With President Trump’s signature on the LEGION Act, the ongoing declared period of war was extended back to Dec. 7, 1941. The congressionally approved act is a way to honor thousands of veterans who were killed or wounded on duty during periods not previously considered a time of war.

“Finally Congress has acknowledged the service and sacrifice of at least 1,600 veterans who died or were wounded in previously undeclared periods of war,” said American Legion National Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett.

“This new law honors the memories of those veterans while allowing other veterans from those previously undeclared eras to receive all the American Legion benefits they have earned through their service.”

The LEGION Act – Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act – also redefines The American Legion’s membership eligibility dates. The eligibility now spans from Dec. 7, 1941, until a time when the U.S. is no longer at war, as determined by Congress.

Here are answers to 11 key questions about the new law and what it means for The American Legion.

**Question: How does this change the eligibility requirements for The American Legion?**

**Answer:** The only change is that Congress has reduced the number of eligibility periods from seven to two. They are April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941, and continuing. No other restrictions are changed.

**Question: What’s the impact on veterans who previously were not eligible for American Legion membership?**

**Answer:** Veterans who were honorably discharged but whose service did not fall into the previous defined war eras may now join The American Legion immediately.

To do so, eligible members may sign up at www.legion.org/newsletters.

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**11 KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE LEGION ACT**

Legislation extends ongoing declared period of war back to Dec. 7, 1941.

By The American Legion

See 11 key things to know about the LEGION Act on Page 4
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COMMANDER’S MESSAGE

Order a keepsake Legion coin

Since The American Legion turned 100 in March, the celebration of our anniversary has continued through the sale of the commemorative coin series. The collectible coins pay tribute to our impact on communities across the country, and are a lasting and timeless expressions of the service and values The American Legion holds dear.

The proceeds from this year’s coin sales from the U.S. Mint help fund American Legion programs that support veterans, servicemembers, their families and the communities in which they live. For example, surcharges totaling $35 for each $5 gold coin sold, $10 for each silver dollar sold, and $5 for each half dollar sold are authorized to be paid to The American Legion. I am proud that any surcharges received from sales of American Legion commemorative coins will help us continue to fulfill our mission.

The silver dollar features the American Legion emblem surrounded by oak leaves and a French fleur-de-lis. On the reverse side are crossed U.S. and American Legion flags beneath an arch from the Arc de Triomphe, in another nod to the Legion’s birthplace. The $5 gold coin commemorates The American Legion’s birth in Paris in 1919, with the Eiffel Tower and a V for victory; they are encircled by the outer edge of the background of the American Legion emblem, representing the rays of the sun. The coin’s reverse depicts an eagle in flight, symbolizing honor, valor and bravery. And in a tribute to the Legion’s dedication to 100 percent Americanism and the welfare of youth, the clad half dollar portrays two children, one wearing a parent’s or grandparent’s American Legion cap, saluting a U.S. flag on the coin’s reverse side. The words “I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG …” are on the obverse side, continuing on the back with “… OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.”

After Dec. 31, the U.S. Mint will no longer sell these limited-edition collector’s items. Individuals can order them as mementos. Posts can purchase them and use them for fundraisers.

I cannot think of a better way to honor The American Legion’s centennial than by ordering a keepsake commemorative coin or coins that will help ensure that our nation’s veterans, servicemembers and youth will receive the assistance only Legion Family members can provide.

To purchase a coin, or coins, or for more information, please visit www.legion.org/coin. For those who do not have access to a computer, call 800-872-6468.

Order yours today before it’s too late.

American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad will award his national commander “Membership Excellence: Team 100” incentive pin to any Legion Family member who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

And as of Jan. 14, 2019, any Legion Family member who renews six American Legion members will be rewarded with the commander’s pin. Renewals received prior to Jan. 14 do not count toward this incentive.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2019 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2018 membership year.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Download the incentive pin forms at www.legion.org/commander/pin.
The American Legion’s National Executive Committee passed Resolution 20 during Spring Meetings in May. The resolution calls for American Legion posts to “promote a fun, positive public image and attract a new generation of American Legion Family members through the planning and operation of Family Play Day or Game Night events in their communities.”

