

Department News

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS



2016–2017 DEPARTMENT COMMANDER CHERI L. STANTON

FEBRUARY 2017



February is Americanism Month

February is an important month for presidential birthdays and expressions of valentine love. February is also a month that we as an organization place special emphasis on our American heritage and patriotism by observing Americanism Month. When Resolution No. 163 was passed at the 1960 National Convention, we established observance of an Americanism Month that calls upon each of us to pause and reflect on what it means to be an American, and to rededicate ourselves to taking action that will uphold “a 100 percent Americanism.” In 1981 National Commander Michael Kogutek stated, “There is no organization whose name is more closely linked in the minds of citizens with genuine Americanism than is The American Legion. It is fitting that this be so because our membership is composed of men and women who assumed and exercised the highest responsibility of citizenship; that of bearing arms in defense of America, her rights and freedoms. The blood of patriots flows in our veins.” In 1998 National Commander Anthony Jordan said, “Americanism covers a lot of ground for our Legion; the idea is bred in our bones and is as necessary as oxygen and as energizing as sunlight.” Those sentiments so proudly stated years ago are still just as alive and vital today. Americanism might have dulled for some citizens, having been overshadowed with so many issues of worry – economy, unemployment, and ever evolving social concerns. But I urge us all, as individual members of the Legion family and collectively as posts, units and squadrons, to reflect on what it means to be an American and our responsibility for fostering Americanism. Americanism should cultivate youth development, educational development, citizenship, community service, religious emphasis, and pride in our nation and the great symbol of our nation, Old Glory. And for each of those Americanism “ingredients”, opportunity to embrace a corresponding program or initiative abounds....**Legion baseball, Oratorical, Boys State, Junior Shooting, Youth Police School program, Scouting, scholarships, Get Out The Vote, and Citizen’s Flag Alliance, to name but just a few.** And in the wake of Americanism Month remember that “Children & Youth Month” closely follows in April. The American Legion has been actively involved with child welfare issues since our early days as an organization and in 1938 designated April as Child Welfare Month, now Children & Youth Month. During that special month, the Americanism Commission’s Committee on Children & Youth urges us to become active in the major concerns directly affecting our nation’s young people – child health, child safety and family support. Whether it be advocating legislation for child health and safety, promoting Halloween safety every October, or helping military families by being engaged in the Family Support Network, show our local communities that the Legion family is dedicated to the welfare of youth. I also echo the call for a “unity of veterans in our common dedication to preserving our heritage through continued service” as National Commander Dale Renaud did in 1986. Pick one, or pick many, but do identify yourself with the efforts of your post, unit or squadron and be actively engaged in your community. Through our unity and involvement we can foster a culture of growth; a culture of growth for serving our nation’s veterans and their families, for nurturing children and youth everywhere, for our organization and its programs, and for Americanism!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

AS OF
JANUARY 27, 2017

TOP 10 DISTRICT AND DIVISION RANKINGS

District	Commander
7	LEPINSKI
5	DEARBONE
17	NAGEL
20	MASSEY
18	MONROE
19	LAUFHUTTE
15	HAZZARD
13	KRAUT
12	JOHNSON
8	CHAMBERS

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



From The Desk of Department Commander Cheri L. Stanton



Taking a moment while on Caravan. To write. I hope the weather was kind to everyone. For the Caravan, we started this first week having ICE follow us after each stop and were glad it stayed that way.

While on the Caravan a lot of new faces have been appearing which is good for our "Family." We made the best possible choice for a speaker this year. Sharon Conatser was fresh from all her travels as National President last year and she brought youth and enthusiasm to our Caravan. If you missed her and our officers talking about the programs of the four pillars, shame on you, you missed what was truly a FAMILY CARAVAN. We had so

much fun that we decided to treat ourselves to a Tasty Freeze cone one night, but we missed a turn. Needless to say, WELCOME TO INDIANA was not on our schedule. A quick turn around and we're "ON THE ROAD AGAIN." Thank you to all who made it to a Caravan stop and a BIG thanks to all who turned in cards, 900 plus is the number I am hearing.

Next month we have Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield. READ THE FLYER IN THE NEWS. It gives you all the hotel and breakfast and luncheon information. Our National Commander and National President and National SAL Commander will be making a stop in Illinois for this event, so come and meet them and listen to their words about the American Legion Family.

At the end of this moth I will be off to Washington, DC for meetings and views of what to expect for our FLAG and veteran's. I hope to get to visit with a

few congressmen and women to see what their views are for the veterans.

In this issue of the Department News you will find on the Legion Posting page info about the April 30th game at Busch Stadium between the Cardinals and the Reds. This event is to honor all Veteran's. They will have veterans from Illinois and Missouri presenting the colors by a Viet Nam group of Veterans. A good time will be had by all!

Also mark on your calendars...On May 13th the 14th District is having the **2nd Annual VETERAN'S AWARENESS 22 WALK** in Milan. It is to remind the public that every day, 22 veterans commit suicide. Half of the money raised will go to a Veteran's Outreach and Suicide Prevention Program in Aledo and the other half will go to the National Emergency Relief Fund that is supported by

(Dept. Commander continued on page 4)



From The Desk of Department Sr. Vice Commander Bob Henderson



The Membership Caravan went real well this year. It was a long 12 days, about 1700 miles, & 20 stops. There was a lot of participation & comradery, which is good. We met a lot of nice people representing the Legion Family. Hopefully this increased the membership of each post in the state. Getting out and getting membership right after the Holidays and when it is so cold shows that we are dedicated Legion Family. However we still have a lot of work to do so don't slack up now that the Caravan is over. Go out and get those last few that we need for at least 100% in Your Posts, Counties, Districts, and Divisions.

