee also heard from Paul Bertrand, National Capital Region Training and Delivery Manager for LivingWorks Education USA. For more than 40 years, LivingWorks has delivered suicide prevention and intervention training to communities, organizations, businesses, active-duty military and first responders.

Bertrand likened suicide prevention training to teaching CPR in that you don’t have to be a doctor to either learn or perform CPR. “When you have a heart attack here, or at home, wherever you are, do you need a cardiac surgeon with you right there?” he said. “Absolutely not. But what you do need is someone who is trained in CPR. We’re training people in that first step.”

LivingWorks provides three different types of suicide prevention training: the two-day ASIST course, the four-hour safeTALK course and Start, an online course. All three have overlapping portions.

“We teach people that people often do give off invitations to get involved and invitations that they need help,” Bertrand said. “People aren’t going to walk right up to you and tell you, ‘I’m thinking of suicide.’

“But what they do, very often more than not, is give off invitations that something big is going on, and they could use a little help right now. We specifically teach people to recognize those invitations. How to explore those invitations. What to say. How to specifically ask.”

Bertrand suggested American Legion departments and posts look into hosting training sessions so they can reach members who might be at risk but aren’t ready to talk about it.

“If they want to be the one, they have to know how to do it,” he said. “Veterans ... oftentimes they’re not really comfortable seeking help. They want to be able to handle everything themselves. (They) are very good at compartmentalizing, not letting people in and to see what is really going on.”

The American Legion Department of Virginia is conducting LivingWorks training at both the state and post level. Bertrand said grants are available to help Legion posts and departments host training sessions; Bertrand said LivingWorks would help write the grant for the Legion, which they could then submit.

Also addressing the committee from Columbia University professor emerita Dr. Jean Stellman, who is teamed with her husband and The American Legion to conduct a ground-breaking study linking Vietnam War veterans’ illnesses to Agent Orange sprayed by the U.S. military as an herbicide and defoliant.

Stellman shared results from a study she began in 1984 tracking a group of Vietnam veterans’ health at different stages in the past 40 years – what the data said about PTSD in those veterans.

Stellman noted that her study has shown that “the more combat you were exposed to, the more (PTSD) symptoms you were going to have, and this was going to last, on average, your whole life. There is a very, very, very high correlation between combat exposure and the PTSD symptoms.”

She noted that there is a relationship between PTSD and metabolic syndrome, heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases. “When we talk about PTSD, we are also talking, we believe, about chronic health effects,” Stellman said.

But Stellman also noted that social support, such as through The American Legion’s [Be the One](#) program, can make a difference. She shared a graphic that showed veterans with PTSD who’ve received some form of social support are significantly different from those who did not.

“Any way that you look at it, these programs can have an important effect,” she said. “You have had the wherewithal to be a part of this organization, and that itself is social support.”

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 VerStrete Jr., Chairman

Third Tuesday Bi-Monthly

September 19 2023 | November 21, 2023

January 16, 2024 | March 19, 2024

May 21, 2024 | July 16, 2024

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

(877) 853-5257

Meeting ID: 989 3388 3350 | Passcode: 546 900

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

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

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

**DEVOTION TO
MUTUAL
HELPFULNESS**

by Jeff Wacker, Sr.

National Convention Committee

Christopher Byrd, Chairman
Second Tuesday Bi-Monthly

September 12 2023 | November 14, 2023
January 9, 2024 | March 12, 2024
May 14, 2024 | July 19, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 953 4866 3402 | Passcode: 670 002

Public & Media Communications Committee

Kevin Chaplin, Chairman
Fourth Tuesday Bi-Monthly

October 24, 2023, | December 26, 2023
February 27, 2024 | April 23, 2024
June 25, 2024 | August 27, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 914 4414 8114 | Passcode: 977 759

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Meet the new Tango Alpha Lima podcast co-hosts

The American Legion | February 29, 2024



American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast co-host Stacy Pearsall is getting two new co-pilots.

Joining Pearsall are Adam Marr and Joe Worley as co-hosts, starting with [this special Leap Day episode](#) where we welcome them to the team. Pearsall, Marr, and Worley will return next Tuesday with their first regular episode featuring a special guest. But for now, let's meet the new co-hosts.

Adam Marr, who appeared as a guest on [this Be the One episode](#), is a veteran of the Iraq War who flew Apache helicopters. Worley, a former Navy corpsman, received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his actions when he was severely wounded.

Meet Adam Marr. Marr is a passionate advocate for veterans mental health and a key figure in advancing veterans' wellbeing since leaving the service in 2015. He is the co-founder of Warrior Angels Foundation, and is author of the best-selling book ["Tales from the Blast Factory,"](#) which inspired the award-winning feature documentary film [Quiet Explosions: Healing The Brain](#).

He is the director of operations for the [Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition](#) and [Reason for Hope](#), which advocates at the state and federal levels to reduce regulatory barriers and open access and programs to lifesaving therapies like MDMA and psilocybin to combat the veteran suicide and opioid addiction epidemics.

Marr is a member of [American Legion Chester R. Vickery Post 12 in Dothan, Ala.](#), where he serves as the post chaplain. He lives in Slocomb, Ala., where he learned to fly helicopters and met the love of his life, Alycia, his wife of 14 years and mother to their three children, Amelia, Austin, and Aria.

Meet Joe "Doc" Worley. Worley served in Iraq as a Navy corpsman. He was an infantry platoon medic in Second Battalion, First Marines, in Fallujah in 2004.

On Sept. 17, 2004, an IED exploded into a Humvee killing a Marine and an Iraqi interpreter. Just 10 days prior, his former platoon lost seven Marines who were killed in action when a vehicle-borne IED drove into their patrol.

The attrition from the blast was so severe that the platoon, known as Pale Rider Three, would be disbanded and the surviving Marines sent to other platoons in Fox Company. As he was running to the aid of two comrades mortally wounded by an IED, Worley was hit by a secondary IED that blew off his left leg, and severely wounded his right leg. Worley tied his own tourniquet while shouting instructions on how to treat the wounded Marines.

After 18 months of rehabilitation, he now lives in Georgia with his family, and works for America's Vet-Dogs, a nonprofit that trains service and guide dogs for military and first responders.

Worley also writes, sings, and narrates audiobooks, and tries to stay active in the gym so he can eat donuts and pizza in his spare time.

Check out this episode, which is among more than 230 Tango Alpha Lima podcasts available [in both audio and video formats here](#). You can also download episodes on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, or other major podcast-hosting sites. The video version is available at [the Legion's YouTube channel](#).

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Bruno Williamson, Chairman
Second Monday Bi-Monthly

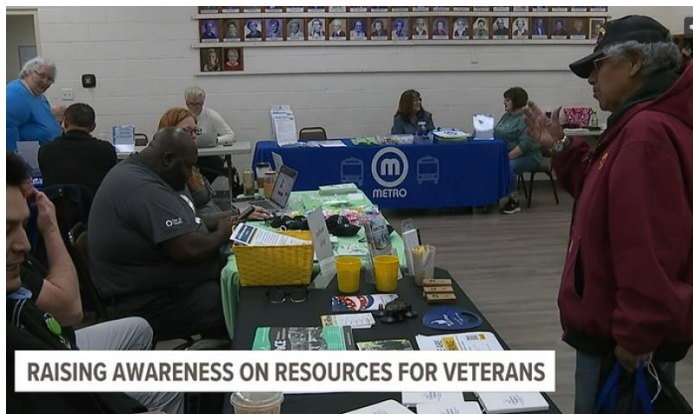
November 29, 2023 | December 11, 2023

February 12, 2024 | April 8, 2024

June 10, 2024 | August 12, 2024

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

Meeting ID: 971 3717 7471 | Passcode: 712 824



Annual stand down continue to provide support for Iowa veterans

The American Legion | February 26, 2024

For at least 10 years, American Legion Post 26's Legion Family in Davenport, Iowa, has hosted an annual veterans stand down to bring valuable services and assistance to the homeless and at-need veterans in its community.

The most recent such event took place Feb. 15, when Post 26 collaborated with Bridging the Gap, a Davenport-based nonprofit that puts such veterans in

contact with agencies and organizations that can provide them support. Around 30 veterans attended the event this year.

Post 26 Commander Ed Hildebrand said it's important to provide such an event because some veterans who leave the military have no idea what is available to them – and some of those then fall into the cracks and end up homeless.

"There's non-communication when some of these guys come out of the service," Hildebrand said. "They're not told where to go, and before you know it, they're homeless. We're trying to prevent that. That's the whole thing."

The stand down brings multiple government entities and other services, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Vet Centers reps, the Social Security Administration, the Red Cross and Salvation Army, housing and employment assistance, and legal aid.

"We want to be able to get them work so they can get themselves an apartment," Hildebrand said. "The American Legion (and other veterans service organizations) are here to do one thing: that's serve the veterans, especially homeless veterans. Serve these guys and show the veterans that someone out there cares. That someone out there is trying to bring a better life to them. That's what it is."

Veterans who attended were also given food and a clothing bag that included coats, shirts, underwear, and socks. Auxiliary Unit 26 served the food during the event.

And this year, two homeless veterans who attended were able to get housing through VA, while another veteran was able to get a service connection and now will be receiving a monthly VA benefits payment.

"We're showing we're here to help veterans. We're here to help the families of veterans," Hildebrand said. "We do this because that's what we do. The whole thing is showing these veterans that someone cares. Help those homeless vets so they have a place of their own or can share a house with somebody. That's what this is all about. We tell them, 'You've got a friend here.'"



All veterans exposed to toxins and other hazards during military service eligible for VA health care beginning March 5

The American Legion | February 26, 2024

Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. This means that all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll.

As [directed by President Biden](#), this expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act — meaning that millions of veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law. This is a critical step forward because veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#). Additionally, VA health care is often [more affordable](#) than non-VA health care for veterans.



VA encourages all eligible veterans to visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care beginning March 5. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on August 10, 2022, more than 500,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care.

“If you’re a veteran who may have been exposed to toxins or hazards while serving our country, at home or abroad, we want you to come to us for the health care you deserve,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “VA is proven to be the best, most affordable health care in America for veterans — and once you’re in, you have access for life. So don’t wait, enroll starting March 5th.”

