

May 2025 Issue



BLUE HATTER



As we celebrate Military Appreciation month, we pause especially for Memorial Day 2025. The Department of Utah is grateful to the many veterans and military service members have served and sacrificed for our great Nation.

As you go to events happening around the State of Utah this month we encourage you to take time to reflect quietly on those veterans and service members who are no longer with us.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the number of Honor Guard members who provide funeral details for hundreds of veterans every year in Utah. Thank you for your dedication, efforts, and commitment.

American Battle Monuments Commission

Do you know about the American Battle Monuments Commission?

Learn more at ambc.gov.

You are welcome to join them annually for Memorial Day as they honor the courage, sacrifice, and enduring legacy of the men and women who gave their lives in service to their country. Across all American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) cemeteries and memorials worldwide, they invite you to join them in this day of reflection and gratitude. Whether you attend in person or observe in spirit, together we remember.





Memorial Day

REMEMBER AND HONOR



2024-2025 NATIONAL COMMANDER



AMERICAN
LEGION
BE
THE
ONE

JAMES "JIM" LACOURSIERE
2024-2025 NATIONAL COMMANDER

National HQ

The impact of The American Legion is substantial. For over a century The American Legion has strengthened American and its veterans through programs, services, compassion and actions that have proven vital, timeless and life-changing.

For example, a record amount of VA disability benefits were secured for veterans free of charge by accredited American Legion service officers to the tune of \$21B.

legion.org

If you have not had the chance to read the Commander's Message in the May 2025 issue of The American Legion magazine, we encourage you to as National Commander LaCoursiere speaks to how "military appreciation starts with quality of life." There are some interesting statistics he refers to from the Military Family Lifestyle Survey and Blue Star Families.

On another note, National Commander LaCoursiere testified at the joint hearing of the House and the Senate Veterans' Affairs committees on February 26, 2025. He said, "Young people who have been told that military service will leave them broken or unsupported in the end will think twice about their propensity to serve at all. And that is a matter of national security. We need to change the narrative. We can change the narrative."

When we consider as a Department what we are doing to encourage young adults to join the service, what do we tell them? What are some life experiences that you share as Legionnaires with the younger generation to help them understand the importance of military service? The good news is that we have amazing Americanism programs to help our youth understand what it means to be an American, and how serving in the military can help us individually in numerous ways. Share your thoughts and stories with others as you continue to make a difference in your communities.

2025 NATIONAL CONVENTION

The American Legion National Convention stands as the organization's largest annual gathering, bringing together approximately 9,000 members from The American Legion Family.



National Convention information is available to you on legion.org. The 2025 National Convention is in Tampa Bay, Florida, August 22 – 28, 2025. You can find the following on the website:

- [Hotel Map](#)
- [Posts to Host Functions](#)
- [2025 Department Hotel Listing](#)
- [Scooter Rental Information](#)
- [RV Resorts Information](#)

Start saving and making plans now to attend. All American Legion Family members are welcome!

A vertical American flag is positioned on the left side of the page, showing the stars and stripes. The stars are white on a blue field, and the stripes are red and white.

CONGRATULATIONS

Salt Lake City psychologist receives prestigious national award from The American Legion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON (April 4, 2025) —Dr. Steven Allen, a staff psychologist with the George E. Whalen Salt Lake City VA Medical Center, received the VA Physician of the Year award from The American Legion during its recent Washington Conference. The award was presented by VA Secretary Doug Collins and American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Chairman Jay Bowen of Colorado.

Allen has worked as a staff psychologist on the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team at the VA Medical Center in Salt Lake City since 1990.

“This award reflects the great privilege and honor I’ve had in working with veterans,” said Allen, who received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming.

The American Legion’s annual Washington Conference took place Feb. 22-26 in Washington, D.C.

About The American Legion

The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with more than 1.6 million members in roughly 12,000 posts across the nation. Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans. Learn more at legion.org.

Media contacts

Henry Howard
Deputy Director
Media & Communications
The American Legion
765.491.3545 (cell)
hhoward@legion.org

Terry Schow
National Executive Committee
Media & Communications
American Legion Department of Utah
XXXXXXXXXX
tschow48@gmail.com

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT DESK

On April 4, 2025. I held a training session on membership. The purpose of this session was to cover three topics that are frequent questions I am asked.

1) What is the difference between Department Post 0008 and Department Post 0008AD?

2) How can department post members near a local post be identified and contacted to invite them to become members of a local post?

3) How are members transferred?

I want to overview this information for the newsletter so it may be used for reference.

A new member joins The American Legion is basically two different ways. They may come to a post meeting, complete an application, pay dues to the post, and have their new membership processed through the post adjutant. When a member joins this way, they are added to the post roster and counted in the post and department membership numbers. If a member joins by going online, through either Legion.org or MyLegion.org, or responds to a direct mail solicitation (DMS) from national, they become members of Department Post 0008AD and are referred to as encumbered members. The dues they paid are kept at national and they are not counted towards the membership numbers for the department. Dues for these members are kept by national for two years and their membership is not included in the department count during this time. As soon as they are moved to a local post, their membership numbers are counted and going forward, their dues go to the local post, the department, and to national. This is why it is important to find these members and invite them to join your post.

The Department Post 0008 members are no longer encumbered, and they count towards department membership. Post leadership has access to the reporting to find these members through their MyLegion.org account. After logging into their account and selecting "my groups" an option appears on the left side of screen for Reports/Labels. Selecting this will provide several options but two of them are to find members within a zip code or withing a certain mileage of a zip code. The members shown on this report are in Post 0008 or Post 0008AD.

Transferring a member requires that the member wants to transfer, the post wants and accepts the member, and that the members membership is current. A member not in good standing may not be transferred. The details of rules to transfer a member may be found on the back of the Member Data Form.

I hope you find this useful. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me
Yours in service.

Richard Mead
Utah Department Adjutant



Did you know?

You can reach your Department Adjutant at the Department HQ office via email at adjutant@utlegion.org or by office phone at 801-539-1013. Should you need to visit the Department office, the office is located at 350 N State Street, Suite 80, Salt Lake City, UT 84103. The Utah State Capitol building can be entered on the west side of the building. Upon entry, call the Department Adjutant to be able to access the elevator down to the office. Please contact the Department Adjutant ahead of time before driving to SLC so that he is aware of you coming to the office.

Department mail

If you need to snail mail to the Department office, please send all correspondence to Department of Utah, The American Legion, Attn: Department Adjutant Rick Mead, PO Box, 148000, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-8000. When possible and appropriate, documents may be emailed to adjutant@utlegion.org.

Membership Targets and Management



2024-2025 National Membership Target Dates

Early Bird/NEF Kickoff
September 11, 2024 - 50%

Fall Meetings
October 16, 2024 - 55%

Veterans Day
November 14, 2024 - 65%

Pearl Harbor Day
December 11, 2024 - 75%

Mid-Winter
January 15, 2025 - 80%

President's Day
February 12, 2025 - 85%

Legion Birthday
March 12, 2025 - 90%

Children & Youth
April 9, 2025 - 95%

Armed Forces Day
May 14, 2025 - 100%

Delegate Strength
30 Days Prior To National Convention

About National Membership Target Dates

Target dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of that week.

Since Veterans Day falls on a Monday, the November target date will be on a Thursday.

To maximize the December renewal notice, the January target date will be on the third Wednesday of the month.

Questions?

Follow up with your Area Commander, Department Vice Commander/Membership Chair or Department Adjutant.

Manage Your Membership

[MyLegion.org](https://mylegion.org)

Access to MyLegion for Leadership

If you do not have access to mylegion.org as a Post or District Commander and/or Adjutant, please contact Rick Mead, Department Adjutant, to gain access at adjutant@utlegion.org or 801-539-1013.



