SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

THE MILLENNIUM

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Top Ten Detachments Membership Percentage

1.	Hawaii	64.18%
2.	Georgia	44.08%
3.	France	43.58%
4.	Louisiana	43.39%
5.	Wisconsin	40.80%
6.	North Carolina	38.05%
7.	Illinois	37.89%
8.	Mississippi	35.15%
9.	Idaho	34.44%
10.	Alabama	34.19%

Statistics as of 03 October 2024

BE THE ONE

Inside this Month's Newsletter

Editor: Get the word out there!

Newshound: The Casey Boys of Nebraska

Preserving Our Past: Restoring Cemetery Monuments and Grave Markers (Part 1)

Squadron Spotlight: "What's in a Name?"

Wisconsin: No Next Of Kin

Sons on Social Media

SAL National Commander Attends National President's Homecoming

Members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) met at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel over the first weekend of October this year. *Photo: Mike Pook (WI)*

Sons From Across the Country Meet in Indianapolis for the Fall NEC

Representatives from detachments throughout the Sons of The American Legion met the weekend of October 4-6, 2024, in Indianapolis for the Fall NEC, or National Executive Committee meeting. The NEC meets three times throughout the year—fall, spring, and at the National Convention—to manage the complex business of an organization of almost 400,000 members.

The weekend begins with smaller meetings of commissions and committees, which then report to the NEC session on the following day at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel. These reports are from all commissions and committees, from Americanism to Internal Affairs to Children and Youth, and give the representatives from the detachments information about priorities and initiatives at the national level.

As an example, the Children and Youth Committee reported this year they are pushing American Legion Family Day, which falls on the last Saturday of April each year. This year, it is on April 26, 2025…. and as the resolution about Family Day states, "posts are encouraged to open their doors to members of their community for the day."

Another such report was from the Membership and Squadron Activities Committee, which discussed that nationally, membership stands at around 394,500—about 5,500 members short of an all-time high in what's being branded as being on "Team 400K".

One of National Commander Joseph Navarrete's projects this year is raising money for the Veterans Children Foundation, or VCF. Following this committee's report, Commander Navarrete asked the NEC if the Sons could meet this "lofty goal of raising one million dollars in a year" - and the response ... a resounding "YES!". Information on VCF can be found here page 10.

American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere and American Legion Auxiliary National President Trish Ward addressed the NEC as well, and discussed what has happened in the past month of their administrative year. Both stressed that we all succeed together as an American Legion Family.

Russell "Rusty Myers III (NJ),
Editor, "The Millennium"

Get the word out there!

American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere in speaking to the Sons at the recent Fall NEC said, "America truly does not know who The American Legion is." His point ...we need to do better at spreading the word about the great things we do.

Use your local media, or capitalize on your post or squadron's social media presence. Take lots of pictures, and write up a brief press release—you don't have to write "War and Peace", you just have to put together a brief article with photos and send it to your local newspaper or TV station. You will be amazed at the results that a little PR does … you will get a groundswell of local support and participation in your events, and you might get some new members out of it.

If you're not sure about how to go about it, resources are available at https://www.legion.org/about/media-toolkits. And don't forget to submit what you do to Legiontown.org.

Of course "The Millennium" is here as well. This month, we are building up more local content from around the country, which we hope the squadrons can take something away from—perhaps trying out a project you've read about here, or learn about a program you never knew about.

This month we welcome aboard Mike Pook, ANEC from Wisconsin. Mike has produced a series on Facebook called "Mentoring Moments" - small snippets of SAL etiquette or protocol that you may or may not have known about. Look for that each month.

We're also publishing a few open-ended series; one by contributor NVC 'Butch' Ray about the heroes some American Legion posts are named after, and another submitted by Gene Theroux of Massachusetts about the restoration of grave markers … not just a story about it happening, but the actual nuts and bolts of how to do it.

