The holiday gift-buying and giving season is well underway. And The American Legion’s 100th Anniversary Coin series makes the perfect gift if you’re looking for a keepsake that pays tribute to the nation’s largest veterans service organization and its impact on communities across the country.

But don’t wait to buy your coin. Act now because sales of the centennial coin series ends after Dec. 31.

“We should maximize the esteem and recognition that this country has bestowed upon our American Legion in honor of our centennial,” said American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford. “As we think about who we are and what we do as stakeholders, as the future of this organization, we are building the foundation for the future of the organization for the next 100 years. And The American Legion’s 100th Anniversary coins are a reminder of who we are, where we’ve been, and why we must remain the voice of veterans in our second century.”

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.

Visit www.legion.org/coin for purchases, pricing details and more information.
COMMANDER’S MESSAGE

Mentorship creates effective leaders

In early November, I had the privilege to address the American Legion National Legion College Class of 2019. I asked them to deliver a message to their community upon returning home from National Headquarters in Indianapolis. And it’s the same message I want all of you to deliver: The American Legion is just as important and just as visible as we were 100 years ago. We are still the most valuable veterans organization to America’s veterans.

And we, as Legionnaires, are cementing the foundation for America through The American Legion’s Americanism programs such as Boys State, Legion Baseball, Oratorical Contest and more. The teaching, training, education and mentoring that we do for America’s youth are developing the future leaders of this country. We are deciding where the future of this organization is going. We are part of the future. We will be shaping the programs and policies of this organization for decades to come.

I hope you’re up to the task.

The shaping of The American Legion’s future is achieved through mentorship and leadership. American Legion College Chancellor and Past National Commander David Rehbein shared with the class what a leader is – “As a leader you have to be honest. You have to be confident. You have to be inspirational. You have to be visionary … you have to see the future and have a vision of what that future is.”

The success to becoming an effective leader is through mentorship. Rehbein shared what to look for in a mentor within The American Legion.

A mentor has to be someone who:

■ Is familiar with the challenges you face;
■ Is confident that you can overcome those challenges and have the initiative to take on those challenges;
■ Gives advice and not commands (this goes for yourself as a mentor);
■ You can confide in;
■ You can trust; and
■ Is working for your good and not using you to further their own career.

Mentorship is essential to the success and future of The American Legion. My leadership philosophy is that a leader provides direction that the group is going to take. And creates the excitement and enthusiasm to move in that direction.

Will you be the leader that I think you can be? Set the course and make it happen.

James W. “Bill” Oxford
National Commander

American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford will award his national commander “A Foundation for the Future” membership excellence pin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2020 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2019 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.

Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.

Download the incentive pin form online at www.legion.org/commander/pin.

American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford will award his 100 percent American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by May 30, 2020.

For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and any combination of an Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Legion Riders chapter.

Each branch must achieve 100 percent membership to qualify for the award.

Download the form at www.legion.org/commander/ribbon.
The season of giving

The holiday season is an extra special time of giving from the American Legion Family.

By Daniel S. Wheeler

The month of December is a time that American Legion Family members go above and beyond with gift-giving to lift the spirits of deployed troops, veterans and children.

The following are a few ways American Legion Family members across the country are delivering Christmas joy this season.

**American Legion Post 991** Legion Family in Worth, Ill., will host Navy recruits from Great Lakes Naval Training Station on Christmas Day for a meal. For the fifth consecutive year, Post 991 picks up about 30 recruits each year by bus and brings them back to the post where they can use telephones and computers to contact family and friends. The recruits can watch TV, play video games and get a chair massage from a licensed therapist.

“These young individuals have been away from home for weeks, often for the first time in their lives,” said Glenn Kraemer, of Squadron 991. “Our volunteers, including a police escort, the local fire district and dozens of citizens, all honor these young patriots for the path of service they are just beginning.”

**Sons of The American Legion Squadron 690** in Palatine, Ill., is hosting a fundraising breakfast with Santa for the public. All donations from the day will benefit American Legion Charities.

**American Legion Post 145** in Avon, Ind., is hosting its sixth annual Indiana Blue Star Spirit of Christmas event for Indiana military families who are in need. The children receive almost everything on their wish list plus clothing and shoes; and the parents are also recipients of gifts. Santa arrives in a Huey to distribute the gifts and visit with the children.

**American Legion Post 90** in Bethesda, Md., is hosting its second annual Christmas Toy Drive that will benefit disadvantaged students of Union Local Elementary School in Belmont. The post is collecting toys, clothing and monetary donations. About 20 children were provided gifts last year and the post hopes to help even more this year.

**American Legion Post 52** in La Crosse, Wis., is hanging the names of about 40 local veterans, including homeless veterans, on a “Buddy Tree” at the post. Anyone can pick a name off the tree and purchase a gift for them.

As your American Legion Family celebrates Christmas and the holidays with troops, veterans and their families, and children in the community, please share your story on the Legion’s website [www.legiontown.org](http://www.legiontown.org).

“Post 28 in Millsboro, Del. filled boxes with food to serve to the less fortunate as part of Mountaire’s Thanksgiving For Thousands,” The American Legion photo

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NATIONAL ADJUTANT’S MESSAGE

**The season of giving**

*The holiday season is an extra special time of giving from the American Legion Family.*

By Daniel S. Wheeler

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Have a membership success story?

Share: [www.legiontown.org](http://www.legiontown.org)
LEADERSHIP

Four steps to apply when implementing training

After Autrey James graduated from National American Legion College in 2014, he returned home with a vision of establishing a Department of California Legion College. His vision became a reality thanks to a team effort.

