

Department News

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS



2016–2017 DEPARTMENT COMMANDER CHERI L. STANTON

JANUARY 2017



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

AS OF
DECEMBER 20, 2016

TOP 10 DISTRICT AND DIVISION RANKINGS

District Commander

7	LEPINSKI
17	NAGEL
18	MONROE
19	LAUFHUTTE
13	KRAUT
20	MASSEY
8	CHAMBERS
23	ROUNDS, II
25	PICOU
5	DEARBONE

Division Commander

4	DUDLEY
3	KILKENNY
2	DAVIS JR.
1	WHYTE
5	SMITH

2017

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

Membership Caravan

20 YEARS OF COMMITMENT

JANUARY...for the Department of Illinois American Legion Family, its time for the annual American Legion Family Membership caravan.

20 years ago department noticed a decline in membership after the holiday season, never moving more than two percentage points during the month of January. To get membership back on the minds of Legion Family members, the caravan of 10 to 20—Department, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders will visit 20 posts in several districts over the course of nine days in January.

For Membership Director Chad Woodburn, this will be his first caravan. He recently sent letters to all 755 posts, on behalf of Department Sr. Vice Commander Bob Henderson, asking them to notify members of where and when the caravan stops are. Encouraging members to come to a stop near them, and turn in any membership cards.

Chad just finished the pre-drive for the caravan route. We have no doubt his diligence will ensure the caravan will run smoothly.

Since the caravan began, Past National Commander Marty Conatser, said membership numbers are now no less than five percent in January. Last year, the caravan collected over 2,000 membership cards.

"It causes members to have to go out and work membership in January – to get the renewals or sign up new members so they have something to turn in at the caravan," Conatser said. "Instead of the big Christmas lull, it gets us back to doing what we know we should be doing all the time, which is focusing on membership. "And ours is truly a family caravan. We make it a big issue during our travels that we are the Legion Family." said Conatser.

A national leader also participates in the caravan, this year, we have Immediate Past National Auxiliary President, Sharon Conatser traveling with us. We are excited to hear her message of leadership and encouragement.

"The caravan is a motivational tool for all of us," Conatser said. "It increases all of our membership, it gets us back to working membership, and it gives us a chance to take a national representative to an individual post. Many of posts will say that they never had a national officer visit before. So it's an honor that out of 755 Illinois posts, only 20 get selected. We sell that as a positive."



From The Desk of Department Commander Cheri L. Stanton



I hope everyone had a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In my travels as State Commander, I have visited several American Legion Posts. I went to Springfield to the State Police post and was informed about a new idea given to them by one of our Junior members. (Girls ages birth to 18) Sierra Buske had an idea to help the homeless veterans and she called it **Socks of Love**. Our Auxiliary is collecting tube socks and comfort items like toothpaste, toothbrushes, soaps, shampoo items, instant coffee and tea bags plus food cards and individual cookies and crackers. These items are put inside the socks and given out to homeless veterans and other people by State Police officers as they patrol. This will be an ongoing program for this year.

From there I went to Marion, Illinois to the Egyptian Past Commanders Club. It is a club that has built and maintains a lodge called **"The Haven"**. It is supported by the **Fifth Division American Legion**. **The Haven** is a place that the Veterans can go during the day to eat, play cards, and go fishing to get away from living in a VA Home. Each year they have a fundraiser for **The Haven** during this weekend to help support keeping it going. The National Vice Commander is invited to come and give a speech. He is a very dynamic speaker.

In Aledo, their post had a special program to honor Amy Hess for the "Adoni" program I mentioned in my last writing. Amy helps get food, furniture, and housing for homeless veterans. She has been running this program for years with NO STATE FUNDING and the state finally recognized her for it. She volunteers her time to help all veterans.

In Bloomington I got to vote for a candidate for the next National Vice Commander from Illinois. We had several great candidates and as commanders,

we choose one to represent Illinois. Now at state convention, we will officially vote for Bill Flanagan from the governing body.

During the last three days of November, I had to fly to Reno to make a site visit for National Convention. Our delegation will be staying at the **Silver Legacy** downtown. We got rooms for meetings, caucus times, and viewed what our hotel rooms would look like. I was surprised at the timing and the logistics that big National Conventions take. There were so many types and varieties of food to choose from, our group did our best to try them all.

Then another section of my travels this month led me to Teutopolis, Illinois. Each year they have a special mass for the veterans of the community and a special breakfast afterwards. I was the main speaker and I told about this being the 75th year Anniversary of Pearl Harbor and

(Dept. Commander continued on page 6)



From The Desk of Department Sr. Vice Commander Bob Henderson



I hope everyone had a great time over the holidays. I hope everyone enjoyed quality time with relatives and friends at parties and Christmas dinners. The food really looked good on the dinner table and I always eat too much. Then the leftovers are many and you can't let them go to waste.

We met with the Operating Engineers local unions at Rockford. We talked to them about starting a Legion Post in their local unions. This went over very well in Wisconsin, hope it

goes over in Illinois, there are 5 locals Unions in the state of Illinois.

I attended three Pearl Harbor Day remembrances, in Teutopolis Post 924, Champaign Post 559 and Mahomet Post 1015. They all put together very good celebrations. I would like to see more of this, it gets the Legion Members out and that is what we need, more comradery.