I want to thank everybody that went out and got those cards for the Caravan.

We want to remember the Lincoln Pilgrimage February 11th & 12th. It is held in Springfield, IL. National Commander Charles Schmidt will be there. The Official Program will start at 8:30 a.m. at the Wyndham in the Rendezvous Rm. On the Mezzanine, with a breakfast. Then we will go the tomb of Abraham Lincoln where remarks will be given by the National Commander, Department Commander, and others. Then there will be Lunch at the Wyndham, with a program to follow. Please get your tickets for the breakfast and lunch.

On the 18th of February there is a Division & District Jr. & Sr. Vice training at Department Headquarters. Please bring your ideas about incentives we

might use for getting membership next year. We are doing very well this year and want to keep it going into next year when you become Commanders and Sr. Vice Commanders. Continue working hard and we will do good this Year and **Thanks for what you have done so far this year.**

There are other programs we need to be looking at, which are coming up in the near future. The Department Oratorical that will be held March 4th in Peoria. I hope you have a contestant representing your district this year, if not, why not.

Then we have Boys State, Girls State, and Youth Police School. We need to be working on them right now. Go **talk** to the Class sponsor or Counselors to see if they have anyone interested in any of the programs. Take brochures

(Dept. SVC continued on page 4)



From The Desk of Department Auxiliary President Luella Buske



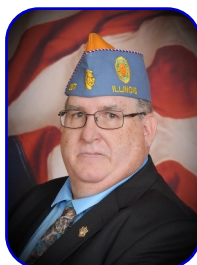
As I write this we are getting ready to leave on The American Legion Family Membership caravan as I listen to the weather channel talk about an ice storm headed our way. But that will not put a damper on this exciting time.

So much is in the works for the upcoming months. Lincoln Pilgrimage, DC Conference, Oratorical, Patriotic Conference and much more. That is just February and March events. I love the fact that we are a forward looking organization, always preparing for the next great were we Serve and Protect our veterans and their families.

I would like to thank the 5 Legion

posts that have contacted us about the proper way to add an Auxiliary Unit to their post family! Don't forget the \$100 award from this president to the Legion Post signing up the largest number of Auxiliary Members. Now that is a win, win!!

I wish each of you, the Illinois Legion Family, and this great country a wonderful New Year and Happy Valentine's Day!!



From The Desk of Detachment Commander Phil Shipley



In our quest to continue service to all veterans in the state of Illinois, the Detachment Sons of The American Legion have another opportunity to extend that service.

This membership year we SONS are doing our best to raise funds for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Since September 11, 2001, the United States lost approximately 6,820 citizen soldiers in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn and other operations in the Global War on Terror. As a result upwards of 12,000 children and spouses must now cope with life without one of their closest friends and providers.

The American Legion continues to lead from the front—having first established the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund almost immediately

following 9/11—by extending the benefits of the fund to all children and stepchildren of services members who died while on active duty since 9/11.

For those who paid the ultimate price for our continued freedom, no amount of money will ever repay our indebtedness to them. Still, we honor their legacies by supporting those children they left behind. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship continues to bridge the financial aid gap for those children.

We urge and encourage all members of The American Legion Family to donate to this worthy cause.

The Detachment of Illinois Sons of The American Legion has once again completed participation in the American Legion Family Statewide Membership Caravan. The Caravan was once again a big success as a new SAL charter was presented, new friendships were formed and old ones reinforced.

Next will be the 83rd annual Pilgrimage to the tomb of Abraham Lincoln February 11-12, in Springfield Illinois. While in Springfield, on

February 11th will be the 11th Annual SAL tour of St. John's Children's Hospital to hand out Josh Dogs on the Children's Miracle Network floor. The Detachment of Illinois is proud to host this event every year the day before the annual Pilgrimage to the tomb of our 16th President sponsored by Springfield American Legion Post # 32.

On March 4th, I am looking forward to attending the 80th Annual Oratorical Contest in Peoria I hope you plan on attending too.

Then on March 11 & 12 I will be back in Springfield at the Department Auxiliary's annual Patriotic Conference. I look forward to seeing you there too.

Until then let's all continue **"Shooting for Membership"**!



Did You Know?

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

That the American Legion VA&R Chicago office helps veterans and their dependents through many different means. We offer face-to-face interviews by appointment, receive daily e-mails, telephone calls and regular mail. Some of our contacts are routine e.g. follow up on claims, submitting new evidence or updating addresses or banking information. Other contacts involve much more and often times end up with our office filling a new or reopened claim. While we try our best to help all we serve we realize that we can't assist everyone. In those cases at least we will steer them in the right direction. Looking back at 2016 I want to highlight some of the more interesting and successful claims or situations we handled.