“As a leader in this organization you have to take calculated risks,” said James, past judge advocate for the Department of California, to the 2019 National Legion College class. “And never give up. If you see something that you think needs to be changed, don’t give up.”

James shared the following steps that can be applied when starting a department Legion College or implementing any type of training initiative.

**Identify your needs or goals.** James expressed that no one person can say what’s best for the department. “It has to be a group effort,” he said. California wanted to develop leaders for The American Legion’s future through mentorship. If you don’t know your department needs, James advised to conduct a survey through SurveyMonkey.com. “Don’t be afraid to ask. Don’t be afraid of what you learn when you ask. Remember it’s all about them, not about you.”

**Develop learning objectives.** James said to ask yourself the questions of what is it that you want them to learn, what do you want this program to do and what do you want them to know. “My case, I wanted to identify and prepare leaders for the future. And inform because the only way we are going to maintain and grow this organization if we are constantly, constantly engaging our members. We cannot say it enough. We cannot do it enough.

“With new members, make sure they have a reason to stay. Everyone joins for some reason or another. But why do they stay? We may come for the camaraderie that we are missing, but we stay because we find something in The American Legion that speaks to us. But you have to let members know about all of those programs. So that was one of the goals that I had with a department Legion College.”

**Design and develop the program.** This includes format (or setting), location, curriculum, instructors (use Legion College alumni and Legion Family members), students (California has a student from each of its 30 districts), budget, resolution and number of times held each year.

**Implement and evaluate.** “You need to get input from others to make sure that you are really meeting the needs of your people, who are your students,” James said.

MEMBERSHIP

Post Excellence Award

The American Legion’s Post Excellence Award has added new criteria for the 2020 membership year. To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90 percent renewal rate and community activity.

The purposes of this award is membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to the youth of the community, and increased visibility of the American Legion Family through service projects. The standard to be achieved in each area is as follows:

**Membership:** An American Legion post must attain at least 103 percent of their membership goal. And at least one post officer attends district meetings.

**Consolidated Post Report:** CPRs must be submitted by July 1. The American Legion’s federal charter requires the submission of an annual report to Congress on activities for the year. MyLegion.org has made it simple for a post to submit its CPR in a timely manner.

**Renewal rate:** The post must renew at least 90 percent of its members that were on the 2019 roster.

**Community activity:** The post must conduct an event that connects the local community with The American Legion post. The objective is to open your doors, welcome the community in, and educate them on what The American Legion is all about and how the post is an asset to the community. Posts do not need to have a physical building to accomplish this. This activity can be held in a park, a community center or anywhere the post can welcome and interact with the local community.

The district commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria. The district commander will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to department headquarters. That list should include the post name, phone number, address and commander’s name. If possible, accompany the last two criteria with copies of press releases submitted to the local media about the community projects to show that the projects were not only accomplished but that an attempt was made to enhance the image of The American Legion through local media. Copies submitted should include a date and time stamp showing receipt by the media outlet.

The department adjutant will transmit information as posts qualify to:

The American Legion National Headquarters
Attn: Membership
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Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055
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**DID YOU KNOW?**

- A relationship that began over a century ago between The American Legion and Stars and Stripes is refreshed this year through a new media-sharing agreement. Members of The American Legion can receive 50 percent discounts on annual subscriptions to the Stars and Stripes digital platform of exclusive military news, topics of interest to veterans, special features, photos and other content, including the daily e-newspaper, job listings and history. American Legion members can subscribe for $19.99 a year by visiting [legion.stripes.com](http://legion.stripes.com) and using the coupon code LEGIONSTRONG when filling out the online form.

- The National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Mo., will host a special exhibition, “The Vietnam War: 1945-1975,” running now through May 31, 2020. From perspectives covering both the home front and the war front, the exhibition explores themes of patriotism, duty and citizenship through a remarkable collection of objects, documents, photographs and more. For more information, visit [www.theworldwar.org](http://www.theworldwar.org).

- The change to the American Legion Preamble from “the Great Wars” to “all wars” has made it to the historical Fathead decals available through Emblem Sales. Select your Fathead decal by visiting the Emblem Sales website, [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org).

**DONATE**

**Use AmazonSmile to benefit American Legion Charities**

With holiday shopping in full speed and soon new year celebrations, now is a perfect opportunity to make American Legion Charities Inc. your charitable organization of choice on AmazonSmile.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

Simply go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com), sign into your normal Amazon account and then type in “American Legion Charities Inc” in the search box when the prompt comes up. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes or service charges. From time to time, Amazon may offer special, limited time promotions that increase the donation amount on one or more products or services, or provide for additional donations to charitable organizations.

Only purchases at smile.amazon.com – not at www.amazon.com or the mobile app – support any charities.

Donations to American Legion Charities Inc. assist The American Legion in providing much-needed assistance to veterans, servicemembers and their families. For more information visit [www.legion.org/charities](http://www.legion.org/charities).

**MEMBERSHIP**

**103 PERCENT MEMBERSHIP AWARD**

American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford will award his national commander “A Foundation for the Future” membership incentive pin to any post, district, county, division, department commander or membership chairman who achieves 103 percent of their assigned membership goal for 2020. Download the 103 percent membership goal form online: [www.legion.org/commander/103percent](http://www.legion.org/commander/103percent)

**MEMBERSHIP**

**December**

Honor ribbons will be awarded to all posts whose membership, as of Dec. 31, achieves an advance membership (for the year about to begin) equal to or exceeding the final membership for the year ending. Visit [www.legion.org/membership/awards](http://www.legion.org/membership/awards).

**January**

15 80 percent membership target date
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