Now we have to get back to the Back bone of the American Legion, Membership. We have an American Legion Family Membership Caravan January 12th thru the 21st. We will have a stop in each District. We would like to get as many Legion Family members at these stops as possible, with

membership cards. Each Member can come to the closest stop even if it is in another district. We aren't going to really care as long as you bring Membership cards. Anybody can come for the program and listen to the speakers and ask Questions. We will have Sharon Conatser as our main speaker since our National Vice Commander is tied up for part of the Caravan. She will bring things to the meeting that will help the Family Membership grow. Come and enjoy the comradery with other Legion Family Members. Hope to see you on **The American Legion Family Caravan**.



From The Desk of Department Auxiliary President Luella Buske



Happy New Year! Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas!

We continue to Serve and Protect our veterans and their families, by working the programs. The Socks of Love service Project is going well and several police departments have stated that several have been handed out to those in need.

I am so excited about traveling with Commander Cheri, Commander Phil, Senior Vice Commander Bob, and

Phil, Senior Vice Commander Bob, and Past National President Sharon on our family caravan. Membership chairman Patti will be traveling with us. We look forward to seeing old friends and making many new friends. Please remind your Auxiliary members we are coming and we hope to collect membership! We are hoping for good travel weather. We are all looking forward to seeing many of you.

March is coming soon! Our Patriotic Conference will be March 10 in Springfield, Illinois at the Route 66 Hotel. We have some great speakers planned and we would love to see

several Legionnaires in the audience. Please watch for further information. It is always a great day. Our National President, Mary Davis, will be with us as well. She is a wonderful lady and truly loves our Veterans and their families.

Let's all make one of our New Year's resolutions to make the American Legion Family a goal Department and Detachment in all four organizations; The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, The Sons of The American Legion, and The Legion Riders! I know we can do it if we all work together.



From The Desk of Detachment Commander Phil Shipley



HAPPY NEW YEAR!! It is my wish that all of your memories of 2016 are pleasant ones and that the New Year holds only the promise of better things to come your way!

Now that the holidays are behind us we can continue in our service to our veterans, our communities, and our children.

Your Detachment Officers are busy preparing for the National American Legion Family Membership Caravan that will take place across the entire state of Illinois from January 12th through the 21st 2017. I am looking forward to meeting members of our

Legion family as we spread the message of how we help those that have had the honor of wearing the uniform of the US Armed Forces. Please let your SAL Squadrons know that they too can participate in this caravan when it rolls through their District. Our Sr. Vice Commander Paul Hayse will be very happy to process any membership cards brought to these caravan stops.

I wish to invite all American Legion Family members to a reception in recognition of the SAL National Commander, Jeff Frain and possibly National American Legion Auxiliary President Mary Davis and American Legion National Commander Charles Schmidt, to be held on Saturday February 11th at St. John's Children's Hospital in Springfield. This reception will be held prior to our 11th annual tour of this Children's Miracle Network hospital. The Detachment of Illinois

has had the privilege of escorting the National Sons of The American Legion Commander to hand out Josh Dogs to children unfortunate enough to be in the hospital for the last 10 years. We will also get to meet a **"Miracle"** family that has been helped by the local CMN staff and hospital. It is a great opportunity for us as a family to show our commitment to the children of our state. Please contact me for any additional information you may need for this annual event.

May you have enough strength and will power to succeed in all of your New Year's resolutions! And may service to our Veterans be the top resolution on your list!



Did You Know?

Office: 312-980-4266 Email: Raymond.Toczec@va.gov

That once again it is the start of a New Year and with that brings personal resolutions which we all seem to make (and most break or give up by February). Here are some ideas tailor made for veterans. And as a Service Officer if our members took these resolutions seriously my job would be so much easier.

1. If you are enrolled in the VA hospital system then sign up for Myhealthvet. You can do this online at <http://www.va.gov/health/> and once signed up you can check your appointments, e-mail your doctor with a medical question, refill your prescriptions and a host of other things.
2. Check your property taxes. If you are a service-connected disabled vet rated 30% or more you should be receiving a reduction in your assessed value. If you are 70% or more you pay NO taxes if your home is valued under \$750,000. Be proactive too, if your spouse is NOT on the title then this exemption will not pass to them. While you're at it, be sure you are getting your senior discount if you are 65 or older. Law was changed and you must sign up each year for that.
3. If you are 30% or more service connected disabled are you claiming all your dependents? Did you have another child or did you marry in 2016 and become a step-parent? Or did your adult child who hasn't gone to school since they turned 18 suddenly decided to enroll in college or a trade school? You can claim that adult child up to the age of 23 if they attend school (even part-time). And on the flip side did you divorce or lose a dependent due to a death this year? If so you need to notify the VA to avoid an overpayment.
4. If you have VA life insurance or for that matter a commercial life insurance policy did you update your beneficiary due to a death, remarriage or divorce last year? Or did your good for nothing adult child become a drug addict or boozier? Do you really want to leave him or her your insurance now?
5. Due to a fire, flood, robbery, or tornado did you lose your military discharge papers? If so contact me for standard form 180 to get a replacement. Believe me, sooner or later you will have to have a certified copy.
6. Are you being proactive and making arrangements for your demise? If you would like a free VA government headstone you might want to get the application ahead of time and fill it out. That way you will have exactly what you wish engraved on that marker. Call 1-800-827-1000 and ask for VA form 1330. And to save your next-of-kin the time and effort how about choosing an undertaker ahead of time.
7. Are you getting either VA compensation or pension benefits and have not yet signed up for Ebenefits? If not go to <http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal> and do it today. Then from the privacy of your home computer (24/7) you can print out VA award letters, statements of service, home loan certificates and verification of your disability percentage. You can also check the status of your claim and/or appeals, review your last 24 months of payments and change your address or direct deposit information.
8. When was the last time you asked the VA to review your service-connected compensation. That bad knee you got in Korea probably has gotten worse in the last 50+ years. Or that busted shoulder blade from an explosion in Iraq is acting up. And that minor diabetic problem you got from Agent Orange may have become more severe and led to other complications. Very few medical conditions stay the same and most get more severe with the passage of time. Contact us today to discuss this further. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WITH THE NEW PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS.
9. Finally, resolve to sign up at least one new member for your post. Someone from your neighborhood, church or community group? Perhaps a friend or relative on active duty. Your post always needs your support in getting new members.

