

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN LEGION



(Membership Card Enclosed)

Post information

Post No. _____

Location _____

Regular meeting

Date _____

Time _____

Post Commander _____

Post Adjutant _____



What is The American Legion?

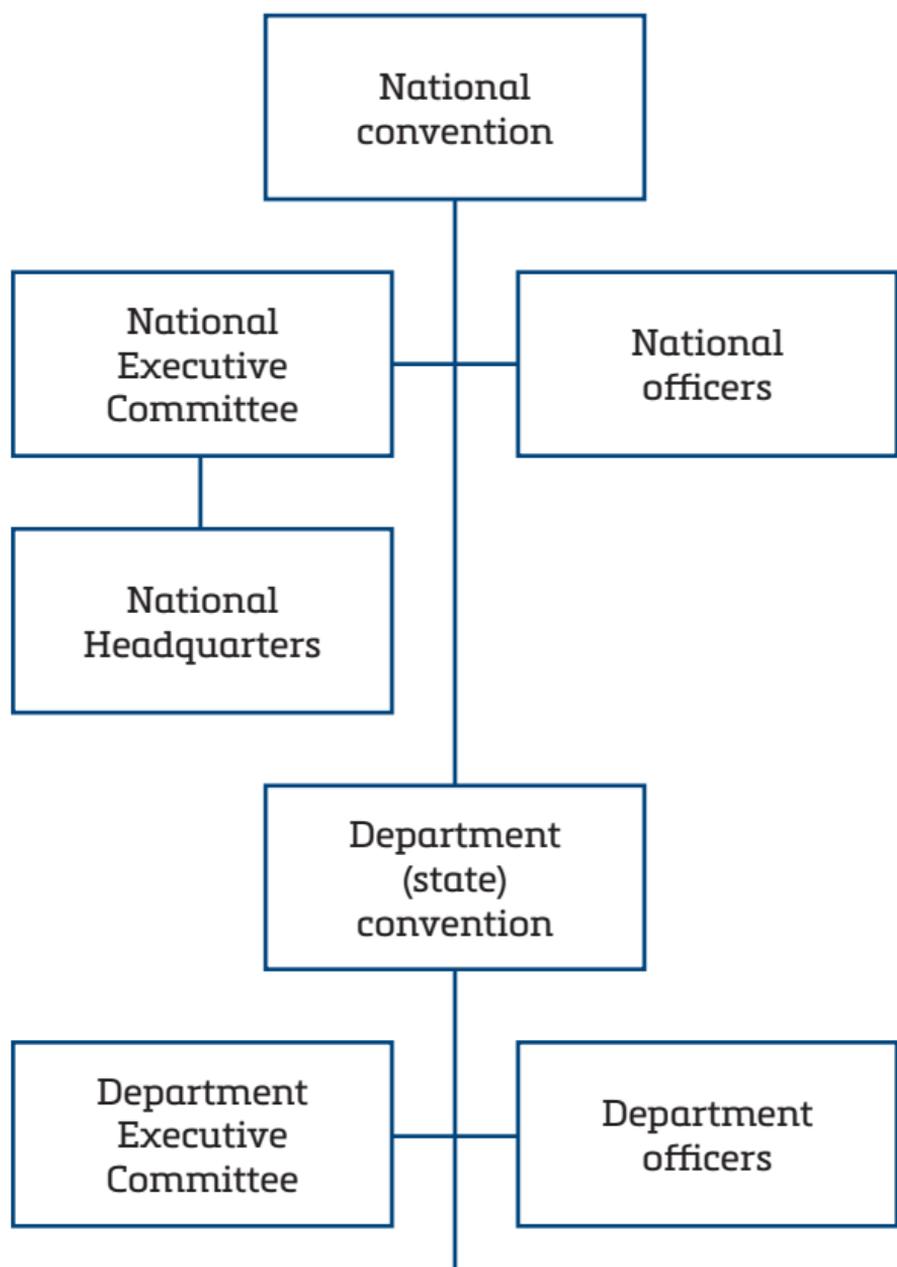
You are now a member of America's largest and most powerful organization of U.S. wartime veterans – approximately 2 million members in more than 13,000 posts nationwide.