2025 TAL Membership Report as of: April 16, 2025

* All-Time High						
	2025 Dept. Year End Goal	2025 Actual Mbsp.	% of Year End Goal	Needed To Meet 100% Target 5/14/2025		2025 Renewal %
Department					103%	
1 FRANCE	3,000	2,893	96.43%	107	3,090	88.60
2 HAWAII	1,909	1,827	95.70%	82	1,966	96.11
3 SOUTH DAKOTA	15,600	14,769	94.67%	831	16,068	91.41
4 ARIZONA	34,368	32,238	93.80%	2,130	35,399	87.00
5 TEXAS	52,117	48,857	93.74%	3,260	53,680	88.21
6 NORTH DAKOTA	10,950	10,239	93.51%	711	11,278	92.20
7 SOUTH CAROLINA	20,023	18,555	92.67%	1,468	20,623	89.61
8 FLORIDA	103,610	95,789	92.45%	7,821	106,718	86.44
9 MICHIGAN	55,154	50,925	92.33%	4,229	56,808	90.69
10 UTAH	5,894	5,442	92.33%	452	6,070	83.88
11 WISCONSIN	46,310	42,294	91.33%	4,016	47,699	90.66
12 PUERTO RICO	3,708	3,384	91.26%	324	3,819	86.65
13 NEW HAMPSHIRE	13,987	12,760	91.23%	1,227	14,406	88.67
14 OHIO	74,420	67,582	90.81%	6,838	76,652	88.46
15 NEW YORK	75,500	68,502	90.73%	6,998	77,765	88.52
16 VIRGINIA	37,860	34,272	90.52%	3,588	38,995	87.96
17 VERMONT	8,557	7,743	90.49%	814	8,813	87.87
18 MARYLAND	43,529	39,254	90.18%	4,275	44,834	88.85
19 ALABAMA	16,417	14,793	90.11%	1,624	16,909	87.68
20 IOWA	34,665	31,230	90.09%	3,435	35,704	90.18
21 MINNESOTA	57,307	51,528	89.92%	5,779	59,026	89.84
22 ALASKA	5,500	4,943	89.87%	557	5,665	81.10
23 NEVADA	5,811	5,221	89.85%	590	5,985	89.13
24 KENTUCKY	14,817	13,306	89.80%	1,511	15,261	85.52
25 PENNSYLVANIA	116,598	104,550	89.67%	12,048	120,095	88.64
26 NORTH CAROLINA	32,619	29,200	89.52%	3,419	33,597	85.82
27 WYOMING	5,275	4,721	89.50%	554	5,433	83.93
28 ILLINOIS	60,000	53,649	89.42%	6,351	61,800	87.73
29 MISSOURI	27,214	24,259	89.14%	2,955	28,030	88.72
30 MISSISSIPPI	8,591	7,647	89.01%	944	8,848	85.73
31 INDIANA	61,890	55,010	88.88%	6,880	63,746	87.77
32 WASHINGTON	18,833	16,736	88.87%	2,097	19,397	86.66
33 CONNECTICUT	14,587	12,958	88.83%	1,629	15,024	88.35
34 KANSAS	18,942	16,821	88.80%	2,121	19,510	88.27
35 NEW JERSEY	32,294	28,663	88.76%	3,631	33,262	87.74
36 CALIFORNIA	68,352	60,647	88.73%	7,705	70,402	86.79
37 ARKANSAS	8,498	7,527	88.57%	971	8,752	87.08
38 NEBRASKA	22,300	19,679	88.25%	2,621	22,969	87.05
39 MAINE	14,926	13,138	88.02%	1,788	15,373	85.82
40 TENNESSEE	21,168	18,611	87.92%	2,557	21,803	84.72
41 MONTANA	9,611	8,448	87.90%	1,163	9,899	86.30
42 LOUISIANA	14,467	12,713	87.88%	1,754	14,901	86.62
43 MASSACHUSETTS	26,576	23,342	87.83%	3,234	27,373	87.01
44 NEW MEXICO	8,462	7,410	87.57%	1,052	8,715	83.57
45 DELAWARE	8,821	7,703	87.33%	1,118	9,085	85.58
46 IDAHO	8,404	7,307	86.95%	1,097	8,656	84.30
47 COLORADO	17,237	14,945	86.70%	2,292	17,754	87.27
48 OREGON	12,683	10,990	86.65%	1,693	13,063	84.59
49 GEORGIA	33,739	29,095	86.24%	4,644	34,751	81.19
50 WEST VIRGINIA	12,190	10,507	86.19%	1,683	12,555	84.48
51 RHODE ISLAND	3,275	2,767	84.49%	508	3,373	82.87
52 DIST OF COL	1,132	934	82.51%	198	1,165	83.00
53 OKLAHOMA	13,800	11,223	81.33%	2,577	14,214	80.33
54 PHILIPPINES	1,000	793	79.30%	207	1,030	78.72
55 LATIN AMERICA	1,385	876	63.25%	509	1,426	56.81
TOTALS	1,445,882	1,301,215	89.99%	144,667	1,489,234	86.34



Thank you **FOR YOUR HARD WORK**

Thank you to all of you for your hard work and dedication for the
Department during the 2024-2025 membership year.
We greatly appreciate all of the American Legion Family for all that you do.



Let's unite to create a positive impact for Department of Utah!

DEPARTMENT *Fundraising*



Department Commander Joe Guimond asked Area 4 Commander Marti Bigbie to continue the program to collect Pull Tabs as one of his Commander projects this 2024-2025 membership year. Tabs collected will be given to RISE (an organization creating opportunities for and with people) which donates them to an organization in Salt Lake City, who then gives them to the Ronald McDonald House and Tabs for Dialysis. Since Area 4 Commander Bigbie has continued to do this for the last 8 years when working with Posts while Department Commander previously, several of Posts already donate directly to the Ronald McDonald House.



Please continue to collect and donate. Thank you!

Department Commander Joe wants a barrel filled by the 2025 Department Convention, but since it will not fit in Commander Bigbie's car, she will carry 5 gallon buckets and jars that the TOPS can be put in at each DEC meeting or other get togethers.

Area 4 Commander Bigbie is going to keep a record of pounds rather than count each tab so we will have a total pound count next June.

THIS CAN BE REPORTED BY THE POSTS ON THE CPR'S FOR 2025.

For additional questions, please contact Area 4 Commander Marti Bigbie.

JOIN US

utlegion.org



martibigbie@gmail.com

2024-2025 AREA COMMANDERS



Bob Jones
Area 1 Commander
 Post 9, Ogden
 801-336-6951
 rohojo1@aol.com



Kent Anderson
Area 2 Commander
 Post 68, Spanish Fork
 702-524-7728
 kba6991@gmail.com



Austin Kendall
Area 3 Commander
 Post 11, Vernal
 435-790-5159
 ajkendall01@gmail.com



Marti Bigbie
Area 4 Commander
 Post 142, Sun River
 435-668-5770
 martibigbie@gmail.com

AREA COMMANDER DUTIES AND COUNTIES

Every year, Area Commanders are nominated and elected to have oversight of their Districts while simultaneously working with Districts and Posts to help them be successful.

For the Department of Utah, there are 4 Area Commander positions. They serve as Department 2nd Vice Commanders over their representative Districts. Each area has 2-3 districts within their area. The Districts within each Area are as follows:

Area 1 (Northern Utah): Districts 1, 2, & 3
 Cache, Box Elder, & Rich Counties (District 1)
 Weber, Morgan, & Davis Counties (District 2)
 Summit, Wasatch Counties + SLC Post 2 (District 3)

Area 2 (Central Utah): District 4 & 8
 Utah & Juab Counties (District 4)
 Salt Lake & Tooele Counties (including SLC, less Post 2) (District 8)

Area 3 (Eastern Utah): Districts 5 & 9
 Carbon, Emery, Grand & San Juan Counties (District 5)
 Duchesne, Uintah, & Daggett Counties (District 9)

Area 4 (Southern Utah): Districts 6 & 7
 Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Millard & Wayne Counties (District 6)
 Iron, Beaver, Washington, Kane & Garfield Counties (District 7)

See the following pages for your District Commanders and the counties they serve.

Utah's 29 Counties & Their County Seats



AREA COMMANDER BUZZ



Bob Jones
Area 1 Commander

Greetings from Area 1, containing Districts 1, 2 & 3 of Northern Utah.

We are chugging along in preparation for the upcoming Districts 1, 2 & 3 Spring Conventions, where each District will elect new officers for the 2025-2026 year. I am excited to meet with dear friends in our Northern Utah Legion family who I don't see nearly often enough. I very much look forward to seeing them again.

On another note, spring and summer are upon us and we still have members who have not been personally invited to Post meeting and who have not paid their dues for 2025. I would encourage Post Commanders and Adjutants to look at their member rosters and then set up "Buddy Check" teams of two members, assign each team a percentage of Post members and ask each team to personally contact each member on their listings. Ask each team to have your teams to invite each member about their health and abilities to accomplish their daily tasks without assistance, to invite each member of their listing to attend Post meetings and other Post events, and for those members who have not renewed their membership for 2025 to renew during their visits.

Remember when you were serving our great nation the sense of pride you had in your uniform and of your obligation to each other, then ask if they are in need of that camaraderie, we each had during our military service. What better way do we have than to achieve that camaraderie than to attend Post meeting and other function. We each owe every veteran the chance to again enjoy the comradeship we share while in uniform.

Finally, if your Post is struggling and in need of assistance, I am always available to join you for meetings and other Post family events, please simply email or call me and I will be there to lend assistance to you, your members and families.



AREA COMMANDER BUZZ



Kent Anderson
Area 2 Commander

The American Legion, founded in 1919, has a long and proud history of advocating for veterans, service members, and their families. *As membership is vital for the continued success and impact of the Legion, finding effective ways to engage and recruit new members is essential.*

To attract new members, it is crucial to communicate the value and benefits of joining the American Legion. This includes:

Advocacy: Highlighting the Legion's role in influencing legislation that benefits veterans and their families.

Community: Emphasizing the sense of camaraderie and support that comes with being part of a veteran-focused organization.

Resources: Informing potential members about the programs and services available, such as career fairs, educational scholarships, and health care access.

Personal connections can significantly impact recruitment efforts.

Consider:

Direct Mail: Send personalized letters or postcards highlighting the benefits of membership and upcoming events.

Phone Outreach: Organize phone banks where current members call potential recruits to personally invite them to join.

Buddy System: Encourage current members to bring a friend to meetings or events. Younger veterans may have different interests and needs compared to older generations.

Tailor recruitment strategies to appeal to them:

Modern Communication: Use text messaging and social media for communication and event promotion.

Family-Friendly Activities: Organize events that welcome veterans with young families, such as picnics, sports leagues, and family fun days. Recruiting new members is only part of the equation; retaining them is equally important.

Focus on the following:

Welcoming Environment: Ensure new members feel welcomed and valued from their first meeting. Assign mentors or buddies to help them integrate.

Regular Communication: Keep members informed about upcoming events, meetings, and opportunities through newsletters, emails, and social media updates.

Recognition: Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of members, whether through awards, public recognition at meetings, or feature stories in newsletters.

Increasing membership in the American Legion requires a multifaceted approach that combines outreach, personalization, and engagement. By emphasizing the benefits of membership, actively recruiting, and fostering a welcoming environment, the Legion can continue to grow and support the veteran community effectively.

AREA COMMANDER BUZZ



Austin Kendall
Area 3 Commander

No report.



Marti Bigbie
Area 4 Commander

UPDATE FOR AREA 4

District 6 held their district meeting on March 22 at 9:00am. District officers were elected.

District 7 will hold their district meeting on Saturday, June 7, at 10-12 with registration for the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL at 9:00am. Meeting at the Golden Corral Restaurant. Lunch is on you.