Well I hope some of these ideas are helpful. If you should need any further information on any of the above resolutions please contact me. Also, I've been collecting more rumors that are out there for a future article. If you have any let me know and I'll check them out. Until next time stay safe and warm.

Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of The American Legion, in the finest sense of the word Comradeship.



From The Desk of the Membership Director Chad J. Woodburn



Happy New Years, hope the holidays were well for everyone.

Just received an email with the 75% Target Date report from National. Membership is moving along great, for the Department we are 80%...(see cut off report for exact number)

Congratulations Illinois...please keep up the great work!!!

Speaking of membership (as I write this while in the middle of pre-driving the Membership Caravan route) the 2017 American Legion Family Membership Caravan is quickly approaching, I hope to see everyone there. Please bring any cards with you no matter how many you might have, every card counts. The Membership Caravan schedule is located on page 7.

See you soon! Stay Warm!

2017 TAL 75% Target Date Report as of: December 14, 2016

* All-Time High	2017 Dept. Year End Goal	2017 Actual Mbsp.	% of Year End Goal	Needed To Meet 75% Target 12/14/2016	2017 DMS New Starts 12/14/2016
1 MINNESOTA	77,000	64,110	83.26%	-6,360	854
2 NEBRASKA	32,463	26,932	82.96%	-2,585	362
3 WISCONSIN	56,739	47,043	82.91%	-4,489	911
4 IOWA	47,000	38,632	82.20%	-3,382	519
5 SOUTH DAKOTA	20,446	16,628	81.33%	-1,294	145
6 MONTANA	11,000	8,891	80.83%	-641	211
7 ILLINOIS	86,500	69,489	80.33%	-4,614	1,418
8 SOUTH CAROLINA	19,765	15,769	79.78%	-945	1,070
9 NORTH DAKOTA	15,100	12,047	79.78%	-722	121
10 MISSOURI	40,438	31,740	78.49%	-1,412	899
11 DELAWARE	10,295	8,067	78.36%	-346	214
12 HAWAII	2,200	1,722	78.27%	-72	185
13 CONNECTICUT	19,800	15,488	78.22%	-638	444
14 MAINE	18,500	14,461	78.17%	-586	257
15 MARYLAND	52,072	40,652	78.07%	-1,598	1,055

Central Region - NVC Paul Martel (FL)

Department	Goal	Total	Percent
WISCONSIN	56,739	47,043	82.91%
ILLINOIS	86,500	69,489	80.33%
OHIO	100,000	77,112	77.11%
MICHIGAN	68,507	52,703	76.93%
INDIANA	82,470	62,052	75.24%
FLORIDA	111,858	80,868	72.30%
KENTUCKY	21,682	15,606	71.98%
WEST VIRGINIA	16,571	11,878	71.68%
Totals	544,327	416,751	76.56%



American Legion Illinois Premier Boys State
www.illinoisboysstate.org

We hope everyone had a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year. Reflecting on the previous year, we are thankful for the many posts that have actively supported our program. With your hard work and support last year we were able to positively impact the lives of 469 young men in our communities throughout Illinois. Together we are influencing our youth to strengthen our nation, One Community at a Time.

With the New Year underway we are asking that you now hit the ground running. Reconnect with your contacts in the schools, community organizations, libraries and others in order to secure boys in your area. For each boy sent

please remember that there needs to be the registration fee raised also. If your post has more boys than available funds please remember to reach out to other organizations, local banks, businesses and your school principals for a possible donation from the vending machine revenue. Always remember, we all reap the rewards by investing in our future.

**The 2017 American Legion
Illinois Premier Boys State
Brochure & Application is available
online or at Department Headquarters**

New Regulation Decreases Cost of Outpatient Medication Copay for Most Veterans

Washington--The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulation on copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions. VA currently charges non-exempt Veterans either \$8 or \$9 for each 30-day or less supply of outpatient medication, under current regulations a calculation based on the medication of the Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI-P) would be used to determine the copayment amount in future years.

"Switching to a tiered system continues to keep outpatient medication costs low for Veterans," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Reducing their out-of-pocket costs encourages greater adherence to prescribed outpatient medications and reduces the risk of fragmented care that results when multiple pharmacies are used; another way that VA is providing better service to Veterans."