So let's hear from YOU. Tell us about something in your detachment, your district, your county, or your squadron. Write about an inspiring Young Son, or a rock-star SAL at home. In doing that, you could help out another squadron, or launch a program they never though about running. President Kennedy said in 1963 that "A rising tide lifts all boats" - so let's help each other out!

Membership Target Dates

NOVEMBER 14, 2024	**35%**
DECEMBER 11, 2024	**45%**
JANUARY 15, 2025	**60%**
FEBRUARY 12, 2025	**75%**
MARCH 12, 2025	**80%**
APRIL 9, 2025	**90%**
MAY 14, 2025	**100%**
**** JULY 22, 2025**	**105%**

****Delegate Strength Target Date**

BE THE ONE

Learn how to help a veteran in crisis

As part of The American Legion "Be the One" mission to end veteran suicide, the Legion has 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.

Members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to take part in this training and share the training with their communities.

To register for the 90-minute course online, or to see in-person sessions, go to: www.legion.org/betheone/training.

Via your myLegion account, you can also opt-in to the "Be the One" newsletter, or go to www.legion.org/betheone/resources for branding and public relations resources.

THE MILLENNIUM

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All information must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon the twentieth of each month and must be made electronically by emailing the editor at rusty.myers@ymail.com

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SAL NATIONAL ADJUTANT
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Southeast:	John Lawrence (LA)
Central:	Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
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SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

★ THE AMERICAN LEGION ★ OCW OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is a program where The American Legion delivers comfort items to military hospitals, warrior transition units, and other facilities worldwide, bringing hope and support to our service members during their recovery.

Find out how your squadron can help here: https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/operation-comfort-warriors

NVC Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
National Vice Commander

Central Region Report

My Fellow SONS!

Welcome to Fall 2024! Welcome to pumpkin spice everything, football, apple cider donuts, carving Jack-O-Lanterns, hay-rack rides, Oktoberfests, bonfires and fellowship!

Speaking of pumpkin spice; nothing other than politics, and whether you have your toilet paper installed over or under the roll, has divided this nation more than defining our membership year!

July 1st we began our 2024-2025 membership year, but our new cards show only the 2025 date! However, if your dues are not paid by Halloween, you can no longer vote in Squadron, District, or Detachment business. (By most constitutions & By-Laws) If your dues are not paid by New Year's Eve, you are no longer eligible for any American Legion Family Benefits such as Temporary Financial Assistance.

This is why we push membership dues renewal so hard at the beginning of the membership year. I urge each of you to reach out to not only the past 2024 members, but to our current 2025 members and get them to pay their dues right away.

Remember the words of Phil Jackson... "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team!"

Individual commitment to a group effort is what makes a team work. We, the SAL, as a team have been making our mission to help veterans and children our effort for over 90 years. Remember, we are not a team because we work together, we are a team because we respect, trust, and care for each other!

Together, we can do this once again. A single leaf working alone provides no shade. Let's spread our branches, and cover all of our renewals for not only 2024, but also the current 2025 membership year!

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said... "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall!"

Let us celebrate this change of seasons by renewing our commitment and desire to once again set records that only the Sons of The American Legion can accomplish!

Keep up the good work my friends!

For GOD and Country!
Butch Ray, SAL National Vice Commander

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

P.S.: Anyone interested in purchasing a NVC Challenge Coin for SAL National Commander Joseph Navarrete's special project, please let me know. At $20 per coin they would make good awards and recognition of your membership's accomplishments this year! I will have them with me at the Fall NEC and can make arrangements to get them to you!

NVC Ray is also a contributor to "The Millennium", and can be contacted at butch.ilsal@gmail.com.

Russell "Rusty" Myers III (NJ)
and legion.org

NEF: Mutual Helpfulness

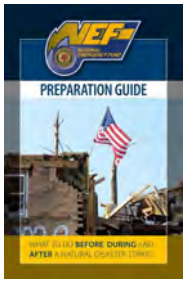
Hurricane season is in full swing, and as Helene and Milton have slammed the southeast these past weeks, members of our American Legion Family are struggling. **So in steps the NEF, or National Emergency Fund.**

If you've been impacted by a natural disaster, you may be eligible for assistance.

