BLUE HATTER

Department of Utah
Department Newsletter

November 2026

BLUE HATTER

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BLUE HATTER



History of Veteran's Day

World War I, known at the time as "The Great War," officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. -VA



HOLIDAYS TO REMEMBER

Nov. 10, 2026 – Marine Corps Birthday

Nov. 11, 2026 – Veterans Day

Dec. 7, 2026 – Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Dec. 13, 2026 – National Guard Birthday

Dec. 19, 2026 – National Wreaths Across America Day

Dec. 20, 2026 – Space Force Birthday

Dec. 25, 2026 – Christmas Day

DEPARTMENT NEWS

From National Discussions to Local Service: Bringing Indianapolis Home to Utah

The American Legion's 2026 Combined Americanism Conference and October Fall Meetings in Indianapolis offered an important reminder for the Department of Utah: our national mission depends on what we do in our own communities. From developing tomorrow's leaders to advocating for veterans and supporting military families, these gatherings connected the work of national leadership with the service carried out by posts and districts every day.

Held September 18–20, the Combined Americanism Conference brought department program leaders together to exchange ideas, discuss program updates, and share practical approaches to serving young people and families. Conference programs included Boys State, American Legion Baseball, the Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports, Children & Youth, and chaplain activities, with American Legion Auxiliary Girls State leaders also gathering in Indianapolis. These opportunities allow departments to learn from one another and provide feedback that helps strengthen national programs.

For Utah, the connection to our local work is clear. Americanism grows when a post sponsors a Boys State delegate, encourages a student to enter the Oratorical Contest, or introduces young people to responsible citizenship. Each opportunity begins with someone willing to contact a school, identify a sponsor, recruit a volunteer, or explain why these programs matter. Looking ahead, we can strengthen our efforts by building relationships with educators, involving alumni, and helping more families understand the opportunities available through The American Legion.

The national Fall Meetings, held October 5–8, brought commissions, committees, and the National Executive Committee together to conduct the organization's business. Commission and committee sessions preceded the NEC meetings, where reports and resolutions move through the national decision-making process. That structure connects the concerns and experience of departments with the direction of The American Legion.

During his October 7 remarks, National Commander Jay Bowen challenged leaders to take five actions: communicate with Congress, support servicemembers through connections with military installations, promote voter participation, recruit members, and be part of the solution. He encouraged use of the Grassroots Action Center, attention to military quality-of-life concerns, and participation in the November 3rd election. His message also connected membership growth with stronger advocacy and service, while reinforcing the Be the One suicide prevention mission.

For the Department of Utah, those challenges provide a practical path forward. We can encourage informed, nonpartisan civic participation, listen to the needs of military families, and invite eligible veterans into meaningful service. We can also make personal connection a daily priority through Buddy Checks, welcoming post environments, and a willingness to ask how someone is doing and listen to the answer.

The value of these national gatherings will be measured through the work that follows. Every Utah post and district has a part to play. By investing in young people, supporting veterans, strengthening our membership, and following through on our commitments, we turn national purpose into local impact. That is how we continue serving, and how we keep Veterans Strengthening America. *-Ninzel Rasmuson, Editor*

2026-2027 DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Name	Title	Phone	Email
Kent Anderson	Dept Commander	702-524-7728	kba6991@gmail.com
Chris Brasted	Vice Commander	801-510-5717	cbrasted@comcast.net
Terry Schow	NEC	801-664-2058	tschow48@gmail.com
Richard Fisher	ANEC	801-698-3104	rfisher590@xmission.com
Michael Tovar	Area 1 Commander	801-645-4145	ssgtovarm@hotmail.com
Glen Bradford	Area 2 Commander	801-472-1948	glenbradford@msn.com
Craig Carlson	Area 3 Commander	435-790-2488	ccarlson@deseretpower.com
Marti Bigbie	Area 4 Commander	435-668-5770	martibigbie@gmail.com
John Robertson	PDC	801-502-8439	johnpeggyr@gmail.com
Joseph Guimond	PDC	801-541-9952	jguimond1963@gmail.com
Ninzel Rasmuson	PDC	530-515-7511	ninzel9@gmail.com
Rick Culter	District 1	661-802-2669	r_mcutler@yahoo.com
Tami Santerre	District 2	801-831-3677	tsanterre14@comcast.net
Vacant	District 3: Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Shiela Heindel	District 4	801-768-4527	seheindel@gmail.com
James Martin	District 5	435-820-0677	mart3403@etv.net
Jeff Stithem	District 6	435-851-6231	utahpostal@hotmail.com
Jerry Curtis	District 7	435-632-1570	commander.district7@gmail.com
Amanda Booms	District 8	573-808-0544	Amanda_downs@ymail.com
Patti Cook	District 9	801-664-4389	Cook.patti.4389@gmail.com
Rick Mead	Adjutant	801-669-1526	adjutant@utlegion.org

Please contact the Department Adjutant for current Department Chairs.

BE THE ONE

I'm Still Here

I knew how to answer, "How are you?"

"Doing fine."

I said it at the Post. I said it on the phone. Sometimes I said it while hoping someone would stay long enough for me to tell the truth.

After leaving the military, I missed having a place where I knew what was expected of me. Pain interrupted my sleep. Memories followed me into quiet rooms. I started turning down invitations, then stopped answering messages. Eventually, I began to believe the people I loved would be better off without me.

During one of my darkest evenings, a fellow Legionnaire called. I almost let it ring. We talked about ordinary things at first. Then he said, "I've missed seeing you. How are you really doing?"

This time, I couldn't say I was fine.

"I don't know if I can keep doing this."

He listened. He didn't tell me how much I had to be grateful for or ask me to be stronger. He asked directly whether I was thinking about suicide.

I said yes.

He stayed on the phone while we connected with crisis support and helped arrange for someone I trusted to be with me. For that night, I didn't have to figure out the rest of my life. I needed help staying safe, and he helped me take that next step.

BE THE ONE

Recovery took more than that conversation. It took treatment, a safety plan, honest conversations, and people who kept checking in after the immediate crisis had passed. There were appointments I dreaded and difficult days when I needed more support. Over time, I learned to recognize when I was struggling and to say so sooner.

Today, I still have hard days. I also have mornings I'm grateful to wake up for, friendships I nearly walked away from, and moments with my family I would have missed.

I'm learning that I don't have to earn care by being useful or pretend I'm well to belong.

To me, Be the One means making room for an honest answer. Call. Listen. Ask directly about suicide. Help a veteran connect with support, and keep showing up.

I'm still here. I'm grateful someone asked, and grateful I had the chance to answer.

-Submitted Anonymously



Department Commander Message

Summer is over and as we focus forward, we should be thinking of other important events such as Veterans Day. I hope every Post has some kind of event to honor our Veterans whether it is simply performing a flag raisingceremony, school educational event, or any other ideas you have to focus this holiday on veterans.

Our veterans served our country to protect the freedoms we enjoy from the powers and rights grants by the Constitution. Our service is appreciated, especially for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. These freedoms we served and fought for are presently under fire at this time in the history of our country. Our freedom is threatened by the introduction of communism by our citizens believing that the government is responsible for providing for our every need. We now have communist ideals embedded in some of our serving politicians. Communism has never in its history worked without taking away freedoms we now enjoy.

I hope all of you are looking for ways to enhance your Post. A Post not going forward is dying. There are so many veterans out there that can bring new life into a Post, especially younger members, but we must provide an atmosphere where they feel welcome and have an active responsibility. As existing members, we have the responsibility to mentor these new members to move our Posts forward.