“Beginning March 5, we’re making millions of Veterans eligible for VA health care years earlier than called for by the PACT Act,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D. “With this expansion, VA can care for all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11. We can also care for veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty here at home — by working with chemicals, pesticides, lead, asbestos, certain paints, nuclear weapons, x-rays, and more. We want to bring all of these veterans to VA for the care they’ve earned and deserve.”

In addition to expanding access to VA care, this decision makes it quicker and easier for millions of veterans to enroll. Many veterans believe they must apply to receive [VA disability compensation benefits](#) to become eligible for VA health care, but this is not correct. With this expansion and other authorities, millions of eligible veterans can enroll directly in VA care — without any need to first apply for VA benefits.

This expansion of care covers Vietnam veterans, Gulf War veterans, Iraq War veterans, Afghanistan War veterans, veterans who deployed in support of contingency operations for the Global War on Terror (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission), and [more](#).

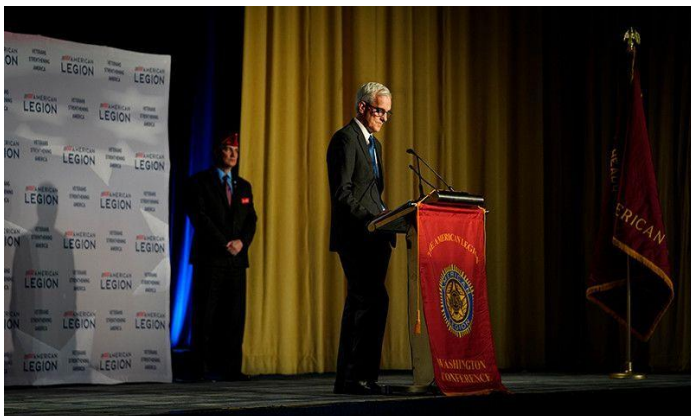
This expansion also covers many veterans who never deployed as a part of a conflict but were exposed to toxins or hazards while serving in the U.S. Specifically, under this expansion of care, any veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (TERA) — at home or abroad — is eligible for VA health care. VA has determined that veterans who were exposed to one or more of the following hazards or conditions during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training participated in a TERA: air pollutants (burn pits, sand, dust, particulates, oil well fires, sulfur fires); chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, depleted uranium with embedded shrapnel, contaminated water); occupational hazards (asbestos, industrial

solvents, lead, paints including chemical agent resistant coating, firefighting foams); radiation (nuclear weapons handling, maintenance and detonation, radioactive material, calibration and measurement sources, X-rays, radiation from military occupational exposure); warfare agents (nerve agents, chemical and biological weapons); and [more](#). VA will use all available information to determine if veterans participated in a TERA, including military records and service connection.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping veterans and their survivors, visit VA's [PACT Act Dashboard](#). To apply for care or benefits today, visit [VA.gov/PACT](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411. More information on eligibility can be found at [VA.gov/PACT](#).

VA secretary: Department taking several steps to deter claim sharks

The American Legion | February 27, 2024



Hilary Ott/The American Legion

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough used The American Legion's Washington Conference to issue a stern warning to individuals or companies that attempt to file VA benefits claims on behalf of veterans but don't have VA accreditation.

Speaking during the Legion's Commander's Call on Feb. 26, McDonough noted that while unaccredited predatory claims companies are not bound by VA regulations and cannot be penalized by the Office of General Counsel, there are still steps VA can take to thwart their efforts.

"When we see predatory companies, bad actors, including non-accredited actors taking advantage of veterans, we're doing everything we can under the current law," McDonough said. "You know that the criminal penalties associated with the statute have been removed. But we can still name and shame. So, when we see a bad actor, we communicate with them

to cease and desist. And then we publish that actor's name, so as to deter veterans from going to those actors.

"We have now stood up a full interagency team within the administration, using all of the enforcement authority that we have at places like the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Treasury, the Consumer Finance Protection Corporation, to make sure that we are using all of those enforcement authorities to name and shame, but to also protect vets whose assets may have been attached or to bring additional regulatory action against the bad actors."

But McDonough said that VA also has to "get better and more timely about providing claims answers. "Because when veterans feel like they're getting a fair shake, they won't like they need to go somewhere else."

McDonough said VA urges veterans to go to its partners like The American Legion, which has a network of accredited service officers who file claims free of charge.

During his address, McDonough shared the following numbers regarding VA's effort in 2023, when veterans submitted 2.4 million claims, an all-time record and 39 percent more than 2022, and nearly 2.3 million intends to file, another record.

- VA processed a record nearly 2 million claims.
- VA delivered a record \$163 billion in earned benefits to more than 1.5 million veterans and survivors.
- Veterans had 116 million health-care appointments, another record.
- The Board of Veteran Appeals processed more than 103,000 appeals, another record.
- More than 46,500 homeless veterans were permanently housed, surpassing the goal of 38,000.
- 4.1 million veterans are now interred in National Cemeteries.

"All of those accomplishments, those are yours, and each of you should be rightly proud of them," McDonough said. "You play a critical role, a key enabler of the VA's mission in keeping our promises to veterans. We have no better partner than The American Legion. And this year, going forward, we're not letting up.

"Together, we're going to bring new vets to VA. We're going to expand access to VA, and we're going to help

vets thrive. We're going to bring as many veterans as possible into our care, because VA is proven to be the best, most affordable health care in America for vets." McDonough said VA already was on the way to expanding care, noting that beginning March 5, any veteran who was exposed to toxins and other hazards during their military service, whether overseas or abroad, [will be eligible for VA health care](#).

"This is the biggest expansion of VA care in generations, and we want vets to apply as soon as possible," McDonough said. "It's quick and easy to enroll. They don't need to be sick, they don't need to file a claim before they enroll."

"Even if they don't think they need this care today, they might need it tomorrow, or the next day, or 30 years from now. All they have to do is enroll, and then they have access for life."

On the benefits side, McDonough said that starting April 20, all recipients of VA payments to veterans or family members [will no longer be able to have those payments deposited into multiple bank accounts](#).

"We're making this change to help protect veterans and families from fraud, and to ensure that we're able to pay veterans on time, every time, without error," he said. "This will require all veterans and beneficiaries who receive GI Bill payments and other benefits payments across multiple accounts to select one of those accounts by April 20."

McDonough was asked about VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM), which was paused in September 2023 after reports of veteran harm and deaths in Spokane, Wash., and elsewhere. It carries a price tag of \$16 billion.

"I continue to believe, VA continues to believe, that a modernized electronic health record is pivotal, is vital to the future for two very simple reasons, both of which are the reasons we started," McDonough said. "One, to get access into a full record of a veteran's service, so we could more promptly and more accurately make sure we're making service connections. Second, it is the best, most prompt way to ensure access to care."

McDonough said a decision would be made in the next two weeks whether or not to deploy the EHRM system in the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago that VA shares with the Department of the Navy.

"We think that we need to proceed there so that we are good partners with DoD, and so that we can reap the benefit of that partnership with the Navy for a complete look into veterans records, starting from when they first enlisted, through their entire relationship at DoD and then when they joined VA," McDonough said, noting the EHRM system also is deployed at two sites in Oregon, one in Washington and one in Ohio. "We are operating those in reset mode. We are updating the system, and we want to deploy it further from those five sites, but we will not until we prove it will work in those five sites."

"I cannot give you a timeline as to when we'll know. But we are making very good progress right now."

McDonough reminded those inside the Washington Hilton's International Ballroom that he continues to view VA's relationship with organizations like The American Legion as symbiotic.

"VA can't, and doesn't, keep this nation's solid obligation and promise to vets alone," he said. "Partnerships like the VA partnership with the Legion help us tackle the most pressing priorities on preventing veteran suicide, ending veteran homelessness, improving health-care access and more. We cannot keep our promise to vets without you, your candor, because vets trust the Legion."

"Vets talk to you when something isn't working the way it should. Your work helps us better understand what veterans experienced in uniform, what they're going through here at home, and how we can better help them."

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

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The American Legion Auxiliary



Sons of The American Legion Membership Application

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

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

Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

E-mail Address _____ Telephone _____

Veteran through whom eligibility is established _____

(a) Above is a member in good standing of Post No _____, Dept. of _____

OR (b) Above is a deceased veteran who served honorably from _____ to _____

(c) Relationship of Applicant to Veteran _____

I hereby subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion, apply for membership, and transmit \$ _____ as annual membership dues.

Signed _____ (By Applicant or Parent)

Eligibility certified by _____ (Post Adjutant)

00-001 (2013)



RECEIPT

Date _____

Received of _____

For God and Country

\$ _____ in payment of dues for 20 _____ in

Squadron _____, Detachment of _____

By _____



Registration is now OPEN for **CRE24**. If you would like to attend, please email jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com. You must provide your name, detachment, email address, and cell number. **Registration is limited to 50 attendees.**

The event will be held on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at the Embassy Suites Columbus Airport. There will be events planned for both Friday and Saturday evenings, as well as a great day of training and educational opportunities.

If you would like to be a presenter, or have a topic you would like covered, please send an email to jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com.

Hotel reservations must be made directly with Embassy Suites Columbus Airport. Click [here](#) for hotel information. **The deadline to make hotel reservations is March 6, 2024.**

Please keep an eye out for more information, and we hope to see you in Columbus!

We are still accepting donations from squadrons, districts, and detachments to help offset the expenses of CRE24. If you would like to help, please email jeffvrabelsr@gmail.com for details.

Thank you in advance for your support!



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Topics to be covered at CRE24

Friday, April 5, 2024

Embassy Suites complimentary Manager Reception

Saturday, April 6, 2024

Embassy Suites complimentary
Made-to-Order Breakfast

The Pebble in the Pond
Obtaining Discharge Documents
Children & Youth 201: Beyond the Basics

Lunch provided by our sponsors

Communicating for Results
Resolutions the Legion Way
Membership – The Multi-Year Program
& Membership Roundtable

Embassy Suites complimentary Manager Reception

Trip to American Legion Don Gentile Post 532
Columbus' Famous City Barbeque Dinner
provided by Post 532
Karaoke provided by Squadron 532 – tentative
Transportation provided by V.A.T. Incorporated

Sunday, April 7, 2024

Embassy Suites complimentary
Made-to-Order Breakfast



Squadron Everlasting

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

Robert Jochum



Rhinebeck – Charles Robert Jochum, always known as Bob, 69, a longtime resident of Rhinebeck, passed away unexpectedly on February 26, 2024 in [Waterford, NY](#).