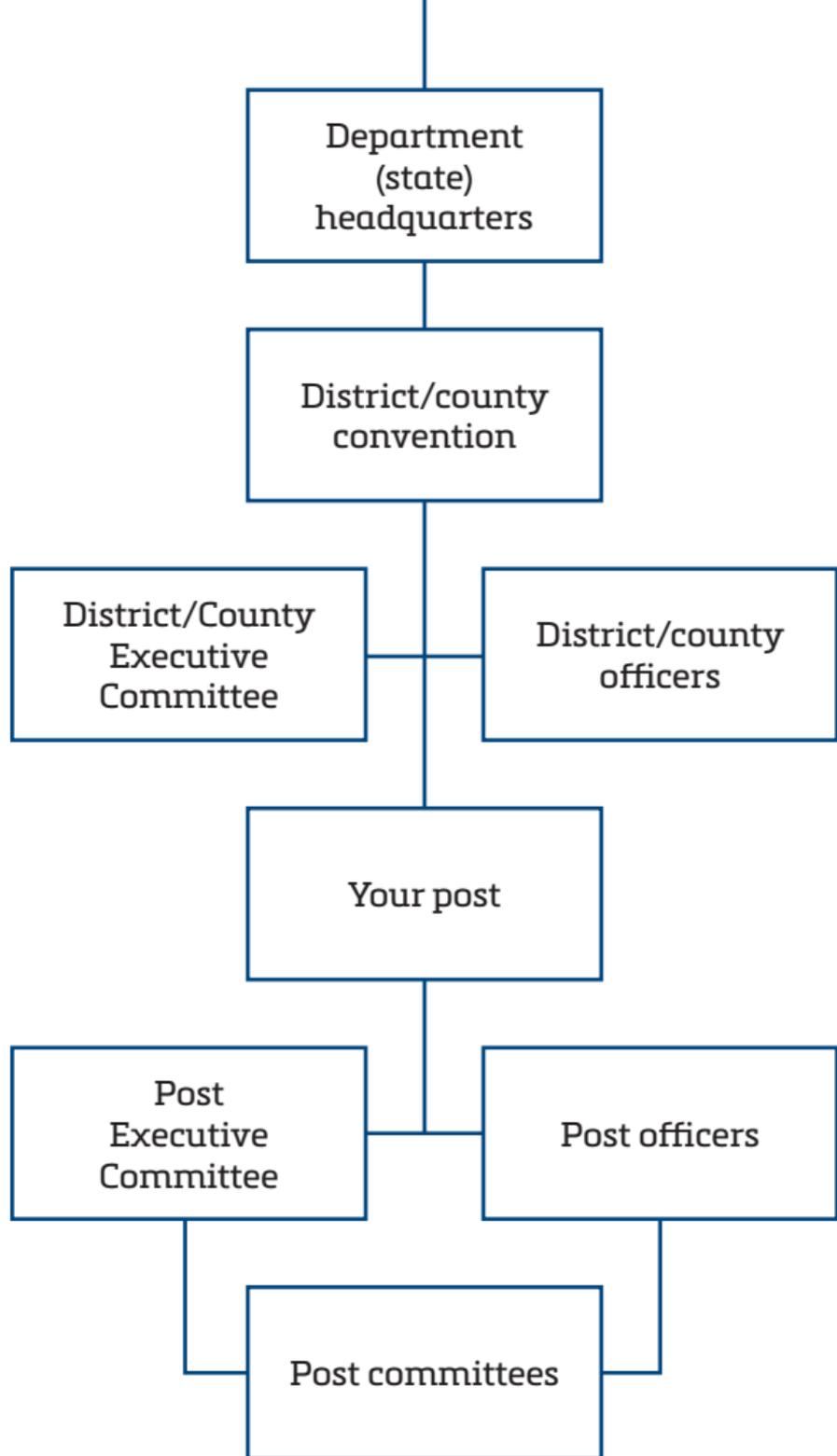
This booklet does not attempt to explain all the Legion's programs. It does, however, give a brief overview of the organization.

