

# THE BLUE HATTER



The Official Newsletter of The American Legion Department of Utah

JULY 2023

VOICES OF VETERANS

utlegion.org

## White House takes aim at Veterans' homelessness with community support grants

*By Matthew Adams/Stars and Stripes*

Tackling veteran homelessness is part of a White House announcement Thursday to spend \$3.1 billion to combat the overall crisis through community support grants. The new measure is “the largest-ever, single-year investment ... to help communities address homelessness,” the Biden administration said in a statement.

About 33,000 veterans across the country lack access to permanent housing, down 11% since 2020 and down 55% since 2010, according to the 2022 Point-in-Time Count released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The VA has been addressing the issue of homeless veterans for the past two years with a target of placing 38,000 veterans into permanent housing. The VA exceeded that goal by finding more than 40,000 veterans a place to live in 2022. The \$3.1 billion will be provided to HUD's Continuum of Care Program, which awards funds for community groups and local governments to help provide support to families facing the threat of homelessness.

The money will not be solely earmarked for veterans, but the White House is encouraging officials with the Continuum of Care program to work with participants to “coordinate with local Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers to ensure these funds are effectively supporting veterans and their families.” Other efforts in the new investment include \$11.5 million in legal services grants, a first of its kind, according to the White House, to help veterans obtain representation in landlord-tenant disputes, as well as assist in other court proceedings such as child support, custody or estate planning.

“For veterans, legal support can be the difference between becoming homeless and having safe, stable housing,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. “With the award of these first-of-their-kind VA grants, more veterans will have the legal representation they deserve, which will increase their access to housing and employment.”

The Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service is being awarded more than \$58 million to help connect homeless veterans with job opportunities. The money will go toward veterans learning occupational skills and participating in on-the-job training in fields such as manufacturing, construction, information technology and cybersecurity.



*Kent Hansen/The Blue Hatter*



# COMMANDER'S CALL

Welcome to the 2023-2024 year!

As I reflect upon our most recent Department Convention in Provo, I am encouraged by the number of members who stepped up to take on positions as we are a small but mighty Department that continues to exemplify The American's Legion's motto, "Veterans Strengthening America." Your continued service is greatly valued.

I recognize the importance of always honoring and remembering all who came before us as we continue to strengthen one another through volunteer service as an American Legion Family.

I love the American Legion Preamble, an oath we recite in our meetings on a regular and ongoing basis. Let us not forget where we came from, our purpose, and why we became a Legionnaire. What is the legacy you will leave? We are veterans strengthening one another as our outreach and impact on America continues to increase daily. We are in the people business.

In addition to the preamble, I love the history of how The American Legion came to be during fierce trials and tribulations in America. "War-weary" veterans found strength through camaraderie and they built the oldest veterans service organization in the world, and it still is today. As a Legionnaire, please join me in my efforts as we continue to honor them, and as we continue to leave our legacy as they did over one hundred years ago. Let us not forget how important every veteran and their family members are as we each leave our own footprint as veterans who continue to serve and strengthen America.

You will be hearing a lot about the National "Be the One" campaign that was initially introduced during the 2022 National Convention in Milwaukee, WI. The purpose of the campaign is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. I invite everyone to visit <https://www.legion.org/betheone/about> to learn more. I am implementing a new Be the One Committee for the Department of Utah to address this campaign in Utah. Be the One who impacts the lives of veterans and their families. Continue to do Buddy Checks. You make a difference every day.

Thank you for all that you do. Let's have a great year!



Ninzel Rasmuson

## BE THE ONE

### DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER

Steve Anderson

Every Legionnaire and SAL member can benefit from a myLegion.org account. MyLegion.org is a free and secure website for American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members to



manage their membership profile and benefits; and for administrative officers of posts, districts and counties to access membership tools. There's no better way to keep on top of where you are with the Legion than using your myLegion.org account. If you haven't already done so, sign up today.

### THE BLUE HATTER

is an American Legion Department of Utah publication intended for American Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Legion Riders and friends of The American Legion. It is published bi-monthly. Submissions, comments and suggestions are always welcome.

## **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN**

As I begin this article, I want to thank **Richard Fisher** and **Virginia McKay** for stepping up to assist the Legion Office during our difficult times.