UPDATE ON TABS TO BE ADDED TO THE TOTAL COUNT

Post 69 45 lbs 8 oz

Post 142 23 lbs 3 oz

Post 90 1 lb 4 oz

Post 9 7 lbs 7 oz

Post 36 22 lbs 1 oz

TOTAL TO DATE 99 LBS 7 OZ

2024-2025 DISTRICT COMMANDERS



Judy Botello
District 1 Commander
Area 1
Cache, Box Elder, &
Rich Counties



Jon Rue
District 2 Commander
Area 1
Weber, Morgan, &
Davis Counties



Steve Anderson
District 3 Commander
Area 1
Summit, Wasatch Counties
+ SLC Post 2



Shiela Heindel
District 4 Commander
Area 2
Utah & Juab Counties



James Martin
District 5 Commander
Area 3
Carbon, Emery, Grand &
San Juan Counties



Jeff Stithem
District 6 Commander
Area 4
Sanpete, Sevier, Piute,
Millard & Wayne Counties



Vacant
District 7 Commander
Area 4
Iron, Beaver, Washington,
Kane & Garfield Counties



Doug "Tommy" Smith
District 8 Commander
Area 2
Salt Lake & Tooele Counties
(including SLC, less Post 2)



Craig Carlson
District 9 Commander
Area 3
Duchesne, Uintah, &
Daggett Counties

DISTRICT COMMANDERS AND THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every year, District Commanders are nominated and elected to have oversight of their district while simultaneously working with multiple posts within their district to help them be successful. The District Commander serves as a liaison between the posts in their District and the Department of Utah. In their role as a District Commander they are also charged with visiting posts, providing training for posts, answering questions, leading District meetings regularly, holding activities and events to support veterans and their families, and being engaged with local community and state functions.

District Commanders typically have two Vice Commanders. Usually, the 1st Vice Commander is responsible for membership oversight and the 2nd Vice Commander has oversight of activity and events. The District Adjutant is typically an appointed position by the District Commander and works directly with Post Adjutants in tandem with the Department Adjutant to ensure membership and financial matters are managed timely and responsibly.

For the Department of Utah, there are 9 District Commander positions. It is recommended that District Commanders have been a Legionnaire for at least 3 years in a post leadership position before becoming a District Commander. For all members, it is also recommended that the free and online basic training is completed prior to becoming a District Commander so that they have a working knowledge of The American Legion. National Legion College is also recommended for those who are in post and District leadership positions, or those who potentially would like to be in post and district leadership roles. Learn more about National Legion College at legion.org/college.

For District Commander contact information, please contact your Area Commander.

2023-2025 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN



**TERRY SCHOW, PDC
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (NEC)
AND DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE CHAIR**

Did you know?

Department of Utah was approved by the National Convention Commission during the 2024 Spring Meetings to hold the 2030 National Convention in Salt Lake City. To learn more about National Conventions visit legion.org.



Please see the following from the Utah Department of Veteran and Military Affairs. Legislators have been hard at work with legislation affecting veterans, service members and their families.

Please remember to get to know your local legislators so that you know them, and they know you. It makes a difference for you and your families.

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

The 2025 Utah Legislative Session brought forth a series of bills aimed at supporting Utah's veterans, service members, and their families. From enhancing protections and addressing homelessness to expanding educational opportunities and recognizing military service, these legislative actions reflect a commitment to those who have served. Here's a brief overview of the key bills passed, covering general provisions, recognition of service, military affairs, and educational benefits.

GENERAL

HB 248 – Veteran Protections Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Verona Mauga (Primary) and Senator Jerry Stevenson

This bill provides that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection is responsible for enforcing civil penalties for individuals who unlawfully provide veterans with assistance in obtaining VA benefits and clarifies what conduct is not permitted when providing veterans with assistance obtaining those benefits.

HB 266 – Veteran Housing Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Jennifer Dailey-Provost (Primary) and Senator Calvin Musselman

This bill requires the Utah Homeless Services Board and the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs to work in conjunction to create best practices for assisting veterans experiencing homelessness.

HB 376 – National Guard Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Jefferson Burton (Primary) and Senator Ann Millner

This bill defines terms; amends provisions related to the appointment of the adjutant general; amends provisions related to the management of the State Armory Board; clarifies what electronic means the State Armory Board may use in conducting meetings and taking official action; allows for the National Guard to repay student loans for active members of the National Guard using current funds; addresses the appointment and responsibilities of certain judge advocates; addresses the use of force by a military service member or a member of the National Guard in certain circumstances; and provides that a military chaplain may solemnize a marriage.

HB 430 – Security and Land Restriction Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Candice Pierucci (Primary) and Senator Michael McKell

This bill introduces critical changes to land use and security protocols in Utah. Primarily, it aims to protect sensitive areas by prohibiting food delivery services and imposing additional restrictions on foreign entities near military installations and other designated sites. This bill reflects a proactive approach to safeguarding Utah's strategic assets and ensuring national security.

SB 62 – Spaceport Exploration Committee

Sponsors: Senator Jerry Stevenson (Primary) and Representative Val Peterson

This bill establishes the Spaceport Exploration Committee to assess the feasibility and potential benefits of creating a spaceport in Utah. The committee will define objectives, evaluate possible activities, conduct studies, and provide recommendations to the Legislature

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

SB 87 – DUI Sentencing Modifications

Sponsors: Senator Stephanie Pitcher (Primary) and Representative Andrew Stoddard

Clarifies that a veterans treatment court program is a problem-solving court an individual may participate in or successfully complete that allows a court to shorten or suspend the individual's suspension or revocation of the individual's license due to a DUI conviction.

SB 78 – Homeless Individuals Protection Amendments

Sponsors: Senator Jen Plumb (Primary) and Representative Tyler Clancy

This bill establishes a homeless service provider ombudsman within the Office of Homeless Services. This role is designed to address and resolve complaints from both individuals experiencing homelessness and service providers.

RECOGNITION

HB 32 – Borgstrom Brothers Memorial Highway

Sponsors: Representative Thomas Peterson (Primary) and Senator Scott Sandall

This bill designates Route 102 as the Borgstrom Brothers Memorial Highway. This bill honors the Borgstrom brothers, recognizing their contributions and sacrifices, by naming a section of Utah's state highway system in their memory. The legislation aims to create a lasting tribute, ensuring their legacy is remembered by residents and visitors traveling along this route.

Official Citation Honoring Vietnam Veterans

Sponsors: Representative Karianne Lisonbee and Senator Calvin Musselman

This official citation from the Utah Legislature acknowledges the profound sacrifices and contributions of Vietnam War veterans. It commemorates the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, highlighting the service of those who answered the call of duty between the 1950s and 1975. The citation recognizes the unique challenges faced by these veterans, including public disapproval upon their return, and honors the bravery of both American and Vietnamese individuals who served. The Utah Legislature, on February 26, 2025, formally recorded its appreciation for these veterans, their families, and all those who supported the war effort.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

HB 122 – Military Affairs Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Jefferson Burton (Primary) and Senator Todd Weiler

Clarifies services provided by the department, Formally assigns the State Approving Agency to the department, and moves the administration of easements around military installations from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity to the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs.

SB 19 – Utah Retirement Systems Amendments for Military Personnel

Sponsors: Senator Heidi Balderree (Primary) and Representative Val Peterson

This bill amends the Utah Retirement Systems to better accommodate military personnel and their spouses. Specifically, it allows unvested military spouses who must relocate due to Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders to retain their employer's contributions to their retirement accounts. This bill acknowledges the unique challenges faced by military families and aims to provide greater financial security during frequent relocations.

EDUCATION

HB 142 – Service Member and Veteran Amendments

Sponsors: Representative Jordan Teuscher (Primary) and Senator Todd Weiler

This bill removes the residency requirement for in-state tuition at a state institution of higher education for: active military members, military veterans, family members of active military members and family members of military veterans.

SB 17 – Services for Department of Defense Civilian Employees

Sponsors: Senator Ann Millner (Primary) and Representative Val Peterson

This bill extends education and employment benefits to civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DOD) who are transferred to Utah. This bill aims to support these individuals and their families by providing access to state-level resources, recognizing their contributions to national security and the state's economy. By including DOD civilians in these benefits, Utah acknowledges their unique circumstances and facilitates a smoother transition for those relocating to the state.



This is the inaugural article for the Service Officer Corner. Many of your members are not aware that the Legion has service officers who can help them with veteran's benefit and veteran's claim information. As we travel around the state doing the district meetings, we will have VA claims forms with us and we urge you to invite your members to the spring and fall district meetings. **Attached to this newsletter is a VA form 21-0966 VA intent to file a claim.** This form allows a veteran to file a VA claim within one year of the date of the form and if approved the VA benefit will be retroactive to the date filed. We encourage you to print out copies of these forms for members. A Veteran can file a VA claim for any injury or illness caused by or aggravated by military service. Member of the guard reserve are in a unique situation. If traveling to and from a drill and you are injured that can be a basis for a claim while at drill or summer camp. If your members have questions have them email one of the service officers listed below.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR ACCREDITED AMERICAN LEGION VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS

Terry Schow

tschow48@gmail.com
801-644-2058

Wayne Jackson

waynej@frontiernet.net
435-253-2975

Rick Mead

adjutant@utlegion.org
801-699-1526

The Department Service Office is located in the VA Regional Office at 550 Foothill Dr., Salt Lake City. Phone number 801-326-2380. Fax number 801-708-8078. They are there Monday and Wednesday from 10am-3pm.

Service officers are one of your best recruiting and retention tools. They offer valuable service to your members.

Did you know?

Legionnaire Tami Santerre is a new VSO for Department of Utah.

Tami Santerre
(801) 831-3677
AFLadyVet14@outlook.com
or tami.santerre@va.gov
(for any VSO inquiries, etc.)

Tami is in the VSO Office every Monday unless it's a holiday.