The NEF provides up to $3,000 for qualified Legionnaires or Sons of The American Legion, and up to $10,000 for qualified American Legion posts which have been affected by declared natural disasters.

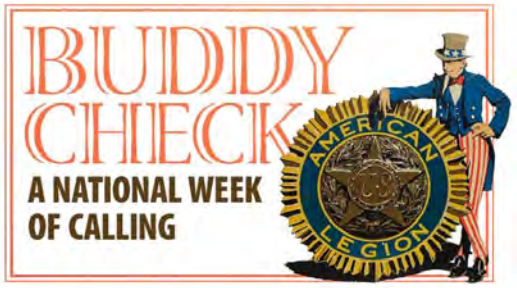
To be eligible for an individual grant, the Legionnaire or Son:

- Must have been displaced from their primary residence due to damage sustained during a declared natural disaster.
- Must provide copies of receipts of items required to meet immediate needs, such as housing, food, water, clothing, etc., during the period immediately following the disaster.
- Must be an active member at the time of the disaster and the time of application.



The American Legion has created a presentation which discusses details on the NEF grant, including what the NEF covers and does not cover and how to complete the NEF application. Click here to view that presentation. And click here for NEF brochures and a preparation guide.

Buddy Check Week: October 21-25, 2024



As we approach Buddy Check Week, we want to remind our American Legion Family members and community members of the importance of looking out for one another. This initiative, created by The American Legion, is designed to make sure we stay connected with veterans who might be facing difficult times, particularly those who may have lost touch with their fellow servicemembers. Why Buddy Checks Matter:

Buddy Checks are a simple but powerful way to remind our brothers and sisters in arms that they are not alone. Life after service can be challenging, and many veterans may feel isolated or disconnected. Reaching out to check on a fellow veteran can make all the difference—it could be a life-changing (or life-saving) conversation.

How You Can Get Involved:

- *Reach out to a veteran you haven't heard from in a while.*
- *Set up a local coffee meetup or check-in session.*
- *Volunteer with your local American Legion post to organize a Buddy Check event.*

The American Legion is committed to supporting the wellbeing of all veterans. Let's come together during Buddy Check Week and make sure no veteran is left behind.

Written on Facebook by the American Legion Department of Montana

MyLEGION.ORG TRAINING VIDEO SERIES

Learn the ins-and-outs of the myLegion platform, and how it can help you and your Sons manage membership in these videos produced by National Headquarters.

https://vimeo.com/showcase/8339635

Preserving Our Past: Restoring Cemetery Monuments and Grave Markers

"To me, it's our responsibility to ensure that our veterans' history and legacy carries on for future generations. Preserving and maintaining their gravestones and markers is a small token of appreciation for their service and sacrifice for our freedom and liberties."

Those are the sentiments of Gene Theroux, a dual member and Past Detachment Commander of Massachusetts.

For a number of years, Theroux has been using social media to put up pictures of his work preserving and repairing grave stones. He works extensively in the City of Westfield, Massachusetts, and at nine cemeteries - four are old burying grounds and five are active cemeteries with two large cemeteries and in the Town of Southwick. In addition, he has worked with and assisted other veteran service officers, cemetery sextons, and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) with gravestone preservation. In addition, he serves as the Veterans Graves Officer for both the City of Westfield and for the Town of Southwick.

So to say he is an expert on the process of restoring grave stones is an understatement— he has written several Community Preservation Act submissions, and has received more than $ 600,000 for cemetery and monument preservation.

"The Millennium" asks Gene how one would go about the whole process of preservation … from identifying the need, to contacting the cemetery, to the actual process of restoration.

"Community engagement and outreach is critical", Theroux says. "Without active engagement in the community, I would not be successful in acquiring grants for preservation work. It is important to let the community know the work that is being accomplished so that when you look for support, you will acquire it."