Last year the Congress passed the PACT Act with wide reaching impact on current conflict Veterans and Veterans going back to the Vietnam War. There are important deadlines approaching that could affect up to one years-worth of VA Compensation benefits. The PACT Act law was signed by President Biden on August 10 2022. If Veterans apply for VA Compensation and are approved by **August 9, 2023** their benefits will be



**Terry Schow**

retroactive back to August 2022. The Act not only affects VA Compensation but also access to VA Healthcare. Among the compensation and health conditions are: Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures, Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation, Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care.

I urge any Veteran who served in the Middle East or Vietnam to contact one the Legion Service Officers to determine if you should file a claim for VA Compensation these services are free, do not pay anyone to file for the benefits you have earned thru your service.

Please get the word out to your Post members. If you email them the claims forms can be emailed back to get the process started.

### **Utah Legion Service Officers**

Greg Popp 801 326 2380 Salt Lake  
Wayne Jackson Fillmore  
Terry Schow Ogden

[Gregory.Popp@va.gov](mailto:Gregory.Popp@va.gov)  
[Waynej@fronternet.net](mailto:Waynej@fronternet.net)  
[tschow48@gmail.com](mailto:tschow48@gmail.com)

## **Alternate National Executive Committeeman**



**Richard Fisher**

This is my last article for The Blue Hatter. I will attend my last National Convention as ANEC in Charlotte. I would like to thank all of you who supported me at the Department Convention. It is my hope that all of you read our Preamble and see that there is no I in it, we are a team. Our job is to work for Veterans and their families. We need to remember that we also are here to teach patriotism and protect our youth from any harm. I would like to stress using our Service office to help all our Veterans who need help. We have a lot of Veterans out there that need our help. We also need to “BE THE ONE” to help prevent suicide among our brothers. We have other programs that The American Legion supports like Children Organ Transplant Association (COTA), Operation Comfort Warriors, Homeless Veterans, Family and Youth programs. Our big voice is at the Washington Conference where our filling of the Consolidated Post Reports helps bring our legislative agenda to Congress. Once again thank you for your support.

# From the Adjutant's Desk...

The Utah Department Convention marks the beginning of a new year. An opportunity to clear the decks and set goals. More important than setting goals is determining how to accomplish those goals. That is where the Adjutants office can help.

We are here to support what you do in serving veterans and members. One of the ways to provide that support is helping you use the tools that can facilitate reaching your membership goals and tracking information to complete submission of the Consolidated Post Reports (CPR).

The tool that can help you throughout the year is MyLegion.org. If you do not have an account, please set one up. It allows you to keep your contact information current so we can contact you with important Legion information. It is also the place to help new members enroll and pay their dues.

The new membership year started July 1. I went into my MyLegion account, verified my contact information and paid this year's dues in less than two minutes.

While there are more capabilities available to Legion leadership, MyLegion is a tool for every member. If you have questions about setting up your account or using the tool, just open your browser, go to MyLegion.org and select help from the menu bar.



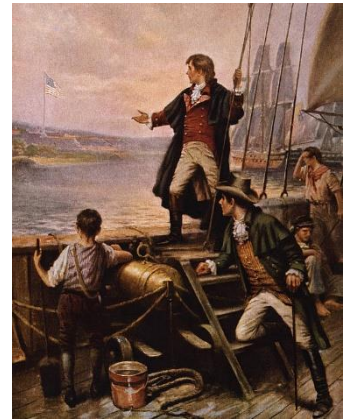
Richard Mead

## Department Chaplain



Steve Steed

"The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States. The lyrics come from the "Defence of Fort M'Henry", a poem written on September 14, 1814, by 35-year-old lawyer and amateur poet Francis Scott Key after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships of the Royal Navy in Baltimore Harbor during the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812. Key was inspired by the large U.S. flag, with 15 stars and 15 stripes, known as the "Star-Spangled Banner", flying triumphantly above the fort during the U.S. victory. By November 1814, Key's composition had appeared in print for the first time under the name "The Star-Spangled Banner."



"The Star-Spangled Banner" was recognized for official use by the United States Navy in 1889, and by U.S. president Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and was made the national anthem by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931, which was signed by President Herbert Hoover more than 100 years after it was composed.

Before 1931, other songs served as the hymns of U.S. officialdom. "Hail, Columbia" served this purpose at official functions for most of the 19th century. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee", also served as a *de facto* national anthem. Following the War of 1812 and subsequent U.S. wars, other songs emerged to compete for popularity at public events, among them were "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful", which itself was being considered before 1931 as a candidate to become the national anthem of the United States. "Hail, Columbia" was originally considered to be one of the unofficial national anthems of the United States until 1931. It was the personal anthem for the president, until it was replaced by the song "Hail to the Chief", and it is now the official vice president's personal anthem.