1. A veteran asked us to help him with a claim that he had been fighting for ten years. He was medically discharged for a certain condition by the Veterans Administration wasn't paying him any service-connected compensation. We reviewed his records and determined that all the VA needed was proof that he currently still had the condition and was being treated for it. We got him enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration system, he started treatment and we got him a 20% rating. We then reviewed his claim in more detail back to his Military Medical Board and found out that they had overlooked some evidence (temporary misplaced Service Treatment Records). We were able to get him 5 years of back payments.
2. An e-mail from a brother of a veteran asked for help in getting the veteran into a State Nursing Home. We hooked him up with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs who oversee the 4 State homes and he was placed on the waiting list. After several months a spot opened up and he was admitted. However during this time we learned that he was suffering from ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) and had never filed a claim. Any veteran who served at anytime and anywhere for more than 90 days and later is diagnosed with that disease can receive compensation. We filed and he was granted 100%. He now gets over \$3,000 a month from the VA.
3. A female veteran left us a voicemail message and we called her back. While in the Navy she was sexually assaulted by an officer. She was an enlisted person and that officer warned her never to report it otherwise she would never be promoted again. She didn't! Now suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) she was having problem with her claim. We were able to find in her Military Personnel Records some performance evaluations from the time of the rape showing a dramatic drop in her job performance. That and a few other bits of evidence and she was granted her benefits.
4. A daughter wrote our office. She very much wanted to join the American Legion auxiliary by was unable to locate her deceased father's DD 214. Her mother had passed away in a house fire along with all the valuable papers. She did have her dad's full name and date of death. We used the online VA National Cemetery Gravesite Locator and found where he was buried. From there the cemetery office had for some reason kept a copy of his DD 214. The daughter is now a member of our Auxiliary.
5. Finally a veteran had his case on appeal for over three years. He was being denied Agent Orange compensation benefits because he couldn't prove he actually set foot in Vietnam. He was sent there TDY from Guam to repair some aircraft but his TDY orders were missing. Turns out while there he wrote home several times and his mom had kept the letters which clearly showed an APO address from Vietnam. He won his appeal.

People are always asking me why I am still working part-time as an American Legion Service Officer. Didn't I have enough of the job with 33 years at the Veterans Administration? I simply reply that as long as I can continue to help my fellow veterans and have successful outcomes like the ones above I will continue to work as long as I can.

Our Service Officers will be heading off to D.C. soon for our semi-annual Service Officer Training School. Hope to learn some new things to pass on to you all. And with a New Year starting we all are getting a little older so just remember

Old age is not so bad when you consider the alternatives.

(Dept. Commander continued from page 2)

National. You raise money, you walk, you eat food, and you help support veteran's. It is a win-win for the Department of Illinois. Last year it rained and we still walked AND HAD A GREAT TIME! There will be a flyer in the next Department News coming out.

(Dept. SVC continued from page 2)

for each one with you and explain what we do in each program. Let them know what is in it for each participant. Some have scholarships available. We need to increase participant involvement.

Then, when you can't find anything else to do, GO KNOCK ON SOME DOORS and GET MEMBERSHIP!!! Thank you.



*From The Desk of the
Membership Director
Chad J. Woodburn*



*American Legion Illinois
Premier Boys State*

www.illinoisboysstate.org

The 2017 Legion Family Caravan is complete. We had a great time traveling the state, and I would like to personally thank everyone that played a part in hosting us. Because of everyone's hard work, over 900 membership cards were collected. That being said, our push for membership is far from over. While our current total is behind this same time last year, we are well on track to obtaining our goal.

The 11th district is preparing for a District revitalization in March. Any District Commander that would like a revitalization please contact me as soon as possible.

Have you liked our department Facebook page? If not, please do, The American Legion Department of Illinois is the page address. There is a lot of information that we have started pushing on the page. There are pictures from the caravan posted there.

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."

---Phil Jackson

Greetings from the American Legion Illinois Premier Boys State Leadership Team!

We had a very busy January seeing that it was National Mentoring Month. That ties into our program so well because that is exactly what we do every session. We mentor our youth by leading with passion and care so that by the end of the week we have a few more future servant leaders in the great state of Illinois. But our program could never be successful without all of you.

So, all of our posts should be in full swing recruiting at all of the high schools, recreation centers, YMCA's, libraries and any events currently taking place. You have an enormous support group to assist you in whatever your needs are starting with our department headquarters. I ask that all of the district Boys State chairmen contact your respective posts to see how you could help them in reaching their goals.

We have been getting several inquiries already from young men, as well as their parents, throughout the state. We are very excited to see which division will bring us the most boys this year. Remember, the more boys your area sends the stronger your individual communities will become. Your dedication to our program assists us in strengthening our state one community at a time.



Gifts To The Yanks Who Gave Fund



Send Donations To: *Gifts To The Yanks Who Gave*
Department of Illinois
2720 E. Lincoln St.
Bloomington, IL 61704

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

POST# _____ DISTRICT# _____ DIVISION# _____

This past Christmas all the orders were filled and delivered. Thanks to all the Legion Family that helped see that this all got accomplished. A total of 7,345 gifts were given out this year. Only complaint this year we still need nursing home names on the order forms as well as Legion Family representative responsible for contact for delivering the gifts.

The cost of gifts keep going up, remember your Legion dues do not help fund the gifts for the Gifts To The Yanks Program. If you do not send in a donation earmarked to the GTTY you are NOT supporting the Christmas gift program for our comrades. **Deadline for donations will be April 15, 2017** into Department for the convention book report.

The next Gifts To The Yanks Commission Meeting will be held at Department Headquarters April 8, 2017 starting at 10:00 am.