Thank you for all you do as a Legionnaire. If there is anything I can do for you or you have a suggestion, please let me know. You cannot know what the American Legion is all about unless you get involved.

Kent B. Anderson
Commander
702-524-7728
Kba6991@gmail.com



Department Vice Commander Message

To my American Legion family,

I want to thank all of you for your continued dedication to all veterans and your communities. Utah truly does have the best American Legion Posts, Auxiliary units, AL Riders chapter, and Sons of the American Legion squadrons. The combined dedication of your services is another great example of why we call Utah the Beehive state. The American Legion is a family organization and as a member, your loved ones are eligible to join the Legion family. I encourage each of you to have discussions with your spouses, children, and parents on these opportunities to honor veterans, provide service to the local communities, and help promote patriotism. Your family is just as wanted, needed, valuable and important to our organization as you are. Reach out to your District or Department leaders to learn more or help revitalize an ALA unit, SAL squadron, or ALR chapter.



As of now our department is just slightly over the 50% mark on our membership goal for the year. Keep up with your renewals and if possible, use mylegion.org as a means to renew online. Consider becoming a PUFL member as a means to never worry about renewals again. If you are a new Adjutant or Commander and in need of help with processing renewals and new membership, please reach out to District or Department leadership. Also, please reach out to former members and encourage them to rejoin. As your Department Vice Commander, I will be more than happy to join in on any recruiting or revitalization events that a Post or District wants to put together.

Department Commander Kent Anderson and myself strongly encourages everyone to participate in everything our organization has to offer, especially when it comes to training and our department puts out incredible monthly training by Zoom that everyone is welcome to join in on. Expanded knowledge brings a more successful and enjoyable experience as a member. Also, please consider attending the first ever Utah Legion College and be on the look out for information on that program over the next few months.

I am always available to serve you in any capacity and everyone is always welcome to reach out to me, especially if you ever need a friend to talk to. Always remember to do “Buddy Checks”, “Be the One”, and “BPOTS”. Thank you for your service and I wish everyone a meaningful Veterans Day and Veterans Month.

Chris Brasted
Vice Commander
Department of Utah
801-510-5717
cbrasted@comcast.net

Department Adjutant Message

A New MyLegion.org Is Coming in December

American Legion National is preparing to roll out a major upgrade to our membership management system. The new platform, scheduled for implementation in December 2026, will replace both the current MyLegion.org and Personify systems. This is an important change that will affect how members, posts, and the Department manage membership information.

Many of you are familiar with MyLegion.org. Individual Legionnaires use it to manage their membership information, renew dues, and access membership records. At the post level, officers and adjutants use MyLegion.org to process memberships, review rosters, and perform other membership-related functions.

What many of you may not know is that the Department uses a separate system called Personify. This is the system we use to manage membership records, generate reports, prepare the weekly membership goals report, and transfer members between posts. The department also uses MyLegion.org to process memberships that are forwarded from the posts who do not use MyLegion.org.

The new system will bring all these functions together into one MyLegion.org platform. Rather than having separate systems for individual members, posts, and the Department, everyone will use the same system. The functions available to each person will depend on their position and assigned responsibilities within The American Legion.

For example, an individual member will have access to their personal membership information, while a post adjutant or commander will have access to the functions necessary to manage their post. Department officers and staff will have access to the additional functions required to manage membership at the Department level.

This should provide a more consistent and efficient way to manage membership throughout the organization.

Department Adjutant Message

Legion+ Is Part of the New Platform

Another important part of this transition is the integration of the Legion+ application with the new membership platform. Some of you have already tried Legion+ and may have experienced problems using it. The new system is intended to address issues that have been identified and provide better integration between the application and membership records.

If you have tried Legion+ in the past and had difficulty, I encourage you to give it another try.

As a reminder, Legion+ is designed primarily as a tool for posts to recruit and enroll new members. One of its most useful features is the ability to have a new member join your post directly rather than initially being assigned to the Department holding post.
Here is how that process works:

1.Invite the prospective member. Using Legion+, a post representative provides a prospective member with a link to join the post.

2.The new member completes the application. The prospective member receives a one-time-use link that allows them to enter their personal information and pay their membership dues.

3.The post commander receives a notification. Once the application and payment have been submitted, a notification is sent to the post commander. The commander must also be using Legion+ to receive and act on the request.

4.The commander approves or rejects the application. The commander reviews the membership request and can either accept or reject it.

5.The member is assigned to a post. If the commander accepts the request, the new member is added directly to that post's membership roster. If the commander rejects the request, the new member is placed in the Department holding post, Post 8, just as if they had joined through the regular online membership process.

Department Adjutant Message

Why This Matters to Your Post

One of the challenges we face with online membership is that veterans who join The American Legion are often placed in Post 8 rather than becoming members of a local post. We then have to work to transfer those members to posts where they can become involved in Legion activities.

Legion+ provides an opportunity to avoid that extra step. When a prospective member joins through your post's Legion+ invitation and the commander approves the application, that member becomes part of your post immediately.

This is especially valuable when recruiting at community events, veterans activities, membership drives, or even during a conversation with a veteran interested in joining. Instead of handing someone an application and hoping it gets returned, you can provide a link that allows the veteran to complete the membership process directly.

There is one important point to remember: The post commander must also be using Legion+ and must act on the membership notification. Without that participation, the direct-to-post enrollment process cannot be completed as intended.

Department Adjutant Message

Preparing for the December Transition

As we approach the December implementation, National will be providing additional information about the new system and its functions. We will share that information with post and district leadership as it becomes available.

In the meantime, I encourage post commanders and adjutants to become familiar with Legion+ and consider how it can support your membership recruiting efforts. If you have not used the application recently, now is a good time to take another look.

Technology should make our jobs easier, not more complicated. Bringing MyLegion.org, Personify, and Legion+ together on a common platform represents an opportunity to improve how we manage membership, reduce duplicate processes, and make it easier for veterans to join and become involved in their local posts.

Our goal remains the same: recruit new members, retain our existing members, and strengthen our posts so we can continue serving veterans, their families, and our communities.

Richard Mead
Department Adjutant
The American Legion Department of Utah

Department of Utah Veteran Service Officers (VSOs)

Terry Schow
tschow48@gmail.com
801-644-2058

Rick Mead
adjutant@utlegion.org
801-699-1526

Tami Santerre
AFLadyVet14@outlook.com
tami.santerre@va.gov
801-831-3677

If you are interested in becoming a Veteran Service Officer, please contact Rick Mead, Department Adjutant.

To learn more about the VA Eligibility and Claim process, visit: https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-a-claim/



DEPARTMENT TRAINING THURSDAYS VIA ZOOM

Zoom links are provided from the Department Adjutant to your email on file with your membership. Zoom training meetings begin at 6pm sharp with training for the first 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes Q&A. Please be on time and prepared to be engaged. Sessions are recorded and can be accessed at a later date; however, please do not rely on a recording as it is important to be present to address questions and provide any clarification, as needed.

Thursday, September 10, 2026 - Post & District Success
Thursday, October 1, 2026 - Membership Processing
Thursday, November 5, 2026 - Americanism Programs
Thursday, December 3, 2026 - Be the One
Thursday, January 7, 2027 - Post Everlasting
Thursday, February 4, 2027 - Award Submissions for Posts and Members
Thursday, March 4, 2027 - VA Claims
Thursday, April 1, 2027 - Honor Guards
Thursday, May 6, 2027 - Post and Squadron Consolidated Reports

If you need assistance with connecting with Zoom, please contact Department Adjutant Rick Mead. Thank you.