As we observe our flag during the celebration of our county's Independence Day, may we remember its significance and pray that it will continue to wave proudly "O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave".



AMERICAN  
LEGION  
**Utah**  
**Boys State**



Kent Hansen



The American Legion Utah Boys State Class of 2023 graduated 186 students from around Utah at Weber State University on June 16, 2023. Scholarships offered through this program from Weber State University, Samsung Corporation, and the American Legion Utah Boys State Foundation were over \$1.9 million. After a week of a hands-on, participatory program in which students become part of the operation of city, county and state government, the students elected a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and two Senators who return the following year as the Class Leadership, with the two Senators attending the American Legion Boys Nation for one week in Washington, D.C. in July. Those students elected to these positions from the Class of 2023 are Governor Harrison Park from Layton, Utah, Lieutenant Governor Kaleb Stephens from Layton, Utah, Senator Carson Cooper from St. George, Utah, and Senator Colby Stone from Washington Terrace, Utah.

Key speakers during the course included Governor Spencer Cox, former POW-MIA Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Jay Hess USAF, Gold Star widow Jennie Taylor, motivational speaker and former talk show host Shane Krauser, and Utah State Senator Dr. F. Ann Millner. This year's Utah Boys State also welcomed students from Alaska, Washington, and Germany (APO).

Since 1939, Utah Boys State has graduated thousands of boys from this respected educational program of government/citizenship instruction for students who have completed their Junior year of high school, including Governor Mike Leavitt, U.S. Senator Mike Lee, and U.S. Attorney David Barlow, District of Utah. The program is taught by volunteers from the American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Police Officers and First Responders, and former Boys State graduates. For more information on the annual Utah Boys State program, go to [www.utahboysstate.org](http://www.utahboysstate.org).

# High School Constitution Oratorical Contest

**Oratorical: A Time to Begin the New Contest Year!** It is time to get started with a new year in the world of the Oratorical Contest. It is time to contact principals, school counselors, debate/speech coaches/teachers, history teachers, FFA teachers, civic education teachers, or any teacher or organization who has speech contests like to Provo Freedom Festival. They all start planning their next year in March/April so there is no better time to begin the contacting. Plan to go to the summer fairs, and/or get a booth at a city celebration.



Shiela Heindel



Get out to your community and spread the need for our young people to learn about the United States Constitution and the duties of its citizens. Use the Handout that we used this year, it will have the same prize information. Remember this contest is for those in 9th grade through 12th grade. And they can participate each year if they don't win first place along the way! A great resource to look at to help you along the way: [www.legion.org/oratorical](http://www.legion.org/oratorical). This site has most everything you will need: publications, National champion videos, the Rules, Judges Briefings, Scripts, and more.

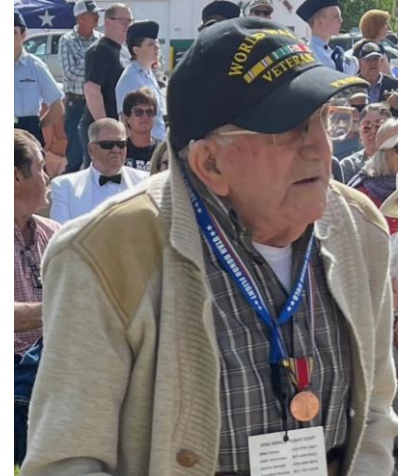
You'll need to start thinking about when to have your Post contest, your District contest, and then get your "staff" together. I will be updating the department oratorical page when the 2024 National Contest dates are announced in a few weeks. Plan on February 24, 2024 for the Department Contest - place TBA. There is no time like the present to spread the word about a great youth program put on by American Legion - that's YOU!



## SPOTLIGHT ON POSTS 74 AND I

**Cedar City Post 74** has had a busy year. The attached photos detail Post 74's Memorial Day event with three generations of the Robison Family in our Honor Guard and special guest, 99-year-old WWII veteran Dick Wrede.

Our Color Guard has been busy with multiple high school graduations and the Annual Patriot Concert. The photo of our Color Guard members from left to right front row, Susan Lee, Dennis Robison, John Fenn, Harold Frazer. Back row left to right Dan Jones, Marc Marx, Larry Bell, Keith Robison, and Bruce Winslow. Most recently, Post 74 partnered with Boy Scout Troop 1848 to revive the traditional Flag Retirement Ceremony.