Born on December 29, 1954, he was the son of Charles Gerard and Beatrice (Merrihew) Jochum. Bob was born and raised in Rhinebeck. After graduating from Rhinebeck High School, he became a General Contractor specializing in Masonry. Bob was truly proud of the work he did and keeping his business in the local community he loved.

On September 24, 1977 at the Good Shepherd Church, he married the love of his life Susan Michel. The two had gone to Rhinebeck schools together, and shortly after graduating they tied the knot. They spent forty-seven years loving each other and creating the family that was Bob's greatest joy in life. His wife, children and grandchildren were the center of his world and he let everyone he met know that Papa was his most treasured title. Bob was proud of all his kids and grandkids, but especially proud of his son Jared for serving in the Marine Corp and his grandson Kobe's future in the Coast Guard.

Bob was known as a hardworking, loyal, dependable, and loving man. He was an incredibly patient teacher with a passion for knowledge. Bob was an avid reader, always had a joke ready to share, loved golf, card and board games and sharing good times with family and friends.

Bob was a part of the local FreeMasons as well as a member of the Sons of the American Legion.

Bob is survived by his loving wife Susan; his mother Bea Jochum; his uncle Sonny (Donna) Merrihew, sister Alyce (Dale) Lane; brother Donald (Carmen) Jochum; his children Rebecca (Kevin) Asher, Jared Jochum, Pamela Jochum (Jeffrey Simays), Melissa Jochum (James

Sears); his grandchildren Amanda, Alexandra, Kobe, Dakota, Ian, Olivia, Kevin, Jace-Man, Mia; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his father Jerry.

Calling Hours will be held at the Dapson-Chestney Funeral Home, 51 W. Market St., Rhinebeck, on Monday, March 4th from 3 PM to 6 PM. A service will be offered at 6pm at the Funeral Home. Memorial Contributions in honor of Bob can be made to Raising a Reader <http://www.raisingareader.org>

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

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

Dana Schultz



Our friend, Dana Ward Schultz, 72, of Spencer, passed away on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Dana was born in [Cloquet, Minnesota](#) on July 23, 1951, adopted shortly after by George and Norma Schultz. He was a 1969 graduate of Muncie Central High School (and a member of the swim team!). He enrolled at Ball State University, majoring in Natural Resources, graduating in 1974. He was also admitted to BSU School of Architecture.

June, 1973, he married Janet Clark. They have 4 children: Justin, Julia, Emily, and Ryan. And from them, 6 grandchildren: Annabelle, Dominick, Max, Zane, Violet, and Seth. He is also survived by a sister, Dawn, of California.

Dana began installing carpet, developing skills to eventually make BEAUTIFUL rug sculptures, also known as rug art. He followed the Indy races and LOVED fly fishing! In fact, loved ANYTHING to do with outdoors.

When divorce and cancer changed life, Dana moved to Spencer. He opened Dana's Hometown BBQ in 2001, world-famous BBQ (well, to

Owen County, anyway). One of his greatest joys was to make people happy thru his cooking. When the restaurant closed, he began working as a cook at the Owen County jail, adding his own "special ingredients" to the simple fare.

Dana touched so many lives and we are missing him greatly. Much love has been shared over the years. He fought and survived cancer and illness time after time, but it finally won.

To our loss Dana was a Mason, a member of the Sons of the American Legion, a supporter of ABATE of Indiana. To us, just a GREAT GUY!

A Celebration of Life will occur on Sunday, March 3, 2024, at the Spencer American Legion, 154 S Main St, Spencer, IN from 1:00pm until 4:00pm. Food prepared using some of Dana's recipes will be served.

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

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

Clifford H. Dobbins



ALEXANDRIA BAY, New York (WWNY) - Clifford H. Dobbins, "Kippy, Poppy," 81,

passed away peacefully at his home on February 27th, 2024. His last hours were spent surrounded by family and friends.

Kippy was born in Alexandria Bay, NY and was the oldest son of Harold and Cora Strough-Dobbins. Kippy attended Alexandria Central School and later married Enid "Kim" Harris-Dobbins.

Kippy worked various jobs throughout his lifetime and retired from Frink America at the age of 55 with 30 years of service. After retirement, Kippy enjoyed spending his time at his grandchildren's school and sporting events. Kippy also spent his winter months in Myrtle Beach, golfing, going out to eat and enjoying drinks with family and friends.

Kippy was a member of the Sons of the American Legion and a long-standing member of the Alex Bay Fire Department. Kippy was an avid hunter, fisherman, golfer, and a great storyteller.

Kippy is survived by his two daughters, Tracy (Jeff) Parzych of Syracuse, NY, and Tori (Glenn) Snyder, of Alexandria Bay. He is survived by his five grandchildren, Ryan (Angie) Loy of Alexandria Bay, NY, Madison (Jonathan) Korcz of Cape Vincent, NY, Molly (Charles) Clemons of Hammond, NY, and Cole and Chase Parzych of Syracuse, NY. Kippy also has six great-grandchildren along with several cousins, a nephew, and nieces. Kippy was predeceased by his wife, Enid "Kim" Dobbins, his father and mother, Harold (Cora) Dobbins and his younger brother, Ivan Dobbins.

Kippy's family would especially like to thank Hospice and his best friend, Gary Hogan, for their weekly visits and unconditional love and care. Kippy was well-known around town and will be missed greatly by many.

Per Kippy's request, there will not be calling hours or a funeral. There will be a celebration of life, TBD, at a later date.

Arrangements are with Costello Funeral Service & Cremations.

Online condolences may be made at costellofuneralservice.com.

Jeffrey Allen Shields



Jeffrey Allen "Lurch" Shields, 62, of Delphi, passed away at 1:10 pm, Friday, February 23, 2024 at Franciscan Health Lafayette East.

He was born on March 20, 1961 in Monticello to the late John N. "Jack" and Faye (Westerhouse) Shields.

On October 30, 1993 he married Susan "Susie" Morris. She survives in Delphi.

Lurch was a 1979 graduate of Twin Lakes High School. Lurch had worked for Monon Trail, Peters Revington, Jack Isom Construction, Midnorth Mechanical (formerly Harvey Sons), and retired from Mid States Contracting.

Lurch grew up attending Sitka Baptist Church, and was baptized at Buffalo Christian Church.

He was a lifetime member of the NRA, Laborers' International Union of North America, and past member of the Sons of the American Legion Post #75 in Delphi. Lurch was an avid antiquer "junkier". He enjoyed gardening and

feeding hummingbirds. Lurch was an all-around crafty dude. He cherished his family, especially his grandchildren.

Along with his wife Susie, he is survived by a son, John (Fiancée, Heidi Justice) Shields of Delphi; two daughters, Jessica (Mark) Corso of Monticello and Greer (Marcus) Andrade of Aviano, Italy; two sisters, Kalene Bunnell of Monticello, and Kim (Darrel) Wiley of Delphi; Grandson, John "Jack" Henry Shields; granddaughters, Makynlee and Nalee Corso, Kylie Andrade, and Marley Everett; and numerous nieces and nephews and "army" of friends.

Along with his parents he is also preceded in death by a favorite son, Spike; brother, Johnny Shields and brother-in-law, Mike Bunnell.

Visitation will be on Friday, March 1, 2024 from 2:00pm until time of services celebrating Jeffery's life at 7:00pm at Springer-Voorhis-Draper Funeral Home of Monticello with Mike Swank officiating. Memorial contributions may be given to the White County 4-H to benefit shooting sports or to stopcancerfund.org. Envelopes will be available at the funeral home.

Friends and family are encouraged to share a photo, a memory, or messages of condolence at www.springervoorhis-draper.com.

Todd Briggs



als.

To honor his memory, donations can be made to Hildebrandt Hospice Care Center, Sons of the American Legion, Post 1830.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

Kenneth J. Yearley



hometown of New Lenox, IL on February 24, 2024.

Todd James Briggs, passed away on February 26, 2024.

He worked for Samuel & Sons Specialty Met-

He was born on November 13, 1954, in the Roseland neighborhood of Chicago, IL to the late John and Mildred (nee Budd) Yearley.

Loving husband of Pam (nee Fornaciari) Yearley; loved nephew, uncle, cousin, brother-in-law, and friend of many.

Ken was raised in Riverdale, IL and graduated in 1972 from Thornton High School. He has been married to the love of his life Pammy for nearly 42 years. Ken worked in the auto industry for most of his life and retired from his AAMCO Transmission business in South Holland. He was a member of the Riverdale, IL and New Lenox, IL Lions Clubs and the Sons of the American Legion in New Lenox, IL. Being extremely outgoing, Ken had many friends. He loved to play golf, was an excellent cook and enjoyed watching the Cubs, Bears, Notre Dame, and Indy racing. Ken also enjoyed music, DJing, and bartending. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

In lieu of flowers donations to the family for a Memorial Bench and Memorial Tree in Kenny's name, at The Sanctuary Golf Course in New Lenox, IL, would be appreciated.

The family will receive friends at Kurtz Memorial Chapel 102 E. Francis Rd. on Saturday, March 2, 2024, from 2:00pm until time of Funeral Service at 6:00pm. Interment will be private.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

Raymond Roland Rossignol



Longtime member of the Sons of the American Legion, Raymond "Frenchy" Roland Rossignol, 76, of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, died unexpectedly at his home on Friday, February 16, 2024. A graveside ceremony will be held at 3 p.m., Monday, February 26, 2024, at Fairview Cemetery in Scottsbluff with Chaplain Bruce Bain officiating. A reception will follow at 5 p.m. at the Gering American Legion Post 36. Cremation has taken place in accordance with his wishes. Memorials may be directed to the Gering American Legion Post 36. Online condolences may be expressed by visiting Frenchy's obituary page viewable at www.reverencefuneralparlor.com, where the graveside service will also be live-streamed.

Ray was born August 29, 1947, in Elizabeth, New Jersey to Roland

and Loretta (Clevette) Rossignol. He grew up with one brother, David, and a sister, Arlene.

He was heavily involved in the American Legion. He was rarely seen without his personalized denim jacket decorated with SAL patches and the American flag. The rare times he was not donning the jacket, he was dressed in uniform to assist with military honors of our Nation's fallen veterans. When his mobility decreased, that did not stop Ray from continuing his legion duties. He would arrive at the cemetery in his white Chevy truck and unload a walker he used to safely trek across the cemetery grounds. He then stationed himself among his SAL peers and waited for his moment to play TAPS.