UTAH LEGION COLLEGE

All American Legion Family members are invited to attend the first Utah Legion College in 2027. If you are interested in being an instructor and/or serving on the Training Committee, please contact Ninzel Rasmuson, Department Training Chair and Dean of Utah Legion College by November 30, 2026. Questions? Contact Ninzel at utahlegioncollege@gmail.com or 385-900-3124.



VAVS/CDCE

Serving Those Who Served: VAVS/CDCE in Utah

Our commitment to veterans continues long after the uniform comes off. For the Department of Utah that commitment means showing up, listening, and finding meaningful ways to support those who have served. Through Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) and VA's Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE), we have opportunities to put that commitment into action.

As the National VAVS/CDCE Representative for our Department, I am honored to help connect our American Legion Family with opportunities to serve veterans. I encourage every Post, District, and member to consider how they can contribute to this shared responsibility.

CDCE connects volunteers and community partners with opportunities to support veterans receiving VA care. Volunteer service, financial contributions, and donated goods help meet needs and enhance veterans' experiences. Members interested in volunteering can contact their local VAVS/CDCE office to learn about available assignments and the steps to get started. Call VA SLC at 801-582-1565 extension 1075 to get started.

A meaningful service project begins with a simple question: "What do our veterans need, and how can we help?" By coordinating with CDCE staff before planning a collection drive or volunteer activity, we can direct our efforts toward identified needs and make our resources count.

As we approach Veterans Day and the holiday season, we have an opportunity to turn appreciation into sustained involvement. Consider making veteran support part of your Post's regular activities. Invite members to explore volunteering, organize a fundraiser for an identified need, or ask community partners to join a coordinated service project. Members who cannot volunteer regularly can still contribute through a focused donation effort or by helping others learn how to participate.

I also ask our leaders to invite newer members into this work. A personal invitation can help someone take that first step into service. Working alongside an experienced volunteer gives a new member an opportunity to build friendships, understand our mission, and see the difference their involvement can make.

Please document your volunteer hours, contributions, and projects, and share that information through the appropriate Department reporting channels. Hopefully, as a Post or Squadron Adjutant, you are already recording these hours for your Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and/or the Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) for the Sons of the American Legion squadron, if applicable. **Please see the following information for guidance as to what can be submitted to VAVS/CDCE for volunteer hours.**

These reports help us recognize service, understand our contributions, and identify opportunities to strengthen our efforts. When sharing stories, always respect the privacy and dignity of the veterans we serve.

VAVS/CDCE

For example, if your post does funeral detail, please send your reports in Excel format, if possible, with the following details:

For VAVS/CDCE only, please send your reports (in Excel format, if possible) with the following details:

Post Name:
Name of Detail/Volunteer:
Date & Number of Hours : (Minimum 4 hours, including preparation, travel, and service time)
Total Hours:

Please do not submit blocks of time. For example, 300 hours for 2026. Please use the guidance above.

Submit your volunteer hours via email to:

Sarah Hallen
Chief, Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE)
VA Salt Lake CIty Health Care System
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
Sarah.Hallen@va.gov

The heart of this work is the individual veteran. Behind every volunteer assignment and every donation is a person who deserves compassion, respect, and connection. Our Be the One commitment can also guide how we approach these interactions: take time to listen, notice when someone may need support, and help them connect with appropriate resources.

Thank you to every member who gives time, contributes resources, and opens doors for others to serve. As your National VAVS/CDCE Representative, I encourage each Post to choose one achievable way to support veterans and build from there. Together, we can make our promise of continued service visible in the lives of Utah's veterans.

Ninzel Rasmuson, PDC
Chair, Partnership, Finance & Fundraising, VASLC, VAVS/CDCE
National VAVS/CDCE Representative for Department of Utah, The American Legion
385-900-3124

VAVS/CDCE Volunteer Hour Guidance

Department of Utah, The American Legion

Ninzel Rasmuson
National VAVS/CDCE Representative for the Department of Utah

Hours performed through a VA-approved volunteer assignment or activity can qualify for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) and Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) credit. Both regularly scheduled and occasional service may qualify. General service to veterans does not automatically qualify; the local CDCE office should confirm eligibility and the reporting process.

Examples of qualifying service

Activity	Condition for credit
VA hospital or clinic assistance	An approved assignment such as patient assistance or administrative support.
Funeral Detail	An American Legion assignment within a post and approved by the VAVS/CDCE.
Visits and companionship	Service coordinated through an approved VA program.
Telephone companionship	An approved assignment such as Compassionate Contact Corps.
Veteran transportation	An authorized VA volunteer transportation assignment.
Special events	CDCE-approved activity recorded as occasional volunteer service.
VA Fisher House support	An approved volunteer assignment or coordinated project.

Activities to confirm before counting

Ask CDCE before counting time spent collecting or assembling donations, fundraising, preparing for events, attending VAVS committee meetings, completing training, or traveling. Remote and community activities may qualify when an appropriate assignment and reporting category are established. VA tracks committee hours separately in its organizational reports.

American Legion service reporting

Post meetings, membership work, general Buddy Checks, parades, and independent assistance to veterans should not automatically be submitted as VAVS/CDCE hours. These activities may belong in Legion service reports, such as the Consolidated Post Report (CPR). Ask CDCE whether a particular project also qualifies for VA volunteer credit.

How to submit hours

1. Confirm the volunteer assignment or project with the local CDCE office.
2. Record each volunteer's name, date, activity, location, and actual hours served. Avoid including veteran patient information in organizational logs.
3. Ask CDCE how to record American Legion affiliation so the organization receives appropriate credit.
4. Use the facility's reporting process. Registered volunteers can enter time through the CDCE Portal at https://www.cdceportal.va.gov/.

Salt Lake City VA contact

Center for Development and Civic Engagement
Email: VHASLCVoluntaryService@va.gov
Telephone: 801-582-1565, extension 1075

VA sources

CDCE volunteer program overview
https://www.volunteer.va.gov/VOLUNTEER/AboutVAVS.asp

CDCE volunteer time entry
https://www.cdceportal.va.gov/

Salt Lake City VA volunteer information
https://www.va.gov/salt-lake-city-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/

Prepared October 17, 2026.

Confirm project eligibility and local timekeeping requirements with CDCE before reporting hours.

Past Commanders Club

Dear Past Commanders,

You are cordially invited to join the Department of Utah, Past Commanders Club.

Eligibility:

To be eligible, you must have served a term honorably as a Post, District, Area, or Department Commander.

Dues & Payment:

Annual dues are $10.00. Please send payments to:

Past Commanders Club
Attn: Secretary, Bob Jones
3359 N. 2550 E
Layton, UT 84040-8497

Club Updates: Welcome

- Past Commanders pins are currently being ordered through Emblem Sales and donated to the club by a unanimous donor.
- Membership cards are under development. Don't miss your chance to become a Charter Member!

Charter Membership Information:
Since our introductory luncheon was missed during the Department Convention, we will continue to honor Charter Members through the June 2027 Department Convention. To be listed as a Charter Member, your 2026–2027 dues must be paid prior to the 2027 convention.

