



THE AMERICAN

# Legion

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*The magazine for a strong America*

## PEARL HARBOR at 75


- Long-awaited identification of *Oklahoma* remains
- A *Tennessee* sailor's view of the attack

### SIDE BY SIDE

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of America and Britain*

### ROBERT GATES ON LEADERSHIP

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# Legion

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The USS *Arizona* and Battleship *Missouri* memorials at Pearl Harbor tell the story of the attack that led to America's entry into World War II and Japan's eventual surrender. *Getty Images*

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A young girl hugs Santa Claus after he arrived in a UH-1 "Huey" helicopter for Indiana Blue Star's Spirit of Christmas event in Danville, Ind., on Dec. 19, 2015. *Photo by Lucas Carter*

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*The American Legion Magazine*, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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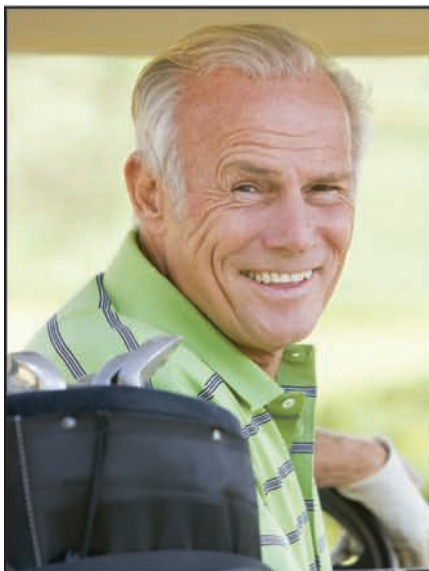
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Photo by Travis Heying

### 'The Dog Debate'

Ken Olsen's report (October) describes the status of a study to determine the effectiveness of service and emotional support dogs as an aid to veterans with PTSD. Far be it from me to doubt the abilities and powers of trained dogs, even after 60 years of raising and living with them.

It is not surprising that dogs can be readily accepted by persons in need of emotional support, as many programs underway have shown. A more perfect helper would be hard to find because dogs do not clutter a relationship with past memories or plans for the future. They are ideal therapists who do not use endless words or confusing goals. Dogs are grounded in the present and, if well raised, accept the companionship of all races and creeds. On a different level, I wonder what kind of help has been offered to these veterans over the past several years. The study's \$12 million price tag does not shock me, and the answers it finds may well help VA, which is in desperate need of help.

I must end here because one of my dogs, Caite, wants to go outside to chase a chipmunk who repeatedly runs under our deck. She is filled with hope that this will be the time she will catch him. If we learn anything from these four-footed teachers, it is to have eternal hope.

— Donald I. Craig Jr., Indianapolis

The \$12 million scientific study might not be necessary if someone simply polled veterans at a VA medical center who deal with mental health issues, including but not limited to those named in the article.

I believe the PTSD emotional support animal (ESA) is a service dog. A veteran who can't leave the house or has anxiety upon returning home needs to feel secure. When trained, a companion animal can search the perimeter, "clear" a room, turn on lights

and more. In crowded places like grocery stores or the DMV line, a trained dog can "block" for the veteran in front of or behind, as needed.

Physical disabilities are devastating. But PTSD is devastating, too, to veterans and those close to them.

My red-flag-o-meter shoots sky high when I read the number of false starts this program has seen. There seems to be a dragging of the feet, in hopes the issue will go away.

— Gail Bodine, North Las Vegas, Nev.



### Oxygen therapy

I am not familiar with the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy to treat TBI or PTSD ("The Mind Field," October). It did, however, save my wife's leg after a botched surgery and infection. Funny how the government has all kinds of money for programs that have never worked but refuses to try something that could be a potential benefit.

In the greater Phoenix area, the cost of HBOT is \$1,500 per treatment. The only downside is a temporary vision change. The constant pressure on the eye from HBOT changes the shape of your eyeball. It is temporary but might make driving a little more challenging. It usually resolves itself in two or three months.

—Harvey Brian, Scottsdale, Ariz.