Springfield Post #32, The American Legion
1120 Sangamon Avenue - Springfield, Illinois 62702-1853
www.springfieldamericanlegion.com spfldpost32@sbcglobal.net

83rd Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage **to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln** **February 11 & 12, 2017**

The 83rd Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln will be held in Springfield, Illinois, **February 12, 2017**. Springfield Post #32, Auxiliary Unit #32 and Sons of The American Legion Squadron #32 extend a most cordial invitation to you to attend and participate.

National Commander Charles E. Schmidt, National President Mary E. Davis, SAL National Commander Jeff C. Frain, our Illinois Department Commander Cheri L. Stanton, our Department President Luella Buske and our Detachment Commander Phillip Shipley, will be attending and participating in the activities. Additionally, many other Legion, Auxiliary, S.A.L., and state and local dignitaries will be in attendance to honor President Abraham Lincoln on this very special day.

The Commemoration begins the evening of February 11, 2017, from 5:00PM –1:00AM, with an Open House at Springfield Post #32, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield. A **FREE shuttle** will run continuously between the **Wyndham City Centre Hotel** and Post 32 from 5:00PM –1:00AM. Dinner service will be available at the Mess Hall Restaurant located inside Post 32, from 4:00PM. – 8:30PM. Reservations are recommended. To place Thursday evening dinner reservations phone 217/523-3415 to reach the Mess Hall Restaurant. We will have plenty of fun, refreshments and a chance to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. The National and Department Officers will be at the Open House to greet everyone.

Room rates for the Wyndham City Centre Hotel are \$101.00 per night, single or double occupancy, and the rate includes free parking. **The preferred way to reserve your room is by calling for reservations at (217) 789-1530 (press 1 for reservations—for reduced rate mention you're with The American Legion Lincoln Pilgrimage group)**

The following program has been planned for February 12, 2016:

- 8:00 a.m.** **American Legion Auxiliary breakfast honoring our National President, at the Wyndham Hotel.**
- 8:30 a.m.** **American Legion breakfast honoring our National Commander, at the Wyndham Hotel.**
- 10:00 a.m.** **Pilgrimage departs Wyndham Hotel for journey to Abraham Lincoln's Tomb.**
- 10:30 a.m.** **Ceremonies and wreath placing from inside Mr. Lincoln's Tomb, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois.**
- 12:30 p.m.** **Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon with Distinguished Guests at the Wyndham Hotel.**

Breakfast tickets are \$20.00 each, and luncheon tickets are \$30.00 each with tax and tip included. Please specify when ordering breakfast tickets if they are for the Legion or Auxiliary breakfast. Luncheon tables of eight (8) will be assigned and may be reserved by sending your check for \$240.00 to the below listed address. If you are from Illinois, please indicate your Illinois District number on all luncheon reservations. Checks should be made out to **Springfield Post #32, The American Legion**. Tickets, reservations and further information please write to: American Legion Lincoln Pilgrimage, ATTN: Phil Drum, Ticket Chairman, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62702. Phone 217/523-3415. Post 32 e-mail is spfldpost32@sbcglobal.net **SPECIAL NOTICE: All meal checks and/or reservations must be received or canceled by February 4, 2017. No refunds can be made after that date. Please make your plans and reservations early, as we may not be able to seat you if you do not order your meal tickets early.**

We sincerely hope that you will be able to be with us to honor our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, on his birthday in his "Hometown", and that you make time to visit the beautiful **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library**, which is only three short blocks from the Wyndham City Centre. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum will be offering their Group Rate to our attendees by merely showing your membership card on Feb 10, 11, 12, 2016.

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**

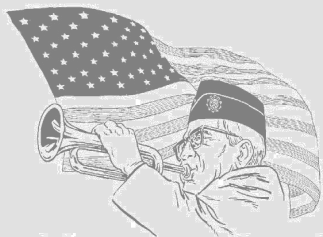
Resolution No. 16: Expectations for Rendering Proper Respect when Participating in Programs of The American Legion

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.**



POST EVERLASTING



The American Legion
Department of Illinois
does mourn the passing
of our comrade

ARTHUR E. RAWERS

It is with great sadness that
we report the death of
Past Department Commander
Arthur E. Rawers who has
transferred to Post Everlasting.

Arthur passed away January 10, 2017.
Funeral services were held on
January 14, 2017 in Hillside, IL.

Arthur was a U.S. Navy WWII veteran,
and a 61 year member of Stickney
American Legion Post 687 in Stickney.

He served as Department Commander
in 1994. He also served on several
Committees and Commission as well as
serving 25 years as an educator and staff
member for the American Legion
Illinois Premier Boys State program.

Julia, his wife of 65 years and family
would like to express their sincere
appreciation to all who attended the
services.

Arthur will be greatly missed by all
who knew him.



1927—2017



POST EVERLASTING



The American Legion
Department of Illinois
does mourn the passing
of our comrade

LARRY J. BESSON

It is with great sadness that
we report the death of
Past Department Commander
Larry J. Besson who has
transferred to Post Everlasting.

Larry passed away January 22, 2017.
Funeral services were held on
January 26, 2017 in Taylorville, IL.

Larry was a U.S. Army Vietnam
veteran, and a 51 year member of
Stonington American Legion Post 257
in Stonington.