Office Address:

SLC Dept. of Veterans Affairs, 550 Foothill Blvd.
SLC, UT 84113

Office: (801) 326-2380 for Monday appts.
Fridays at Post 9 (4:30-6:00) 845 W. 24th St.,
Ogden Utah 84401

Tami will also go to District 2 posts upon request and do remote visits as needed, such support for nursing home and assisted living residents.

SECTION III: GENERAL BENEFIT ELECTION

IMPORTANT: VA may not be able to use this form to establish an effective date for benefits if you do not select one or more of the general benefits listed below.

19. I INTEND TO FILE FOR THE GENERAL BENEFIT(S) CHECKED BELOW: (Choose all that apply)

☐ COMPENSATION ☐ PENSION

NOTE: ONLY CHECK THE BOX BELOW IF YOU ARE A SURVIVING DEPENDENT OF THE VETERAN.

☐ SURVIVORS PENSION AND/OR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

IMPORTANT: After receiving this form, VA will give you the appropriate application to file for the general benefit you select above. You can also apply for VA disability compensation online at www.va.gov. If you give VA a completed application for the selected general benefit within *one* year of filing this form, your completed application will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of this form. Only the *first* completed application for each selected general benefit that is received after you file this form will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of this form. You may indicate your intent to file for more than one general benefit on this form or you may submit a separate intent to file (VA Form 21-0966) for each general benefit. Please complete as much of this form as possible, as VA cannot process this form if we cannot identify the claimant and/or veteran.

SECTION IV: DECLARATION OF INTENT AND SIGNATURE

By filing this form, I **HEREBY INDICATE MY INTENT** to apply for one or more general benefits under the laws administered by VA.

I acknowledge that:

- (1) this is **not a claim for benefits**,
- (2) I must file a complete application for each general benefit with VA before VA will process my claim; and
- (3) a complete application for the same general benefit(s) as indicated on this form must be received within one year of the date VA receives this form for my application to be considered filed as of the date of this form.

20. SIGNATURE OF VETERAN/CLAIMANT/AUTHORIZED AGENT (REQUIRED)

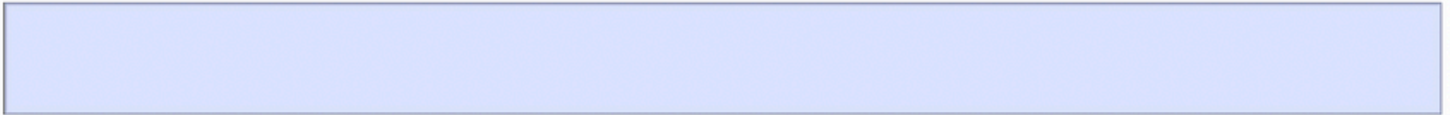
 (Redacted signature)

21. DATE SIGNED (MM/DD/YYYY)

- -

22. NAME OF ATTORNEY, AGENT, OR VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION (VSO) (Please Print)

NOTE: This form may only be completed by a VSO, attorney, or agent if a valid power of attorney has been completed.

 (Redacted name)

Where to Send Correspondence - After completing this form, mail to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Evidence Intake Center
P.O. Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547- 4444

PENALTY: The law provides severe penalties (including fine and/or imprisonment) for willfully submitting any statement or evidence of a material fact you know to be false, or for fraudulent receipt of any document you are not entitled to.

PRIVACY ACT NOTICE: VA will not disclose information collected on this form to any source other than what has been authorized under the Privacy Act of 1974 or Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations 1.576 for routine uses (i.e., civil or criminal law enforcement, congressional communications, epidemiological or research studies, the collection of money owed to the United States, litigation in which the United States is a party or has an interest, the administration of VA programs and delivery of benefits, verification of identity and status, and personnel administration) as identified in the VA system of records, 58VA21/22/28, Compensation, Pension, Education, and Veteran Readiness and Employment Records-VA, published in the Federal Register. Your obligation to respond is required only to preserve a date of claim for an application that is received within one year of receipt of this form. VA uses your Social Security number to identify if you have a claim file and to ensure that your records are properly associated with your claim file. VA will not deny an individual benefits for refusing to provide his or her SSN unless the disclosure of the SSN is required by Federal Statute of law in effect prior to January 1, 1975, and still in effect. The requested information is considered relevant and necessary to determine the appropriate application and provide it to the claimant.

RESPONDENT BURDEN: We need this information to determine the intent of the claimant and to provide the claimant with the appropriate application for VA benefits (38 U.S.C. 5102). Title 38, United States Code, allows us to ask for this information. We estimate that you will need an average of 5 minutes to review the instructions, find the information, and complete this form. VA cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless a valid OMB control number is displayed. You are not required to respond to a collection of information if this number is not displayed. Valid OMB control numbers can be located on the OMB Internet Page at www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. If desired, you can call 1-800-827-1000 to get information on where to send comments or suggestions about this form.

Almost ready: Work on restoration of Utah's 'Merci Car' reaches its home stretch

Standard-Examiner

Last spring, Utah's "Merci Car" was transported from Ogden's Union Station to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for restoration work to be completed by Mike Pannell's Vintage Rail Restorations. Now, the boxcar — one of 49 train boxcars gifted to the United States by France following World War II — is inching closer to its Junction City return.

Originally constructed during the late 19th century, the Merci Car is a "forty-and-eight" boxcar, a name denoting the number of men (40) or horses (eight) that could be contained inside for transport. The boxcars were used by the French Army to transport troops, horses and freight during both World Wars. They were also used by the German forces occupying France during WWII to transport prisoners of war and captured civilians to concentration camps.

Utah's car was part of the 1949 Train de la Reconnaissance Française, or "Merci Train," which contained boxcars packed with gifts that were transported from France to all 48 states — Hawaii and Alaska were not yet part of the union — as well as the District of Columbia (which shared a car with the Territory of Hawaii), in recognition of American donations/assistance after the war.

For Pannell, playing a role in preserving that history has been a moving experience.

"It means an awful lot because the history behind these cars is, by a majority of people, completely forgotten about or unknown," Pannell said. "The actual military history and the significance of the cars and why they were donated and everything else is largely forgotten. So, from that point of view, it's quite a sobering project."

Before being shipped off to Wyoming, Utah's Merci Car had been in Ogden dating back to 2002. Before that, it resided for decades at Salt Lake City's Memory Grove Park, where it was damaged by weather and vandals.

Despite that and the years of weathering since, the car arrived for restoration in better condition than some similar boxcars that have come Pannell's way. However, restoring it has nonetheless been a massive undertaking.

"There is more work than we envisaged because, initially, we were going to try and save as much of the original wood as we could," Pannell said. "But it turned out that with the graffiti that it suffered in Salt Lake and the general rot of the wood itself, we decided to replace everything."

Still, Pannell reports that work on Utah's Merci Car is ahead of schedule.

"We're probably 75%, maybe 80% complete on the body of the car and we are, I'm guessing, about 70% complete on the underframe of the car at this point," he said.

Throughout the restoration process, Pannell has relied on people like Jeff Livingston, who spearheaded the restoration of Hawaii's Merci car, and Merci Train expert David Knutson, for their knowledge and help.

Upon completion, the car will have retained its original steel, most of its original roof and some of its original wood. When the work is done, Pannell hopes to see the car displayed alongside Wyoming's "Merci Car" before it's returned to Union Station, perhaps as early as May.

"Our intention is to have this one loaded up on a truck and take it down to the Legion in town and have both of them together just for one afternoon, because it'll be the only time this will ever happen," Pannell said.

Pannell added that the restoration contract runs through August of this year. By Ryan Aston | Apr 9, 2025



Utah's "Merci Car," photographed Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024.

Photo supplied, Michael Pannell



A 2025 photo of Utah's "Merci Train" boxcar. Restoration work on the car is ongoing.



**NINZEL RASMUSON, PDC
DEPARTMENT
'BE THE ONE' CHAIR**



Resources

What's the quickest way to get help in an emergency?

If you are a veteran in crisis, resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- Call 988 and press 1
- Text 838255
- Visit the VA Crisis Line website at [mentalhealth.va.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

You may have heard that there is a new Be the One app! The Columbia Lighthouse Project has worked specifically with The American Legion to tailor the app to The American Legion's Be the One suicide prevention mission. As mentioned in The American Legion magazine May 2025 issue, One of the app's key features is privacy. "I don't know who you are, I don't have your phone number, I don't know any of that, The Columbia Project's Wendy Lakso said who provides Be the One training. "That's important to know as a veteran. I can't track you. All I know is what location you're in by zip code." The app also provides links to local resources. (p.10). Download it today on your smartphone.

One of the challenges of Be the One in our Department is community outreach. Such as, events that are happening that impact the lives of veterans, families, and the community at large. Reach out to me if you are having events so we can share the information. The more visibility we have about events and other community outreach activities, the better!

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be the Be the One Chair for the 2024-2025 membership year. It has been a highlight in my life to serve each of you this year.



UDVMA SURVEY - SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs (UDVMA) has partnered with the Ken C. Gardner Policy Institute to better understand how and where active service members and veterans access suicide prevention resources, the obstacles they face in getting help, and their preferred ways of receiving information about these vital resources. They are asking veterans, service members, and their families to participate in a short 7-minute survey.

“As part of our ongoing commitment through the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their families, we need your crucial partnership. This survey is an important step in understanding the unique challenges our veterans and military community face, particularly regarding mental health support.” -Governor Spencer J. Cox

By sharing your experiences, you can help us identify more effective ways to deliver suicide prevention resources to active service members and veterans who need them most.

This survey will take about 7 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary and will not impact any services you receive from veteran or military organizations.

If you are willing to participate, please click on this anonymous survey link:
https://eccles.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Did4nkrzqmUuyO

The survey will remain open for two weeks (until May 13).

If you would like to contact the research team directly, please email Kara Byrne at kara.byrne@utah.edu.

We also encourage you to share this survey with your networks and communities. Your collective participation will provide invaluable insights.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for helping us reach those who need support.