**Editor's note:** Cost estimates of oxygen treatment vary widely. According to Dr. Paul Harch, director of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine's Hyperbaric Medicine Fellowship Program, the article's quoted \$2,000 average is what is billed in hospital-based hyperbaric departments for the therapy. Freestanding clinics charge between \$125 to \$250 per treatment or offer it free through charitable programs. The total cost of treatment is between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

### White House immigration plan

Rep. Dina Titus' mentality is the reason we are in a quagmire concerning illegal immigration (Big Issues, October). Her comment about millions of hard-working families having to

stay "in the shadows" reeks with ignorance of human nature. These people committed a criminal act when they entered the United States illegally, putting themselves "in the shadows." They were fully aware of what they were doing. By choice, they disregarded the difference between right and wrong, moral and immoral, defiance and compliance. Does Titus think they will follow the law in other matters?

—Jo-Ann Principi, Merritt Island, Fla.

Suppose you went on an extensive vacation with family and left your home vacant for a period of time. You returned only to find a family of complete strangers living in your house. They raided your refrigerator and made extensive use of all the amenities therein. Would you seek to remove these people from the premises under threat of legal action for trespass?

The issue is not about race, nationality, poor children in a corrupt society, or any other sad story offered in defense of ignoring U.S. immigration laws. The real issue is whether or not you consider this nation your home. Personally, I consider the entire landmass known as the United States of America to be my home. I spent time in the military doing my part in its defense. I do not have a clue as to why anyone in a responsible position in our government — who has sworn to uphold the laws of our nation — is so willing to ignore the laws that so many have shed blood to protect.

—Virgil M. Piper, Marina, Calif.

The truth is, many of our forebears were undocumented aliens. In 1620, the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth, Mass., and soon there was a flood of undocumented aliens — people from England first and then a horde of Europeans speaking many languages the locals couldn't understand.

I am with Rep. Dina Titus. How many undocumented immigrants are in Nevada versus Rep. Jeff Duncan's home state of South Carolina?

—Thomas F. Gribble, Gering, Neb.

### Lest we forget

I was disappointed by the September issue's Table of Contents page. There is a picture of a U.S. flag and underneath it the words "Never Forget." You noted two of the 9/11 terrorist attacks but failed to mention the third, Shanksville, Pa., where the plane went down in the field and all aboard were killed.

Those on board gave their lives for our country and should be remembered along with those killed in the attacks on New York and Washington.

—Martha G. Ward, Warrendale, Pa.

### Spreading patriotism

The story about World War II veteran Jack Cowley and his flags (Rapid Fire, August) was outstanding. I am a 97-year-old World War II Marine Corps veteran. I have assembled flag kits for first-grade students at Kent Gardens Elementary School in McLean for the past two years. What a wonderful group of young Americans we have.

—Charles Schuck, Vienna, Va.

## THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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# Membership is your job and mine

People are always trying to write The American Legion's obituary.

The theory goes that as World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans pass away, the Legion and other veterans service organizations will die with them. But history and reality prove otherwise. The Legion is not an antiquated fraternal group, fixed to one era and place. Quite the opposite. Who we are and what we do have been inextricably woven into the fabric of American life for nearly 100 years.

On Capitol Hill, where we succeeded in getting Congress to pass the GI Bill and acknowledge the link between Agent Orange and veterans' health problems, the Legion is fighting as hard as ever for today's servicemembers – and tomorrow's, too. We championed the Post-9/11 GI Bill and support modifications to strengthen it. When politicians suggest the federal government retreat into privatization of veterans health care, we're there to argue that nothing can replace a robust and properly funded VA. We're pushing for appeals modernization so that 450,000 veterans can get answers on their benefits claims. We aggressively pursue further study of alternative treatments for PTSD and TBI.

Across the country, thousands of our posts are pillars of their cities and towns. We teach children to respect the U.S. flag and provide color guards for funerals and community events. We sponsor baseball teams and Boy Scout troops. We connect veterans and their families to Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) in difficult times or a National Emergency Fund grant after a natural disaster. We're everywhere.

I don't see an America without an American Legion. For veterans eager to continue serving, our camaraderie and array of programs are second to none. But if we don't grow our membership, the Legion's influence will be greatly diminished. A smaller Legion means a smaller veterans' footprint nationwide, fewer opportunities to mentor youth in citizenship and patriotism, and a voice in D.C. that's harder to hear.