This new regulation eliminates the formula used to calculate future rate increases and establishes three classes of outpatient medications identified as Tier 1, Preferred Generics; Tier 2, Non-Preferred Generics including over-the-counter medications; and Tier 3, Brand Name. Copayment amounts for each tier would be fixed and vary depending upon the class of outpatient medication in the tier.

These copayment amounts will be effective February 27, 2017:

- \$5 for a 30-day or less supply--Tier 1 outpatient medication
- \$8 for a 30-day or less supply--Tier 2 outpatient medication
- \$11 for a 30-day or less supply--Tier 3 outpatient medication

These changes apply to Veterans without a service-connected condition, or Veterans with a disability rated less than 50 percent who are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition, and whose annual income exceeds the limit set by law. Medication copayments do not apply to former Prisoners of War, catastrophically disabled Veterans, or those covered by other exceptions as set by law.

Copayments stop each calendar year for Veterans in Priority Groups 2-8 once a \$700 cap is reached.

Thank you,

Jacob B. Gadd, M.B.A. VHA/VSO Liaison

Office Of the Under Secretary for Health Veteran Health Administration

Department of Veterans Affairs

1575 Street NW Room 605

Washington, DC 20420

(Dept. Commander continued from page 2)

some of the memories of the survivors. It took a lot of grit to survive but I was amazed at the men who went on to serve during Korea and Vietnam. A lot of veterans never talk about what they went through until years later. I think the Honor Flight has had a positive effect on all the veterans who have gone to help release some of their memories.

The National American Legion hosted a meeting with President-elect Donald Trump's transition team and representatives from over 30 veterans service organizations to address veteran's concerns. We support the Trump administration's efforts to strengthen, reform and sustain the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) Health Care System, remove budget constraints that negatively impact veteran-centered programs, and reform the VA's claims and appeals process.

My favorite place to stop this month was in Joliet at the Rialto Square Theater to hear the 34th Annual band concert presented by the Award-Winning Joliet American Legion Band. What a spectacular event! After 60 years, we witnessed the passing of an era where Tom Drake stepped down as Director, and became "Director Emeritus," allowing him to continue to spend some time with the band family in the future. He remarked to his wife that he will be home on Tuesday night instead of at band practice. He hadn't missed many in his 60 years. Congratulations on a JOB WELL DONE!

In January we start our Family Membership Caravan. I hope to see many of you from the WHOLE LEGION FAMILY attending as well as bringing cards for each group. Our own Sharon Conatser, Past National President will be our guest speaker and I hope we have lots in attendance to hear about programs from National.

I want to thank each and every one of you for all your efforts so far on membership. Illinois has been in fifth to seventh place in the nation this year, so CONGRATULATIONS! **Can't wait to thank you in person on the Caravan!**

2017 ILLINOIS AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY MEMBERSHIP CARAVAN SCHEDULE JANUARY 12 - 21, 2017

January	City	Post #	Dist#	Div#	ETA
JANUARY 12	GURNEE	771	10	2	6:00 PM
JANUARY 13	PEARL CITY	1014	13	2	8:30 AM
JANUARY 13	EAST MOLINE	227	14	3	12:00 PM
JANUARY 13	GALVA	45	15	3	5:30 PM
JANUARY 14	LELAND	570	12	2	8:30 AM
JANUARY 14	ROMEONVILLE	52	11	2	12:00 PM
JANUARY 14	WARRENVILLE	589	11	2	5:30 PM
JANUARY 15	HOWARD H. ROHDE	888	9	1	8:30 AM
JANUARY 15	WAYNE-WRIGHT	1052	2	1	12:00 PM
JANUARY 15	BROADVIEW-HILLSIDE	626	5	1	5:30 PM
JANUARY 17	CHRISMAN	477	18	4	11:30 AM
JANUARY 17	ST. FRANCISVILLE	947	23	5	5:30 PM
JANUARY 18	CARRIER MILLS	364	24	5	6:00 PM
JANUARY 19	DuQUOIN	647	25	5	9:30 AM
JANUARY 19	GRANITE CITY	113	22	5	6:00 PM
JANUARY 20	JERSEYVILLE	492	20	3	9:00 AM
JANUARY 20	PANA	168	21	4	12:30 PM
JANUARY 21	MAHOMET	1015	19	4	8:00 AM
JANUARY 21	HEYWORTH	624	17	4	11:30 AM
JANUARY 21	DEERCREEK	1276	16	3	5:30 PM



Past National President Sharon Conatser will be our special guest during the 2017 Illinois American Legion Family Caravan.

Please take time to come to one of the caravan stops nearest you and if you plan on attending the meal you will want to R.S.V.P. to the post.

Bring any membership cards with you that need to be turned in...even if it's just ONE.

Carry the card that advances The American Legion's mission

★ Support The American Legion with
your everyday purchases.

Apply Today



When you apply for The American Legion USAA Rewards Visa Signature credit card, you can benefit from great rewards, chip technology for enhanced security, greater payment access worldwide and USAA Bank's legendary customer service. You can also enjoy:

**0% introductory APR
For 12 months**

On balance transfers and convenience checks that post to your account within the first 3 months following account opening. After 12 months, your Regular APR, currently between **11.15% to 26.15%**, will apply to these introductory balances and any new transactions. Each balance transfer and convenience check has a transaction fee of up to 3%. If you transfer a balance or write a convenience check with this offer, all purchases will be charged interest until you pay the entire balance in full, including any transferred/convenience check balances. After that, you will have a grace period on purchases when you pay your entire statement balance each month by the payment due date. Your Regular APR will apply to your purchases and cash advances upon account opening. Your Regular APR will vary with the market bases on the Prime Rate.