**ADOPT A HIGHWAY**

American Legion Post 1 conducted their 12<sup>th</sup> highway clean-up at 9:00 am on Saturday May 13, 2023. Project Chairman, Steven Hart, had the group meet at the Juab Road Department on Highway 132 at approximately 500 West on 100 North Street. He gave safety instructions about crossing the highway, presented all with a bright orange fluorescent safety vest, orange garbage sacks, plastic ties, grabbers, and made starting place assignments. One-man crews were assigned each section of the Highway Route 132 from one Adopt a Highway Sign on the east to the other one on the west, a distance of approximately two miles. The various Legionnaires were placed at different starting locations and worked toward each other. The post collected 16 bags of litter. They also put some other debris which would not fit into the sacks on the roadway along by the orange filled sacks which had been furnished by the state road department.



**AMERICAN LEGION  
BASEBALL (UTAH)**



**SENIOR TEAMS** *(19 years old and below):*

- Bear River AA2023AA, Tremonton
- Cache Sharks, Logan
- Cache Valley Bigg Mixx A, Logan
- Cedar Rangers AA, Cedar City
- Helper Merchants AA, Helper
- Logan Lumberjacks AA, Logan
- Price Raptors, Price
- Ridgeline Wolverines AA, Millville
- Snow Devils AA, Smithfield
- Saint George Post 90 Sentinels AAA, St George
- Trappers AA AA, Hyrum

**JUNIOR TEAMS** *(17 years old and below):*

- ALA Eagles B, Spanish Fork
- Bear River A2023 A, Tremonton
- Bear River B2023 B, Tremonton
- Chargers 15U B, Draper
- Logan Lumberjacks A Team A, Logan
- Logan Lumberjacks B Team B, Logan
- Lone Peak 2026, Highland
- Lone Peak Knights 2027, Highland
- MVB, Orem
- Ridgeline Wolverines A, Millville
- Ridgeline Wolverines B, Millville
- Ridgeline Wolverines Green A, Millville
- Snow Devils AA, Smithfield
- Snow Devils BB, Smithfield
- Tooele 17 U, Tooele
- Tooele Bears 15 U, Tooele
- Trappers AA, Hyrum
- Trappers BB, Hyrum
- Vernal Post 11, Vernal

**STATE TOURNAMENTS**

**Senior A: July 15-20, 2023**  
Mountain Crest HS, Hyrum

**Senior AA: July 21-26, 2023**  
Ridgeline HS, Millville

**REGIONAL TOURNAMENT**

**Juniors: August 4-8, 2023**  
Havre, Montana

**Seniors: August 2-6, 2023**  
Fairfield, California

**WORLD SERIES**

**August 10-15, 2023**  
Keeter Stadium  
Shelby, North Carolina

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) >  
PROGRAMS > BASEBALL > FIND A TEAM > UTAH  
Click on team for location, team manager and  
phone #. Some have team schedules.

# American Legion Auxiliary



Mike Rasmuson

Greetings Everyone! My name is Mike Rasmuson, and I am the new Department Auxiliary President for 2023-24. Ninzel Rasmuson is my wife. I joined the American Legion Auxiliary in October of 2019, when the rules changed and male spouses were allowed to join the Auxiliary. I have served in Department Leadership for the last two years.



We, in the Auxiliary, will continue to serve the American Legion Family by putting "service before self". We want to continue to help support the Legion like we always have. We will also continue to move forward with our core programs of using Poppies to raise money, Gift Shop to serve veterans in need at during the holidays and develop the young future leaders for our community with Girls State.

How can you help us? We, like The American Legion, are always searching for new members. As your Posts grow, we would like to see our Units grow, too. Please invite your spouses and family members to become involved in what we do.

If you have questions as to who is eligible to join us, just reach out to any one of us, and we will find answers to your questions. We look forward to having a fantastic year as we serve on our communities with all members of the American Legion Family.

## SONGS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Here's the contact information for the new Detachment of Utah Sons of The American Legion leadership.

**John McDonnell** 5577 So. Whitewood Dr., Taylorsville, UT 84129, 801-631-2020, [jemcdonnell68@gmail.com](mailto:jemcdonnell68@gmail.com)

**Ross King** 2478 W 6000 S, Roy, UT 84067, 801-745-5861, [rossking73@gmail.com](mailto:rossking73@gmail.com)

**Bryan Rue** 792 Grain Street, Kaysville, UT 84037, 949-246-9641, [saladjutant@utlegion.org](mailto:saladjutant@utlegion.org)