For identifying a cemetery in need of gravestone repairs, a survey of the monuments and markers needs to be completed for a particular cemetery. Theroux writes that it is important to note that there are a lot of safety hazards within the cemeteries; for example, obelisk monuments and tablets on a base could be a hazard ... many times you will find leaning monuments which have the potential to fall and to injure the visitor. A resource is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation article "Mourning Glory: Preserving Historic Cemeteries ".

It is important to communicate and inform a cemetery of what you'd like to accomplish, and to inform them of your intended process. "People with good intentions have caused a lot of damage to gravestones by using the wrong material", Theroux notes.

So how do Gene and his team prioritize the repairs of monuments or gravestones? His three priorities are mitigating safety hazards, then identifying markers of historical significance, followed by fixing leaning marble tablets.

Much of the work, though, is done before he even steps into a cemetery to start the preservation process. "For every hour in a cemetery, there are five or six hours of accomplishing research and documentation, [aside from] editing the photos and sometimes video captured."

It is critical to take before/during/after photos of each preservation to a gravestone.

Another important fact is that the family of the plot owns the private monuments and markers. "Perpetual Care" is something that is commonly misunderstood; in quoting an article on gravelisting.com, "Perpetual care is like a community fund specifically dedicated to keeping this park beautiful and functional. Families contribute to this fund when they purchase a plot, ensuring the cemetery has the resources to maintain the grounds." Perpetual care funds typically do not extend to maintenance of the grave marker.

Theroux, far right, at Pine Hill Cemetery in August

PDC Theroux also speaks about the importance of assembling a motivated group of volunteers to do the work. He has a team of veterans, who accomplish everything from simple resets to complex repairs of gravestones. "I have one member who loves to clean gravestones, and that attribute is appreciated by the whole team." For gravestones that have fallen tablets with a base, or have fragmented into multiple pieces, that designated member who enjoys cleaning will thoroughly clean all the fragments prior to use accomplishing any epoxy or mortar repairs.

Read Part 2 of this article next month, which will dive into the actual process of restoration >>>

The Newshound

A special section for the Young Sons of The American Legion

The Casey Boys of Nebraska

For our Young Sons featured in the "Newshound", we send a questionnaire for the family to fill out … not just for the parent, but questions to ask the kids. The answers you get back from these kids sometimes make you tear up, and are truly inspiring.

That was absolutely the case reading the answers that the Casey boys of Nebraska gave.

> ***"A seven-year-old chose service over self, who does that? Liam Casey does!"***
>
> ***Chris Casey (NE)***

Can you think of something you did with the Legion that made you really proud or happy? Sean Casey, 13, answered "Getting in front of my classmates to provide flag education because it showed other kids that they can accomplish anything they want."

His 9-year old brother Liam answered about what has made him in much the same way, … "Doing our pizza parties at the veterans' home because we give them company so they are not alone."

Sean and Liam are both sons of Chris and Cassie Casey, of Blair, Nebraska. The boys are all members of Squadron 112 in Benson, where they are eligible for membership through two of their great grandfathers—USAF Tech Sgt. David Harvey, who served in Vietnam, and David London, who served during Korea in the United States Army.

Dad Chris has served as chairman of the national Americanism Commission, as well as Detachment Commander and Detachment Adjutant. The boys themselves also hold office … Sean has been the Benson Squadron 112 Sergeant-At-Arms, and currently serves in his third term as the Detachment of Nebraska Chaplain; Liam currently serves as the Sergeant-At-Arms for the Benson 112, and was recently appointed as the Detachment of Nebraska Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms.

Dad can't be proud enough of his two sons. "As a man of faith, watching Sean complete his duties as Detachment Chaplain makes me overwhelmed with joy. The confidence he has gained over the years by offering prayer, conducting memorial services, and completing readings has made both his mother and I very proud of him. Liam has followed his brother's example and completes every duty he is assigned with the honor his forefather's service deserves. Both boys understand duty, honor, sacrifice, and they know we can never repay the debt owed to our nation's veterans."

These young men do what the do because they want to give back, and want to make a difference.