For most of his life his signature look was long hair and a matching beard. He became a Santa look-alike when his long locks whitened, and he was eventually recruited to be the legion's "Santa" during the Christmas season.

Ray was a motorcycle enthusiast throughout his life. He enjoyed getting together for bike run events with other riders and Sons of the Legion members. He also participated in many bike shows over the years.

Despite his rough biker appearance and his notorious, "the Hell I can't" attitude, Ray, lovingly known by his friends as "Frenchy," had one of the kindest hearts. He was giving, eager to help and a loyal friend. He will be deeply missed.

Survivors include his brother, David Rossignol; sister, Arlene (Tom) Bernard; daughter, Kara (Darrin) Cannady and another daughter; son, Richard (Sherri) Rossignol; grandchildren, Kelsey, Jacob, Keaton, Madisyn, and Macy; extended family members; his American Legion brothers and sisters; and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Roland and Loretta Rossignol; and loving partner and companion, Sandra Gillett in 2022.

Danny Dale McClellan



Danny Dale McClellan, 69, of Dillsboro passed away Monday, February 26, 2024, at his home. Danny was born on Wednesday, August 4, 1954, in Milan; son of Paul and Maryetta (Goodpaster) McClellan. Danny was a member of the Carpenters

Union Local #1142 and a member of the Dillsboro Sons of the American Legion. He enjoyed his animals and traveling along the creek. Danny most of all cherished spending time with his loving family and friends.

Danny will be missed by his sons Wade McClellan of Dillsboro and Koy McClellan of Dillsboro; sister Tina McClellan of Aurora; nephew Jeremiah (Melissa) McClellan; and 5 grandchildren.

Danny was preceded in death by his parents Paul and Maryetta McClellan and brother Richie Lynn McClellan.

There are no services. Memorials may be given in honor of Danny to the Family.

Filter-DeVries-Moore Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements: PO Box 146, Dillsboro, IN 47018; (812) 432-5480. Please visit our website at www.filter-devriesmoore.com to share your condolences and memories of Danny.

Darryl Skallet



Darryl Gene Skallet (84) of Pequot Lakes, Minnesota passed away peacefully on February 24, 2024. A Funeral Service will be held on Saturday March 2, 2024, at 11:00am at the Kline-Brenny Funeral Chapel in Pequot Lakes (30208 Lilac Drive, Pequot Lakes). There will be a visitation held one hour prior to the start of the service at the funeral home.

He was proceeded into death by his wife Marylou Skallet, parents Alton and Evelyn Skallet, brothers Alton (Punky) and Richard Skallet. He is survived by his sons David (Karen) Skallet, Daniel (Sherry) Skallet, Daughter Dawn Thompson (Joe), and children of Marylou Skallet, 12 Grandchildren and 9 Great Grandchildren.

Darryl was born in Pennington County Minnesota where he grew up on a Dairy farm, he graduated from Thief River Falls High School in 1975 and shortly after moved to Minneapolis to embark on a new adventure where he started his first job as a plumber and shortly after began work for Fruehauf Corporation as a mechanic. A couple of years later he went to work for Midwest Printing and remained in the printing industry for the remainder of his career. Throughout his printing career he advanced to lead

pressman and Supervisor. His job took him to several countries, but his most exciting trips were to Japan and Europe.

He married Marylou in 1994, and in 2001 he and Marylou retired and moved to Pequot lakes to their lake home. Marylou became ill in 2004 and Darryl became her primary care giver, always on the ready to assist and help her when needed.

He had a passion to help others and could fix anything. He was a life member of the Sons of the American Legion and former Commander of the Son's of the American legion/Pequot Lakes Post 49 where he spent countless hours volunteering at omelet breakfasts and assisting with building the Veterans Memorial Bog walk. His hobbies included fishing, hunting and Casinos.....he never could pass up a good pull tab box!

He will be deeply missed by his family and friends.

Arrangements are entrusted to Brenny Family Funeral Chapel, Pequot Lakes.

Michael Yaeger



LIMA -- Michael Evan Yaeger, 70, passed away at 10:25 pm on February 24, 2024, at his home.

Michael was born on April 30, 1953, in Ashland, Ohio, to Ervin B. "Whitey" and Goldie L. (Byrd) Yaeger.

Michael graduated in 1972 from Lima Senior High School and went on to earn an associate degree in Pre-Hospital Healthcare. He then worked for Lima Allen County Paramedics and Delphos Ambulance. Michael was the Patient Transport Coordinator for Upper Valley Medical Center in Piqua, Ohio. He was also a car salesman at Lima Lincoln Mercury & Reineke Ford. He attended St. Rose Catholic Church and was a member of Eagles #370, Sons of The American Legion (SAL), and Jaycees of Lima/Delphos. Michael was also a member of The West Central Ohio Paramedic & Nurses Association where he was a past president, treasurer, and secretary.

He is survived by his three children: Michael Ervin (Jennifer) Yaeger of Buckeye Lake, OH, Melinda Elaine (Scott) Farling of Pandora, OH, and Christopher James (Angie) Yaeger of Glandorf, OH; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; brother, Robert Yaeger of Cincinnati, OH; sister, Karinda Yaeger of

Florida; and stepsisters, Judy Felton of Missouri & JoAnn Linn of Florida.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, William Yaeger; sister, Shelia Barth; brother, Mitch Yaeger; infant brother, Joseph Yaeger.

The family will receive friends from 4 pm to 8 pm on Friday, March 8, 2024, at Chamberlain-Huckriede Funeral Home, Lima, Ohio. A funeral mass will begin at 11 am on Saturday, March 9, 2024, at St. Rose Catholic Church. Fr. David Ross will officiate. Burial will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery, Lima.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Lima Memorial Cancer Center.

Arrangements handled by Chamberlain-Huckriede Funeral Home. Condolences may be expressed at www.chamberlainhuckriede.com.

Published by The Lima News from Feb. 28 to Feb. 29, 2024.

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

Todd A. LaPointe



CASCO — Todd Arnold LaPointe, 55, passed away peacefully at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston on Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.

He was born on June 27, 1968, in Portland, the son of Michael and Donna (Goding) LaPointe. He grew up in Casco. He graduated from Lake Region High School in 1986.

He worked at his father's machine shop, Unique Machine in Casco for 22 years.

Todd was an avid music lover, particularly Classic Country and of its history. He also loved to dance, and he enjoyed World History, as well. Todd was a member of the Sons of the American Legion and truly loved his Post, #155 in Naples.

Todd never met a stranger. Those who knew him loved him. And the feeling was mutual.

He is survived by his parents, Michael and Donna, siblings Mary Skillings and David LaPointe and his nephews, Dustin and Cody Skillings, and great-nephew Wyatt Skillings.

Fly high, our little angel. We will miss you forever.

There will be a celebration of life for Todd at the American Legion, Post #155 in Naples on Saturday, March 2, 2024, at 1 p.m.

Arrangements are in the care of the Hall Funeral Home in Casco tributes may be shared with Todd's family at www.hallfuneralhome.net.

RENEW!



If you would like to see Round-Up continue, please consider making a donation to offset expenses.

Thank you!

Jeff Vrabel Sr
@Jeff-VrabelSr



venmo



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or we can rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

TELL SOMEONE THEY MATTER

#TBM #SPEAKLIFE

Why are we supposed to say "it's okay" when it's not



SCHOLARS

continued from page 1

So, while I was finding one of his good friend's name on the wall, which I did, he was meeting with one of his Army friends who he hadn't seen in about 10 years. Being involved in the Legion has allowed him and I to grow together, and I love getting to hear more and more of his stories as he's been opening up with me."

Kirages gifted her grandfather a membership in The American Legion last year. She also wrote a children's book called "Stories with Pop Pop: Women in Disguise, the Civil War" that highlights her relationship with him and his service, both in uniform and with the Legion.

Jordan Smothers of Monroe, Ga., didn't know his grandfather, an Air Force veteran of the Korean War. But when he visited the Korean War Memorial, "I took the time to think about my grandfather" and all servicemembers. "I feel a lot of times today that veterans are not given the honor and recognition that they deserve. They were willing to fight for us, fight for our freedom. Not everyone can say they would do that, but they did. That's something special. It's something we should truly recognize and be grateful for."

Being named a National Samsung American Legion scholar and receiving \$10,000 for higher learning because of it has been life-changing for Adrianna Hutton of Delaware.

"I am really so grateful for this opportunity because since winning (the Samsung American Legion) scholarship I was so amazed that I could do something like that, that I decided to apply to another scholarship, and I am so proud to announce that I'm going to Princeton University on a full ride scholarship. Being able to receive this award has already pushed me into so many opportunities that I could never have imagined myself in.

"Of course, I have to thank my Pop Pop, who served in the Vietnam War in the Army," who served as Hutton's chaperone. "We've just had so much fun (in Washington, D.C., with Legion Family members). It's just been such an amazing experience for us. Winning this scholarship is an absolute honor. Words cannot express how life changing the Samsung (American Legion) scholarship has been for me and my future."

Sports



CoForce LLC

Share Be the One by hosting an INDYCAR watch party at your post

The American Legion | February 22, 2024

With the exposure that Be the One has received through The American Legion's sponsorship of Chip Ganassi Racing's American Legion Honda, the 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES is a perfect opportunity to bring Be the One into your post – and your community – by hosting an INDYCAR watch party.

This season, INDYCAR rookie Linus Lundqvist is behind the wheel of the No. 8 Honda – which prominently features The American Legion and [Be the One](#) branding on its livery – for most of the 2024 season. And defending INDYCAR SERIES champion Alex Palou also will carry American Legion branding on his No. 10 DHL Honda, so there will be plenty of opportunities to invite fellow American Legion Family members and other racing enthusiasts to the post and cheer on the American Legion drivers.

Once there, they can relax and enjoy watching the race – while also learning more about Be the One. It's an opportunity to share information about the Legion's veteran suicide prevention mission in a relaxed social setting.

We've put together [some tips for hosting an INDYCAR watch party](#) at your post, including choosing a race from the 2024 INDYCAR SERIES, links to resources and a sample press release to promote the event, and some suggested talking points about why the Be the One mission is so important.