2,500 rewards points

After your first purchase. In addition, earn 1 point for every \$1 spent on all other purchases charged to your card with no limit to the amount you can earn. Redeem points for 1% cash back, or use them for gift cards, merchandise or travel.

Plus, now you can extend your support.

Easily redeem your USAA Rewards credit card points
for donations to The American Legion.

1,000 rewards points equals \$10.

No annual fee

No penalty APR and no foreign transaction fees.

This offer expires January 31, 2017.

Apply now

Or call 877-699-2654

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



New Year's Day

January 1st

~ ~ ~

2nd 100% Post Cash Award

(1:00 PM Cut-Off)

January 2nd

~ ~ ~

National Membership & PA Workshop

Indianapolis, IN

January 6th--7th

~ ~ ~

American Legion Family

Membership Caravan

January 12th--21st

~ ~ ~

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Dept. Office Closed

January 16th

~ ~ ~

Gold Pin

(1:00 PM Cut-Off)

January 31st

~ ~ ~

3rd 100% Post Cash Award

(1:00 PM Cut-Off)

February 3rd

~ ~ ~

Lincoln Pilgrimage

Springfield, IL

February 11th--12th

~ ~ ~

Lincoln's Birthday

February 12th

~ ~ ~

Valentine's Day

February 14th

~ ~ ~

Division & District

Jr. & Sr. Vice Commanders Training

10:00 AM--3:00PM

@ Dept. HQ

February 18th

###



National Executive Committee Resolution No. 16

Rendering Proper Respect

ATTENTION ALL POSTS

Important Notice

The American Legion is a strong supporter of the protection of the American Flag. The American Legion realizes there are proper platforms for expressing protest or disagreements. We vehemently reject using disrespect to the Flag of our Nation or the National Anthem as a way of protesting. The National Executive Committee passed the enclosed resolution addressing the issue for participants in our Youth programs.

Illinois strongly supports the action of The National Executive Committee. This means that local Posts will need to screen all participants in Boys State, Youth Police School, Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball or other programs to ensure compliance. Please take the time during the screening process to eliminate the embarrassment latter.

We support an individual's right to protest, but using our programs as a platform for that protest will not be allowed. Please ensure that whoever screens applications for participation in our Youth programs is aware of this new policy.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Department Adjutant at 309-663-0361.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA OCTOBER 12-13, 2016

Resolution No. 16: Expectations for Rendering Proper Respect when Participating in Programs of The American Legion

Origin: Americanism Commission

**Submitted By: Americanism Commission
(As amended)**

- WHEREAS, The American Legion since its founding has supported this country, and
- WHEREAS, Countless members of The American Legion died defending the Constitution of the United States and the First Amendment; and
- WHEREAS, The American Legion has fought bigotry, racism and similar concepts since its founding; and
- WHEREAS, The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion pledges that "For God and Country" we shall associate ourselves together "To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism"; and
- WHEREAS, There have been public displays of disrespect to the Flag of the United States, including during the National Anthem, by certain individuals, groups and others failing to show respect thereto; and
- WHEREAS, The American Legion realizes there are proper platforms for expressing protest or disagreement; and
- WHEREAS, The American Legion vehemently rejects using disrespect to the Flag of the United States or the National Anthem as a platform for publicly expressing protest or disagreement; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2016, That The American Legion expects participants of all its programs to show proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further**
- RESOLVED, That the national organization of The American Legion recommends to departments and posts that the chairman or director of any American Legion program make clear to all participants in advance of the program that The American Legion has the expectation for rendering proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further**
- RESOLVED, That if any participant of any program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual should not be a participant in American Legion programs; and, be it finally**
- RESOLVED, That if any participant of any national-level program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation.**

Legacy Scholarship helps ease financial burden

When Lisa Witt received the news on her front doorstep that her husband, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Daniel Witt, was killed while on active duty, finances became a concern. Daughter Eva was headed to college soon, and sons Eric and Peter were not far behind.

But The American Legion's [Legacy Scholarship](#) helped eased some of that financial burden and ensured the siblings followed in their father's footsteps of becoming lifelong learners.

The Legacy Scholarship was "very easy to apply to, very supportive, and very easy to renew," said Lisa, a retired Air Force colonel. "Those were all very helpful things at a time when there was a lot of stress and grief, and it was hard to focus."

The Legion's Legacy Scholarship Fund has ensured higher education is a possibility for children whose parents lost their lives while honorably serving on active duty on or after 9-11. And now children of 9-11 veterans with a VA disability rating of 50 percent or higher are eligible to apply to the renewable scholarship.

The Legacy Scholarship enabled Eva to study art — a passion she shared with her father — at Xavier University in Cincinnati. "I was the first one going to college and the first one who brought this extra financial burden to the family. By applying to The American Legion Legacy Scholarship it allowed me to study something I was passionate about and then pay for things like (art) supplies," said Eva, 25, who recently graduated with a masters in counseling and art therapy and lives in Chicago. "It was really special to be able to pursue art in higher education and be supported in a financial way to pursue that passion."