"Sean's first rock star moment was when he led the 13 Folds Ceremony by reading the meaning of each fold in front of 160 of his 5th grade classmates", dad Chris continued. "That event was the first of many public speaking appearances in front of big crowds as a representative of the SAL. There was one specific moment that occurred for Liam in which I knew he was beginning to understand the importance of service to our community - [when] our squadron had a fundraising breakfast scheduled for the same day as his 7th birthday. No one would fault our family for missing the fundraiser since it was Liam's big day. Not only did we not miss the fundraiser, but Liam washed the dishes the entire event with the biggest smile on his face. The squadron surprised him with a birthday cake at the conclusion of the event. A seven-year-old chose service over self, who does that? Liam Casey does!"

"I like being able to help with activities and it is really fun being able to connect with everyone", noted 8th grader Sean. Liam who is in 4th grade feels exactly the same - "I like doing the events … I get to thank veterans for their service."

"They are the epitome of what every Sons of The American Legion member should strive to be and they are only just beginning", writes dad. "Both of their great grandpas have now passed, but Sean and Liam continue to honor their legacy of service with everything they do as active members of the Sons of The American Legion."

Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

NEC Technology

The National Executive Committee conference room used some exciting new Audio/ Visual Technology this year, incorporating wireless connectivity in order to be more seamless, yet a voice could be heard naturally without getting up and moving to a central location.

Facebook Photo: Courtesy Mike Pook (WI)

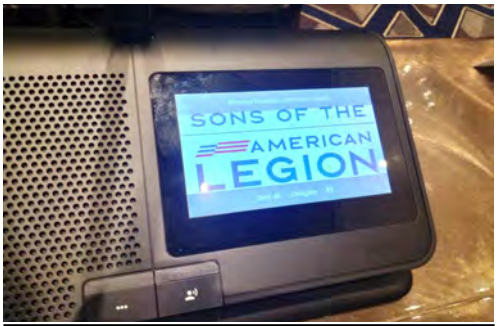
The Shure conference room mics are wireless, and provided clean and precise audio. One unit placed between two Detachment NECs worked out well.

One high-end Video Camera captures the action at the podium, and through a switcher is displayed on two large screens via two high definition projectors in the conference room. That video and audio feed is also broadcast live via social media.

An official stenographer took down the words and added the closed captioning to the live video.

The NEC's and National Conventions are all made available via a live stream at the National SAL Facebook Page, at https://www.facebook.com/americanlegionsons.

The body of this article taken from a Facebook post published by ANEC Mike Pook (WI)



Facebook Photo: Courtesy Mike Pook (WI)

The American Legion National Regional Information Conference

Denver, Colorado
Saturday, November 16, 2024
The Westin Westminster
10600 Westminster Blvd,
Westminster, CO 80020

Are you ready to elevate your commitment to The American Legion? Join us for the National Regional Information Conference (NRIC), where you can network with Legion leaders and members passionate about serving veterans and their communities. This dynamic, one-day event features hands-on learning about The American Legion's core operations and programs, tailored for both new and experienced members.

"Sons of The American Legion Priceless Heritage - The Legion's Best Kept Secret"

Buckle up and prepare for a full day of Sons of The American Legion history and how your post can charter a Squadron. You'll see how Squadron members can bring families with younger children into the Post to benefit and participate and how the Sons are committed to the Four Pillars of The American Legion. You'll leave with resources to get and keep Squadrons active and involved. Our dynamic presenters will provide a high energy day and become your go-to contact for SAL support.

Registration link which leads to the Denver Conference:
https://web.cvent.com/event/650e7d28-3b98-42f9-a336-faf104f69928/summary

Scan the QR Code and Renew Your Membership Today!

The Sons On Social Media: A snapshot of the SAL around the country

Squadron 22 and Auxiliary Unit 22 (Rapid City, SD) donate $2,200 to the Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) School Lunch program. This money was raised during the Son's annual car show.