We are a social club supporting Department charitable causes and 1919 Society charities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to:

Chairman - Randy D. Edwards: 801-224-6168
Secretary - Bob Jones: 801-336-6951

Best Regards,
Randy D. Edwards

4 Area Commanders

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 (District 3)

Area 2 (Central Utah): District 4 & 8
Utah & Juab Counties (District 4)
Salt Lake & Tooele Counties

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)

An Area Commander serves as an important link between Department leadership, Districts, and local Posts throughout the Department of Utah. Area Commanders support District and Post officers, encourage membership growth and retention, promote Department and National programs, assist with training and communication, attend meetings and events, and help identify challenges where Department resources or assistance may be needed. Most importantly, the Area Commander builds relationships and helps ensure that Posts have the information, encouragement, and support they need to successfully serve veterans, their families, and communities. The role is one of communication, mentorship, leadership, and service, helping strengthen The American Legion from the Post level throughout the Department of Utah.

Area Commanders



Michael Tovar, Area 1



Glen Bradford, Area 2



Craig Carlson, Area 3



Marti Bigbie, Area 4

Area Commander Reports

AREA 4

District 7 Commander Jerry Curtis has a new executive board and has notified the Posts within the District of these changes. Per the membership report 10-15-2026 the district was at 59.8780% for paid memberships. Lots of work to reach November 12th for the 65% and December 9th for the 75% paid memberships.

Many Posts will have some type of event for Veterans Day, November 11th; December 7th Pearl Harbor Day and December 19th Wreaths Across America. The local American Legion Riders holding event on Saturday November 14th.

District 6 Commander Jeff Stithem was contacted to help charter a new post-looking for help in getting this done. Congratulations Jeff continue to ask for help to complete by first of the year. October 15th membership report shows paid membership dues at 50.2403. In past years membership dues for many of District 6 posts were collected/paid at their Veterans Day events.

MARTI BIGBIE
National Vice Commander, Western Division 2026-2027
American Legion Member Post 142 Sun River
Area 4 Commander Department of Utah
PDC, Department of Utah
Women In the Air Force, membership

UTSA
UTAH TECH STUDENT ASSOCIATION

VETERANS DAY
TRIPLE DEUCE MARCH & COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

EVENT PARTNER GUIDE

Honoring those who have served. Supporting our veterans. Building a stronger community.

Utah Tech Student Association (UTSA) and the Service Branch are proud to host the Veterans Day Triple Deuce March & Community Celebration. This event brings together veterans, students, community members, and local organizations to honor our nation's heroes, raise support for a meaningful cause, and create a lasting impact.

EVENT AT A GLANCE

Check-in: 7:00 PM

Flag Ceremony: 7:30 PM

2.22-Mile Triple Deuce March/Run:
Begins shortly after the flag ceremony

Location: Utah Tech Campus
225 S Univ Ave, St. George, UT 84770

OUR GOALS

RUN
Come together in unity and support our veterans.

HONOR
Pay tribute to the brave men and women who have served our country.

CELEBRATE
Build community, create awareness, and make a positive impact.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

We invite veterans' organizations, veteran-serving nonprofits, and community partners to set up an information table/booth, connect with students and community members, and share the resources and support you provide to our veterans.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU BEFORE THE EVENT

- Confirm your attendance by the RSVP date (to be provided).
- Share your organization's name, contact information, and any special setup needs.
- Send us your logo (for promotional materials and social media).
- Let us know if you'll be fundraising, distributing materials, or need power/wifi (if available).

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- Arrive at the designated time for setup (details will be shared).
- Set up your information table/booth (tables and chairs may be provided — please confirm).
- Staff your table during the event.
- Bring any materials, handouts, or items you'd like to distribute or showcase.

WHAT UTAH TECH WILL COORDINATE

- Overall event planning and logistics.
- The 2.22-mile Triple Deuce March/run.
- The flag ceremony.
- Community celebration and event flow.
- Marketing and promotion.

FUNDRAISING & CHARITY

We will be raising funds for a designated veteran-serving charity (to be announced). The Student Association Service Branch will match donations up to $1,500.

- On-site donation table and fundraising activities will be provided.
- Information about the charity and how to give will be shared before and during the event.
- Your organization is welcome to support in any way you choose (but is not required to fundraise or donate).

COSTS & EXPECTATIONS

- Participation and information tables are free.
- There are no required fundraising or donation expectations.
- This is a collaborative event, and we are grateful for any level of support!

DISTRICTS



Rick Culter
District 1 Commander
Area 1
Cache, Box Elder, &
Rich Counties



Tami Santerre
District 2 Commander
Area 1
Weber, Morgan, &
Davis Counties



Vacant
District 3 Commander
Area 1
Summit & Wasatch
Counties



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



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



Amanda Booms
District 8 Commander
Area 2
Salt Lake & Tooele Counties



Patti Cook
District 9 Commander
Area 3
Duchesne, Uintah, &
Daggett Counties

9 District COMMANDERS

While the Department is missing one District Commander currently, there are 8 active District Commanders who are working with their posts at varying levels. On the following page are the roles and responsibilities of what the District Commander is charged with during their tenure.

In addition to districts and posts, there are Sons of the American Legion (SAL) squadrons. Not all posts have SAL squadrons. If you are fortunate to have an SAL squadron to support your post, please encourage their involvement to support your post efforts. It really helps!

Furthermore, if your districts and posts have Auxiliary units, please encourage them to be involved with your posts and squadrons.

And last, but not least, if you have Legion Riders, they are also a tremendous support.

We are an AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY.

If you need assistance as to how to contact your District Commander as a post, please contact your Area Commander for further assistance.

DISTRICT COMMANDER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A District Commander serves as the primary leader and liaison between local Posts and the Department within The American Legion. The role is both operational and pastoral—focused on leadership, support, accountability, and communication.

Key Responsibilities

1) Leadership & Oversight
The District Commander provides leadership to all Posts in the district, helping ensure they operate effectively, follow Legion policies, and remain mission-focused. This includes guiding Post leadership, encouraging best practices, and helping resolve challenges.

2) Communication Link
District Commanders are the vital conduit between the Department and Posts. They share Department priorities, initiatives, and deadlines with Posts—and carry Post concerns, ideas, and needs back to Department leadership.

3) Membership & Post Development
A core responsibility is strengthening Posts through membership growth and retention. District Commanders encourage recruitment, mentor Post officers, and support struggling or inactive Posts to ensure long-term sustainability.

4) Program Promotion & Support
District Commanders promote the Legion's programs—Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Americanism, National Security, and Children & Youth—helping Posts understand how to participate and succeed at the local level.