NINZEL RASMUSON, PDC DEPARTMENT TRAINING CHAIR

April 2025 brought a training we received by Paula Stephenson, Department Americanism Chair. Americanism programs were highlighted and important information was provided to those in attendance. If you missed the training, you can contact Paula with further questions or visit utlegion.org under the Training and News tab for additional information.

This month marks the last training session from Rick Mead, Department Adjutant, about CPRs and CSRs with support from the SAL. Don't miss out on important information at this training session scheduled for May 22, 2025 at 6pm via Zoom. The Zoom link will be provided to you from the Department office if your email has been provided to the Department Adjutant.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve again as your Training Chair for the 2024-2025 membership year. I love learning and the opportunity to get to know each of you better! Have a great summer and we will hopefully see you at conventions.

Did you know?

You can access training information offered by National HQ at legion.org/information-center/training. There is a wealth of information available to you at your fingertips.



National American Legion College

If you have never attended the National American Legion College (NALC) then you are missing out on a valuable and important experience as a Legionnaire. Check out legion.org for more information.

Applications can be downloaded, completed, and submitted to your department leadership. Your department must endorse you before they submit any applications to national. Applications received from students will not be accepted and will be returned to you and your department adjutant. Applications are due from your department by July 31st. If you have questions, please submit them to ia@legion.org.



2024 -2025 Training Calendar

Department of Utah

DATE	TOPIC	INSTRUCTOR
September 26, 2024 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	Membership	Rick Mead, Dept Adjutant John Robertson, Dept VC & Membership Chair
October 12, 2024 Saturday - in person	Fall Training Conference See flyer below	Various instructors
October 24, 2024 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	Nonprofit Information for Posts and Districts	Rick Mead, Dept Adjutant Ninzel Rasmuson, PDC Barb Beck, Dept Judge Advocate
November 21, 2024 (3rd Thursday) - Zoom	Temporary Financial Assistance Children & Youth Programs	Richard Fisher, ANEC Children & Youth Chair
December 12, 2024 (2nd Thursday) - Zoom	How to Run a Post Meeting Post Fundraising, Activities & Events	Bob Jones, PDC Area 1 Commander
January 23, 2025 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	Auxiliary Membership, President's Project & Poppy Program	Mike Rasmuson Dept Auxiliary President
February 27, 2025 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	Veteran Service Officers & Claims	Terry Schow, PDC, NEC & VSO Rick Mead, Dept Adjutant & VSO
March 27, 2025 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	Utah Boys State	Doug Case, PDC Utah Boys State President
April 24, 2025 (4th Thursday - Zoom)	Americanism Baseball, Scouting & Jr Shooting Sports	Paula Stephenson, PNVC, PDC Americanism Chair Kit Workman, Jr Shooting Sports Chair
May 22, 2025 (4th Thursday) - Zoom	CPRs & CSRs	Rick Mead, Dept Adjutant SAL Detachment Adjutant

*Subject to change.

*Zoom links to be provided by the Department Adjutant to all Department, District and Post leadership. Post Commanders and Adjutants are responsible for providing training information to all members in their post.

*Powerpoint presentation available after training under the Training and News on the Department website (utlegion.org).

*All Powerpoint presentations to utilize the Department Powerpoint template to ensure professionalism for all trainings provided.

HISTORIAN



**NINZEL RASMUSON, PDC
DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN**

The 2024-2025 membership year is already coming to a close soon. It is always amazing to me how time flies and the rest is already history!

Hopefully, you were recording your post histories and read information earlier this year about how you can submit your post histories for the national competition.

In 2025, as approved in Resolution 20, the national post contest will become a showcase. Departments will be able to submit:

- One hard-copy post history
- One digital post history
- One digital department history

Beginning in 2025, post histories will be presented as best-practice ideas for all posts. Digital post submissions will be made available through the national library and museum, and hard-copy submissions will be displayed at the national convention. All submissions will receive a certificate of recognition from the national historian, who may also recognize special achievements by individual submissions.

The national historian will continue to conduct a contest for digital department histories, with rules to be announced annually by that year's historian within 45 days of their appointment. Rules for the 2025 National Historian's Contest will be announced by Oct. 13, 2024. Department contest entries will be due by Aug. 1, 2025, and post showcase submissions will need to be received by Aug. 8, 2025.

Should you need additional information, please contact me.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Department Historian for the 2024-2025 membership year. May you always preserve the important histories of your posts. Have a wonderful summer and hopefully I will see you at the conventions soon!



Did you know?

In the State of Utah they have a dedicated website to learn more history on the go!

Simply go to the 'History To Go' website at historytogo.utah.gov to learn more about the great state of Utah. This site includes articles, exhibits, historic photographs and lots of Utah history.

KNOW MORE





DEPARTMENT OF UTAH AMERICANISM PROGRAMS 2024-2025

UTAH BOYS STATE

Douglas Case, President/Chairman

Call: (888) 222-6057

Email: utahboysstate@utlegion.org

Website: www.utahboysstate.org

(Information/Student Registration/
Counselor Registration)

HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL (U.S. Constitution) CONTEST

Shirley Haindel, Chairman

Home: (801) 768-4827

Email: shaindel@gmail.com

Website: www.legion.org/oratorical

Class of 2025: June 8-14, 2025

at Weber State University (WSU)

Scholarships at Graduation: \$500 to \$10,000

**WSU to 2024 Boys State graduates =
\$1.9 million**

Post Contests in January 2025

District Contests in February 2025

Department Contest: March 1, 2025

Scholarships: Dept level: \$750-\$1,500

National level: \$2,000-\$25,000

AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

Major Kit Workman, Chairman

Call: (801) 540-6464

Email: kworkman1@aol.com

Website: www.legion.org > GET INVOLVED > YOUTH PROGRAMS > JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

**Competition Schedule: September 1, 2024 to
July 26, 2025**

Scholarships: \$500 to \$5,000

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Steve Burgess, Chairman

Call: (801) 443-1271

Email: steve@albaseballutah.org

Website: www.albaseballutah.org

Nation website: www.legion.org/baseball

Steve Hansen, Baseball Commissioner

Call: (435) 760-7030

Email: shansen2121@yahoo.com

Online registration opens January 1, 2025

Scholarships: \$500 to \$5,000

SCOUTING

Gene Cottrell, Chairman

Call: (435) 830-9518

Email: genecottrell1967@gmail.com

National website: www.legion.org/scouting

**Eagle Scout of the Year Applications due March 1,
2025 to Utah Department Adjutant**

Application download from National website

Scholarships: \$500 to \$10,000

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Richard Fisher, Alternate NEC

Call: (801) 698-8104

Email: rfisher590@xmission.com

**Website: www.legion.org/tfa for Temporary
Financial Assistance Information**

Paula Stephenson, Utah Americanism Chairman
Call: 801-589-2871 Email: pstephns@aol.com

October 18, 2024



\$ SCHOLARSHIPS \$

UTAH BOYS STATE

Douglas Case, President/Chairman

Call: (889) 222-6057

Email: utahboysstate@utalegion.org

Website: www.utahboysstate.org

(Information/Student Registration/
Counselor Registration)

**Class of 2025: June 8-14, 2025 at Weber State
University (WSU)**

Applications start online February 1–April 15

www.utahboysstate.org

Scholarships at Graduation: \$500 to \$10,000

WSU (\$1.9 million in 2024) and private scholarships

Samsung Scholarships \$1,250 to \$10,000

HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL (U.S. Constitution) CONTEST

Shirley Heindel, Chairman

Home: (801) 768-4527

Email: sheindel@gmail.com

Website: www.legion.org/oratorical

Post Contests in January 2025

District Contests in February 2025

Department Contest: March 1, 2025

Scholarships: Dept level: \$750-\$1,500

National level: \$2,000-\$25,000

AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

Major Kit Workman, Chairman

Call: (801) 540-6464

Email: kworkman1@aol.com

Website: www.legion.org > GET INVOLVED > YOUTH PROGRAMS > JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

**Competition Schedule: September 1, 2024 to
July 26, 2025**

Scholarships: \$500 to \$5,000

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Steve Hansen, Baseball Commissioner

Call: (435) 760-7030

Email: shansen2121@yahoo.com

Nation website: www.legion.org/baseball

Scholarships: \$500 to \$5,000

Online registration opens January 1, 2025

SCOUTING

Gene Cottrell, Chairman

Call: (435) 880-9518

Email: genecottrell1967@gmail.com

National website: www.legion.org/scouting

**Eagle Scout of the Year Applications due March 1,
2025 to Utah Department Adjutant**

Application download from National website

Scholarships: \$500 to \$10,000

OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS (www.legion.org/scholarships)

LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP: needs based for children of post 9/11 fallen servicemembers or
veterans with a 50% or higher VA disability rating

ANAVICUS (Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada & US): \$1,500. Nine scholarships annually



Introducing a great young American, Gavin Graff, graduate of Utah Boys State class of 2024 and Daniels Fund scholarship recipient. Gavin hails from Desert Hills High School and he was elected Mayor of Wagner City (a mock city within Utah Boys State). His school and community engagement are an exemplary model and worthy of a completely separate article in and of itself, perhaps another time. Here is Gavin's Boys State story in his own words: "I wanted to attend Boys State because I have long been interested in how our government works and I hoped that it would be an opportunity to learn about the United States processes. I also wanted to enhance my leadership skills and meet other students who shared interests and values. While growing up, the political environment I observed was one of polarization. In our current climate, education and understanding the fundamentals of government is valuable to help create a healthy space for discourse. I wanted to attend Boys State to have some first-hand experience in this kind of civics.

My experience at Boys State exceeded my expectations. I had so much fun meeting new people and working together with my city. The responsibilities of Boys State seemed daunting at first but quickly became something to look forward to as we progressed through the week. Boys State taught me about our government in a way that no class has been able to, something I am very grateful for. Through guest speakers and personal interactions, I also gained a greater appreciation for the American Legion and our amazing veterans who volunteer their time to be a part of Boys State. I really enjoyed learning from them and their mentorship.