He served as Department Commander
in 1983. He also served on the Internal
Affairs Committee at both National and
Department level. Larry also served
on various other Committees from
Post to Department levels.

His wife, Mary Jane of 53 years and
his family would like to express
their sincere appreciation to
all who attended the services.

Larry will be greatly missed by all who
knew him.

Memorials may be made to the Illinois
Veterans Home in Quincy.



1942—2017

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



- 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
~~~
- President's Day**  
**DEPARTMENT OFFICE CLOSED**  
**February 20th**  
~~~
- Washington Conference
Washington, DC
February 26th--March 1st
~~~
- Dept. Oratorical Semi-Finals & Finals  
@ Peoria Civic Center at 9:30 AM  
March 4th  
~~~
- ALA Patriotic Conference
Springfield, IL
March 11th--12th
~~~
- 98th American Legion Birthday  
March 15th  
~~~
- SAL Spring DEC
Franklin Park
March 25th
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2017 Brings New Laws For Illinois

Nearly 200 new laws have taken effect January 1, 2017, in Illinois. Here is a list of some that may affect you.

- New Driving Laws that will affect you. Speeding through a work or school zone could warrant jail time. Speeding between 26 mph and 35 mph over the posted limit is a Class B misdemeanor and driving more than 35 mph is now considered a Class A misdemeanor.
- Those who have been convicted of driving without insurance could have their vehicle impounded if they are stopped by police within 12 months of the first citation, according to police.
- Scott's Law, also referred to as the "move over" law - HB 6006 Requires vehicles to change lanes when coming up on a car with its hazard lights on.
- Railroad Crossings - Drivers who drive around lowered gates at grade crossings will face stiffer fines for violating railroad crossings laws. Fines will increase to \$500 for the first offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent violation.
- Honorary Highways for Heroes - HB 4344: Makes it easier for families of veterans killed in action to apply for an honorary designation on state roadways.
- Police Dog Retirement - SB 3129: Gives police officers first preference to adopt their police dogs to ensure retiring police dogs can remain part of the officer's family.
- New Excused Absence from School - HB 4432: Excuses students from school to play "Taps" at a military funeral.
- Granting Grandparents Visitation Rights - HB 5656: Allows grandparents and great-grandparents to visit their grandkids who are in DCFS custody.
- Improving Patients' Rights-SB 1564 Ensures patients receive information about treatment options, regardless of the medical provider's religious beliefs, including abortion referrals.
- Expanding Epinephrine Access and Training - HB 4462 Allows law enforcement agencies to conduct training programs that teach officers how to recognize and respond to anaphylaxis.
- Removing Lead Toxins - SB 2300 Properties with high lead levels will be prohibited from being sold or released until the problem is mitigated and the property is considered safe. Older homes are more likely to contain lead and children are more susceptible to poisoning.
- Spotting Signs of Domestic Violence -HB 4264: Trains cosmetologists, estheticians, nail technicians and hair braiders to look for signs of domestic violence by requiring them to take a one-hour continuing education class about domestic violence and sexual assault as part of their licensure renewal process.
- Allowing Children to Testify Outside of Court - SB 2880 Child victims will be allowed to testify in battery and domestic abuse cases to via closed-circuit television to spare them the trauma of testifying in open court.
- Juvenile Offenders - Raises the age from 13 to 15 for minors accused of homicide and certain sex offenses to be represented by legal counsel throughout the interrogation process.
- Social Media Password Privacy - HB 4999: Strengthens current law prohibiting employers from accessing employees' social media passwords.
- Smile - You're on Camera! - SB 629: Allows vehicles that transport people or goods on a contractual basis to have a video recorder operating, though a notice must be posted letting passengers know their conversations may be recorded.
- Protecting Low-Wage Workers - SB 3163: Bans any company from asking a worker paid less than \$13.50 an hour to sign a non-compete agreement.
- Banning Bath Salts - SB 210: Prohibits retailers from selling the type of drug known as "bath salts."
- Sick Time Flexibility - HB 6162: Requires employers to give their workers greater flexibility in using their sick time. A company providing sick leave to employees must allow them to use up to half of their allotted time to attend to the medical needs of family members.
- Vehicle Registration Expiration Date Option- HB 5651 Allows vehicle owner's to select their birthday as the vehicle's registration expiration date
- Ending Pension Abuse - HB 4259: Makes lobbying groups ineligible to receive taxpayer-funded pensions to end the abuse of state dollars.
- Hunting Law for Minors - SB 2410: Allows minors to trap game without having to take the hunter training course if they are accompanied by someone who is at least 21-years-old.
- Catching Catfish - HB 5788: Fishers can use a pitchfork, underwater spear gun, or a bow and arrow to catch catfish.

For a complete list of the new Illinois laws go to - <https://www.illinoispolicy.org/new-illinois-laws-going-into-effect-in-2017>

Appeals modernization, Choice Program & Cannabis research: A look at the 115th Congress



Members of the 115th Congress of the United States were sworn into office Jan. 3 and immediately went to work, passing two pieces of legislation related to veterans health care. Matthew Shuman, the newly named director of The American Legion's Legislative Division, believes that's only the start for this session of Congress.

Shuman, a U.S. Army veteran, shared insight on what he thinks are some of the key issues coming up in the 115th Congress.

The American Legion Media Division: What do you feel are two or three of the key issues relating to veterans that will come up during the 115th Congress?