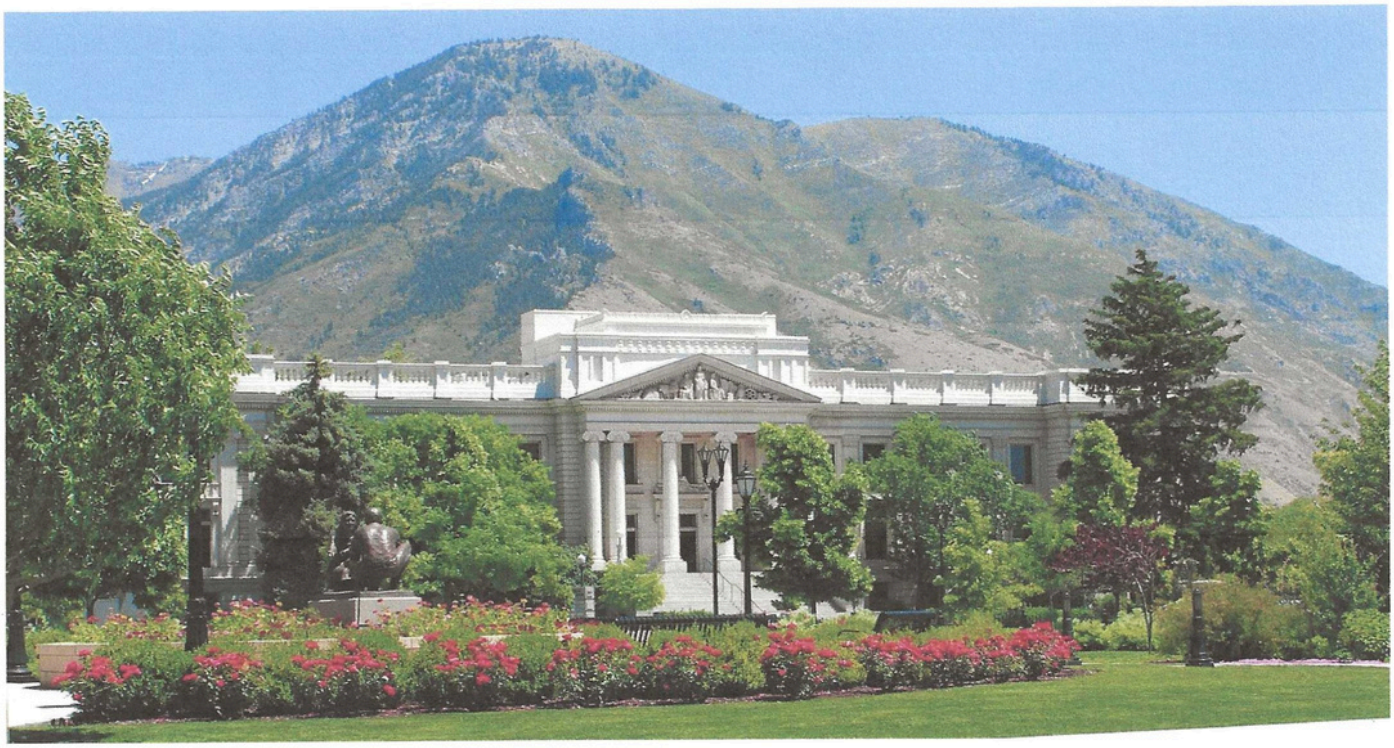
5) Advocacy & Representation
They represent the District at Department meetings, conferences, and official functions, ensuring their Posts have a voice in Department decisions and initiatives.

6) Mentorship & Officer Development
District Commanders mentor Post Commanders and officers, helping develop future leaders and ensuring continuity of leadership within the organization.

7) Ceremonial & Community Presence
District Commanders often participate in ceremonies, memorials, and community events, serving as visible representatives of the American Legion and its values.

In Summary
A District Commander is not simply an administrator—they are a leader, advocate, mentor, and connector. Their effectiveness directly impacts the strength of Posts, the engagement of members, and the success of the Department's mission. -NR

UTAH COUNTY
VETERANS CELEBRATION



6th Annual Veteran's Fair and Military Services Birthday Celebration

Monday, November 9, 2026, 10-2 p.m. Ceremonies at 12 p.m.

Utah County Historic Courthouse

51 S. University Ave., Provo, UT

Open to the Public

Several Veteran centric groups to include the Veterans Administration staff and local Veteran Service Organizations will be available to answer questions and provide assistance.

Timpview Veterans Day Assembly

Wednesday, November 11, 2026. Assembly starts at 10 a.m.

Timpview High School Thunderdome

3570 Timpview Drive, Provo, UT

Post 52, Randolph

Post 52 Rich County led by Post Commander Clayton Webb dedicating a new display for the Rich County Veterans Memorial inside the county courthouse. Post 52 was assisted by seniors from Rich County High School with gathering pictures of every veteran to have served from Rich County.









News You Can Use - "Brushing Scams" / "Quishing Scams"

A brushing scam is when online sellers send you unsolicited, low-value packages using your stolen name and address so they can post fake "verified purchase" reviews under your identity, boosting their product ranking on marketplaces. Sellers might also place a QR code and / or a search line (URL) inside of the package. Once you click on the QR code or key in the URL you'll be subjected to a "Quishing Scam." Quishing (combining QR and Phishing) is a type of phishing attack where scammers use malicious QR codes to redirect you to fake websites that steal information or install malware on your device. Do yourself a favor, get smart, google brushing and quishing scams.

Post 74, Cedar City

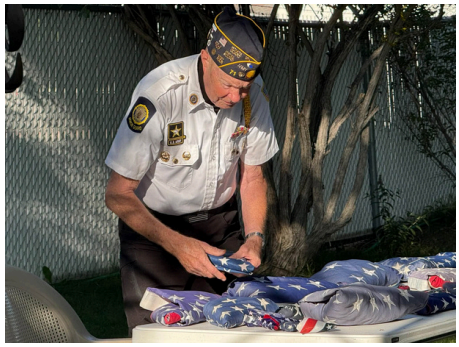
Check out new information from the Cedar City American Legion Family below. Thank you!





District 8, Salt Lake and Tooele Counties









On September 11, 2026, District 8 held a flag retirement at Post 112 in Salt Lake City led by District Commander Amanda Booms. Dinner was served beforehand and then, in accordance with the Flag Code, old and tired flags were retired. Thank you to everyone who was involved for this important flag retirement that is held every year for Flag Day and Patriot Day.

You Are Not Forgotten: SAL National Commander's POW/MIA Challenge

Sons of The American Legion National Commander Thom Skelley is challenging squadrons to bring POW/MIA remembrance into their communities. His 2026–2027 initiative encourages each squadron to arrange a POW/MIA remembrance table in a local restaurant, honoring prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

When a table is not possible because of cost or a restaurant's willingness to accommodate it, Skelley's team has created an alternative: a customizable poster featuring the remembrance table and its ceremony. Both options help educate the public and keep the commitment to our missing servicemembers visible throughout the year.

Here in Utah, squadrons can answer the challenge by starting a conversation with a local restaurant owner and offering to coordinate a display. Fellow Legion Family members can help make those connections and share the meaning behind the tribute.

Every empty chair represents someone whose story matters and a family whose sacrifice continues. By bringing this remembrance into everyday community spaces, we reaffirm a lasting promise: You Are Not Forgotten.

Please contact me if you are interested in joining me in this important challenge. I have different sizes of the nationally approved graphic to share.