Serving as one of the mayors of Utah Boys State I was given the unique opportunity to apply the leadership, problem-solving and communication skills I have developed through high school and my involvement in extracurriculars. Because of the hands-on-approach of Boys State, I now have a much better understanding of how our government works. I believe it's important for young people to be involved in shaping the future of our communities and my experience at Boys State helped equip me with the knowledge and skills to be a better citizen. In addition, Boys State was incredibly helpful in making me a more appealing applicant to universities and scholarships.

I'm extremely grateful to be receiving the Daniels Fund Scholarship. Receiving this scholarship will allow me to graduate from college debt free. Bill Daniels was a decorated veteran of WWII and the Korean War. He would later become an early pioneer in cable television and with his fortune establish the Daniels Fund. Being a part of this foundation is an honor and I am glad to represent such an organization. I'll be using my Daniels Fund Scholarship to attend Columbia University in New York City starting this fall. I'm going to study neuroscience with the ultimate goal of attending medical school to become a physician. I'll miss Utah, but I am excited to attend college and challenge myself, step outside my comfort zone, and grow as an individual".

Finally, what advice do you have for potential Utah Boys State citizens?

"Attending Utah Boys State was one of the most valuable experiences I've had during high school. Boys State is so much more than just a US government summer camp, it's an opportunity to become a better American. The skills you will learn and the friendships you'll make will impact you profoundly. Boys State also teaches something that is notoriously difficult to grasp: Respect. Respect for your country, the people who protect it, and your fellow Americans. Regardless of your background or your personal views, Boys State is for you. If you have the drive and commitment to be a Boys State Citizen it will repay you in ways that money never will".

Submitted by Doug Case, President Utah Boys State

UTAH BOYS STATE



NINZEL RASMUSON, PDC UTAH BOYS STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & UTAH BOYS STATE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

A new event that we are excited about this year is the Welcome Reception that is happening on June 8, 2025 to welcome the new class of 2025. Citizens, parents, American Legion Family, dignitaries, and community members are welcome to attend, however, an RSVP is required. An invitation by email has been sent out by the Department Adjutant. If you have not received this invitation by email, please contact Rick Mead, Department Adjutant.

As it is with every event, funding is needed to support this event and supporting future participants of Utah Boys State who may not be able to afford the attendance fee.

Please go to utahboysstate.org/ubs-foundation.org to donate.

Every penny counts. Thank you for your support!

DONATE



In addition to donations, we are always looking for volunteers to support our efforts. If you have recommendations for Foundation Board members, please email a resume to ubsf@utahboysstate.org. Think of individuals who are influencers in your community. Do they engage with the community well? Do they have knowledge that will help the foundation? What expertise do they have that will help build Utah Boys State? Let us know!



Did you know?

The Utah Boys State Executive Director has the role of overseeing the curriculum and other activities for Utah Boys State while serving with the Utah Boys State President to ensure all of the citizens have a great experience while attending the youth summer camp in June.

The Utah Boys State Corporation (aka "schoolhouse") is a separate entity from the Utah Boys State Foundation (501c3).

Utah Boys State Foundation



The Utah Boys State Foundation is looking for donors and those who would like to raise funds for Utah Boys State. Operation costs are extensive to run the program in June and help boys in need. The foundation would greatly appreciate your support.

Should you be interested in supporting the foundation, please contact Ninzel Rasmuson, Utah Boys State Foundation President, for additional information. She can be reached via phone at 385-900-3124 or via email at ubsf@utahboysstate.org.



**2024-2025 Utah Boys State
Foundation and Corporation Meeting Schedule**
6pm, Foundation Meeting
7pm, Corporation Meeting
**Subject to Change*

July 29, 2024 (Zoom meeting)

August 19, 2024 (Zoom meeting)

September 30, 2024 (Quarterly meeting, in-person)

October 21, 2024 (Zoom meeting)

November 18, 2024 (Zoom meeting)

December 16, 2024 (Quarterly meeting, in-person)

January 20, 2025 (Zoom meeting)

February 17, 2025 (Zoom meeting)

March 17, 2025 (Quarterly meeting, in-person) – Location: TBD

April 21, 2025 (Zoom meeting)

May 19, 2025 (Zoom meeting)

June 2025 (Quarterly meeting, in-person) – Utah Boys State, Weber State University



Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion

For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

to maintain law and order;

to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;

to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

to make right the master of might;

to promote peace and goodwill on earth;

to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of
The American Legion (Auxiliary Only);

to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

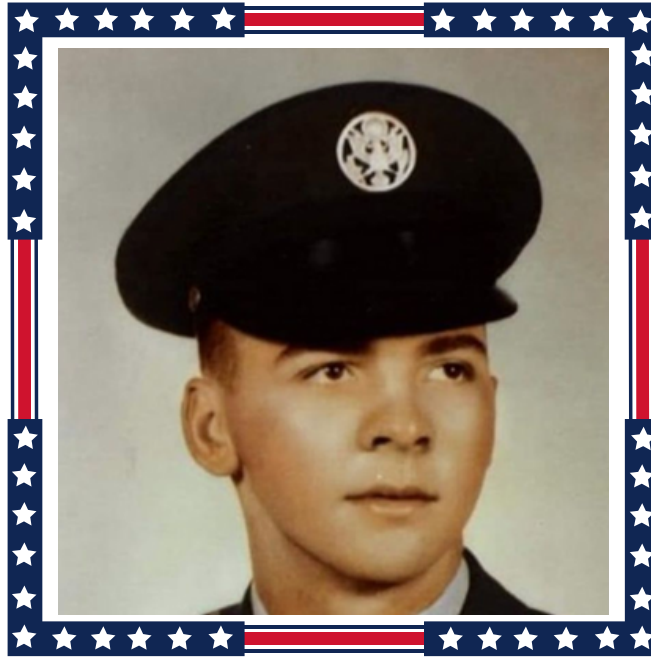
CALL TO ACTION!



Challenging every Legionnaire and Auxiliary member to memorize the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion with a goal to have it completely memorized by the end of this year.

*You got
this!*

LEGIONNAIRE HIGHLIGHT



NORM NELSON

Tribute to Norm Nelson

Past American Legion Post, District, and Area Commander

He was one of the very best and did so many Military Funeral Honors, Courts of Honors and Posting of the Colors all over Northern Utah. His team posted the Colors for the Olympics in 2002. Norm was recognized as a Distinguished Veteran by the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs, was a member of the George E Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home Construction Advisory Committee and a member of the Veterans Home Advisory Committee. I nominated him as a Pioneer in Blue for the United States Air Force and he was one of a hand full selected from around the United States. Norm was one of a select group of Veterans that could be counted on to help a Veteran or on a Veterans project anytime day or night, or weekends. No one did more for our Veterans. Honored to have known and worked with Norm. He will be sorely missed. My sincere condolences to Ms Willis and the family. -Terry Schow, NEC

UTAH AMERICAN LEGION HONOR GUARDS



HONORED TO SERVE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Throughout the State of Utah, hundreds of Legionnaires render funeral detail services as members of their post as American Legion Honor Guard members. It is an honor and privilege to provide this support and service to veterans families when they lose a loved one. Services are provided regardless of rain, snow, or shine.

Families may request services from their local posts. Please contact the Department Adjutant at adjutant@utlegion.org for more contact information about Honor Guards in Utah.



Legionnaires, Post 1, Nephi



Honoring Our Honor Guards, 5/2024

Resources

Visit the website below to share your Honor Guard stories on LegionTown USA.

<https://www.legiontown.org/honor-guard>



Thru rain or sleet or
heat or snow,
the American Legion
Honor Guard will go.

To perform their duties
on command
in honor of all those
who defended this
land.

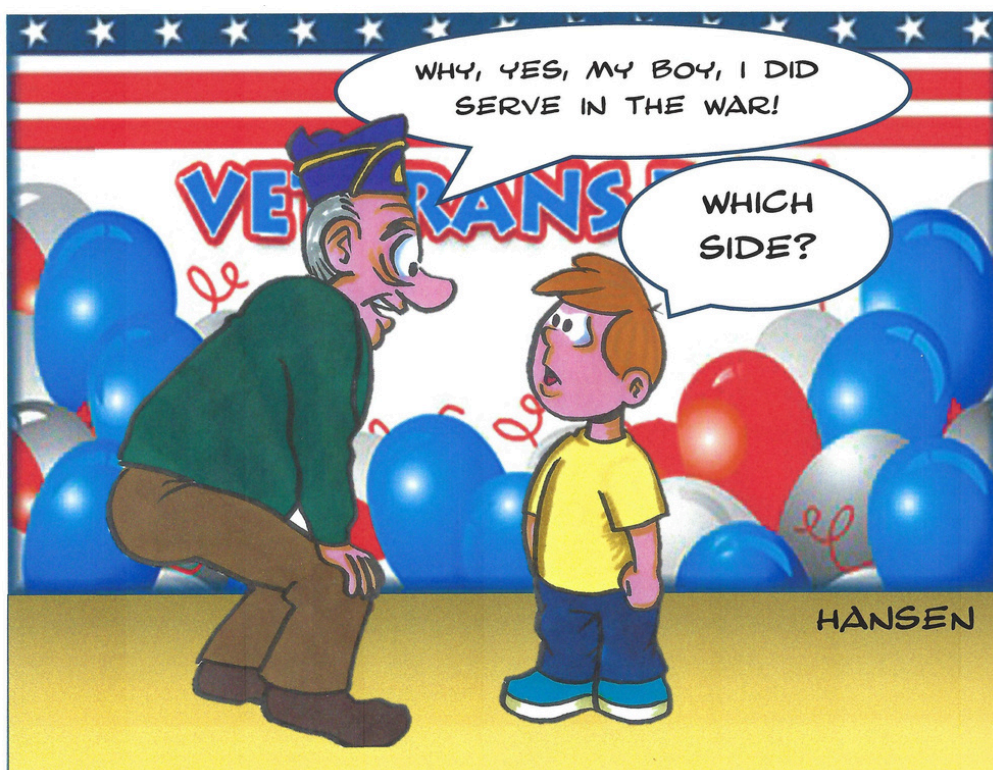
Their gesture of good
deeds for the family
bereaved will bring
comfort and closure to
what they have
achieved.