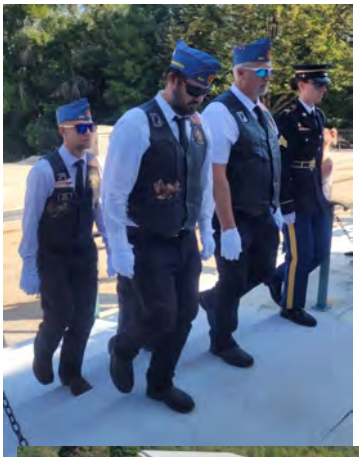
One of the younger members from Jefferson County, the Detachment of New York.

Installation of officers at Squadron 386 (Hershey, PA).

Oklahoma Detachment Cmdr. Steve Thomas, National Cmdr. Navarrete, PNC Hall and OK NEC Chris Cook at the "Sons Saving Ta-Ta's Fundraiser" in Indianapolis.

The Sons On Social Media: A snapshot of the SAL around the country

Squadron 43 (Hollywood, CA) officially welcomed several members at an induction ceremony that took place on September 15th, followed by a flag retirement ceremony where those in attendance were able to retire a flag in honor of a forefather.



On a weekend in September, several members of Pennsylvania's American Legion Family had the privilege to lay wreaths in Arlington National Cemetery at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, DC.

Post and Squadron 260 members (South Hadley, MA), were honored on this foggy morning to replace a worn American Flag with a brand new one which honors veterans at final rest at Mater Dolorosa Cemetery in South Hadley.

Detachment of Vermont Finance Officer Lucas Herring presenting a Sons of The American Legion donation for $3,066 to Stacey Wright-Hodge, Specialist, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement., for homelessness programs and activities for veterans.

Squadron 180 (Great Bend, KS) and the American Legion 180 Family visiting six local grade schools to teach 4th graders about Flag Etiquette.

Newly Elected Detachment of Maryland Youth Officers

Illinois 12th District new SAL officers

The Harrison Lee Post #283 Family (Livonia, NY) members visiting the Vietnam Wall Memorial in Penn Yann, NY.

The Legion Family of Post 618 (Willis, TX) cooked and delivered food to local firehouses, police department, and Constables on 9/11.

Randy Timms (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

NNOK: No Next Of Kin

The Wisconsin District 1 Legion Family came together this year and raised awareness and much needed funding for the Department's Unclaimed Veterans Burial Fund, also known as the Terrence Sund Fund. The name we chose was intentionally peculiar to draw attention to it. The NNOK Ride (pronounced "knock") stood for No Next Of Kin. Our tag line was "No Veteran Should Take Their Final Journey Alone". The name and tag garnered attention and provided us a unique opportunity to explain what this was all about.

At times this was a challenging endeavor but was always rewarding to see the support of so many. The challenge was speaking with people about the subject matter. Not everyone is comfortable with it. But it was rewarding to see the outpouring of support from all corners of the Legion Family.

Steve Conto has operated this fund on the generosity of donors from its inception. He and Susan have done a brilliant job of sorting through the legal issues, the historical documents and coordination to care for every unclaimed veteran that has been presented to them. At times, they have reached deep into their own pockets simply because funding wasn't sufficient.

Bill Fitters, my co-chair, and I were truly blessed at the NNOK Ride's success. We created a scavenger hunt for information that drew the participants to a wide variety of veteran locations throughout the District. We had basket raffles and silent auctions. Our thanks to District 1 Commander Nathan Bond and Auxiliary President Zondra Morris as well as her First Vice President Crystal Shaw for their support, encouragement and involvement for truly making this a District 1 Legion Family affair.

At the end of the day, we tallied up total donations and had $21,931.00. Two weeks later, after several additional donations were made, we were blessed beyond measure to write a check in the amount of $23,370.00 for the Unclaimed Veterans Burial Fund.

Discussions have already begun for next year, but I'd challenge every Legion Family Post, Squadron and Unit to consider having your own "NNOK Ride". Funds will always be needed as we care for unclaimed veterans. If you wish some help getting organized, give me a call or email. We'll be thrilled to help you get started.