Respectfully,
Mike Rasmuson
Detachment Commander
Utah Sons of the American Legion
utahsalmike@gmail.com
530-949-8280



DEPARTMENT OF UTAH AMERICANISM PROGRAMS 2026-2027

AMERICAN LEGION UTAH BOYS STATE

Douglas Cass, President/Chairman
Cell: (385) 564-4080
Email: utahboysstate@utlegion.org
Website: www.utahboysstate.org
(Information/Student Registration)

Class of 2027: June 13-19, 2027
at Weber State University (WSU)
Scholarships at Graduation: $500 to $10,000
Scholarship offers to 2026 Boys State graduates = $1.7+ million

AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL (U.S. Constitution) CONTEST

Shiela Heindel, Chairman
Cell: (385) 244-5254
Email: sheindel@gmail.com
Website: www.legion.org/oratorical

Post Contests in January 2027
District Contests in February 2027
Department Contest: March 20, 2027
Scholarships: Dept level: $750-$1,500
National level: $2,000-$25,000

AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

Kit Workman, Chairman
Cell: (801) 540-6464
Email: kworkman1@aol.com
Website: www.legion.org/shooting

Competition Schedule: September 1, 2026 to July 26, 2027
Scholarships: $500 to $5,000

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

John Decker, Chairman
Cell: (801) 628-5329
Email: 6decker@gmail.com
Nation website: www.legion.org/baseball

Steve Hansen, Baseball Commissioner
(sign up teams)
Email: utlegionbaseball@gmail.com
Online registration opens January 1, 2027
Closes June 1, 2027
Scholarships: $500 to $5,000

SCOUTING AMERICA

Jeff Stitham, Chairman
Cell: (435) 692-6159
Email: utahpostal@hotmail.com
National website: www.legion.org/scouting

Eagle Scout of the Year Applications due March 1, 2027 to Utah Department Adjutant
Application download from National website
Scholarships: $500 to $10,000

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Joseph Guimond, Chairman
Cell: (801) 541-8352/Department HQ: (801) 539-1013
Email: jguimond1968@gmail.com

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

LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION POST CONTACT INFORMATION:

NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

Randy Edwards
Department Americanism Chairman
Edwards.randy60@gmail.com
801-224-6168

Updated 8/14/2026

TIS THE SEASON

TO VOTE! At Boys State we highlight, enlighten, and drive home the topic of voting. Is voting a right, privilege, duty, responsibility? When you don't vote what message does that send to all the veterans that have answered the call so that you can have a say, VOTE.

Veterans Day is a time to reflect on and honor the courage and sacrifice of all veterans.

Let us also renew our commitment to honoring and supporting the families and loved ones of those killed, captured, or missing in the name of freedom. Family members and friends have lived—and will continue to live—with the reality of that absence.

Boys State season is here. It's time to refresh your knowledge of the Utah Boys State program and polish your sales pitch. Visit your schools to promote this nationally recognized, premier summer youth program.

This season also gives Posts an opportunity to hear Boys State reports. I've been privileged to visit a few Posts, participate, and hear these reports firsthand. Each highlights a different strength of the program, here's a sample of their comments:

- I was amazed at how quickly the boys bonded. They arrived as strangers on Sunday and were lifelong friends by Tuesday.
- I loved writing bills and learning about the legislative process. I never expected to learn so much.
- I really enjoyed the guest speakers. They were motivational and inspiring—great examples to follow.
- You hear stories about veterans and sacrifice. At Boys State, you discover the reality behind those stories.

Utah Boys State goes beyond teaching civics and government. It helps young men discover what is possible through character building, leadership, exploration, understanding, and common bonds. Through shared values, sacrifices, and accomplishments, participants gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be an American.

Participants experience something bigger than themselves: the values that shape our way of life, our freedoms, and our constitutional democracy. Staff and counselors give of themselves, sharing practical experience and a wide range of perspectives. Together, they demonstrate what it means not simply to live in our nation, but to be part of it and thrive.

Application: Beginning December 1, 2026, interested boys complete an interest from at www.utahboysstate.org and will be given access to the application portal.

Deadline to Apply: April 15, 2027, application portal closes.

Program Dates and Location
Location: Weber State University, Ogden Campus
Check-in: Sunday, June 13, 2027, beginning at 4:00 p.m.
Graduation ceremony: June 19, 2027, at 11:00 a.m.

Program Cost
$350.00

Visit www.utahboysstate.org to learn all about the program as well as eligibility.

Holiday season is here, from all of us at Boys State to all of you, the Legion family:

Enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends!
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



AMERICAN LEGION Utah Boys STATE

Founders 25o

BUILDING BRIDGES CHANGING LIVES

You are invited to be a part of something extraordinary through the Utah Boys State charity fundraiser called Founders 250 in honor of America250. Together lets make dreams come true one heartfelt donation at a time. 100% of donation proceeds support Utah Boys State citizens.

- **Donate $250 by December 31, 2026**
- **Support Utah Boys State program**
- **Receive an exclusive pin, alumni membership, and recognition at June Welcome Reception**

utahboysstate.org/ubs-foundation/

National Vice Commander, UT



Martha (Marti) Bigbie was elected as a national vice commander of The American Legion during the 107th National Convention in Louisville, Ky., on Sept.3, 2026.

Bigbie graduated from Aberdeen High School in South Dakota and served in the Air Force from 1967 to 1973. She was part of the 2nd flight of women to join the Air Force who were not required to be in the medical field. After attending personnel school in Amarillo, Texas, her duty assignments included Westover, AFB, in Springfield, Mass., Wheeler, AFB, in Hawaii and Bolling AFB in Washington.

Bigbie is a paid-up-for-life (PUFL) Legionnaire and a member of Post 142 in SunRiver, Utah. Since joining The American Legion in 2007, Bigbie has served as a member of the Ritual Team, chaplain and baseball chairman, 2014-2022. She also was elected or appointed to various offices at every level including commander of Lester Keate Post 90, St George, Utah; commander and adjutant of District 7; Area 4 commander; Department (state) of Utah sergeant-at-arms, vice commander and commander. She served as a counselor at Utah Boys State and as a member of the National Emblem Sales Committee. She has been The American Legion National Membership Recruiter of the Year in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2024, 2025 and 2026. She has also been Department Commander of the Year and Department Membership Recruiter of the Year. She received one Silver and eight Gold Brigade awards for recruiting.

Bigbie is a life-member of ANAVICUS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Vietnam Veterans of America; Military Women's Memorial; US Air Force Women Veterans Association, Veterans Advisory Council VA – Salt Lake City; Utah Veterans Advisory Council; Veterans Coalition of Southern Utah; Southern Utah Veterans Home Advisory Board in Ivins. She was Legionnaire of the Quarter in 2015 and Legionnaire of the Year 2012, 2015, 2021-2022 for post and 2016-2017 for District 7. Bigbie received the William Christoffersen Award in 2021 Department of Utah, the Lifetime Achievement for Veterans Advocacy in 2022, and a Certificate of award for women in American History (DAR) for work with veterans in 2023. She also received many Post Excellence awards (8 years) and pins for membership from national commanders.

Bigbie says she lives by the motto, "Let no veteran or family member be forgotten."

National Vice Commander, UT

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER, WESTERN REGION

National Commander Jay Bowen priorities for the 2026-2027 membership year B.P.O.T.S. following with BE THE ONE, "BE PART OF THE SOLUTION"

1. Veteran Suicide Prevention
   - Remains the orgaization's most important mission
   - Continue the message: "It's okay not to be okay"
2. Veteran Assistance
   - Connect veterans with benefits, service and meaningful support
   - Make sure veterans know The American Legion is there before a crisis becomes critical
3. Youth Development
   - Invest in programs that build citizenship, leadership and opportunity
   - Strengthen communities by engaging young people and their families
4. National Security Advocacy
   - Advocate for a strong national defense and those currently serving
   - Support servicemembers, military families and the quality of life needed to sustain readiness
5. Membership Growth
   - Show veterans the value of membership through visible service and community impact
   - Recruit, engage and retain members by giving them meaningful ways to participate

Be active participants, not observers
Every member can choose to be part of the solution
Participate in Grassroots to keep abreast on legal matters

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

Challenge members to become active participants rather than observers.
American Legion programs succeed when members choose to be part of the solution.

