

# THE BLUE HATTER



The Official Newsletter of The American Legion Department of Utah

SEPTEMBER 2023

VOICES OF VETERANS

utlegion.org

## NEVER FORGET THE FALL OF AFGHANISTAN

Dear American Legion Family members and friends,

It was two years ago when we were collectively dismayed at how swiftly the Taliban reasserted control over Afghanistan. Once the withdrawal of American troops gained momentum, we only knew it was a matter of time.

Still the speed of the Taliban takeover unleashed anger, frustration and concern for Afghanistan interpreters and other allies who risked their lives to help U.S. troops during the 20-year war.

Predictably, Taliban rule has plunged Afghanistan into a floundering economic state where human rights are compromised, malnutrition is rampant and education is shoved aside.

And our allies' lives remain in danger.

As veterans we understand what it means to say, "No one gets left behind."

For two decades, our troops fought shoulder-to-shoulder with trusted Afghan allies who served as translators, protected troops from harm and fought for freedom. And to this day, the brave Afghan women who undertook missions with Green Berets and Navy Seals as Female Tactical Platoons have Taliban bounties on their heads.



We must continue our two-fold fight for them.

The United States must honor its promises and provide lasting protection for Afghans who have safely resettled in America as well as those who were left behind. The American Legion is urging Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would allow Afghans who fought alongside our servicemembers the opportunity to apply for permanent legal residency after undergoing additional vetting.

Join this mission to support our Afghan allies by sending a message to Congress through our Grassroots Action Center.

Thank you for what you do every day on behalf of our nation's veterans, servicemembers, their families and the communities in which they live.

National Commander  
Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola

# COMMANDER'S CALL



Ninzel Rasmuson

September is Suicide Prevention Month. In a continued effort to support service members, veterans, their families, and their friends across the State of Utah, and throughout the year, I invite each of you to access and become knowledgeable about resources for The American Legion's "Be the One" initiative for the purpose of veteran suicide prevention. You can "Be the One" to help save a life by doing Buddy Checks and being proactive. Continue to invite veterans and their families to your meetings, activities, and events regularly. If you are a Commander, I encourage you to appoint a willing member to be the Be the One liaison for your post or district.



The Be the One initiative is my Commander's Project this 2023-2024 membership year.

Please make every effort to share Be the One information. Include your local community to make a difference with you. *Share* what you are doing to make a difference. *Show* your empathy and compassion for others. You can find a wealth of information at [legion.org/betheone](http://legion.org/betheone) for information and ideas. If you are on Facebook, consider joining and participating in the page titled "Be the One, Department of Utah, The American Legion."

If you would like to donate to the Be the One initiative to help veterans in Utah, please contact Richard Mead, Department Adjutant, at [adjutant@utlegion.org](mailto:adjutant@utlegion.org) if you have questions. Your donations will help veterans in need on a case-by-case basis that will be vetted by the Department. Donations can be mailed to the Department of Utah, The American Legion, Department of Utah, Attn: Department Adjutant, PO Box 148000, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-8000. Make checks payable to the 'Department of Utah, The American Legion.' If you are interested in serving on the Department Be the One Committee, please contact Jon Rue at (949) 683-7900. *Thank you for your support.*

# BE THE ONE

In my experience, I know Buddy Checks work. I am inspired by the stories I hear weekly about how our American Legion Family is making a difference in Utah. Continue to contact your comrades regularly as it is crucial that all service members, veterans and families we serve and support know that we are accessible and available.

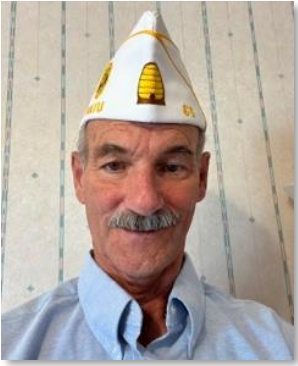
My call to action is to take time to visit the following sites below for more information and resources, and then share. Move forward with your Buddy Checks. Be a good friend. ***In the event someone needs immediate help, dial 988 and Press 1 for the Veteran Crisis Line.***

Thank you for your continued service. I honor your commitment and dedication to the work you do every day. Leave your legacy.



**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.

## DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER



Steven Anderson

Hope you all have had a great summer. I would like to remind the Post Commanders to keep in touch with their membership on a monthly basis. I hope you are doing your best to bring back those who didn't get their dues in last year. Stay on top of your monthly dues as well.