A piece of her artwork created on the day she learned of her father's passing helped earn her a spot in Xavier's art program and has become symbolic for the whole family. The painting is of a bird with what looks to be a hole in its chest due to spilled ink caused from Eva rushing away from the painting to hear of the news. "Birds are now an important symbol for us because they remind us of dad because of that flight," she said. "That for me as an artist was a very symbolic moment of that day."

At the time of his passing in May 2008, Daniel, 42, was a C-5 pilot with the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air

Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. With nearly 20 years in the service, he flew numerous medical evacuations of wounded soldiers and supply missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Lisa said Dan would pray with the wounded soldiers en route back to the states and then verbally promise, "'I'm going to get you back home safely.' That captures who he was."

"He had a strong sense of duty," said Peter, 20, who is studying architecture at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. "So it's been very helpful to have The American Legion Legacy Scholarship to help with the financial burden and to carry on our dad's legacy." Peter has used the scholarship to purchase materials for the building of architecture models. "(The scholarship) is very personalized because (the Legion) empathized with our story."



As the three siblings applied for college scholarships during their pursuit for different educational paths, a commonality among the three of them was that they were all recipients of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship. "That's really been a blessing to have that support not just individually, but as a family," said Eric, 24, a graduate of Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio, with a degree in biology. Eric used the scholarship to help pay for lab fees and a case study conducted in Bermuda. "And just the fact that we were all able to return to it because many scholarships are non-renewable."

Recipients of the Legacy Scholarship may reapply up to six times for the expense of graduate or post-graduate tuition, books, room and board, meal plans, transportation and other supplies needed to achieve a higher education.

"(The American Legion) cares so much about these families that have really hard stories, that are struggling in financial ways but also struggling with loss," Eva said. "Being able to know that the organization is not just looking at our financial need but also taking into consideration the other burdens that are on the family and how that financial support can take some of that burden off of us. That was why (the Legacy Scholarship) was always a really important one to return to."

American Legions best kept “secret” in Illinois

U.S. Air Force veteran James Baulier has made multiple trips to The Haven, an outdoor retreat located in Carbondale, IL, and operated by The American Legion Department of Illinois – and, more specifically, the Department of Illinois Fifth Division and the Egyptian Past Commanders’ Club (EPCC).

A temporary resident at the Community Living Center at the Marion, IL, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Baulier said visiting The Haven always is a great experience.



“It brings regular life back,” Baulier said. “It’s tremendously valuable. (The volunteers at The Haven) are the nicest people you could ever meet. It’s wonderful how they treat you here.”

The EPCC – named for the area of Southern Illinois known as Egypt – was formed in 1937. A member of the club, Legionnaire Ray Hubbs, came up with the idea of creating a facility along Crab Orchard Lake that would serve as a rehabilitation program for veterans.

The site was chosen in 1947, a lease for the land was signed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and construction began in 1948. Fundraising efforts kept the project moving forward, and in 1950 the facility was dedicated on what remains a federally protected wildlife refuge.

Since then, hundreds of thousands of veterans have used the facility, spending a day there fishing in the lake

and walking outside, or relaxing inside the ski lodge-type building playing cards or pool, watching television or movie, and enjoying a meal. Each visit is a day trip, and the facility is open year-round.

Allen and Sherry Rix serve as live-in caretakers. In addition to performing upkeep on the facility, they also cook and serve meals for guests. Sherry, a member of Auxiliary Unit 647 in Du Quoin, IL, said the facility hosted 19 events in September and another 19 in October, serving more than 1,300 individuals. The majority of those were veterans – most from the Marion VAMC.

“It thrills me,” Sherry said of seeing the veterans’ reactions to the facility and the impact their visits have. “It’s the highlight of my month. I look forward to these guys. I love to talk to them and hear their stories. And they’re all so sweet. They’re so appreciative, but they don’t understand it’s me who’s thanking them. “To get to live here, I get up and thank God every morning. Finding this place for us, giving us this chance to meet these vets, it’s amazing.”

The facility also is used by National Guardsmen and reservists for a “family day,” by AA groups, and by church groups. Other members of the community will use the facility for dinners and weddings; donations made by those using the facility help with the operation costs.

In addition to fundraising, donations also play a major role in funding the facility. “Donations keep coming in that keep us afloat,” Legionnaire Bill Flanagan said. “To be very honest ... when something’s going on and you need money, you just put out the call, ‘Hey, we need donations for whatever,’ and they come in like crazy. Everyone is so generous.”

Flanagan, a past department commander, has served as The Haven board of directors’ secretary-treasurer since 2000 and has been involved with the facility for 20 years – though he can’t explain exactly why he has become so dedicated to the facility. “I guess it’s one of those things I got involved in, and I want to see it move on,” he said.

Flanagan said the facility has probably had eight different caretakers during his 16 years as secretary-treasurer. “Right now, we have found two very professional caretakers,” he said of Allen and Sherry. “They’re top-notch, really. It’s very critical, because you never know who may come in and want to see the place, use the place, something like that. It’s just so nice to have people who care about what they’re doing. They are passionate.”

Jeff Roscow, a member of Post 147 in Marion and senior vice commander for Illinois’ Fifth Division, said the facility has needed to “evolve with the times.” There are less long-term patients at the Marion VAMC, so now more groups from the hospital will visit The Haven.

“There are times when the mission has needed to be rethought a bit,” said Roscow, a member of the Haven’s board of directors and somewhat of a historian on the retreat. “But the core mission has always been the same: to serve the veterans in this area. That won’t change.”