Thank you to each and every individual that helped us exceed our expectations. Whether you voted to donate funds, made and delivered baskets for raffles or provided items for auction or worked all day at the event; without your support this never would have happened.

Submitted Photo: (l to r) - Eric Remmick, Tim Penkert, Mark Pape (Hartland, WI Sq. 294) with a $1,000 check

Mike Pook (WI), Staff Contributor "The Millennium"

"Mentoring Moments"

Editor's Photo

"When at a meeting, and you hear the Commander give three raps of the gavel, this means to stand up. When you hear one rap this means to sit down."

Important Web Links

The National Public & Media Communications Committee has created this Important Web Links document for our members, as well as for all members of the American Legion Family, to use to get to some of our most important websites.

SAL National Web Site
https://www.legion.org/sons

Publications and Forms (SDR, Handbook, Awards and much more)
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/publications-and-forms

Subscribe to Newsletters (requires signing into MyLegion.org)
https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/My-Account/Opt-In-Out

Newsletter Digital Archives
https://www.legion.org/library/258352/50-years-sons-american-legion-newsletters-now-available

Be The One
https://www.legion.org/betheone

Voter Voice
https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home

Membership Reports
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/membership-reports

Future Meetings
https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion/sons-of-the-american-legion-meetings

NVC Harl "Butch" Ray (IL)
Contributor, "The Millennium"

Series: What's in a Name?

Fellow Sons, here is the second article in the series "What's in a Name?", a set of articles which highlight American Legion Posts throughout the country and the serviceman for which they are named. We must always remember that we stand upon the sacrifice of those veterans from which our eligibility has come.

Douglas M. Lyons American Legion Post # 72 (Tennessee)

Douglas M. Lyons. WWI Veteran who was killed in combat action in Verdun, France, 12 October 12, 1918. Posthumously Awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions. The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Second Lieutenant (Infantry) Douglas M. Lyons, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in action while serving with 114th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division, A.E.F., near Verdun, France, 12 October 1918. Inspiring his men by his fearlessness, Lieutenant Lyons led an attack against a strongly fortified enemy position, and, in so doing, was killed.

On September 23, 1930, forty-two men from the Stewart County, Tennessee area met and completed the Application for Post of The American Legion. The Post would be named after Douglas Milford Lyons, a WWI Veteran who was killed in combat action in Verdun, France, 12 October 12, 1918. Post 72 was granted its Permanent Charter on February 26, 1931 and has been a part of the Stewart County Community for nearly 93 years.

Don (Dominic) Gentile American Legion Post # 532 (Ohio)

Dominic Salvatore "Don" Gentile (December 6, 1920 – January 28, 1951), was a World War II RAF and USAAF pilot who achieved fame as he came close to surpassing Eddie Rickenbacker's World War I record of 26 downed aircraft. He later served in the postwar U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. military required two years of college for its pilots, which Gentile did not have, so he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was posted to the UK in Dec 1941 as a Pilot Officer. Gentile flew the Supermarine Spitfire Mk V with No. 133 Squadron, one of the three famed RAF "Eagle Squadron"s beginning in June, 1942.

In September 1942, the Eagle squadron pilots transferred to the USAAF, becoming the nucleus of the 4th Fighter Group. Gentile became a flight leader in September 1943, now flying the P-47 Thunderbolt. After conversion to the P-51B at the end of February 1944, Gentile built a tally of 15.5 additional aircraft destroyed between March 3 and April 8, 1944. After downing three more planes on April 8,[13] he was the top scoring 8th Air Force pilot.

This series will continue over time tell brief stories of some of these posts that honor our legacy. If your post home has a story to share about the Veteran for which it is named, please send me that information for future articles.

Kevin Chaplin (VA),
Chairman, PMCC

National Commander attends Trish Wards Homecoming

Kevin Chaplin serves as the chairman of the National Public and Media Communication Commission

Our National SAL Commander Joseph Navarrete and his wife Lorreta attended the National Auxiliary President Trish Ward's Homecoming in Wichita, Kansas, along with National Commander for The American Legion James A. LaCoursiere Jr and his wife Lisa.