Matthew Shuman: There's a couple that instantly come to mind. One is continuing on the march of modernizing the (Department

of Veterans Affairs) appeals process. We had a really large push at the end of the last session. That should relatively be an easy win for the new administration to do some good work over at the VA. That's going to be something that's definitely on our radar very early.

Another very hot topic for this year in particular is going to be (VA's Choice Program): whether to let it die, or whether to extend it or whether to make it bigger – as some people ... want to do. The Legion's going to be battling that, of course.

And then there's the reclassification of cannabis for medical research. (read the Legion's resolution [here](#))

Q: Any other issues that might be of interest to the Legion's membership?

A: [Concurrent receipt](#) is a huge thing. That's something we're really going to hit hard this year. Concurrent receipt has been an issue for a long time, and I think this is the Congress that we're going to be able to push it through.

Q: Veterans issues came up during the presidential campaign. Between that and some of the problems still facing VA, do you feel that there is a lot of attention on veterans issues and is this a good opportunity to bring a lot of these issues to the forefront?

A: Jan. 3 was the first day of Congress, and the first bills they voted on were veterans bills. That was great. I think this is going to be a very interesting year for veterans policy. Any opportunity to bring up veteran policy in the mainstream is wonderful.

Q: How can the confirmation process for cabinet-level nominations affect the pace at which legislation is passed?

A: It will take some attention away (from the legislative process). Fortunately the two committees we do most of our work with are the Veterans Affairs and Armed Services (committees). And the majority of our work is done with Veterans Affairs, and they don't have much to do (with the confirmation process). Of course there's the secretary of the VA (confirmation). It's hard to say right now, without knowing who the VA secretary appointee is, how long it will take. There will be people ... who will be confirmed on Day 1. So we could have someone appointed for secretary of the VA who is that easy, or we may get somebody like, for example, (former VA Secretary Eric) Shinseki, who took several days. That could sort of stifle the legislative flow, but I'm not expecting too much (of a delay).

Q: How critical is the work of Legion members at the local level to our lobbying efforts?

A: One hundred percent of our influence comes from our members, without question. We are a non-profit organization. We don't give (lawmakers) money. All we have are votes. We're the largest (veterans organization). These (members) have wives and kids and husbands and dads and moms, so the population of our people grows exponentially. We need our members to call frequently. That's the No. 1 threat on Capitol Hill. I can say, "Hey, if you don't help us out, I'm going to have 10,000 veterans call and email your office in the next 24 hours." I don't want that to happen ... but that's where our influence comes from.

American Legion cited as one of top resources for jobseekers



An annual survey of veterans and employers shows The American Legion is one of the top resources for veterans looking for work or resources in their job search.

The annual Veteran Talent Index (VTI) was established in 2011 by Monster and Military.com to help transitioning servicemembers get a better grasp of the employment landscape.

“The VTI was initially created to provide information on why veterans, specifically, post-9/11 veterans, faced a higher unemployment rate. The VTI also provided research and information around what the barriers were to connecting veteran job seekers with employers eager to hire them,” the report notes.

As noted in this year’s VTI, “In 2011, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans was 12.1 percent, much higher than the 8.7 percent of non-veterans. Companies wanted to hire veterans but didn’t know where to find them and many veterans expressed frustration at the difficulty in finding veteran-friendly employers. The result was a concerted effort and partnership among the public, private and non-profit sectors to work together to help lower the unemployment rate and connect job seekers with employers eager to hire them.”

This year’s survey asked job seekers and employers about their use or partnerships with nonprofits and veterans service organizations. Twenty-one percent of veterans responding to the survey said they use The American Legion for resources in their job search, compared to 26 percent using the Department of Veterans Affairs and 21 percent using the Department of Labor.

A listing of career fairs can be found on the Legion website at <https://www.legion.org/careers/jobfairs>, and job search advice and other career information can be found at <https://www.legion.org/careers>.

American Legion 2017 State Convention Book Application for Ad placement

BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

[Post use only] American Legion Post name: _____ Post No. _____

Slogan Choices: (three choices—choose one)

- ____ 1. We Are Proud To Be Part of
The American Legion Family
- ____ 2. Helping The American Legion
Help American’s Veteran’s
- ____ 3. We Proudly Stand Behind
The American Legion

Ad Choice: (please choose black & white or color)

- Medal of Honor (full page--7-1/2 x 10 in.)
- Silver Star (half page--7-1/2 x 5 in.)
- Bronze Star (quarter page--3-3/4 x 5 in.)
- Purple Heart (3-3/4 x 3-3/8 in. “Business card”)
- Commander Salute (3-3/4 -1-11/16 in.)
- Flag Page (1-3/4 - 1 in.)

Black & White Ad

Color Ad

\$230.00 _____	\$250.00 _____
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\$25.00 _____	\$25.00 _____

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Send Check to: American Legion, Dept. of IL 2720 E. Lincoln St. Bloomington, IL 61704

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Boys State alum earns Navy's highest non-combat Heroism medal

A former American Legion Jersey Boys State citizen and staff counselor has received the Navy's highest non-combat decoration for heroism. Jonathan Dennler received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal on Jan. 10. He is a midshipman 3rd class at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., where he transferred after two years at George Washington University.