Credit: Legion.org

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO

Some of the following pages show the amazing amount of service posts do as “Blue Hatters” in their communities. The posts who provided submissions are examples of what we know is happening throughout the Department. As a Department, we are grateful to every member’s commitment to the Preamble of the Constitution of the American Legion. Keep up the great work and know that we “Thank You For Everything You Do!”

AMERICAN LEGION



HA HA HA
HA HA HA

Post 27, Farmington, UT

Thank you to Kent Hansen, member of Post 27, who share his cartoon talents with the Department regularly. We all appreciate your talent and enjoy a laugh every time!

Utah American Legion helps students learn about citizenship

Post 72, Orem, UT

Students at Arches Academy in Orem, Utah, gained new respect for America by participating in the Milestones of Freedom program, becoming immigrants for a day to experience the path to citizenship with the support of local American Legion Post 72 members.



You can view The American Legion National HQ
YouTube Video at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/jG-rRdHTvWs?si=2do5p09vNz6kjACI>



THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO

Post 142, Sun River, UT

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS FOR POST 142 SUNRIVER

At the April 2nd membership meeting the program was the Utah Tech ROTC. Instructor Captain Dalan G. Bennett and Staff Sergeant Austin Johnson who is the Military Science 1 Instructor for the Freshman cadets presented the program by powerpoint with pictures of accomplishments of what they have done. Captain Bennett brought 3 of the 5 Junior Cadets (Miracle Maae, Keeham Moulton, Katherine Glaser) who will be Seniors and commissioned in the Spring. Currently in the Utah Tech ROTC program are 15 men and 13 women total to date of 28 in the program. About 30% are or have prior military duty both stateside and overseas duty. The 3 Cadets each answered questions from the Post members.

(PICTURES 3697 - left to right - Cadet Miracle Maae, Cadet Keeham Moulton, Cadet Katherine Glaser, Staff Sergeant Austin Johnson and Capt. Dalan G Bennett

Picture 3698 - Post 142 member Eugene D'Arezzo - gives all upcoming events from Utah Tech

Picture 3699 - Captain Dalan G Bennett prefers to speak without a mike gave overview of the program then opened up to questions)

Post 142 SunRiver works at the STUFF SALE at the Country Club where the Post sells donuts, cookies and coffee as one of the fundraisers. ALSO buddy checks and recruiting new members are done while passing out donuts.

14th Annual 2025 MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE will be held at SunRiver Veterans Honor Park- Monday, May 26 at 8:00 am (flyer attached) where Post members along with other VSOs will be posting the flags. The Guest Speaker will be CMS (RET) JERRY RANDALL member of Post 90.



**14th Annual
SunRiver Veterans Honor Park – Monday, May 26
2025 Memorial Day Service**



**Everyone is invited to attend the Memorial Day service at the
SunRiver Veterans Honor Park at 8:00 AM**

Guest Speaker

CMS (RET.) JERRY RANDALL

Special Participants

Master of Ceremonies: John Kelley
Soloist: Terri Metcalf-Peterson
Bagpipes: John Mayer

Chaplain (RET.): Forest Addington
Photography: Richard Church
Sound: Marcus Warren & Pat Ault

Participating Groups

American Legion Post 142
Marine Corps League Detachment 1270
Daughters of The American Revolution
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Honor Guard
Patriot Guard Riders of Southern Utah
Sons of the American Revolution
American Red Cross

Seating will be limited, please bring your own chair

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO

Post 69, Kanab, UT

At the recent Vietnam Veterans program sponsored by Wreaths Across America and Post 69 Kanab, one of the guest speakers was TERRY L. PARTHMORE who read some of his poetry that he wrote during recovery from surgeries. Terry published 17 combat poems in his book A CHILDHOOD LOST memories, dreams, and nightmares. Vietnam Veteran 1969-1972. All were great, but the one I personally like was number 11 titled SHE that Terry wrote in 2003.

SHE

By Terry L. Parthemore

She flew above the base camp, raised up with the morning sun.
Brought down and folded neatly when the weary day was done.
Boys, who turned to men each day, were so proud to see her fly.
She'd wave and look down upon them from her perch in the sky.
A symbol of a nation that seemed a million miles away.
On the staff, she'd dance and prance knowing she would always stay.
Then, one night, a battle raged. She was not upon the pole.
Carried from her resting place, by a young, man to a hole.
They found them in the morning, where they both had joined the fight.
Both had fallen, side by side, sometime in the bloody night.
His friends wrapped him within her, sent them both back to his home.
She was torn and tattered, too scarred and battered to roam.
They took her from upon him while a lonely bugler played.
Carefully, folded neatly, he was gone, and still, she stayed.
She was given to his parents before, a small and grieving crowd.
This fair, star spangled banner had become his final shroud.

Another guest speaker was Adjutant/Finance Officer Glen Chamberlain from Post 120 Thaddius Hodges, Orderville. Glen's speech is as follows:

I was asked to speak about what my service in Viet Nam meant to me. I am proud to have served because of those who served before me, with me, after me and those still serving. I am proud to be called a veteran because of the quality of that group of people.

I want to say a little about how I got to be a Hospital Corpsman. In the fall of 1965, I was living and working in Las Vegas. I worked at a Texaco station for Richard Jameson. A friend got out of the Navy and was looking for work. He moved in with me and went to work at the North Vegas Texaco. I had already received my Draft Notice, had my physical and was Classified 1-Y. I guessed that meant one year. So, I knew I needed to go in the service. My friend had been a Sonar Man, and I thought that sounded pretty cool. One day a co-worker said he needed to leave. He was going to go join the Navy. I said, "just a minute, I will go with you." After joining the Navy and taking all of the tests, they said I could be anything I wanted, except sonar. I guess I am tone deaf. So, I became a Hospital Corpsman. 14 years later, on January 1, 1979, that same friend and I joined the Kane County Sheriffs' Office. That Sonar Man and friend was Doug Crosby.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO

Post 69, Kanab, UT, Cont'

To those currently serving and to their families, thank you. Your dedication and sacrifice have kept our nation strong and free.

To all veterans, whether you served on the front lines or supported from behind the scenes, your contributions matter. Your service has made a difference and our country is grateful.

Korean War veterans fought in what is often called the "Forgotten War," but we have not forgotten they served in harsh and unforgiving conditions, halted the spread of Communism and laid the groundwork for a free and prosperous South Korea.

To those who served in Viet Nam, we carried out our duty with honor in a deeply divisive time. Many of us returned home to a nation that failed to give us the welcome home we would have liked. President Nixon said there was no event in American history more misunderstood than the Viet Nam War. When brave men and women served our country all those years ago, they fought and sacrificed for a noble cause. Many died for it, giving the ultimate sacrifice for freedom and for country. We hoped for the same outcome as South Korea. But things were different.

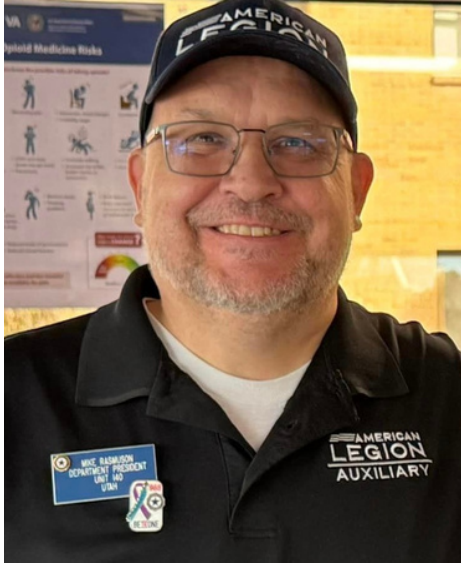
What binds all of us together across the years and across the conflicts and wars, is a shared commitment to duty, honor and country. We have passed the torch of liberty from one generation to the next, ensuring that the flame of freedom continues to burn brightly. The freedoms we enjoy, the security we cherish and the opportunities we have, are the results of our labor and sacrifice.

Thank you for your service, your sacrifice and your continued dedication to our nation.
May God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America. -Glen Chamberlain, Legionnaire

I ASKED AND RECEIVED PERMISSION TO READ THIS TO VARIOUS GROUPS AS THIS MESSAGE
NEEDS TO BE HEARD BY ALL GROUPS NOT JUST VETERANS. (Marti Bigbie, Area 4 Commander)



AUXILIARY



MIKE RASMUSON
DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Greetings Everyone!

We just passed tax day, and it reminds me that sometimes we all need motivation for that 'final push' to get us over the hump. I was just looking at our 2024-2025.

Membership report and we are almost 89% of the way to our goal. This is the best we have done in membership percentage in quite a while. We only need about 100 more members to reach our goal. Just think, do you know anyone that is eligible to be a member that you haven't talked to yet? Can we make that final push? Only time will tell.



I was seriously ill in March-- and I'm still catching up. What did I miss? National President Trish Ward's two day whirlwind visit. By all reports, she appreciated our laid back, people experience driven approach to having her enjoy Utah. Special thanks to Cary for making it all happen.

Girls State! We are in the prime season to be talking to local schools about getting girls registered for one of our signature programs. My wife jumped into a Zoom meeting on my behalf for a Girls State board meeting and subsequent training and she was impressed with the participation. Great work!