And remember, we've created additional resources to assist your post's American Legion Family efforts to promote be the one. You can find those [here](#).

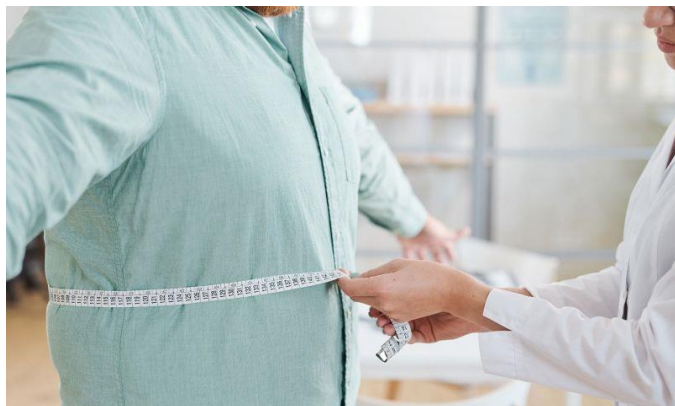
Whatever the format of your Be the One event, we want to know about it. Please share your stories and photos at www.legiontown.org under the Be the One category.



Daniel J. Seehafer,
National Commander
The American Legion

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Seehafer".

Daniel J. Seehafer, National Commander
The American Legion



Medicare and weight-loss treatments

Jim Miller/via Crescendo | February 22, 2024

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

Does Medicare cover weight-loss treatments for retirees?

Traditional Medicare covers some weight-loss treatments, such as counseling and certain types of surgery for beneficiaries. Unfortunately, it does not

cover weight-loss programs or medications. Here is what you should know.

Who is Eligible? To be eligible for Medicare-covered weight-loss treatments, the patient's body mass index (BMI), an estimate of body fat based on the individual's height and weight, must be 30 or higher. This score increases the risk for many health conditions such as certain cancers, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and sleep apnea. To calculate BMI, the National Institutes of Health has a free calculator accessible [online](#).

What is Covered? For individuals with a BMI of 30 or higher, Medicare Part B will cover up to 12 months of weight-loss counseling conducted by a medical professional in a primary-care setting such as a doctor's office. Most counseling sessions entail an initial screening, a dietary assessment, and behavioral therapy designed to help you lose weight by focusing on diet and exercise.

Medicare also covers bariatric and metabolic surgery for beneficiaries with a BMI of 35 or above who also have at least one underlying health condition, such as diabetes or heart disease. To be eligible, a patient must demonstrate prior (unsuccessful) efforts to lose weight through dieting or exercise. These procedures involve making alterations to the digestive system to help lose weight and improve metabolic health.

One common bariatric surgical procedure covered by Medicare is Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery, which reduces the stomach to a small pouch that induces the feeling of fullness even after eating small meals. Another procedure that may be covered is a laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding, which inserts an inflatable band that creates a gastric pouch encircling the top of the stomach, similarly inducing a feeling of fullness.

What is Not Covered? Medicare does not cover weight-loss programs such as fitness or gym memberships, meal delivery services or weight-loss programs. Additionally, it does not cover any weight-loss medications, but does cover FDA-approved medications to treat diabetes, which in some cases have been found to help with weight loss. Medicare Part D covers Ozempic and Mounjaro for diabetes only, not for weight loss. Medicare does not cover Wegovy or Zepbound, because they are approved only for weight loss.

Do not start a weight-loss prescription without first consulting your primary-care physician to

determine the benefits and potential risks. Without insurance these medications are expensive, often costing \$1,000 to \$1,300 per month. To help curb costs, try reputable prescription discount websites or, if your income is limited, patient assistance programs through pharmaceutical companies.

Medicare Advantage Individuals enrolled in a private Medicare Advantage plan may have coverage for gym memberships and some weight-loss and healthy-food-delivery programs. These are considered expanded supplemental benefits and have gradually been added to some plans to provide coverage for nutrition, health, and wellness. Contact your plan provider to see what is covered.

“Savvy Living” is written by Jim Miller, a regular contributor to NBC’s “Today Show.” The column, and others like it, is available to read via The American Legion’s Planned Giving program, a way of establishing your legacy of support for the organization while providing for your current financial needs. Learn more about the process, and the variety of charitable programs you can benefit, at legion.org/plannedgiving. Clicking on “Learn more” will bring up an “E-newsletter” button, where you can sign up for regular information from Planned Giving.

American Legion Post #142, a bastion of camaraderie and community, asks for financial support for a new roof

Michael d’Oliveira, Editor | [New Pelican](https://www.newpelican.com) | March 1, 2024



American Legion Post #142 often hosts public events, including a country western event last Saturday.

New Pelican Staff

Pompano Beach – At American Legion Post #142, the bar takes up a lot of space.

But drinking is a small part of daily life at the post, and even then, it’s mostly a social endeavor, a couple drinks between old friends and comrades.

“It’s all for the camaraderie. I probably come here four times a week,” said Marine Corps veteran Kevin Bolender, a member of the post for almost 20 years. “It’s a bastion . . . some place you can go where everyone knows your name,” he said, likening it to the TV show “Cheers.”

But even a home away from home isn’t free.

Like any other business or club, there are bills and maintenance that go with keeping the doors open. “Our costs have gone up, like everyone. “We’ve had to dig in to keep up,” said Bolender, who serves as the post’s finance officer. Along with typical increases like insurance, the post is also facing a much more rare expense: a new roof.

To help pay for it, the post’s veterans are asking for donations, which can either be made on their GoFundMe page – gofundme.com/f/american-legion-post-142 – or by mailing a check to the post at 171 SW 2 St., Pompano Beach, FL 33060. Write “roof fund” in the memo.



Marine Corps League Intracoastal Detachment #1058 contributed \$2,000 to the new roof for American Legion Post #142. Pictured are Detachment #1058 Commandant Jon Saluk (left) and Post #142 Commander Dave Sweeney.

Courtesy photo

So far, about \$15,000 has been raised, including \$7,120 on GoFundMe and a \$2,000 check from Marine Corps League Intracoastal Detachment #1058. The post needs to raise about \$25,000 more.

“There’s been so many different patch jobs done to it,” said Marine Corps veteran Rich Murtha, who is leading the fundraising campaign. “We’re going to have to take the whole thing off . . . We’ve done everything we can to it without going to this next step. We’re trying to get donations of materials from

Lowe's or Home Depot but we're not counting on any of that."

A recent rainstorm and the ensuing leaks highlighted the need. There are also several blackened ceiling panels. "We had to use buckets," said David Sweeney, Army veteran and post commander.

Approximately 800 veterans, spanning several organizations, including Marine Corps League Intra-coastal Detachment #1058, Disabled American Veterans Chapter #133, Sons of the American Legion, Women's Auxiliary, and the Legion Riders use the post. There are also non-veterans, including the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, and several programs the veterans support, such as toy drives. On Tuesdays, trained veterans are available to help their fellow servicemen and women apply for Veterans Administration benefits.



American Legion Post #142.
New Pelican Staff

"There's a lot of different things we do to help the community and we're open to the community," said Murtha.

The post, which was founded in 1946 and named in honor of U.S. Army Air Corps 1st Lt. George Sterling McClellan, who gave his life during World War II, is a lot like a community center, hosting many events for members and the public, both on major holidays – solemn and celebratory – and typical days of the week, including karaoke nights, barbeques, bingo, card games, antique car shows, and Easter egg hunts.

"We have all kinds of things going on all the time . . . "We have fun here," said Sweeney. "It's a beautiful place and it needs tender loving care."



Senate, House VA committee staffers brief Legion on variety of issues

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | February 27, 2024

Members of The American Legion's Legislation Commission were provided an overview of legislation of importance to both the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs by those working the legislation on an almost daily basis – staff from each committee.

During a panel that included staff from both the majority and minority from both committees, topics included the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health records modernization, education benefits, expanded access to community care, VA staffing and the need for the committees to hear directly from veterans. The discussion took place Feb. 26 during the Legion's Washington Conference in the nation's capital.

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (SVAC) Majority Counsel Billy Van Saun said that one area of concern to Committee Chairman Jon Tester is veterans getting the care they need in rural states like Montana.

"Obviously being from a rural state, veterans' access to clinics, transportation for rural veterans to get to the VA is something we are continuing to work on," Van Saun said. "For the last couple years, we've tried a couple options, and it's not an easy solution, but we're going to continue to find a way to get veterans to the care that they need at the (locations) they want to."

A member of the American Legion Department of New York, Van Saun said Legionnaires building relationships with members of Congress and their staff is an important piece in delivering legislation that benefits veterans.

“Every time I go home to Northern New York I stop in (to my Legion post). My wife is from Seattle, and every time I go to Seattle, I stop in the local Legion post there to talk to the guys that are hanging out in the post and listen to them. I would love to have those conversations come to the Hill. I love to hear about how people are getting to VA, their experience at the VA, their issues with applying for benefits or using accredited agents or attorneys. Those are the relationships that I’d like to see of more on the Hill. Those conversations about the personal experiences they’re having with VA.”

Hunter Thompson, a Minority staffer with the SVAC, talked about the American Legion-supported Veterans’ Health Empowerment, Access, Leadership, and Transparency for our Heroes (HEALTH) Act, which was co-introduced by SVAC Ranking Member Jerry Moran. *The legislation aims to protect and expand access to care for veterans, safeguard veterans’ ability to choose their own providers and require VA to improve the quality of care veterans receive.*

“We want to ensure that the community care program works for veterans and allows them to get the care they need in their communities, specifically as it pertains to residential rehabilitation services,” Thompson said. “We often see veterans that have to travel far too many miles, hours of travel, to receive the care that they need.

“On top of that, having VA look at a value-based care model, something that is both precision and very patient-focused. Focused on the outcomes, not just the inputs. Looking at ways for VA to incentivize providers, especially in the mental health-care space, yielding good outcomes that are very particular and veteran-focused.”

Thompson said oversight is an important area this year. “Over the past few years, VA has made a number of great strides in bringing on last year over 60,000 new employers into the system,” he said. “This year, they’ve positioned themselves as saying, ‘OK, we’re ready with a full-staffed workforce to fulfill the mission of VA.’