District Commanders, keep in touch with your Post Commanders as well. And Area Commanders, stay in communication with your Districts.

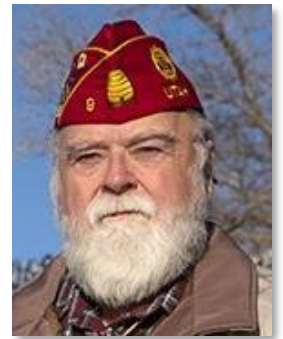
Thank you for all you do.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN

The past few months have been PACT Act activities, events and applications highlighted by the President's visit to the George E Wahlen Salt Lake VA Medical Center on August 10. No President in my lifetime has ever visited a Veterans facility in Utah. He addressed a small group of Veterans, VA Officials and elected officials. I urged him to provide more funding for mental health and better pay for mental health and Vet Center staff he seemed receptive and mentioned my request in his remarks. Nationwide the VA received 1.3 million claims and here in Utah received 6,000 claims.

Although the window has closed for retroactive payments Veterans may still apply for PACT Act benefits including health care. For more information go to: [www.va.gov/PACT](http://www.va.gov/PACT). You can also file an Intent To File (a VA claim) by calling the VA @ 1-800-827-1000. The Department Service Office 801-326-2380 in SLC can assist.

Benefits also extent back to Vietnam Agent Orange exposure and Toxic Exposure to burn pits Iraq and Afghanistan. There is an Agent Orange Registry and the airborne hazards and open pit Registry for Middle East Veterans. Please make sure the word get out to your Post members.



Terry Schow

## Alternate National Executive Committeeman



Doug Case

Greetings, as I forge ahead into yet uncharted waters, I'm excited to begin the journey and even more excited to have you along on the adventure. As many of you have heard me say, the only resource you cannot ever replace is your time. What we choose to do with our time could very well be one of the most important decisions we'll make. I choose to commit a good portion of my time to The American Legion because it feels good to be a part of something bigger than myself, feels good to contribute on several different levels, feels good to help a fellow veteran down on their luck, feeling like they have nowhere to turn. Feels good to support a grieving family at the death of their veteran, feels good guide, mentor and lift-up a young student. Feels good to "Be One of the One's" stepping up to make a difference. Thank you for your service and all that you do for the Legion. As always, I'm at your service. Doug Case, Alternate National Executive Committeeman (ANEC) 2023-2025

# From the Adjutant's Desk...

**UTLegion.org has a new look.** The website has been updated and while we are still in the process of updating information and creating content for the site, we need your feedback and suggestions. If you have not visited the site recently; please do so and provide any feedback you may have. We are also in the process of determining the best way to post video training on the site.



We want to make this a valuable resource to all Legionnaires. To do this the information must be accurate and your help is needed to make this happen. In addition to accurate information, we also need current pictures of post, district, and area officers. While it would be nice to have all professionally done pictures this is not practical. If you can have someone take pictures at a Post meeting with the American flag as a backdrop similar to the pictures now on the site, we would welcome them to be included.



**Richard Mead**

Additionally, any pictures you have from activities in which your post has participated, please send those as well with a brief article so it may be included on the site. m so please make suggestions. The site will continue to be updated so please visit it often.

**Breaking news from 2023 The American Legion National Convention.** Contained in the General Session Report for Tuesday, August 29, 2023, the following information was reported in the Report of the Convention Committee on Finance. The Finance Committee met on Sunday, August 27, 2023. "The Chairman introduced the National Treasurer, Shawn Long (Indiana), who updated the committee on the financial position of the National organization. Treasurer Long completed his report with a recommendation for national per capita be set to \$23.50 in membership year 2025. Dan Wiley (Kansas) made a motion to set dues to \$23.50. The motion was seconded by Tim Smith (Oklahoma) and adopted unanimously by the convention committee on finance."

The proposed change was brought to the floor of the convention on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, and was approved. This topic will be addressed further during the Utah Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting in December 2023.

If you have questions, please contact me.

## Department Chaplain



**Steve Steed**

### Pillar 3: Americanism

American Legion founders, the core of whom were front-line officers in World War I, had emerged from the all-volunteer prewar Preparedness Movement with firsthand concern about the prospect of combat with limited resources, weapons, training and supplies.

After the armistice, they added another ingredient to their concerns: public understanding and appreciation of the American identity.



The American Legion would take a proactive approach to Americanism, forming a committee that would become a national commission to advance the concept through programs and services. By January 1920, citizenship and naturalization programs were forming at local posts, and the Legion offered its services before Congress to provide such education.