Western Region membership is reported 2 times a week from National which shows the membership percentages by state. Some Department made the 55% by October 14th, others not. The next two TARGET DATES of November 12th 65% and December 9th 75% will take every member, Post, District and Area Commanders help to insure that membership dues are sent to Department/National or encourage online renewals for Utah to make this goal.

NVC Marti Bigbie, Western Region

National Executive Committeeman Message

As we approach Veterans Day, please take note of the discounted meals information that has been included with this issue of the Blue Hatter and please share it with your members. Be The One and Buddy Checks are frequently mentioned in American Legion circles. These are especially crucial during this special month. Please check on the families on deceased veterans and see what assistance might be rendered.

As you may have heard by now funding for the northern Utah Veterans Cemetery has been approved and construction has started. This Cemetery will be in Washington Terrace (Weber County) and should be done within a year. Funding has also been approved for the new Veterans Home in Taylorsville (Salt Lake County) and it should take 18 to 24 months to complete.

By the time you read this, the elections may be over if not, please remember to vote and please consider using the Legion link to notify your elected officials of our position on veterans issues. The link is legion.org/action.

Also, in this newsletter, contact information for department service officers is available. Please remind your members that we are available to assist him in filing claims and for providing information on veterans benefits.

I wish you and your family well during this holiday. Best Thanksgiving Wishes and Merry Christmas.

Thanks for all you do for our Veterans and for the American Legion.

Take care,

Terry Schow

National Executive Committeeman Message

This is in addition to the $14 million for the Northern Utah Veterans Cemetery in Weber County.

VA awards record high $106.5M in cemetery grants in FY 26

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal year 2026 awarded to 21 cemeteries in U.S. states, territories and tribal nations a record-high $106.5 million in grants – the most single-year funding since the Veterans Cemetery Grant Program (VCGP) started in 1980.

Grants typically fund construction of new Veterans cemeteries and expansion of existing ones, improvements needed to maintain interments as well as operations and maintenance projects.

Since 1980, VA has awarded grants totaling more than $1.2 billion to more than 120 cemeteries in 47 states, 14 tribal nations and three territories (Guam, Saipan and Puerto Rico). These grants help ensure more than 94% of all Veterans living in the United States have access to a Veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their home.

"Every VA cemetery grant reflects our commitment to honor the lives of those who served our nation," said VA Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Sam Brown. "Under President Trump's leadership, the Department of Veterans Affairs is strengthening its partnerships with states, territories and tribal nations to ensure Veterans and their families have local access to the burial benefits they earned."

$1,911,000 for the expansion of the Utah Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Park in Bluffdale.

Terry Schow

National Executive Committeeman Message

Many Veterans think their only options are VAMC or local VA Clinics but check out this option below.

To use your VA urgent care benefit, you must be enrolled in VA health care and have received care through the VA or an authorized community provider within the past 24 months.

How to Access In-Network Urgent Care

- Check Eligibility: Call 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) to verify you meet the 24-month rule before you go.
- Find an In-Network Clinic: Use the VA Facility Locator online. Select Urgent care for the facility type and Community urgent care providers (in VA's network) for the service type, or call the regional support line at 866-620-2071 (for Utah and Western states).
- Confirm at the Clinic: When you arrive, tell the front desk that you want to use your VA urgent care benefit and verify they are in-network.
- Contact Number for Utah Providers: If the urgent care clinic needs to verify or activate your benefit, they can call 833-4VETNOW (833-483-8669).

Terry Schow



Check this Out

National Executive Committeeman Message

The American Legion
Payments To or Benefiting Departments
September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

Department	Direct Mail Fundraising (Dept. share)	Emblem Sales Royalty	Incentives from Moshp goals	Subtotal Direct payment to Depts	Scholarships awarded	CWF grants awarded	TFA paid	NEF paid	Credit Card/e check fees	Call-In Travel Expense paid by National	Subtotal Benefiting Depts	Total Impact of TAL payments
Alabama	11,793	1,809		13,602	63,153				8,743	37,026	108,922	122,524
Alaska	4,343	575		4,918	113,650				4,368	35,213	53,231	58,149
Arizona	30,496	3,817	2,000	36,313	55,800				24,697	18,051	98,548	134,861
Arkansas	9,380	1,172		10,552	24,858				3,166	27,671	55,701	66,253
California	80,622	6,371		86,993	101,012		3,508		54,504	53,410	212,434	299,427
Colorado	18,919	2,173		21,092	73,219				11,485	27,940	112,644	133,736
Connecticut	3,091	2,573		5,664	18,350		2,500		7,197	30,025	58,072	63,756
Delaware	1,210	730		1,940	8,650				6,187	38,404	53,241	55,181
DC	184	127		311	4,400				693	1,880	6,973	7,284
Florida	78,204	7,536	2,000	87,740	153,687		2,028		75,221	45,685	276,621	364,361
France	246			245					1,922		1,922	2,168
Georgia	30,145	3,255		33,400	93,247		7,256		15,469	48,297	164,269	197,669
Hawaii	970	142		1,112	9,300				885	17,567	27,752	28,863
Idaho	8,102	1,378		9,480	15,945				3,613	35,726	55,284	64,764
Illinois	14,374	8,688		23,056	84,417		3,683	10,000	20,216	66,837	185,134	208,209
Indiana	58,384	8,045		66,429	42,450			24,506	28,630	55,135	150,721	149,972
Iowa	24,812	9,537		34,349	58,105				10,304	47,214	115,623	149,972
Kansas	20,547	3,828	1,000	25,375	27,508				5,589	13,784	36,403	52,602
Kentucky	14,725	1,973		16,198	17,030				5,155	20,804	53,609	66,801
Louisiana	11,434	1,758		13,192	27,650				6,477	43,571	64,148	68,486
Maine	2,321	2,017		4,338	14,100				27,601	85,143	143,744	153,723
Maryland	6,921	2,658		9,579	33,100				11,464	64,643	141,546	178,457
Massachusetts	34,051	2,840		36,891	23,150	42,289						79
Mexico	79			79	81,387				33,615	67,758	182,760	252,224
Michigan	58,481	8,984	2,000	69,465	32,550				23,342	70,724	126,616	148,856
Minnesota	11,526	9,714	1,000	22,240	18,900				2,371	24,715	45,986	49,106
Mississippi	1,581	1,540		3,121	66,950				10,730	45,417	123,097	133,460
Missouri	6,674	3,689		10,363	11,700				3,086	16,214	31,000	34,481
Montana	1,760	1,721		3,481	12,200	2,400			10,652	33,691	58,943	84,409
Nebraska	18,357	4,109	3,000	25,466	13,277		5,700		3,383	15,162	37,522	40,586
Nevada	2,647	417		3,064	20,750				6,211	22,814	49,775	54,656
New Hampshire	2,512	2,368		4,880	26,100				15,974	56,694	98,768	132,003
New Jersey	30,391	2,844		33,235	20,551				3,895	5,981	30,427	42,080
New Mexico	10,587	1,066		11,653	66,181		2,500		33,124	100,030	201,834	286,538
New York	71,387	13,316		84,703	150,591	155,853	1,567		17,289	27,981	353,282	406,893
North Carolina	49,468	4,144		53,612	17,400				4,040	24,410	45,850	57,572
North Dakota	8,426	3,296		11,722	62,526		2,426		28,718	64,569	158,239	183,043
Ohio	14,823	9,981		24,804	52,925				4,633	34,512	92,070	111,135
Oklahoma	17,147	1,919		19,066	14,600		7,218		6,197	25,009	53,025	68,927
Oregon	14,575	1,328		15,903	14,600				iea8		803	39,134
Pennsylvania	20,007	894	3,000	23,901	121,622				404			459
Philippines	55			55	10,631		855		480	10,884	22,850	25,029
Puerto Rico	1,989	191		2,180	2,000				1,068	11,851	14,919	21,458
Rhode Island	4,173	366	2,000	6,539	61,938				12,466	39,398	113,802	121,361
South Carolina	5,106	2,453		7,559	11,300				6,096	27,226	44,622	66,830
South Dakota	14,913	3,295	4,000	22,208	59,383		1,500		10,190	42,537	113,610	135,753
Tennessee	19,606	2,538		22,144	182,412	35,000	11,632		30,530	79,816	339,391	399,532
Texas	53,202	6,939		60,141	30,650		6,526		3,101	16,452	56,729	68,373
Utah	**6,627**	**1,016**	**4,000**	**11,643**	**30,650**		**6,526**		**3,101**	**16,452**	**56,729**	**68,373**
Vermont	4,754	1,599		6,353	14,832				3,565	15,204	33,601	39,954
Virginia	38,605	3,910		42,515	110,781	66,000	7,500	1,479	12,030	23,541	75,586	112,878
Washington	34,994	2,298		37,292	31,036				4,534	22,814	43,848	47,898
West Virginia	2,397	1,653		4,050	16,500		2,500		17,013	52,343	88,456	110,747
Wisconsin	11,991	8,300	2,000	22,291	16,600		2,500		2,624	14,947	26,758	30,509
Wyoming	881	870	2,000	3,751	9,187						4,402	4,402