“However, oftentimes we go to facilities across the country, and they tell us, ‘We still need more employees in order to provide that access and care that veterans deserve. So, through this year, we want to see what VA’s going to be able to do, in their words, to be more efficient and have more patients coming through the VA system. But how are they going to do that if we still hear that there are shortages in the workforce across the system?’

Thompson added that his committee often hears from organizations like the Legion from the national level. “However, I always find that a lot of the issues we end up really hyper-focusing on are when we hear from the local folks,” he said. “There’s so many issues that are happening at the local level that never make their way up to us unless they’re brought to us.

“So, I think that the biggest things are, obviously, being sharp on what are the legislative needs and what are the fixes. But be able to show here’s the impact it’s having in the community with these veterans.”

Katy Flynn, Majority General Counsel for the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (HVA), urged the meeting’s attendees to reach out to their members of Congress on critical issues because, “it’s how we learn what the needs are on the ground. It’s really vital for you all to continue that advocacy and to get to know your Congresspeople, because they come to us with everything you reach out to them with.”

Flynn touched on a few issues and pieces of legislation the committee is monitoring, include sexual harassment claims at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); VA accountability and the VA home loan program; access to care at both VA facilities and through community providers, including mental health care and substance abuse rehabilitation; and improved education benefits – including the VET-TEC Authorization Act of 2023, which permanently funds the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses program for veterans seeking job training in high-tech industries. The legislation has passed in the House.

“The pilot program was a huge success, with an 84-percent graduation rate and an average starting salary of over \$66,000,” said Flynn. “We feel really good about that program.”

Ally Cimino, HVA Minority Staff Director, Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee and Deputy General Counsel, said one of Ranking Member Rep. Mark Takano’s biggest priorities for this session of Congress is The Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, which will allow veterans to age at home if they choose while giving their caregivers the support they need to honor the veterans’ wishes.

She also spent some time talking about veteran homelessness, which she called, “the amalgamation of every part of the system that’s not working. Whether a veteran can’t access their GI Bill benefits. Whether they can’t access health care. Whether they can’t access mental health treatment. Substance use

treatment. All of these things add up and cause someone to potentially experience housing insecurity. And in the worst case, homelessness.”

Cimino said she is hoping for passage of the Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively (HOME) Act, which she said, “gives VA some of the flexibility they need to meet veterans exactly where they are and get them housed.”

During the panel Cimino asked John Harry, the HVAC Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization, to give his insights on VA’s Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM), which was paused in September 2023 after reports of veteran harm and deaths in Spokane, Wash., and elsewhere. It carries a price tag of \$16 billion. “We’re still in a place where success is possible,” Harry said. “VA about six months ago appointed new leadership for this program, and they’re by far the most competent and qualified leadership we’ve seen in the program in the last five years.

“Success is still possible. It’s a big bureaucracy. It takes a long time to turn the ship. I think they’re going to get there.”

Harry said VA’s current records system, VistA, was built by VA for VA and by doctors for doctors. “So, it’s a system that they love,” he said. “The problem is it’s a 40-year-old system. Cybersecurity was not a big thing back then, so it’s not something they can manage now. The way it was built, it’s basically sort of duct-taped together, and every VA has a different version of VistA, so they don’t communicate well with each other. And they really don’t communicate well with the rest of health care.

“We are still determined that a modern EHR is the right solution, whether it’s the one that they’ve contracted with or a different one. Where we’re at is just trying to help VA get themselves together so that they can be as successful as possible.”

Also, during the commission meeting, the National Legislative Council presented its Member of the Year Award to California Legionnaire Manny Vega. A member of American Legion Post 731 in San Diego, Vega participated in all 23 of the Legion’s 2023 advocacy campaigns while reporting 15 members with his members of Congress.

“That is what success is about,” National Legislative Council Chairman Rick Oertel said. “Doing that job. Making sure you have that rapport. Making sure you’re making those meetings. And when you get

that legislative alert, you’re responding to those immediately.”

Alaska was named the council’s Department of the Year for having the highest percentage of activists connected with Congress in the Legion.

Seehafer touches on Be the One, claim sharks, and military quality of life during Washington Conference

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | February 26, 2024



Hilary Ott/The American Legion

Addressing members of the American Legion Family on the eve of many of them heading to Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress, National Commander Daniel Seehafer thanked the contingent for coming to the Legion’s Washington Conference to advocate for the nation’s veteran, military, and their families.

And then he reemphasized that last word.

“I include families because it’s so, so important to who we are and what we actually do,” Seehafer said. “It’s quite common for seriously wounded veterans to say on the battlefield, ‘Tell my family that I love them.’ Tell my family. Sometimes, these are their last words.

“And who is more impacted than the family, especially when a veteran makes that tragic decision to take his or her own life? That’s why it’s our No. 1 mission: to prevent veteran suicide. To yes, Be the One. And so, we have to Be the One for our veteran families, as well as the veterans themselves – especially in their times of crisis.”

Seehafer said [Be the One](#), the Legion’s veteran suicide prevention program, asked Legionnaires to look

closely at whether a fellow veteran may be in crisis, even when the signs aren't always there.

"That's why we must be pro-active, even when things appear to be going well," he said. "You see, veterans often keep their pain bottled-up, and when they do, their families suffer too."

That's why American Legion service officers play such a critical role in Be the One. "Our great American Legion service officers are often the first line of defense when it comes to reaching these veterans and family members," Seehafer said. "They not only work tirelessly to obtain benefits for those who have served, but also for their surviving spouses when their deaths are connected to their military service." Also related to veterans benefits what Seehafer's call to urge legislation that protect veterans while punishing agencies and businesses that charge veterans to file for their benefits, even when they are not accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "Among our agenda items this year is a call for Congress to fight the sharks," he said. "We are calling for criminal penalties against any company that skirts the VA accreditation process in order to charge veterans and families outrageous fees to process claims and appeals. In fact, it's against the law to engage in these practices, and those who do should be prosecuted."

Seehafer noted the suicide crisis isn't just impacting veterans. "The rates have been high among the active-duty ranks as well," he said. "By improving the military quality of life – that includes barracks, family housing, employment opportunities for spouses, and affordable childcare – we can eliminate some of the top sources of stress that service members and their families face."

"Not only must Congress act on these issues, but The American Legion is playing an active role through our [BASE Program](#) (Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience). Think of it as an extension of our highly successful VA&R [System Worth Saving](#) program, but this time, it's for the military." Once a member of the military is ready to hang up his or her uniform, Seehafer said they need to be given the tools and guidance to move smoothly into the civilian world.

"Transition assistance is of paramount importance to military members wondering how to support themselves and their families once they leave service," he said. "We know that feelings of not fitting in, loneliness and isolation are common among those in suicidal crisis. The military must be

directed to use every high-tech and data-driven resource possible to ensure separating servicemembers can transition smoothly."

Seehafer also addressed other issues during his address, including:

- Ensuring the U.S. Coast Guard gets paid in the event of a government shutdown. When budget lapses occur, Coast Guard pay isn't guaranteed because the branch falls under the Department of Homeland Security.
- Parity for National Guard and reserve members receiving GI Bill benefits for the time that they serve. "Military service is extremely challenging, and, at times, we all know it, dangerous," he said. "A day of service should equal a day of service, regardless of who issued the orders."
- Concurrent receipt. Seehafer said no veteran should have to fund his or her own disability compensation out of their military retirement pensions.
- Access to health care for military personnel and their families serving overseas.
- Implementing and overseeing the PACT Act.
- Access to alternative treatments and therapies for veterans.
- Allowing general but honorably discharged veterans to use the GI Bill.
- Protecting the U.S. flag.



Pentagon must move faster to mitigate blast exposure in troops, senators say

Svetlana Shkolnikova | February 29, 2024

Senators on Wednesday said the Pentagon must collect better data on troop exposure to blast overpressure and identify those most at risk for traumatic brain injury at a much faster pace to protect the health of service members.

Lawmakers on the Senate Armed Services Committee's personnel subpanel as well as experts on brain injury said the Pentagon has been too passive in addressing and preventing damage caused by shock waves that emanate from exploding weapons, known as overpressure.

The cumulative effect of repeated low-level blast exposure can cause headaches, seizures, hallucinations and increase risks of depression and suicide.

"I want to be a partner but a partner that urges you to move faster and deliver more for our service members as quickly as possible," Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., told Pentagon officials during a hearing on the issue. "We need to do better for our troops, and we need to do it right now."

Frank Larkin, a former Navy SEAL who worked for a Pentagon organization focused on improvised explosive devices, said the health risks of blast exposure were a concern 15 years ago, when the U.S. was at war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Those worries led to the creation of new armored vehicles to survive blasts but the service members inside them were not spared from the invisible pressure waves that rocked their bodies and brains, Larkin said.

"A lot of these folks came out of these vehicles, and they looked fairly normal, and it wasn't until time evolved that we started to see behavioral changes, cognitive dysfunction and so forth," he said.

Larkin said his Navy SEAL son, Ryan Larkin, became a different person after serving as a combat medic, sniper, and explosives breacher in four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He stopped smiling, had trouble sleeping, complained of headaches and became convinced there was something wrong with his head.

Ryan Larkin was prescribed more than 40 medications for his ailments but in 2017, at 29-years-old, he died by suicide. A postmortem examination showed he had microscopic-level brain injury that was uniquely related to blast exposure, his father said.

"My son died from his injuries suffered both in training for combat and combat operations," Larkin said. "He just didn't die right away."

Traumatic brain injury became known as the "signature wound" of the U.S. war on terror and continues

to affect thousands of service members who train on weapons such as artillery and rocket launchers.

The Defense Department provided treatment for such injuries nearly 50,000 times during three months in 2023, according to Warren. More than 20,000 military personnel were diagnosed with traumatic brain injury in 2022, said Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla.

"The more we learn, the more we come to understand that blast exposure is an ongoing threat to the health of individual service members and to the well-being, the morale and the readiness of our entire force," Warren said.

Lawmakers have for years urged the Pentagon to be more proactive in protecting troop brain health, ramping up pressure on officials last year after a New York Times investigation revealed the military's mitigation policies were having little to no effect on the ground.

Pentagon officials on Wednesday said they are taking steps to improve data collection and blast exposure records, which experts said is key for tracking exposure in high-risk occupational specialties and developing strategies to limit exposure in training environments.

The Defense Department only has blast exposure data for 500 service members, Warren said. Some of the highest rates of exposure are seen among training instructors and members of the artillery community.