Legion Baseball registration opens January 1st



Registration for the 2017 American Legion Baseball season will open Jan. 1 at www.baseball.legion.org.

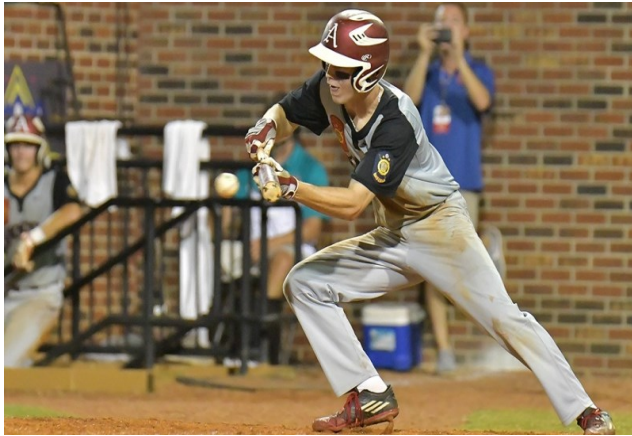
More than 3,700 teams participated in the 2016 Legion Baseball season, which resulted in eight teams punching their tickets to Shelby, N.C., for the 90th American Legion World Series.

The 2017 season will feature a new group of [regional tournament sites](#) as teams vie for a trip to Shelby. Hosting the tournaments from Aug. 2-6 will be The American Legion Departments of Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Ohio, North Dakota, Montana and Colorado. The American Legion World Series will take place Aug. 10-15 with games broadcast on ESPN3 and ESPNU.

Also new for 2017 is a [pitch count rule](#) aimed at increasing arm safety for pitchers. This is a switch from pitchers being limited by innings pitched, as pitch counts have been found to be a better way to track usage.

For more information on Legion Baseball, visit www.legion.org/baseball.

SportsEngine to power Legion Baseball department website network



Together, American Legion Baseball and SportsEngine – a member of the NBC Sports Group – will create an American Legion department baseball website network.

Resolution No. 5, adopted by the National Executive Committee during Spring Meetings last May, gives all 50 Legion departments the ability to have a new, powerful and mobile-friendly baseball-specific website on one single hub. Currently, each department creates its baseball website independently.

SportsEngine, a leader in providing technology solutions to national governing bodies, leagues and teams, was selected as the provider of the network after careful consideration. The Minneapolis-based company will create and support a network of websites that will be offered to each department.

The network of websites will feature the same template that provides easily accessed information, dynamic graphics and baseball-related features such as live scoring with GameChanger, tournament management software, scheduling and league manager capabilities, and team manager tools.

The website network is expected to launch for interested departments in February.

“We are very excited to work with SportsEngine to help promote the Legion Baseball program with some of the most powerful and easy-to-use technology on the market,” said Gary Stone, American Legion Baseball chairman. “This network will help departments effectively communicate and market their programs and continue to grow our program.”

During the Cold Temperatures PLEASE don't forget to check on our comarades who are alone or can not get out!

Commander focuses on MIA recovery during Vietnam visit



Nearly half a century after serving as a young airman in Vietnam, American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt kicked off his Far East tour by paying homage to former POWs and studying ways to obtain a full accounting for those still missing in action. Despite logging nearly 20 hours of commercial flight time in 24 hours, Schmidt was up for an early morning briefing Tuesday by members of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Hanoi and the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam's capital.

"We are here for the families of those missing in action," Schmidt said. "Not all of us returned from Vietnam. There are families waiting for closure. We are going to stay focused on this issue. I am proud that The American Legion has a resolution calling for a full accounting and I don't imagine that the resolution will ever go away. Nor should it."

"It is a mission that we take very seriously and we are honored to do this," said Marine Corps Major Chad E. Bonecutter, deputy commander of DPAA Detachment Two. "There are 1,261 reasons for us to be here. That's how many that are still missing in Vietnam."

While much work remains in locating and identifying MIAs, 711 U.S. veterans have been identified and repatriated since the war. Deputy Chief of Mission Susan M. Sutton said that it was the MIA issue that opened the doors for greater cooperation between the

two countries on other issues. "The Vietnam-U.S. relationship is getting better and the MIA issue was the starting point for this," she said.

Sutton said that legacy issues from the war include unexploded ordnance and U.S. concerns about human rights. Despite differences, Sutton said that the United States has a 90 percent favorable rating among the Vietnamese.

Bonecutter and Sutton both stressed the need for U.S. veterans from the Vietnam War to share any intelligence or information that they have that could lead to the location of North Vietnamese service-members that are missing.

"It's a two way street," Sutton said. "They would like to locate their missing as well. Some soldiers may have kept diaries or have information that would be very helpful to the Vietnamese in locating their remains. That cooperation can lead to further assistance in location our MIA's, Time is not on our side, as some of the witnesses are getting older and memories fade."

Schmidt agreed that The American Legion can help in this effort and is calling on his fellow Vietnam War veterans to share any helpful information with the DPAA or Vietnam Embassy. "In a sense, the war is still not over for these families and a price is still being paid," he said.

MIA's were not the only item on the agenda, as Schmidt paid homage to American Prisoners of War by visiting the infamous Ho Lo Prison, also known as the Hanoi Hilton.