L to R: National President Ward, SAL National Commander Navarrete, and his spouse Loretta at the homecoming event in Kansas.

Our National Legion Family leaders have a homecoming celebration in their home state to celebrate their achievement of being elected to the highest office in their organization, and to thank their many friends, team members and supporters that helped them along the way. These events are scheduled some time during their year of service. Usually, any Legion Family member is welcome to attend, celebrate and participate in the activities. Trish's homecoming was held in Wichita Kansas from September 26th to the 29th. Activities including a visit to the Eisenhower Library and Museum, Veterans Memorial Park – Botanica and a tour of the Kansas Aviation Museum. The culmination of the weekend was a Gala Banquet dinner at the Exploration Place. There was western theme where event goers were encouraged wear their best boots, Stetson, and favorite denim. It was a wonderful event and fun weekend. I encourage anyone who has not attended a national officer's homecoming to take the time to do so.

The Department of New Mexico American Legion Family Invites you to the Homecoming Event for National Commander Joseph Navarrete

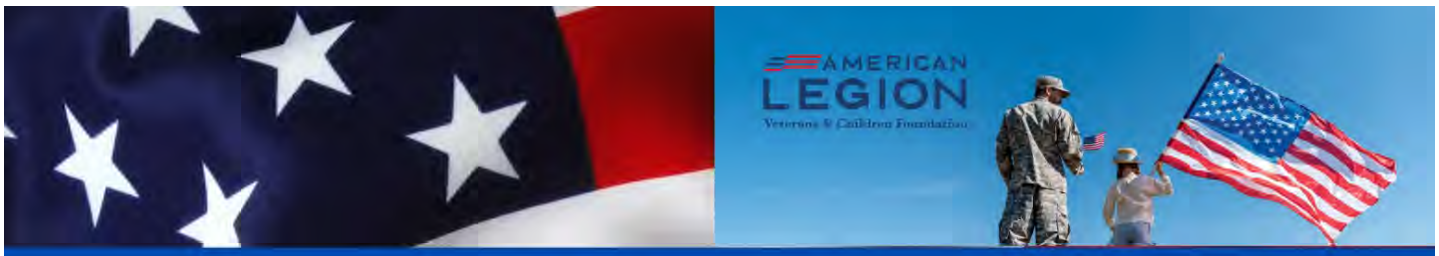
Albuquerque, New Mexico
April 11-12, 2025

Hotel: Albuquerque at Old Town
800 Rio Grande Blvd
NW Albuquerque, NM 87104

Booking:
https://bit.ly/SALHomecoming2025
or call 505-843-6300
group code 2504LEGION

Register for activities at https://bit.ly/SALRegister2025

Questions: contact
Loretta Navarrete
nmfornava@gmail.com



Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF)

A foundation of hope providing financial resources for the organization's Temporary Financial Assistance Program and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation support, including training for accredited service officers.

Highlights of the Veterans & Children Foundation:

- In **2019**, the American Legion Endowment Fund began doing business as the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation to more clearly state who benefits from tax-deductible donations.
- **$17.9 million** is the amount in American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants awarded since 1926 to assist military and qualifed veteran families with minor children, who are facing unexpected financial emergencies that threaten the stability of their home.
- **11,161** is the number of children whose homes were stabilized with the help from American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants over the last decade.
- **$30 million** is the approximate amount in cash grants issued from The American Legion Endowment Fund and Veterans & Childrens Foundation for veterans and their children in need since 1925.
- **$64.4 billion** is the amount in VA disability secured for veterans since 2020 by American Legion service officers.
- More than **3,000** trained American Legion service officers provide VA benefits representation and other forms of assistance to some **750,000** veterans at any time, all the time, free of charge.

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It's not a goal, it's our mission.

Support the VCF!

More information available at www.legion.org/vcf. A printable pamphlet is downloadable here.
The above flier has been provided courtesy of the Detachment of Nebraska.

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A newsletter of Sons of The American Legion

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