Dennler received the honor for his actions while leading a Boy Scout troop from Texas on a camping trip in Ontario, Canada, last July. A major storm struck the Quetico Provincial Park by surprise with 80 mph gusts and lightning strikes. Two trees fell on the troop's campsite, killing a 13-year-old Scout and a female adult volunteer, and severely injuring others.

Unable to contact help on the radio, Dennler canoed more than 1.5 miles at night in 60 mph winds to a ranger station to bring back help and medical supplies.

The Navy and Marine Corps medal falls in order of precedence just below the Distinguished Flying Cross and above the Bronze Star. It was first bestowed during World War II, to then Lt. John F. Kennedy, and has been awarded only about 3,000 times since.

To win the award, there must be evidence the act of heroism involved specific life-threatening risk to the awardee.

[Dennler told the Navy News Service](#) that the Naval Academy "has taught me how to work and think in environments where many things are out of my control, and I think the academy helps to create mindsets that put others first. I am incredibly thankful for those lessons."

Dennler attended Jersey Boys State in 2012, winning election as mayor of his city and later, state senator. He volunteered as a city counselor at Jersey Boys State in 2013 and 2014 while attending George Washington.

"Jonathan Dennler embodies the virtues of American Legion Jersey Boys State," said David S. Bagatelle, director of American Legion Jersey Boys State. "Our mission is to inspire the youth of New Jersey to become good citizens devoted to American ideals. We're proud of him – for his courage and commitment to country."

An active member of the academy's Semper Fi Society, Dennler hopes to serve in the Marine Corps after graduating from the academy in 2019.



2017 American Legion Family Membership Caravan Team

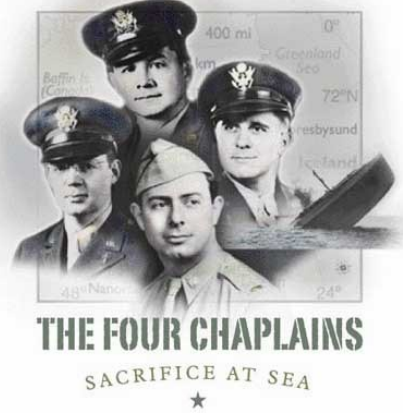
January 12th - 21st the team traveled North to South, East to West collecting Membership cards. They congratulated Posts, Units and Squadrons who were or became 100%. They mentored, collected donations for Operation Comfort Warriors, chartered new Units & Squadrons, and even signed up new members along the way.

**During the Cold Temperatures
PLEASE remember to check on our
comarades who are alone or can not get out!**

REMEMBERING THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

By: Harl "Butch" Ray, Past SAL National Chaplain

Feb. 3, 2017, marks the 74th anniversary of the sinking of the USAT Dorchester and a very special display of bravery. On that day in 1943, a torpedo struck the ship reducing its time afloat on the surface of the Atlantic to only an additional 20 minutes. What happened during those few minutes is the reason we remember this day and the acts of courage and sacrifice that took place on her deck every year since.



Four first lieutenants gave the supreme sacrifice that day; each one an Army chaplain. They included Methodist minister, The Reverend George L. Fox, Reform-Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (Ph.D), Roman Catholic priest the Reverend John P. Washington, and Reformed Church in America minister, The Reverend Clark V. Poling. Their backgrounds, personalities and faiths were different. They had met at Army Chaplains School at Harvard University where they became friends as they prepared for service in the European theater, all sailing on board USAT Dorchester to report to their new assignments. All having one God as their father.

The torpedo knocked out the Dorchester's electrical system, leaving the ship dark. Panic set in among the men on board, many of them trapped below decks. The chaplains sought to calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation of the ship and helped guide wounded men to safety. As life jackets were passed out to the men, the supply ran out before each man had one. The chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many men as they could into lifeboats and then linked arms and, saying prayers and singing hymns, went down with the ship.

"As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets." — Grady Clark, survivor

As national chaplain of the Sons of The American Legion, I encourage all squadron, district and detachment chaplains to commemorate the anniversary on the first Sunday in February, Four Chaplains Sunday.

In these ceremonies, we honor the Four Chaplains and ensure their legacy of brotherhood and selfless service. May they be remembered for generations to come.

How does The American Legion Help Our Veterans?

This past year 2016 The American Legion Department of Illinois has assisted Veterans in need. Since 1919, The American Legion has remained Committed to the health and welfare of our nation's Veterans and families.

The National Commission on Children & Youth established a form of direct aid to veteran's children. In 1925, Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) was established. Through TFA a Post can call upon the National Organization for cash assistance to help maintain the Basic needs of veteran's Children. Non-repayable grants are awarded to eligible families over a temporary period when it is determined that a child is in need and all other available resources have been exhausted. They must have a child 17 or younger living with them. Plus the Veteran does not need to be a legion member, but has served during our same dates.

In 2016, we helped 47 families, 85 kids with a total of \$63,643.73. Where does this money come from. An endowment fund and a small portion of your dues.

Veterans Charity/Fundraiser Complaints

The Federal Trade Commission and various state Attorney's General are conducting a "sweep" of various charities and fundraisers who are preying on the good will of folks by making deceptive claims regarding money raised to help Veterans/military. For example, falsely claiming that money is going to help veterans or what percentage of money collected goes to veterans/military. Along those lines, if you or your members are aware of any such complaints, please forward them to Thomas W. Banning, Assistant Attorney General.