In 1921, The American Legion formed an alliance with the National Education Association, which accepted the Legion's offer "to cooperate with the NEA in securing for America a program of education adequate to meet the needs of the 20th century ... and which will make all, whether native or foreign-born, good American citizens." The alliance led to National Education Week and the 1926 publication of a two-textbook set.

Following the same reasoning, the American Legion Oratorical Contest, which had its first national competition in 1938 and now awards more than \$138,000 in scholarships annually to top finishers, is not all about rhetoric. It is a constitutional speech contest; competitors must study and know the Constitution to succeed, preparing orations they have researched, written and rehearsed as well as impromptu speaking on randomly assigned constitutional topics.

The American Legion is an organization dedicated to God and country, with a membership of military veterans who take deep pride in the U.S. Flag and all that it means. Since its inception nearly 100 years ago, the Legion has been a stalwart champion of patriotic values, morals, culture and citizenship. The Legion's pillar of Americanism embodies its devotion to law and order, the raising of wholesome youth, an educated and law-abiding citizenship, and respectful observance of patriotic holidays and remembrances.

True Americanism is an ideology that is continually nurtured within one's soul through individual daily actions, thoughts, and beliefs in what their responsibilities are to be, blessed to live in one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.



**Kent Hansen**

Even though Utah Boys State runs only a week in June, making the Legion's premiere youth program happen is a year-round effort. While the program is largely developed and operated by a cadre of dedicated Legionnaires and friends, Utah Boys State cannot exist without the support of Posts throughout the state.

Every Post has at least one (or more) high schools in its proximity. Those Posts are responsible for contacting the high school administration to facilitate recruitment of eligible Juniors. In addition, Post Legionnaires should be available to conduct the mandatory interviews with each candidate which is necessary for admission.

Every one of us has demonstrated our commitment to the principles of freedom and democracy when we stepped up to wear the uniform of our country. We reiterated that commitment by joining the Legion. The values outlined in the Preamble and in the Four Pillars are the very values that validate our membership and, indeed, our citizenship.



Our goal is to develop a standing corps of Legionnaire volunteers to lead Utah Boys State into the future. As we do so, we will be helping to ensure the preservation of the principles of freedom for which we all fought will prosper in the years ahead.

Fall is in the air, for those of you that rise early in the morning you can feel the difference. Kids are back in school, hunters are taking to the mountains, and lawn mowing chores will transition to shoveling snow. Fall is also the time we look forward to holidays and the spirit of giving, finding just the right gifts that will surely brighten our friends and loved one's hearts. Doing for others is deep rooted in our American Legion comradeship DNA, if I have it and you need it, it's yours.

Your Utah Boys State staff are already busy finding just the right topics to teach next year, the year, the right guest speakers, the right counselors to help mentor boys and the right staff members to pull it all together. We're also actively engaged in finding money to help; help with boys that don't have enough funds to attend, help with the raising program cost, help with needs-based scholarships etc.

Our goal is to promote and provide a first-rate, once in a lifetime experience, we hope your goal is to help. If you have it in your heart, and in your means please consider making a financial donation to The American Legion Department of Utah Boys State Foundation. Depending on your personal financial situation, your donation is likely tax deductible, please consult with your tax advisor.

If you think you have some skills that could benefit the program staff, GREAT! We need integrated technologies (IT), for guys like me the simple term is good computer skills. We need help with administration, someone willing to perform vetting (background checks) for all adults involved in the program. We need assistant finance officers in both of our organizations, Boys State Corporation (School House) and the Boys State Foundation (Financial Support). Boys State really is a family affair so Legion members, SAL, Auxiliary, are all welcome, and we'd like to get a few teachers onboard. If you know someone with the proverbial deep pockets, ask them to donate. If you are a money finding hound, we'd love to have you join our team.

Finally, some are asking for a job description for a Boys State Counselor. We are working on a short video that will provide the information you seek. The link will be posted on our new Department website [www.utlegion.org](http://www.utlegion.org) and at [www.utahboysstate.org/counselor](http://www.utahboysstate.org/counselor) tab.