Legion Post 365 in Vista, Calif., and Post 116 in Fuquay-Varia- na, N.C., held the first two Legion Family Play Days in July.

At Post 365, kids raced tricycles and dodged water balloons, adults played cornhole, and there was karaoke, face painting and the decoration of cookies. At Post 116, kids tossed rings onto a peg board, Boy Scouts played basketball, police officers played cornhole, firefighters showed kids inside two fire engines, and there was an opportunity to douse Post 116’s immediate past commander, 34-year-old Derric Grimes, an Army combat veteran and father of two young girls, into a dunk tank.

By connecting all generations, Grimes said, “They see it now as what The American Legion ought to be — a place that is there for the family, is there for the community, but is also a place for veterans, to be together, spend time together and build that camaraderie. It’s not that any one part of The American Legion’s mission is more important than another. We have to care for veterans. We have to support their families. And we have to strengthen our communities. It’s not an either or, it’s an and.”

For Post 365 Commander Steve Miller, “We’re trying to do anything we can do enhance the family orientation so anytime that we have the opportunity to get kids in here and young families, that’s a win-win. I want the young families to come in — kids, grandkids — this is a family atmosphere. It’s an opportunity to bring the Legion and families together.”

Robyn Nolin brought her 11- and 8-year-old sons to the Post 365 event. “It’s family — Legion Family — it’s what we do,” said Nolin, an Army veteran and commander of Post 364 in Santee, Calif. “Most of us veterans have families, especially post-9/11, and as a recruiting mechanism we have to do better at doing family involvement at posts.”

Community outreach is familiar territory for Post 116, which has grown by about 700 members over the last decade, to an all-time high of 918.

Legion Family Day “gives the community a sense that we are doing something here, that we are a place where folks can congregate and have a good time with their kids,” explains Post 116 Americanism Children & Youth Chairman and Scout leader Scott Quilty, an Army combat veteran who lost an arm and leg to a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2006.

Post 365 member Chris Yates, who served 20 years in the Marine Corps, sees the Legion Family Days continuing as an extension of the outreach that is already a priority for the post.

“At the end of the day, the mission is introducing the community to The American Legion, getting some of the active duty that’s in the area to know that we’re here, to know that we’re a family-oriented organization ...,” he said. “The issue is, can we do more for families? Can we bring more families in? Can we focus on the family so that we’re not separated again? We’ve had enough separation from our families. If we come to the post and have a family fun day, we just enhance life. We enhance who we are and who we love, and we’re doing what we do together.”
www.legion.org/join.

Question: I am among the veterans who were not allowed to join previously, so why do you want me now?

Answer: The American Legion’s founding fathers believed, “a veteran is a veteran,” an axiom that has held true throughout the organization’s more than century of service. Some veterans were ineligible to join because of the war eras that were defined by Congress. The recent bill passage and president’s signature changed that.

Question: So how does this differentiate The American Legion from AMVETS?

Answer: The American Legion’s eligibility criteria states that veterans must have served during “wartime.” When Congress decides the U.S. is no longer in a state of war, the Legion’s membership eligibility period will close, while AMVETS will still be open to those who served.

Question: How does this affect the Sons of The American Legion (SAL)?

Answer: The Sons’ eligibility criteria will change along with that of The American Legion. Any son or grandson of a living American Legion member will be able to join the SAL program. (Sons and grandsons of deceased veterans are also eligible.) For example, a son of a veteran who served between 1985 and 1988 previously would not have been eligible.

With the extension of the war period, that veteran would immediately be eligible for The American Legion and the son would be able to join the SAL.

Question: How does this affect the eligibility for the American Legion Auxiliary?

Answer: This follows the same concept as the SAL, as noted previously. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is currently open to grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and adopted female descendants of eligible veterans.

Question: How does this affect membership for departments, districts and posts?

Answer: This change opens up American Legion membership to millions more veterans who likely live in your communities. They may become members immediately.

Question: The current membership applications don’t address the eligibility change. How do we process those members?

Answer: New membership materials are being developed as quickly as possible.

Question: What steps should departments, districts and posts focus on?