Poppies! Memorial Day will be here before you know it. What experiences are you going to share with your family, friends, Unit, Post or District? Plan now and get out recognize Veterans in your community.

We have our Department Convention coming up in June. We would love to see you there. We will be working on building your knowledge of how to run a Unit, District or your Committee. We will be having a more open format that will allow us to collaborate and have a great experience!

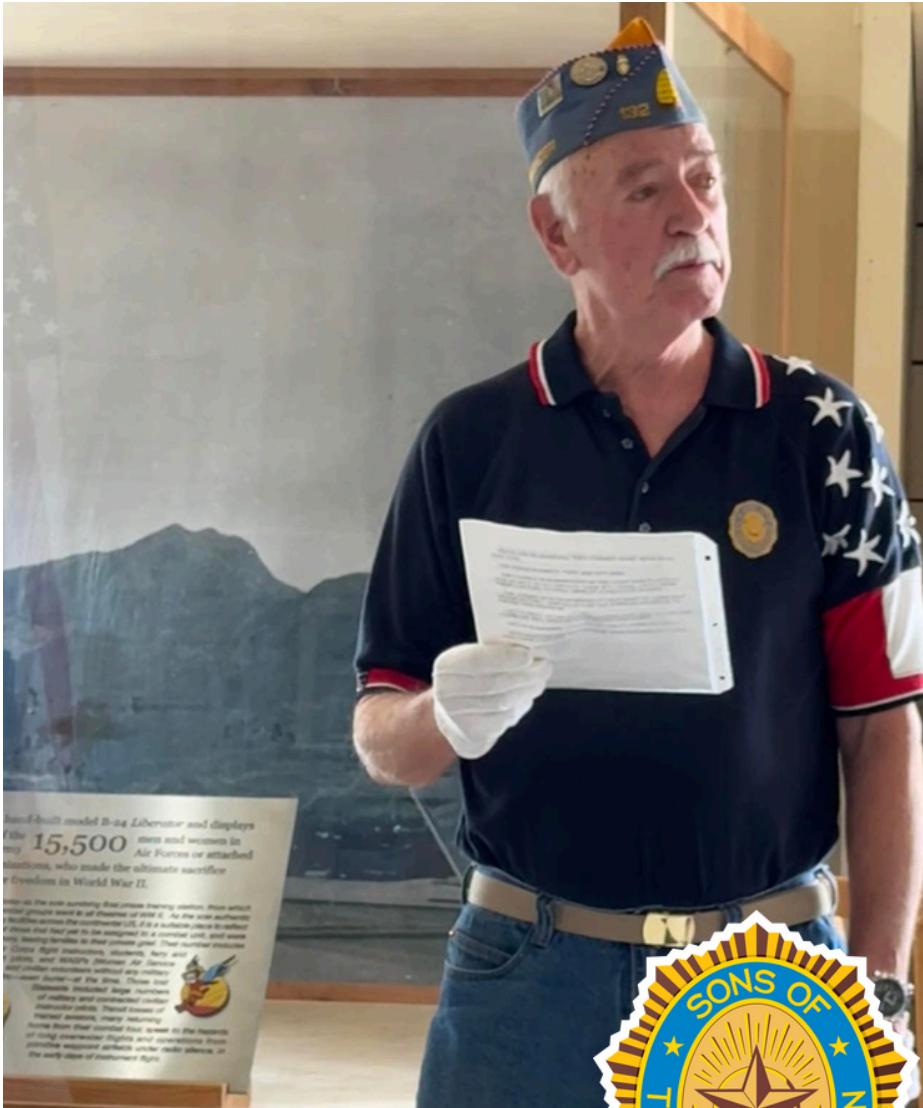
I hope all is well with you.

Have a Happy Spring!

Mike Rasmuson

American Legion Auxiliary President

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



JOHN MCDONNELL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Please do not hesitate to contact me for support for your local squadrons in Utah. Our team is available to provide helpful information and training. I can be reached at 801-631-2020 or via email at jemcdonnell68@gmail.com.

What are the squadrons doing for activities and events in your area? Please share them with us!

SAL DETACHMENT OFFICERS

Joe Guimond
NEC

John McDonnell
Detachment Commander

Ross King
Detachment 1st Vice Commander

Robert Gunn
Detachment 2nd Vice Commander

Bryan Rue
Detachment Adjutant

SAL DETACHMENT CONVENTION

The SAL Detachment Convention is going to be during the same weekend as the Department Convention. If you have questions, please contact Detachment Commander John McDonnell.



Preamble to the SAL National Constitution

Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of Veterans of the Great Wars, associate ourselves together as "Sons of The American Legion" for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order;

to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism;

to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers in the Great Wars;

to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

to combat the autocracy of both the classes and masses;

to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth;

to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

to consecrate and sanctify our friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness;

to adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands;

and to assist in carrying on for God and Country.

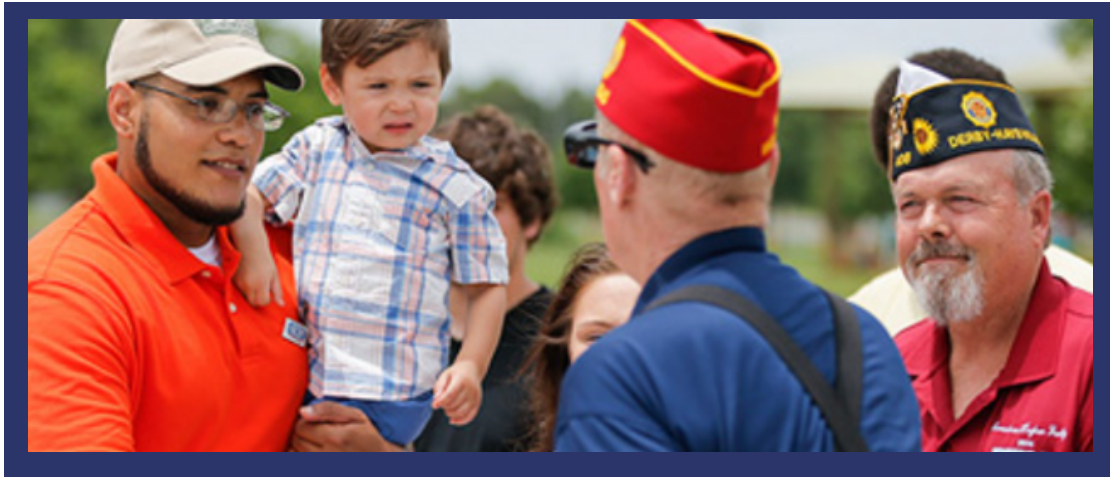
CALL TO ACTION!



Challenging every SAL member to memorize the Preamble to the SAL National Constitution with a goal to have it completely memorized by the end of this year.

*You got
this!*

Operation Comfort Warriors



Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is an officially recognized program of The American Legion Charities Inc., and its purpose is to assist wounded, injured, or ill active-duty military personnel and veterans by providing morale-enhancing gifts to warrior transition units, VA, and DoD medical care facilities, military installations, and 501 (c)(3) and (c)(19) organizations which are part of The American Legion Family or such nonprofit entities sponsored by an American Legion entity.

How Recipients Benefit

Ensuring the health and morale of those currently serving and the well-being of Veterans are essential to the purposes of this program. The Legion provides items and services through programs and entities that provide aid and comfort services to the recipients and their families. Through its support of warrior transition units, VA and DoD medical care facilities The American Legion demonstrates to these recipients that those that have come before them will continue to stand by them in their service to our great nation.

Family is an enormous part of the recovery process. Event grants may include a recipient's family. Through an event grant OCW can provide outings to amusement parks and other outdoor activities such as sporting events and fishing trips where recipients are encouraged to bring their immediate family to enjoy a day away from the hospital, therapy, or the daily grind of living with their newly found limitations and recharge themselves.

How You Can Help

The American Legion strongly prefers that monetary donations be made as most military, and VA medical centers are not equipped to store large quantities of care packages. The monetary donation allows for the donation to be expedited for items to be purchased and delivered to our wounded warriors and Veterans.

How to donate

[Click here to contribute a donation electronically.](#) (Opens in a new window)

Checks may be mailed to:

Operation Comfort Warriors

The American Legion

5745 Lee Road

Indianapolis, IN 46216.

How to raise money

A fundraiser such as a motorcycle run or a fish fry can be a great way to gather donations. A local Legion post, auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron, Legion Riders chapter, church group or other charitable organization could assist in holding a fundraiser. Proceeds from a fundraising event can be donated to the Legion via the website or mailing address listed above.

LAST WORD FROM THE EDITOR

THANK YOU!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported my efforts as the editor of the Blue Hatter this 2024-2025 membership year. I have learned so much and appreciated all of your submissions all year. What a great group of family we get to be a part of as we support veterans and their families. Thanks again for everything you do!



Please send all submissions, corrections, and suggestions to Ninzel Rasmuson, Editor, Department newsletter for the "Blue Hatter" to ninzel9@gmail.com. Should you need to speak by phone, please send me a text message at 385-900-3124 and I will contact you as soon as possible.

If sending photos with submissions, please include 1-3 photos in .jpeg or .png format.

Content and photos submissions are subject to editor discretion and consideration for input into the newsletter.

Please be timely with your submissions as it takes time to complete the newsletter.

All leadership, feel free to share the newsletter among community members and partners. Please ensure all members of your posts and districts are receiving the newsletter as there is important information for all members. I suggest you print one copy to be passed around for viewing during your meetings. Thank you for your help and support!

For God & Country,

Editor, Blue Hatter
Department of Utah

BE THE ONE

Submission Deadlines and Newsletter Distribution

Submission Deadline

Friday, August 16, 2024

Friday, October 18, 2024

Friday, December 13, 2024

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Friday, April 11, 2025

Newsletter Distribution

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Friday, November 1, 2024

Thursday, January 2, 2025

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Thursday, May 1, 2025