The American Legion was born at a caucus of nearly 1,000 officers and enlisted men of the American Expeditionary Forces, March 15-17, 1919, in Paris, France. It was during this caucus that the Legion received its name and drafted the preamble to its constitution (see the back of your membership card).

The Legion's first national convention was held Nov. 10-12, 1919, in Minneapolis. There, delegates selected Indianapolis as the site of a permanent national headquarters.

Organization of The American Legion (simplified)





Organization

American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis houses the following divisions at two locations (downtown and the John H. Geiger Operations Center at old Fort Benjamin Harrison): Finance, Americanism, Emblem Sales, Information Technology, Internal Affairs, Membership, Marketing, Media & Communications, and Customer Service.

The Legion's Washington, D.C., office houses the Legislative, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Foreign Relations and Veterans Employment & Education divisions.

The Legion is organized into departments, with one department headquarters for each of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines – 55 in all.

The various departments are divided into districts/counties. Local posts fall under the jurisdiction of a district/county.

The Legion post

Your post is the heart of The American Legion. The strength of the organization is measured by the programs and activities of local posts, which include the following:

Service to the veteran A post service officer is available to help veterans and their dependents access the benefits guaranteed them by law.

School involvement Posts work with local schools to promote flag etiquette, sponsor youth for American Legion Boys State and Oratorical contests, and provide scholarships for students.

Recreational programs Golf, soccer, softball, bowling, picnics and trips to local events are examples of activities that posts can organize for Legionnaires and their families.

Community involvement Your post may organize patriotic observances, parades, Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, honor guards, blood drives, cleanups and other services depending on the needs of the community.

How can YOU get involved?

If you are interested in helping your fellow veterans, working with youth, getting involved in community activities or just doing your part, you are our kind of Legionnaire.

Your post has a number of committees that may interest you, such as:

Americanism

Children & Youth

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

National Security

Membership

Employment

Public Relations

Sons of The American Legion

Boy Scouts

Hospital Visitation

If your post does not have a particular program, there's no reason it can't be started.

Attendance and participation in post meetings (see inside cover for time and date) is the best way to get the most out of your American Legion membership.

American Legion Auxiliary Membership is open to grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of American Legion members and those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during American Legion eligibility periods. Most posts have an Auxiliary unit that works with the Legion on various programs. Eligible female veterans can be dual members.

American Legion Riders Membership is open to all active members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion, including those on active federal duty in the U.S. military. Members must own and ride motorcycles and be active members within the American Legion Family.

Sons of The American Legion All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion – as well as male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War or the global war on terrorism, or who died subsequent to honorable discharge from such service – are eligible for SAL membership. Some qualify for dual membership.

What is ... ?

Convention District, department and national conventions are where American Legion policy is determined. Delegates and alternates to district/county and department (state) conventions are elected at a regular meeting of your post.

Resolutions These are formal expressions of official opinions. Except for a few resolutions that originate in convention committees, resolutions are forwarded to National Headquarters from department conventions. Most originate at post meetings. The national organization cannot act on a given problem in the absence of a controlling resolution. Conversely, it must act on a matter when mandated to do so by a resolution properly adopted by the national convention or National Executive Committee.

Department Executive Committee (DEC)

The DEC is the governing body for each state between annual department conventions.

National Executive Committee (NEC) The NEC is comprised of one elected individual from each of the 55 departments, plus the national commander, five national vice commanders and past national commanders.

Caps You'll notice various color combinations of the American Legion cap. The blue cap (by far the most worn) is the post cap. A person wearing a blue cap with a white top is a district/county officer. A department officer wears an all-white cap, while national officers wear red caps.