National American Legion Fall Conference Update
October 3-8, 2026

Dear American Legion Members,

You are the life of this great organization. Your ideas, innovations, suggestions, and everyday acts of kindness make a difference. Through volunteerism, membership recruitment, and sharing the great work we do to support our four pillars, you are the key to The American Legion's success.

1. Taking Care of Our Veterans
Speak with every veteran and encourage them to explore the benefits they have earned. They may not need assistance now, but understanding their benefits and establishing eligibility can help them prepare for future needs. Did you know you may qualify for benefits based on presumptive conditions? Talk with your Veterans Service Officer today. In the first six months of 2026, accredited American Legion service officers secured $12 billion in VA disability benefits for veterans, free of charge. Their training is supported through the Veterans & Children Foundation. So far in 2026, these service officers have secured more than $2.1 billion in VA disability benefits each month.

By July 1, 37.1% of VA benefits appeals handled through free American Legion representation had been decided in favor of the veteran, with another 33.2% remanded for additional documentation.

2. Children and Youth
Through the years, The American Legion has provided more than $18 billion in Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grants to help stabilize the homes of military and veteran families with minor children facing unexpected financial crises.

Our posts also support children and youth through programs such as Utah Boys State, Scouting, the Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports, and American Legion Baseball.

3. Americanism
Our Americanism efforts include advocating for English as the official language, protecting the American flag from desecration, and supporting citizenship and naturalization.

4. National Security
National Security remains one of The American Legion's four pillars and an essential part of our commitment to our country.

American Legion Fall Conference Update, cont'

I am proud to be a member of this organization. You and I need to be advocates for our successes, speaking with the people we meet about the great work of The American Legion. We must also recognize and include the American Legion Family: the Sons of The American Legion (SAL), the American Legion Auxiliary, and the American Legion Riders. Each contributes so much to our success.

If each of us renews early and recruits just one eligible new member, we can retain our current membership and work toward doubling our strength across the Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL.

How can we do that? Is your eligible son or grandson a member of the SAL? There is your one. Is your eligible spouse a member of the Auxiliary? There is another opportunity. Does your neighbor know about the work described above? That conversation could lead to another member.

We can all contribute by making sure our members join, renew, and remain engaged. Membership strengthens our ability to carry out our mission, including Be the One. It helps us reach more veterans, share The American Legion's message, and, most importantly, save lives and change lives.

During our Fall Conference, we reviewed existing information and explored innovative ideas to improve The American Legion's financial future. One development supporting the Oratorical and Junior Shooting Sports programs is their move to Hillsdale College. This move offers substantial savings while supporting our programs and our commitment to remaining nonpartisan.

Another change involves The American Legion Magazine's smaller format. The magazine's content will remain the same, while the reduced size is expected to save the national organization more than $2 million annually in mailing costs alone.

Ideas and improvements like these help the national organization respond to membership losses caused by deaths and declining overall enrollment. We must do more to reach veterans of the War on Terror and those who have served during the past 20+ years.

As your Americanism Commission Chairman, I am asking for your help in increasing membership so we can sustain our great programs. If each of us recruits one new member while retaining our current members, we can double our membership.

American Legion Fall Conference Update, cont'

As a Past National Vice Commander, I was asked to chair the selection committee for the Western Region's 2027–2028 National Vice Commander candidate. The committee submitted its report to the Western Caucus, recommending Eric W. Measles of California. Eric's name will be submitted to the national selection committee for its recommendation and security screening before returning to the Western Region for a vote at the National Spring Convention.

Thank you for all you are doing. Let us stay motivated and make this a great year. Please contact me with any questions, concerns, or matters I may be able to address.

For God, Family, and Country,
Randy D. Edwards
Chairman, 2026–2028, Americanism Commission
Department of Utah, The American Legion

FREE DISABLED VETERAN PARKING AT THE SLCIA AIRPORT

As of July 1, 2024, the Salt Lake City International Airport (SLCIA) is offering complimentary parking for vehicles that display a Utah Disabled Veteran license plate issued by the Utah Department of Motor Vehicles. If a disabled veteran does not have a Utah Disabled Veteran license plate, they can show either a U.S. Department of Defense Uniformed Services ID Card (USID Card) or U.S. Department of Veterans ID card to receive complimentary airport parking.

Parking Garage:
Five days of complimentary parking when space is available, any days beyond five will be charged at the posted daily garage rate. Disabled Veteran complimentary parking does not apply to the Premium Parking area. When planning to park longer than 30 consecutive days, contact slcairport@spplus.com or 801-575-2887 or your vehicle will be considered abandoned.

Economy Parking:
Ten days of complimentary parking when space is available, any days beyond ten will be charged at the posted daily economy rate. When planning to park longer than 30 consecutive days, contact slcairport@spplus.com or 801-575-2887 or your vehicle will be considered abandoned.

BLUE HATTER SUBMISSIONS

Blue Hatter Submission Due Date:	Blue Hatter Release Date:
Sunday, September 5, 2026	Tuesday, September 8, 2026
Friday, October 23, 2026	Tuesday, November 3, 2026
Sunday, December 27, 2026	Tuesday, January 5, 2027
Friday, February 26, 2027	Tuesday, March 2, 2027
Friday, April 23, 2027	Tuesday, May 4, 2027

Please be timely with your submissions so I have enough time to have the newsletter completed by the release date. Department Adjutant Rick Mead will release the Blue Hatter to all leadership across the Department to be shared at the post and district level. It will also be available on utlegion.org.

Please take the time to read the newsletter as there is important information the Department disseminates so you can keep up to date.

If you have any questions, please contact Ninzel Rasmuson, Department Newsletter Editor, at ninzel9@gmail.com or cell 385-900-3124.