Answer: A good first step would be to review all recruiting materials to look for eligibility dates. Information on electronic media (websites, social media channels, etc.) should be changed immediately. It is up to departments to decide on the best way to handle printed materials, while updated ones are being produced.

Question: How does this change the Paid Up For Life program?

Answer: There are no changes to the PUFL program, though the newly eligible members would be able to become PUFLs. To learn more about the program, visit https://www.legion.org/PUFL.

Question: Who can I contact for more information about this change as it applies to membership and recruiting?

Answer: Visit www.legion.org/membership/contactus to find the representative in your state.
101ST NATIONAL CONVENTION

Convention opportunities await

Workshops, training sessions, sight seeing and more available to Legion Family members during national convention in Indianapolis.

The 101st National Convention in Indianapolis, Aug. 23-29, will mark the final months of The American Legion's centennial celebration, which will conclude in November.

Workshops, training sessions, tour opportunities and more will occur during this year’s convention. Prepare now by making time to be a part of the following opportunities offered to American Legion Family members.

Subject matter expert training. The training will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on both Saturday, Aug. 24, and Monday, Aug. 26, at the Indiana Convention Center, Halls D & E, Level 1. Topics of discussion include how to: work with other veteran service organizations, leverage social media, inspire post growth and use MyLegion.org. Leadership from DeVry University will be speaking about sponsorship, and a staff member from Indiana University-Purdue University will speak on campus connection. Download the agenda at www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/SMET_2019.pdf.

Digital Media Training Workshop. The workshop will address the growing needs of 21st century American Legion Family communicators. Volunteers who handle public relations or communications programs at their post or district level are encouraged to attend part of all of the workshop. The Digital Media Training Workshop will be held Monday, Aug. 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a break for lunch. It will be held in the Indiana Convention Center, Room 125, Level 1. Register for the media workshop at www.legion.org/register.

Training for incoming district commanders. Every year more than 750 Legionnaires across the nation are elected to serve as a district commander. The American Legion’s Membership Division is hosting a training course for 2019-2020 incoming district commanders. The Incoming District Commanders Training is Monday, Aug. 26, at 9 a.m. at the JW Marriott Indianapolis in the Grand Ballroom, Sections 8 & 9, Third Floor. Topics include post analysis, district revitalization, MyLegion.org training, Buddy Check, and a membership engagement plan at the district and post level. Download the agenda at www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/district.commander.training_2019.pdf.

Film festival. This year’s festival will be held Monday, Aug. 26, in Rooms 126 and 127, Level 1 of the Indiana Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The final schedule will be announced on www.legion.org/convention prior to the start of the festival. Among the planned elements are:

- Episodes of “To Strengthen a Nation,” the centennial documentary produced by American Legion National Headquarters
- “Heroes of WW2: The European Campaign”
- “Sixth of June,” a short film about the Normandy invasion
- “Meuse-Argonne Offensive,” a short film about the World War I battle

Credentialing summit. The American Legion’s Veterans Education & Employment Division is hosting a National Credentialing Summit Wednesday, Aug. 28, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the JW Marriott Indianapolis. The summit will feature experts from the private and nonprofit sectors, the armed forces and federal agencies to share best practices for credentialing and enhancing civilian career prospects for veterans, servicemembers and military spouses. Register at www.legion.org/register.

Tour opportunities. Ticket information is available for every tour under www.legion.org/convention/resources. Discounted ticket prices are available through advance purchases. Tours include:

- American Legion and Auxiliary National Headquarters – Aug. 23 and 26
- City landmarks such as Monument Circle, Central Canal, the Children’s Museum and the governor’s residence – Aug. 23, 24 and 26
- Indianapolis Motor Speedway, home of the “greatest spectacle in racing,” – Aug. 23, 24 and 26
- The Soldiers & Sailors Monument, World War II Memorial, USS Indianapolis Memorial and the 9/11 Memorial – Aug. 23, 24 and 26
- Museum at the Allison Engine Company (now Rolls-Royce), which had a history of creating U.S. military technology dating back to World War – Aug. 23
- Camp Atterbury, covering over 40,000 acres, was a major combat training facility during World War II and now is one of two facilities that train regular and reserve forces before their deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq – Aug. 23 and 26
- Museum at the Allison Engine Company (now Rolls-Royce), which had a history of creating U.S. military technology dating back to World War – Aug. 23

Other convention news. Additional events, including convention agenda, parade information, tour opportunities and more can be found at www.legion.org/convention.