In the summer of 1989, the Legion was 3,013,189 members strong. That was before the Gulf War, 9/11, and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our numbers should be going up, not down, as a new generation of veterans flows into our communities.

The doughboys who established the Legion in 1919 recruited 843,016 members by the end of the organization's first year. They did it without the Internet, TV, radio or phones. They had limited transportation and no interstate highways. Yet their message spread like wildfire: "Join up!" They didn't care about gender, ethnicity or the cost of membership. All they cared about was the price they'd paid to be eligible for membership.

We, too, must make it our mission to sign up every eligible veteran we find – not necessarily for reward or recognition, but because they've earned the privilege to be part of our family. They need the fellowship of those who know where they've been and what they've sacrificed. My challenge to every Legionnaire is to recruit one new member this year.

It's up to us to leave our Legion bigger and better than we found it, and to hand its great responsibility and purpose off to a new generation that, first and foremost, must be asked to join.

*Charles E. Schmidt*



National Commander  
Charles E. Schmidt

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The Legion's Holiday Donor Blood Drive runs Nov. 24 to Dec. 31. In 2015, more than 46,000 donors gave nearly 76,000 pints of blood.

[www.legion.org/security/blood](http://www.legion.org/security/blood)

### MEMBERSHIP DOOR HANGERS

A new membership tool is helping Legionnaires recruit potential new members who fly U.S. flags at their homes or have military license plates or stickers on their cars. Posts are encouraged to customize these downloadable door hangers by adding contact information.

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- National Security Council (2014-present)
- National American Legion College Alumni Association president (2013-2014)
- Department historian (2012-2015)
- National Homeland Security & Civil Preparedness Committee (2010-2013)
- Department commander (2010-2011)
- Department membership chairman (2009-2010)
- Department Blood Donor chairman (2007-2010, 2011-present)
- National Americanism Council (2007-2010)
- Department senior vice commander (2006-2009)
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- Post service officer (1999-2010)

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## KEN LEE

When Ken Lee first stepped into his American Legion post in Oroville, Wash., he and his family were struggling.

"I had some upper and lower back issues and had a couple of operations to alleviate some of the discomfort, which never happened," he says. "We had a lot of medical issues at that point (and were) living in a 17-and-a-half-foot trailer. We went from park to park because we didn't have the finances."

Aware of Lee's difficulties, the post service officer recommended that the Army veteran fill out an application for a Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grant.

"I had no idea what that meant," he says. "He mentioned I should fill out paperwork for it. A few weeks later, I was notified that I had a check waiting at the post. I came down and talked to the service officer again and found out I had been granted some assistance. I was totally in awe. We talked in length about The American Legion and its programs, and it thrilled me to know that I could be a part of this. I joined on the spot."

Today, Lee serves as the Department of Washington's alternate National Executive Committeeman. He's also a volunteer for Evergreen Boys State, frequently mentoring youth and visiting schools to recruit for it. He estimates he drives 35,000 miles a year promoting Legion activities and membership.

"There are so many different programs," Lee says of the Legion. "It's hard to imagine how many lives are being touched. Not just military lives, but the family unit as a whole."

Looking back on how a local post helped him, Lee can't help but be enthusiastic about all the Legion does for communities – particularly youth. He says every member can make a difference for someone, somewhere, and inspire others to do the same: "One spark can start a fire."

**Watch an interview with Ken Lee online:**

 [www.legion.org/magazine](http://www.legion.org/magazine)

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Photo by Lucas Carter





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# Impeach the IRS commissioner



## SUPPORT

### Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio

■ Jordan sits on the House Judiciary and House Oversight & Government Reform committees.

President Obama put John Koskinen in charge of the Internal Revenue Service in 2013 to restore the public's trust in the agency, following the news that Lois Lerner and other officials had used the IRS to target conservative organizations based on their political views.

Three years later, Koskinen has not only failed to restore the public trust but has stonewalled Congress and impeded congressional efforts to get to the bottom of the IRS targeting scandal.