*Thomas W. Banning, Assistant Attorney General
Bureau Chief, Military & Veterans Rights Bureau
Illinois Attorney General's Office
500 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62706*



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



AMERICAN LEGION Posts to Be HONORED

Sunday, April 30th by St. Louis Cardinals

Pre-Game Ceremony on Field for Legion

HONOR GUARD OF NAM VETS

Selected ILLINOIS Post's Officers to Represent Legion

Cardinals Providing FIELD Level Seats

(NO UPPER DECK)

CARDINALS vs. REDS @ 1:15 PM--Ceremony @ 12:45 pm

\$61 Seats for ONLY \$26

Legion Posts Members and Auxiliary

Your Family, Friends, Associates

VET Supporters and General Public

VETS of ALL ERA'S and ALL Vet Groups are Welcome

If You Can't Come Buy Tickets for Kids, Grandkids & Family

We have Special Seats for those can't climb steps

Cardinals provide carts to take to seating area

Request Assistance upon entering Stadium (COME EARLY)

RESERVATIONS BY MARCH 1ST--PAYMENT BY MARCH 15TH

Details and Assistance for Seating Contact TODAY!!!!

BILL KIEFER, Sgt USMC--AL 10th Dist POW-MIA Chairman

American Legion Post 335--Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO

(H) 314-395-2788 (C) 314-363-8707

Email: KieferVVA794@yahoo.com

Fund Raiser for POW-MIA Museum--Vets--HEROES CARE

Pass the Word to All Your Members

PLEASE POST--ANNOUNCE--PUBLISH--Email



**AMERICAN LEGION
POST 503
LODA, IL**

FISH--CHICKEN--GIZZARD FRY

\$8.00 ALL YOU CAN EAT!!!

"CHILDREN 8 & UNDER EAT FREE"

Choices Include: French Fries, Baked Beans, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw. Coffee, Lemonade, Water. Fresh Bag of Popcorn (free) Soda Pop Available for \$1.00 ea. Assorted Chips for 50 cents ea.

2nd/4th Fridays in JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY 12TH ONLY

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

"EAT IN or CARRY OUT"

"COME AND JOIN US"!!!

"Win a Free Meal Raffle"

Raffle Tickets will be handed out and 5 Tickets will be drawn. The 5 winners will Receive Their next Fish Fry Meal for FREE!! [winners do not need to be present for drawing]

Christmas Party With The Veterans

On Monday, December 19, 2016, the Illinois State Police (ISP) American Legion Post & Unit # 1922 gathered at Troopers Lodge # 41 in Springfield to wrap presents and then travel to the Springfield Renaissance Veterans Transition Home for Christmas dinner with the residents.

Post Commander Rick Avart welcomed those in attendance and Past Commander Limey Nargelenas opened the event with prayer. The meal was provided by the local HyVee Food Store and desserts were provided by Unit # 1922 Auxiliary members.

After dinner, gifts were distributed to the veterans which included jackets, candy, knit caps and gloves. One veteran was quite moved by the gift of gloves. He said he had a warm coat, a hat, but didn't have any gloves and with the onset of the cold weather, he was counting his money to see if he could possibly afford to by a pair of gloves.



It was an enjoyable evening visit and meal. Old friendships were renewed and new residents were officially welcomed by Post and Unit # 1922 members. After gifts were distributed to the veterans, everyone gathered in front of the Christmas tree for a group photo.

American Legion Post and Unit # 1922 get together with the Vets at the Transition Home twice each year. A steak fry is scheduled each fall and the Christmas Party is scheduled in December.

2016—2017 DIVISION & DISTRICT MEETING DATES

DATE	DIST. / DIV.	TIME	HOST POST	CITY
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	13TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	ASHTON POST 345	ASHTON
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
03/12/2017	22ND DISTRICT	1:00 PM	O'FALLON POST 137	O'FALLON
03/15/2017	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	MORTON GROVE POST 134	MORTON GROVE
03/17/2017	10TH DISTRICT	7:00 PM	ROUND LAKE POST 1170	ROUND LAKE PARK
03/19/2017	2ND DIVISION	1:00 PM	ROCK FALLS POST 902	ROCK FALLS
03/19/2017	5TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	MASCOUTAH POST 292	MASCOUTAH
03/22/2017	9TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	DES PLAINES POST 36	DES PLAINES
03/23/2017	3RD DISTRICT	7:00 PM	HAROLD WASHINGTON POST 1987	CHICAGO
03/23/2017	8TH DISTRICT	8:00 PM	EDWARD SCHULTZ POST 697	LANSING
03/26/2017	24TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	ALBION POST 590	ALBION
03/26/2017	25TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	BENTON POST 280	BENTON

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**

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Department Commander Department Editor
CHERIL STANTON MARTY CONATSER

Now Is The Time To Stand Together For Our Flag

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Newletter 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

FEBRUARY TRIVIA?

1. What U.S. president's State of the Union address lasted a record 81 minutes?
2. What U.S. president was born William Jefferson Blythe IV?
3. What 1970's president openly discussed his battle with hemorrhoids?
4. What U.S. president had the shortest life?
5. What former president was on an African hunting trip when his enemy J.P. Morgan quipped: "Let every lion do his duty"?

ANSWERS:

1. Bill Clinton's.
2. Bill Clinton.
3. Jimmy Carter.
4. John F. Kennedy.
5. Theodore Roosevelt.



Check us out on Social Media!