And download The American Legion’s National Convention app at www.legion.org/mobileapps/nationalconvention to stay updated on events and story, photo and video coverage right from your smartphone.
DID YOU KNOW?

- After a multi-year effort, the Library and Museum has made available through the Digital Archive (https://archive.legion.org) all the currently active resolutions from 1919 to present. This amounts to close to 2,000 resolutions that establish and guide the priorities and programs of the Legion.

- Through fan voting, American Legion Baseball will be honoring the greatest players from the first 100 years of The American Legion. Fans can vote online at www.legion.org/baseball/vote for the team. A total of 85 nominees, including all of the 78 former American Legion Baseball players inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame as players or coaches, were presented to the American Legion Baseball Committee, which pared the list down to 60 for a fan vote.

Fans can vote for as many or as few players as they see fit for their ballot.

- The U.S. Mint will have a booth in the Exhibit Hall at the Indiana Convention Center during The American Legion’s 101st national convention in Indianapolis to sell the Legion’s 100th anniversary commemoratives coin series.

- On July 31, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution honoring The American Legion’s 100th anniversary of serving veterans, their families and communities.

Sens. Mike Braun, R-Ind., Jon Tester, D-Mont., Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and Todd Young, R-Ind., introduced the resolution designating Aug. 23-29 as “American Legion Week” to coincide with the Legion’s national convention in its home city of Indianapolis. U.S. Rep. André Carson, D-Ind., is expected to introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

- The American Legion’s 29th annual Junior 3-Position Air Rifle Championship in Colorado Springs, Colo., named Makenzie Sheffield of Granbury, Texas, its precision winner and Jaden-Ann Fraser of Church Hill, Tenn., its sporter winner.

LEGION BASEBALL

World Series coverage added to ESPN and ESPNews

The continuing growth of the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., has led to an increase of live television coverage on the ESPN family of networks for 2019.

For the first time, Friday’s pool play games will also be broadcast live on television and can be seen on ESPNU. Tuesday’s championship game will be aired live on ESPN with a 6:30 p.m. Eastern first pitch, and following coverage on ESPN the game will air again on ESPNU.

Thursday’s games will again air online on ESPN3.com and games Saturday through Monday will air on ESPNU.

Here is the complete schedule for the 2019 American Legion World Series, all times Eastern:

Thursday, Aug. 15, on ESPN3.com

Game 1 – 10 a.m. – Southeast vs. Great Lakes
Game 2 – 1 p.m. – Mid-South vs. Western
Game 3 – 4 p.m. – Central Plains vs. Northwest
Game 4 – 7:30 p.m. – Northeast vs. Mid-Atlantic

Friday, Aug. 16, on ESPNU

Game 5 – 4 p.m. – Great Lakes vs. Western
Game 6 – 7 p.m. – Southeast vs. Mid-South

Saturday, Aug. 17, on ESPNU

Game 7 – 1 p.m. – Northwest vs. Northeast
Game 8 – 4 p.m. – Mid-Atlantic vs. Central Plains
Game 9 – 7:30 p.m. – Southeast vs. Western

Sunday, Aug. 18, on ESPNU

Game 10 – 1 p.m. – Mid-South vs. Great Lakes
Game 11 – 4 p.m. – Mid-Atlantic vs. Northwest
Game 12 – 7:30 p.m. – Northeast vs. Central Plains

Monday, Aug. 19, on ESPNU

Game 13 – 4 p.m. – Semifinal – Winner Stars vs. Runner-Up Stripes
Game 14 – 7 p.m. – Semifinal – Winner Stripes vs. Runner-Up Stars

Tuesday, Aug. 20, on ESPNews

Game 15 – 6:30 p.m. – Championship – Winner Game 13 vs. Winner Game 14

www.legion.org/baseball
The American Legion’s 2018-2019 Consolidated Post Report (CPR), which documents every activity a post fulfills in a 12-month (June 1-May 31) reporting period, was due July 1. Less than 70 percent of the 12,697 total posts worldwide submitted a CPR.