First, with two subpoenas and three preservation orders in place, Koskinen allowed 422 backup tapes containing potentially 24,000 emails related to the IRS targeting scandal to be destroyed. This alone is a heinous offense, but it doesn't end there.

Not only did Koskinen allow subpoenaed records to be destroyed on his watch, but he kept Congress in the dark for four months after his team learned the backup tapes were destroyed. Additionally, he made false statements under oath when testifying before Congress. At one point, Koskinen "confirmed" that all backup tapes were unrecoverable. But it took the IRS inspector general's team only a few hours and a car ride to a storage facility to discover that not only were 700 other backup tapes available, but Koskinen and his team hadn't even checked to see if such tapes existed.

Finally, Koskinen has failed to reform the IRS to protect Americans' First Amendment rights. Just last month, a federal court found that the IRS could still be targeting conservatives.

This is inexcusable and amounts to what Alexander Hamilton called the "abuse or violation of some public trust." It is more than enough to deserve impeachment.



## OPPOSE

### Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

■ Hoyer is the second-ranking member of the House Democratic leadership.

The effort by a group of House Republicans to impeach the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service without sufficient cause is both outrageous and unprecedented. Many Americans were rightly concerned by allegations that certain

organizations applying for tax-exempt status were selected for extra scrutiny. But a Justice Department investigation found no evidence of political motivation or interference. It was determined, though, that Lois Lerner, then

director of the IRS' Exempt Organizations Unit, exercised poor judgment, and she resigned.

Lerner's departure should have been the end of the matter. Now House Republicans have decided to go after IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, insisting that he be impeached even though the House Judiciary Committee has not held any hearings. Koskinen didn't even work at the IRS in spring 2013, when the allegations came to light. He has been working to restore the agency's reputation for nonpartisan professionalism.

To impeach Koskinen would set the dangerous precedent that removing federal officials from office without proper cause is now fair game in our politics. If that were to happen, it would seriously undermine the functioning of the U.S. government. Impeachment isn't something to be taken lightly. In fact, in the history of the United States, no sitting subcabinet official has ever been impeached.

House Republicans ought to stop wasting taxpayers' time and money on such frivolous games. Instead, they should work with Democrats to make progress on our real challenges. That ought to be Congress' agenda, not a pointless and partisan witch hunt.

**THE HEART OF THE ISSUE**  
*House Republicans have accused IRS Commissioner John Koskinen of destruction of evidence and slowing an investigation into the agency's wrongdoing. Critics say impeachment wastes time and taxpayer money.*

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Number of those hospitalized or killed as a result of their injuries

Source: USA Today



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## WRONG NUMBERS

*High cholesterol can sneak up on you.  
Get a screening and know your risk factors.*

BY BETH W. ORENSTEIN

You can actually have high cholesterol and not know it – the condition rarely has signs or symptoms. But you should know your cholesterol, because if it's too high it could lead to heart disease, says Gladys Velarde, a cardiologist at UF (University of Florida) Health in Jacksonville, Fla., and adviser to the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention's Counter Cholesterol campaign.

"Having high cholesterol can more than triple your risk of having a cardiac event, and depending on your other risk factors, some data suggests, it may even be up to five times as much," Velarde says.

Two types of particles carry cholesterol, a waxy-like substance, through your bloodstream: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). HDL is known as the "good" cholesterol because it carries cholesterol from other parts of your body to your liver, where it is broken down so it passes from the body. LDL is known as the "bad" cholesterol because it allows cholesterol to build up in your arteries. When this happens, it can harden and pieces can break off. Should a piece block an artery that feeds the heart, it can cause a heart attack. Should it travel to the brain, it can cause a stroke.

Cholesterol has two sources: you and your food. Your body makes most of the cholesterol you need to stay healthy. You also get about 25 percent of your body's cholesterol from what you eat. Your cholesterol levels naturally begin to rise after about age 20 in men and level off after about 50. Women's cholesterol levels begin to rise to about the same level as men's, or higher, after menopause.

You should have your cholesterol screened at least once every five years, starting at 20, and more often if you have risk factors such as diabetes or high blood pressure, or are older or overweight, Velarde says. Genetics and lifestyle habits also can be risk factors.