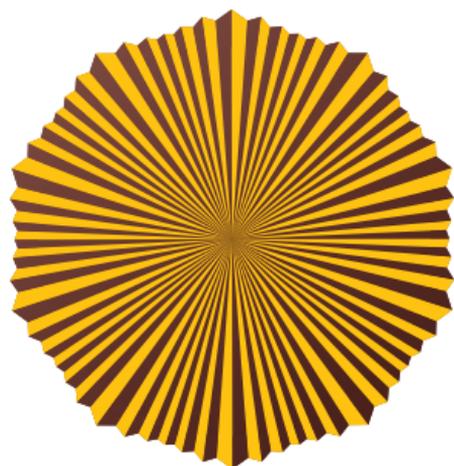
Again, this booklet does not list or explain every American Legion program. Rather, it is meant to encourage you to attend your post's meetings and see for yourself how the Legion works.

Your involvement is limited only by your desire to make The American Legion a stronger organization. To go deeper, obtain a copy of "This is The American Legion" by asking a post officer or contacting department headquarters.

Welcome to The American Legion.



The American Legion emblem has rich symbolism that a mere glance does not reveal. The emblem is laid upon the rays of the sun – giver of life, warmth and courage, and foe of the cold, darkness, fear and apprehension. In turn, each part of the emblem has a significance that no Legionnaire who wears the emblem should take lightly, and that he or she should know from the first moment they put it on. Why does the star signify constancy of purpose? Because the stars are fixed in the heavens. As the stars do not wander, so should The American Legion not wander from its fixed purposes. Here, in pictures, are the meanings of all the parts of the American Legion emblem.

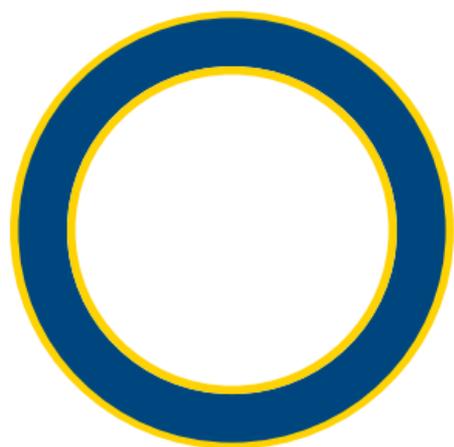


THE RAYS OF THE SUN form the background of our proud emblem, and suggest the Legion's principles will dispel the darkness of violence and evil.

THE WREATH forms the center, in loving memory of those brave comrades who gave their lives in the service of the United States, that liberty might endure.

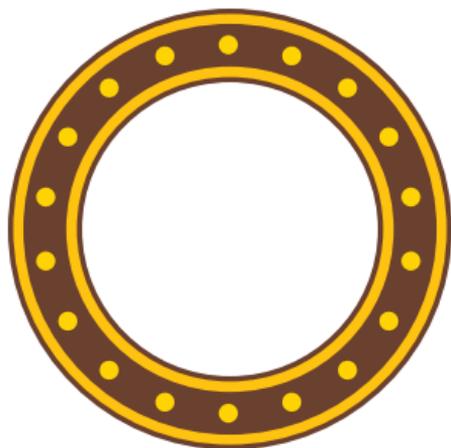


THE STAR, victory symbol of World War I, symbolizes honor, glory and constancy. The letters "U.S." leave no doubt as to the brightest star in the Legion's constellation.



TWO LARGE RINGS The outer ring stands for the rehabilitation of our sick and disabled comrades. The inner ring denotes the welfare of America's children.

TWO SMALL RINGS are set upon the star. The outer ring pledges loyalty and Americanism. The inner ring is for service to our communities, states and nation.



The words **AMERICAN LEGION** tie the whole together for truth, remembrance, constancy, honor, service, loyalty, veterans affairs and rehabilitation, children and youth, and Americanism.

AMERICAN

LEGION



Your membership card



THE AMERICAN LEGION

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