Dr. Carlos Williams, director of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, said cognitive assessments will be performed on all new troops this year before they participate in training.

"One of the most important things we can do is baseline our members from the moment they come into the military," he said. "And so that means before they start the military training, and that allows us to follow them over time."

Lester Martinez-Lopez, the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said the Pentagon is looking into how often subsequent testing should be done. Special Operations Command has determined its members should be tested every three years while the Pentagon is planning on every five years.

Martinez-Lopez said the Defense Department needed to sort through more “data and science” to determine if testing should be more frequent. Kathy Lee, director of the Pentagon’s warfighter brain health policy, said more research was also required before establishing safety thresholds for firing explosive weapons. Warren and other senators said the Pentagon needed to act now.

“We know enough to start moving in the right direction,” she said. “I urge you: better to make your best estimate and get started.”



Hilary Ott/The American Legion

Klobuchar presented Legion’s Distinguished Public Service Award

[Steven B. Brooks](#) | February 27, 2024

After receiving The American Legion Distinguished Public Service Award on Feb. 26 during the Legion’s annual Washington Conference in the nation’s capital, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., mentioned someone who might be watching the presentation.

“It is such an honor to receive this award,” Klobuchar said. “My dad served during the Korean War, and I know he’s up looking down with pride right now.”

The Minnesota senator was presented the award for being “a champion of important legislation that The American Legion has prioritized year after year, and she has tirelessly worked to improve our national security.”

She also was cited for dedicating “countless hours to bolstering our national security, improving military quality of life, and caring for our country’s veterans. Your vigilant efforts to protect our United States Armed Forces and our allies across the globe have

been critical to ensuring that the honor of the United States military is upheld.”

Klobuchar said whenever she meets with U.S. military personnel, she’s reminded that, “When we send them overseas, we make a promise. A promise of how we’re going to treat them when they’re there, with the equipment, with what they need. But also, how we’re going to treat them when they come back.”

That’s why, she said, passage of the PACT Act was so important. “It wasn’t just, as you know, about recent conflicts,” she said. “It was also about those exposed to Agent Orange. It is very important to us that those vets got covered, because that promise way back when wasn’t kept. And it was our duty to continue that work and to make sure it was kept.”

Klobuchar also spoke on the importance of working to ensure those Afghans who served as allies to U.S. troops during the war in Afghanistan aren’t forgotten.

“They put their lives on the line. Many of them lost their lives,” she said. “Their families’ lives are still on the line if they’re still over there in Afghanistan. We must keep our covenant with our heroes. They bled Afghanistan. They live in limbo in the U.S. now. They live here, literally, with a trap door underneath of them. They have to apply and reapply just to stay here, without any clear path to citizenship.

“They deserve that permanent residency, followed by what is called the gold standard of vetting. I’ve so appreciated The American Legion leadership (on this issue). I cannot tell you how critical it’s been with my colleagues.”

Klobuchar closed her remarks by remembering her final visit with Sen. John McCain before he passed away in 2018. “He opened one of his books, and he pointed to this line,” she said. “And this was the last thing he basically said to me by pointing to the line: ‘Nothing is more liberating than to fight for a cause larger than yourself.’ That, to me, is what service to our country is all about. And it is embodied by all of you.”





Legion names VA Healthcare Provider of the Year

The American Legion | February 27, 2024

Kimberly Nutt, an echocardiography technician at the Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center in Philadelphia, was named the 2023 American Legion VA Healthcare Provider of the Year. Nutt accepted the award on stage at the Commander's Call on Monday during the Legion's annual Washington Conference. "I was extremely touched to hear that I was nominated for this prestigious award by one of my dearest patients," Nutt said. "I was even more overwhelmed to get the news that I would be receiving this award for Healthcare Provider of the Year. I truly am very humbled by this. I have the amazing good fortune to get up every day and do something that I truly love, and it's very meaningful to me."

Nutt said that her job with patients as an echocardiographic technician is to do more than evaluate their heart. "To me it's to talk to the individual themselves as a whole," adding that you never know what someone may be going through or what kind of day they are having. "It doesn't take much to say 'hi,' to compliment them, to ask them how they're doing and to take a moment to listen. It's not just about the job, it's not just about their heart. It's about them as a whole."

"I am blessed to be working with and for all of you every day."



2024 SAL Membership Report: February 29, 2024

#	DETACHMENT	2024 DET. YEAR END GOAL	NEEDED TO MEET 80% TARGET 3/13/2024	2024 ACTUAL MBRSHIP	% OF YEAR END GOAL	2024 RENEWAL %
1	SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	-349	1,638	101.68%	85.47
2	HAWAII	120	-25	121	100.83%	89.92
3	PUERTO RICO	156	-24	149	95.51%	89.54
4	WISCONSIN	4,398	-673	4,191	95.29%	84.42
5	FRANCE	168	-26	160	95.24%	83.13
6	NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	-162	1,022	95.07%	85.03
7	SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	-213	1,469	93.57%	78.03
8	FLORIDA	23,066	-3,086	21,539	93.38%	77.52
9	OREGON	1,534	-157	1,384	90.22%	74.16
10	NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	-588	5,410	89.76%	79.07
11	IOWA	4,914	-474	4,405	89.64%	81.73
12	ILLINOIS	13,716	-1,241	12,214	89.05%	82.12
13	MARYLAND	16,803	-1,481	14,923	88.81%	80.58
14	RHODE ISLAND	348	-30	308	88.51%	74.93
15	ARIZONA	8,595	-726	7,602	88.45%	73.13
16	OHIO	31,690	-2,598	27,950	88.20%	81.00
17	MICHIGAN	26,236	-2,035	23,024	87.76%	78.21
18	PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	-4,717	54,914	87.52%	81.09
19	CONNECTICUT	1,865	-126	1,618	86.76%	75.56
20	NEBRASKA	6,992	-458	6,052	86.56%	81.98
21	LOUISIANA	1,821	-113	1,570	86.22%	79.15
22	NEW YORK	30,663	-1,902	26,432	86.20%	78.54
23	MINNESOTA	11,435	-664	9,812	85.81%	79.15
24	NEW MEXICO	1,582	-88	1,354	85.59%	67.03
25	INDIANA	37,244	-2,076	31,871	85.57%	78.76
26	VERMONT	3,920	-205	3,341	85.23%	79.13
27	GEORGIA	4,887	-245	4,155	85.02%	73.86
28	NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	-134	2,350	84.84%	69.98
29	VIRGINIA	4,367	-210	3,704	84.82%	73.08
30	TENNESSEE	1,792	-85	1,519	84.77%	70.31
31	NEW JERSEY	9,662	-457	8,187	84.73%	75.44
32	ALABAMA	2,100	-99	1,779	84.71%	72.82
33	MISSISSIPPI	736	-32	621	84.38%	72.50
34	DIST OF COL	91	-3	76	83.52%	76.14
35	WYOMING	1,248	-40	1,038	83.17%	73.76
36	KANSAS	6,055	-184	5,028	83.04%	76.14
37	TEXAS	5,783	-147	4,773	82.54%	70.37
38	DELAWARE	2,596	-60	2,137	82.32%	73.07
39	MAINE	2,757	-57	2,263	82.08%	72.80
40	IDAHO	659	-8	535	81.18%	61.12
41	WASHINGTON	2,682	-31	2,177	81.17%	64.76
42	CALIFORNIA	11,292	-92	9,126	80.82%	69.08
43	ALASKA	1,740	-6	1,398	80.34%	66.57
44	MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	-8	4,354	80.15%	72.23
45	COLORADO	2,952	2	2,360	79.95%	68.58
46	MONTANA	1,091	3	870	79.74%	74.70
47	MISSOURI	3,337	15	2,655	79.56%	71.04
48	ARKANSAS	406	2	323	79.56%	63.64
49	UTAH	460	6	362	78.70%	66.89
50	WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	39	2,035	78.48%	68.38
51	LATIN AMERICA	33	1	25	75.76%	37.50
52	OKLAHOMA	1,430	100	1,044	73.01%	59.43
53	NEVADA	387	36	274	70.80%	60.45
54	KENTUCKY	2,399	286	1,633	68.07%	57.95
55	PHILIPPINES	79	18	45	56.96%	54.43
Grand Totals:		382,111	-25,630	331,319	86.71%	77.73

2024 SAL Regional Breakdown

Western Region - James R. Fischer, Sr. (CA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
HAWAII	120	121	100.83%
OREGON	1,534	1,384	90.22%
ARIZONA	8,595	7,602	88.45%
NEW MEXICO	1,582	1,354	85.59%
WYOMING	1,248	1,038	83.17%
IDAHO	659	535	81.18%
WASHINGTON	2,682	2,177	81.17%
CALIFORNIA	11,292	9,126	80.82%
ALASKA	1,740	1,398	80.34%
COLORADO	2,952	2,360	79.95%
MONTANA	1,091	870	79.74%
UTAH	460	362	78.70%
LATIN AMERICA	33	25	75.76%
NEVADA	387	274	70.80%
PHILIPPINES	79	45	56.96%
Totals:	34,454	28,671	83.22%

Southeast Region - Linwood A. Moore (VA)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
PUERTO RICO	156	149	95.51%
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,570	1,469	93.57%
FLORIDA	23,066	21,539	93.38%
LOUISIANA	1,821	1,570	86.22%
GEORGIA	4,887	4,155	85.02%
NORTH CAROLINA	2,770	2,350	84.84%
VIRGINIA	4,367	3,704	84.82%
TENNESSEE	1,792	1,519	84.77%
ALABAMA	2,100	1,779	84.71%
MISSISSIPPI	736	621	84.38%
TEXAS	5,783	4,773	82.54%
ARKANSAS	406	323	79.56%
Totals:	49,454	43,951	88.87%

Midwest Region - Terry A. Harris (KS)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
SOUTH DAKOTA	1,611	1,638	101.68%
NORTH DAKOTA	1,075	1,022	95.07%
IOWA	4,914	4,405	89.64%
NEBRASKA	6,992	6,052	86.56%
KANSAS	6,055	5,028	83.04%
MISSOURI	3,337	2,655	79.56%
OKLAHOMA	1,430	1,044	73.01%
Totals:	25,414	21,844	85.95%