If you have money to donate, please send checks or money orders to American Legion Utah Boys State Foundation, PO Box 187, Kaysville, UT 84037. If you think you'd be a good fit on staff or as a counselor, please send an email with a description of your skills and experience to [ubs@utahboysstate.org](mailto:ubs@utahboysstate.org). We'll take all the counselors that our funding can support so give generously. To become involved, contact Utah Boys State President Doug Case (435-790-4782) or Executive Director Kent Hansen (801-589-7667). For more information on the annual Utah Boys State program, go to [www.utahboysstate.org](http://www.utahboysstate.org).

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## *High School Constitution Oratorical Contest*

Our Department contest will be held March 9, 2024 in Provo. We will be at the Old Historic Courthouse in the Ballroom. Most Post contests should be finished before the end of the year and District contests finished before the end of February. Check out [legion.org/oratorical](http://legion.org/oratorical) for much more information with the rules, the current amendments to be used, videos of past contest winners, how to dos, and much more. I will be putting more on the Utah American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Program Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/utlegionoratorical/>



**Shiela Heindel**



## SPOTLIGHT ON DISTRICT 4

I would like to report what **District 4** has been doing these last few months. I am going to lump some of these things together but just know that each post has contributed.

We have sponsored and conducted Memorial Day services throughout the district; performed flag ceremonies; been in city parades including the Freedom Festival; placed flags in our local cemeteries; done myriad funeral services; recruited at events; raised money for charities both American Legion and local; held Oratorical contests; sent boys and girls to Boys and Girls State, respectively; passed out poppies; worked with the Utah Food Bank; worked at Be The One booths; and not least of all conducting regular Buddy Checks.

**Post 13** in Provo through Randy Edwards has hosted the National Commander; with Judy Daybell arranged and successfully concluded the 2023 Annual Department Convention in Provo; worked with the Veterans Support Court to assist veterans in crisis; and raised money for the 1919 Society.

**Post 72** has held car shows and socials to gather their members socially. They were also the Grand Marshals for the Orem City Festival parade.

**Post 19's ALR Chapter 19** held their annual Old Glory Ride and raised over \$1600 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. **Post 13's Squadron 13** has picked up litter; held Boy Scouts Courts of Honor; helped with the Hope of America 4-day event at the Marriott Center; assisted in several Freedom Festival events: the Freedom Speech contest and the Patriotic Service; also set up flags for the Festival; actively recruiting for the Legion and Sons; and conducting Flag Retirement Ceremonies. I probably have forgotten some of the activities that our district's posts have accomplished but please know we are all doing our best to serve our veterans and communities.

DID YOU KNOW?



## CHILDREN & YOUTH



Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has been a staunch supporter of children and youth. The National Commission on Children and Youth continues that commitment today, as it seeks to improve the well-being of all children. The key to the future of a free and prosperous country, expressed by every generation of veterans, is held

by the children and youth of today. The Legion strongly supports traditional family values, assistance for at-risk children and activities that promote their healthy and wholesome development. While there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow, our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training that we, as parents and citizens, provide for the young people of today.

Today's young people face an array of societal pressures. The dissolution of the traditional American family, illegal drug use, TV shows and movies filled with obscenities and indecencies. There is an alarming increase in bullying, aided by the spread of smart phones and social media. Gone are the care-free days when children spent their summers playing baseball on vacant lots, lounging in tree houses and riding bikes around town.

The American Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth is guided by three main objectives: to strengthen the family unit, work with quality organizations that provide services for children and provide communities with well-rounded programs that meet the needs of young people."

Now is a great time of the year to commit to learning more about the Children and Youth programs. Go to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) search, review/read the various topics and even print the Children and Youth Department Chairman Guide. There's a ton of information available that can be adapted to your Post functions. Get smart, get motivated, get into your schools, get to know the teachers, kids, and resource officers. It's good for your community and it's good for your soul.

# American Legion Family Members

Don't miss your chance to take the

## **BASIC TRAINING COURSE**



Learn why we do what we do!

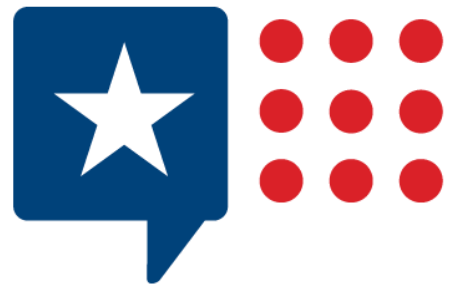
It's a **FREE** self-paced online training for The American Legion Family.

Go to: [WWW.LEGION.ORG/ALEI](http://WWW.LEGION.ORG/ALEI)

### **Legion Laughs** BY KENT HANSEN



# Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988** then  
**PRESS 1**