"It was very moving to visit a place that was the scene of so much heroism and suffering by our POW's," he said. "It's just another reminder of why The American Legion exists: to keep the legacy of these heroes alive."



Take a few minutes
to make sure they are
warm and have food





Department Commander Cheri Stanton spoke at the 70th annual Teutopolis Pearl Harbor Breakfast. Cmdr. Stanton spoke about the amazing comeback America accomplished after that terrible day 75 years ago on

December 7, 1941.

Local veterans started gathering for the Pearl Harbor Memorial Breakfast in 1946. For the first few years, many of the veterans wore their military uniforms. The breakfast is a gathering hosted by Teutopolis American Legion Post 924 and gains assistance from different volunteer groups.

The idea behind the breakfast today is to never forget that day of infamy or the bravery displayed by those under attack that Sunday morning in Hawaii.



**You're Never too old to sign up
to be a New Legion member!**

JUST ASK

Alternate NEC Bernie Stegmuller, stopped in to visit a 94 year young lady after hearing of her brutal attack outside her home in Chicago.

During their visit he found that Josephine Regnier served during WWII. She had never been asked to join The American Legion, so Bernie asked, and he signed her up.

Pictured above are Therese Schey, Karen Greenwald, and Josephine Regnier (94 year old) and Bernie Stegmuller.



***The 2016 American Legion Department of Illinois
Constitution & By-Laws is now available.***

**for a copy, contact Dept. HQ at 309-663-0361
or email the print shop at printshop@illegion.org**

2016—2017 DIVISION & DISTRICT MEETING DATES

DATE	DIST./ DIV.	TIME	HOST POST	CITY
01/08/2017	19TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	DELAND POST 102	DELAND
01/08/2017	20TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	MT. STERLING POST 374	MT. STERLING
01/08/2017	21ST DISTRICT	1:00 PM	SPRINGFIELD POST 32	SPRINGFIELD
01/16/2017	23RD DISTRICT	1:00 PM	OLNEY POST 30	OLNEY
01/18/2017	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	MORTON GROVE POST 134	MORTON GROVE
01/20/2017	10TH DISTRICT	7:00 PM	SHARVIN POST 397	NORTH CHICAGO
01/22/2017	5TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	SPARTA POST 396	SPARTA
01/25/2017	9TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	MERLE GUILD POST 208	ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
01/26/2017	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	REHFELDT-MEYER POST 474	MATTESON
01/28/2017	3RD DISTRICT	7:00 PM	GEO. L. GILES POST 87	CHICAGO
01/29/2017	24TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	NEW HAVEN POST 1141	NEW HAVEN
01/29/2017	25TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	THE HAVEN	CARBONDALE
02/08/2017	2ND DISTRICT	7:30 PM	FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT POST 923	CHICAGO
02/15/2017	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	EVANSTON POST 42	EVANSTON
02/17/2017	10TH DISTRICT	7:00 PM	LAKE ZURICH POST 964	LAKE ZURICH
02/19/2017	18TH DISTRICT	UNKNOWN	MARSHALL POST 90	MARSHALL
02/22/2017	9TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	FRANKLIN PARK POST 974	FRANKLIN PARK
02/23/2017	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	HAZEL CREST POST 398	HAZEL CREST
02/24/2017	3RD DISTRICT	7:00 PM	DORIE MILLER POST 915	CHICAGO
03/05/2017	19TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	DECATUR POST 105	DECATUR
03/05/2017	21ST DISTRICT	1:00 PM	MORRISONVILLE POST 721	MORRISONVILLE
03/08/2017	2ND DISTRICT	7:30 PM	FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT POST 923	CHICAGO
03/12/2017	4TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	SPRINGFIELD POST 809	SPRINGFIELD
03/12/2017	20TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	MENARD COUNTY POST 129	ATHENS

NOTE: Remember if any changes or updates regarding your District/Division meetings occur please contact Joy Wilson at 309-663-0361 or email: joywilson@illegion.org

★ **DATES TO REMEMBER** ★

- ★ Oratorical Contest—March 4, 2017
- ★ Boys State--June 10th--16th, 2017
- ★ Illini Girls State--June 18th--24th, 2017
- ★ Youth Police--June 25th--30th, 2017

THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
P.O. BOX 2910
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS 61702

PUBLISHED MONTHLY *

Phone: 309-663-0361 Fax: 309-663-5783
Email: hdqs@illegion.org Web: www.illegion.org

Department Commander Department Editor
CHERIL L. STANTON MARTY CONATSER

Now Is The Time To Stand Together For Our Flag



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
BLOOMINGTON, IL
PERMIT No. 18

* One year Subscription to the Department News
\$10.00 for 11 issues
Newsletter articles must be at Department Headquarters by the
15th of each month for it to be in the next months issue.

Department of Illinois ~ Official Member of The National American Legion Press Association

JANUARY TRIVIA?

- 1. On what date did two million people gather in London to protest against the war?
- 2. Which Labour MP told the press that they would resign from their cabinet position if the UK wne t to war without UN backing?
- 3. How many U.S. states are named after a presi- dent?
- 4. Who is the only president to have survived two assassination attempts by women?
- 5. What portly U.S. president was the first to be a golf nut?

ANSWERS:

- 1. 15th February 2003.
- 2. Claire Short.
- 3. One.
- 4. Gerald Ford.
- 5. William Howard Taft.



Check us out on Social Media!