It is important for the CPR response rate to increase so that the great work American Legion posts and members are doing in their communities and beyond is shared – whether it’s providing funeral honors, sponsoring youth to attend a Legion program, conducting fundraising efforts or more.

Eight departments achieved 100 percent reporting: Delaware, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Tennessee. They will receive a plaque on stage during the 101st National Convention in Indianapolis in August.

For The American Legion’s centennial membership year, 168 Legionnaires achieved Gold Brigade or Silver Brigade status for recruiting 10,256 new members.

There were 122 Legionnaires who recruited 50 or more new members (not counting transfers) by the May membership target date to achieve Gold Brigade status; and 46 Legionnaires recruited 25 to 49 new members (not counting transfers) to achieve Silver Brigade status.


The 2019 American Legion Recruiter of the Year is Charles “Abe” Abrahamson of Twin Falls, Idaho. Abrahamson is a member of Post 101 and the immediate past Department of Idaho commander. He recruited 748 new members for the 2018-2019 membership year.

The Gold Brigade recipients will be awarded unique gifts that designate affiliation with the Gold Brigade of The American Legion. First-time Gold Brigade members will receive a Gold Brigade patch, a special Gold Brigade cap pin, a Gold Brigade certificate, and a designer jacket, polo shirt or sweater with a Gold Brigade logo. Second time/repeat Gold Brigaders will receive a Gold Brigade patch and certificate, a hash mark for a jacket sleeve, and a designer jacket, polo shirt or sweater with a Gold Brigade logo. A Gold Brigader who has won the award for five consecutive years is eligible for a distinctive Gold Brigade blazer. A Gold Brigader who has earned the award for at least six consecutive years or more is eligible for a $150 check and a Legion cap with the inscription “Master Recruiter.”

Silver Brigade recipients receive a silver pin and certificate. Silver Brigade and Gold Brigade awards cannot both be awarded to a recruiter during the same membership year.

The American Legion National Headquarters wants to recognize posts that were chartered during National Commander Brett Reistad’s year, 2018-2019, as Team 100 second-century posts.

Dispatch Editor Cameran Richardson has received several answers as to why the posts were chartered. If you chartered a post in the past year please provide the following information by email to crichardson@legion.org:

- Why was your post started?
- A list of the charter members
- A photo with everyone, or as many members as possible, in it. If you cannot get a group photo at this time, please send a photo of your post home, charter or some other identifying image.

Also, we would like to get your answers by Aug. 15 for possible publication and/or presentation at the 101st National Convention.
VETERANS HEALTH

Take the Legion’s mental health survey

The American Legion has launched an online mental health survey in support of the Department of Veterans Affairs Public Health Approach to Reducing Veteran Suicide. It is part of The American Legion’s continuing research and efforts on mental health issues impacting our nation’s veterans. The survey was created by The American Legion’s TBI/PTSD Committee and is designed to collect data that will help The American Legion bring local resources related to TBI, PTSD and suicide prevention to veterans and their families.

You can take The American Legion’s Mental Health Survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/N8JC8SM.

“Using a public health approach is a proactive strategy to increase suicide prevention readiness because it draws on the power of the collective, as opposed to the reactive strategy of focusing on the individual,” read The American Legion’s testimony on suicide prevention. “The first line of defense in preventing veteran suicide is the veteran’s primary social circle — close friends and family. Those individuals closest to the veteran are the most likely to notice small changes in mood and behavior. They are also best equipped to approach the veteran with concerns of suicide due to their established level of trust.”

The information collected by the survey on current suicide prevention training efforts, in addition to various forms of treatment for TBI and PTSD, will help The American Legion determine its current suicide prevention readiness, areas of potential improvement, and aid in the development of a consolidated list of available resources. These resources will be categorized by location and vetted to ensure the treatments are evidence based and beneficial for veterans.