Northeast Region - John R. Cook (NH)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
FRANCE	168	160	95.24%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6,027	5,410	89.76%
MARYLAND	16,803	14,923	88.81%
RHODE ISLAND	348	308	88.51%
PENNSYLVANIA	62,746	54,914	87.52%
CONNECTICUT	1,865	1,618	86.76%
NEW YORK	30,663	26,432	86.20%
VERMONT	3,920	3,341	85.23%
NEW JERSEY	9,662	8,187	84.73%
DIST OF COL	91	76	83.52%
DELAWARE	2,596	2,137	82.32%
MAINE	2,757	2,263	82.08%
MASSACHUSETTS	5,432	4,354	80.15%
Totals:	143,078	124,123	86.75%

Central Region - Robert L. Bristo (MN)			
Detachment	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
WISCONSIN	4,398	4,191	95.29%
ILLINOIS	13,716	12,214	89.05%
OHIO	31,690	27,950	88.20%
MICHIGAN	26,236	23,024	87.76%
MINNESOTA	11,435	9,812	85.81%
INDIANA	37,244	31,871	85.57%
WEST VIRGINIA	2,593	2,035	78.48%
KENTUCKY	2,399	1,633	68.07%
Totals:	129,711	112,730	86.91%

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02/29/24		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, 6, 7	49,454	43,951	(5,503)	88.87%	444		
2 Central 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	129,711	112,730	(16,981)	86.91%	1,343		
3 Northeast 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	143,078	124,123	(18,955)	86.75%	1,105		
4 Midwest 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	25,414	21,844	(3,570)	85.95%	254		
5 Western 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	34,454	28,671	(5,783)	83.22%	312		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	382,111	331,319	(50,792)	86.71%	3,458		



02/19/24		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, 6, 7, 8	4,398	4,191	(207)	95.29%	13	4	84.42%		
2 Illinois 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	13,716	12,214	(1,502)	89.05%	357	12	82.12%		
3 Ohio 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	31,690	27,950	(3,740)	88.20%	263	16	81.00%		
4 Michigan 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	26,236	23,024	(3,212)	87.76%	309	17	78.21%		
5 Minnesota 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	11,435	9,812	(1,623)	85.81%	23	23	79.15%		
6 Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	37,244	31,871	(5,373)	85.57%	373	25	78.76%		
7 West Virginia 1, 5, 6	2,593	2,035	(558)	78.48%	1	50	68.38%		
8 Kentucky 1, 4	2,399	1,633	(766)	68.07%	4	54	57.95%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	129,711	112,730	(16,981)	86.91%	1,343				

02/29/24		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, 8, 9, 10	120	121	1	100.83%	(10)	2	89.92%		
2 Oregon 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1,534	1,384	(150)	90.22%	4	9	74.16%		
3 Arizona 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	8,595	7,602	(993)	88.45%	179	15	73.13%		
4 New Mexico 5, 6, 7	1,582	1,354	(228)	85.59%	19	24	67.03%		
5 Wyoming 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,248	1,038	(210)	83.17%	22	35	73.76%		
6 Idaho 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	659	535	(124)	81.18%	3	40	61.12%		
7 Washington 4, 5, 7	2,682	2,177	(505)	81.17%	37	41	64.76%		
8 California 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	11,292	9,126	(2,166)	80.82%	63	42	69.08%		
9 Alaska 3, 7	1,740	1,398	(342)	80.34%	(10)	43	66.57%		
10 Colorado 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2,952	2,360	(592)	79.95%	1	45	68.58%		
11 Montana 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1,091	870	(221)	79.74%	-	46	74.70%		
12 Utah 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	460	362	(98)	78.70%	4	49	66.89%		
13 Latin America 4, 6	33	25	(8)	75.76%	-	51	37.50%		
14 Nevada 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	387	274	(113)	70.80%	-	53	60.45%		
15 Philippines	79	45	(34)	56.96%	-	55	54.43%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	34,454	28,671	(5,783)	83.22%	312				

02*09		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 Puerto Rico 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	156	149	(7)	95.51%	-	3	89.54%		
2 South Carolina 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	1,570	1,469	(101)	93.57%	9	7	78.03%		
3 Florida 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	23,066	21,539	(1,527)	93.38%	244	8	77.52%		
4 Louisiana 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,821	1,570	(251)	86.22%	23	21	79.15%		
5 Georgia 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	4,887	4,155	(732)	85.02%	67	27	73.86%		
6 North Carolina 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2,770	2,350	(420)	84.84%	8	28	69.98%		
7 Virginia 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	4,367	3,704	(663)	84.82%	28	29	73.08%		
8 Tennessee 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,792	1,519	(273)	84.77%	25	30	70.31%		
9 Alabama 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2,100	1,779	(321)	84.71%	3	32	72.82%		
10 Mississippi 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	736	621	(115)	84.38%	3	33	72.50%		
11 Texas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	5,783	4,773	(1,010)	82.54%	29	37	70.37%		
12 Arkansas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	406	323	(83)	79.56%	5	48	63.64%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	49,454	43,951	(5,503)	88.87%	191				

02/29/24		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, 8, 9	1,611	1,638	27	101.68%	20	1	85.47%	02/22/24	
2 North Dakota 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1,075	1,022	(53)	95.07%	-	5	85.03%		
3 Iowa 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	4,914	4,405	(509)	89.64%	28	11	81.73%		
4 Nebraska 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	6,992	6,052	(940)	86.56%	53	20	81.98%		
5 Kansas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	6,055	5,028	(1,027)	83.04%	115	36	76.14%		
6 Missouri 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	3,337	2,655	(682)	79.56%	37	47	71.04%		
7 Oklahoma 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1,430	1,044	(386)	73.01%	1	52	59.43%		
TOTALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	25,414	21,844	(3,570)	85.95%	254				

02/29/24		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, 7, 8	168	160	(8)	95.24%	-	5	83.13%		
2 New Hampshire 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	6,027	5,410	(617)	89.76%	72	10	79.07%		
3 Maryland 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	16,803	14,923	(1,880)	88.81%	95	13	80.58%		
4 Rhode Island 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	348	308	(40)	88.51%	1	14	74.93%		
5 Pennsylvania 4, 5, 6, 7	62,746	54,914	(7,832)	87.52%	330	18	81.09%		
6 Connecticut 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,865	1,618	(247)	86.76%	7	19	75.56%		
7 New York 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	30,663	26,432	(4,231)	86.20%	57	22	78.54%		
8 Vermont 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	3,920	3,341	(579)	85.23%	7	26	79.13%		
9 New Jersey 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	9,662	8,187	(1,475)	84.73%	471	31	75.44%		
10 Dist. of Columbia 4, 7	91	76	(15)	83.52%	-	34	76.14%		
11 Delaware 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	2,596	2,137	(459)	82.32%	4	38	73.07%		
12 Maine 5, 6, 7	2,757	2,263	(494)	82.08%	5	39	72.80%		
13 Massachusetts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	5,432	4,354	(1,078)	80.15%	56	44	72.23%		
TOTALS 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	143,078	124,123	(18,955)	86.75%	1,105				

02/29/24		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, 5, 6, 7, 8	23,066	21,539	(1,527)	93.38%	244	8	77.52%		
2 Ohio 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	31,690	27,950	(3,740)	88.20%	263	16	81.00%		
3 Michigan 1, 4, 5, 6, 7	26,236	23,024	(3,212)	87.76%	309	17	78.21%		
4 Pennsylvania 4, 5, 6, 7	62,746	54,914	(7,832)	87.52%	330	18	81.09%		
5 New York 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	30,663	26,432	(4,231)	86.20%	57	22	78.54%		
6 Indiana 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	37,244	31,871	(5,373)	85.57%	373	25	78.76%		
TOTALS	211,645	185,730	(25,915)	87.76%	1,576				

National Totals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	382,111	331,319	(50,792)	86.71%	3,458		77.73%		
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02/29/24		2024 LEADERSHIP STANDINGS							
Detachment	Det	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	National Rank	Renewal Rate	Quota Date	105% Date
1 Vice-Commander Cook	New Hampshire	6,027	5,410	(617)	89.76%	10	79.07%		
2 Commander Hall	Maryland	16,803	14,923	(1,880)	88.81%	13	80.58%		
3 Trailing Candidate Clancy	New York	30,663	26,432	(4,231)	86.20%	22	78.54%		
4 Vice-Commander Bristo	Minnesota	11,435	9,812	(1,623)	85.81%	23	79.15%		
5 Leading Candidate Navaratte	New Mexico	1,582	1,354	(228)	85.59%	24	67.03%		
6 Vice-Commander Moore	Virginia	4,367	3,704	(663)	84.82%	29	73.08%		
7 Vice-Commander Harris	Kansas	6,055	5,028	(1,027)	83.04%	36	76.14%		
8 Vice-Commander Fischer	California	11,292	9,126	(2,166)	80.82%	42	69.08%		



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%

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS AND HONOR THE GREATEST GENERATION

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the charities of Sons of The American Legion



If you would like to show your support for our troops each week with our RED shirt, or honor and remember the Greatest Generation with our Kilroy shirt, act now, these won't be available for long, and are selling quickly.

Adult Sizes	SM	M	L	XL	XXL	XXXL & Up
	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$25.00
RED						
Kilroy						
Total						

Total \$ _____
 Shipping \$ 9.95
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Ship to: _____

Return this form along with check to
 Jeff Vrabel Sr.
 2222 Birch Bark Trail
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 Please allow a minimum of two weeks for processing





1919 Society Pledge Commitment

DONOR INFORMATION

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

TERMS OF PLEDGE

I am supporting the 1919 Society with a pledge total of: \$
<input type="checkbox"/> Today with a single payment <input type="checkbox"/> Over the next year, beginning on (date): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Over the next _____ years, beginning on (date): _____ Please bill me <input type="checkbox"/> Annually <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT(S)

<input type="checkbox"/> Check - Make checks payable to: American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation - 1919 Society	
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit card <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/> AmEx <input type="checkbox"/> Discover	
Credit Card Number	Exp. Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Planned Gifts and Stock - Please contact The American Legion Office of Charitable Gifts toll free at 833-257-0955 or by email at CharitableGiving@legion.org	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
My/Our gift will be matched by	
<input type="checkbox"/> Matching gift enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Matching gift form will be sent	

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

Donor Signature	Date
Donor Signature	Date

Thank you for your charitable contribution.

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