You should also know your total cholesterol, which includes not only your HDL and LDL but other fats such as triglycerides – fats carried in your blood from the food you eat. With your health-care provider, look at your numbers and risk factors to determine whether you need medication to lower your LDL.

*Beth W. Orenstein of Northampton, Pa., is a freelance medical writer.*

## Make these lifestyle changes

These five lifestyle changes can help get your cholesterol numbers where they need to be:

■ **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** This includes fresh fruits and vegetables, lean cuts of meat, low-fat dairy and whole grains. You want some fats in your diet; the best are monounsaturated, such as those found in peanut, olive and canola oils. Eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids also help raise your good cholesterol, and adding soluble fiber to your diet may help lower your LDL.

■ **Exercise most days of the week.** Exercise can help raise your HDL. The American Heart Association recommends you get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise a minimum of five days a week. If you are a couch potato, talk to your doctor before beginning any exercise program, Velarde says.

■ **Lose weight.** If you're overweight, losing even a small amount – 5 to 10 percent of your body weight – can help lower your cholesterol. A heart-healthy diet and exercise should help you lose weight as well as maintain that loss once you do. Cut down on sugar and fats, limit portions and save fried foods for special occasions.

■ **Quit smoking.** One-third of all deaths from heart disease are caused by smoking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking is particularly dangerous to your heart if you have other risk factors, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes, Velarde says. Smoking lowers levels of HDL in your body. Quit and you can reverse rather quickly damage you may have done to your heart.

■ **Limit how much alcohol you drink.** Drink in moderation. That's one a day if you're a healthy female or male older than 65. Healthy males younger than 65 can have up to two drinks a day. Drinking too much alcohol can increase your triglycerides and harm your heart, causing muscle damage, an irregular heartbeat or stroke.



Media Bakery

## Vets find balance in yoga

Paul Zipes started doing yoga in 1995 on a dare from his wife. A former Navy diver, he enjoyed it so much he became a yoga teacher and founded Yoga for Vets in 2007. More than 1,000 veterans have taken advantage of participating facilities' offer of four or more free classes.

The Yoga for Vets website lists 700 teachers, studios and gyms that offer free classes to veterans who have served, or are currently serving, in the U.S. military. Many choose to continue taking classes or begin practicing yoga at home; some, like Zipes, become yoga teachers.

The site includes testimonials, including one from Marine Corps veteran A.K. Bhagwati, who started practicing yoga while in the service as a way to manage anxiety. When he left the Corps, his anger and depression escalated, but yoga helped.

"Eventually I got tired of feeling so negative about everything," Bhagwati said. "I had a bunch of injuries, and because I had trouble working out the way I once did, I had a lot of pent-up energy in my mind and body. I became a yoga teacher, and everything started to change. I learned to meditate, to breathe deeply, and to feel like I had some control of my mind when I felt lousy. Yoga saved my life."

– Mark L. Fuerst

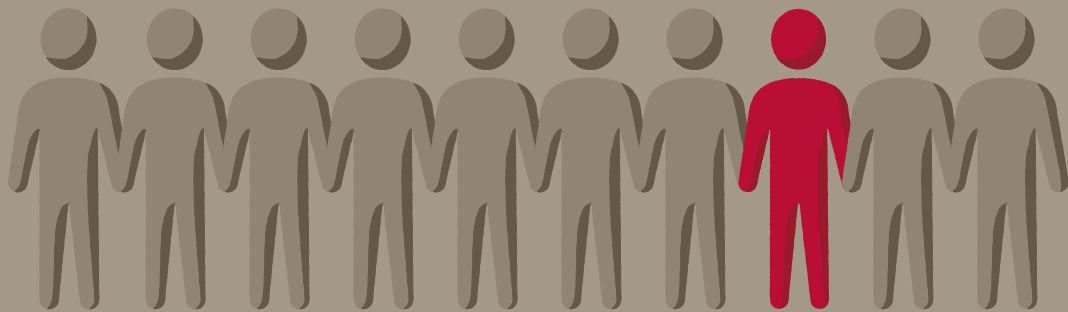
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# VIETNAM VETERANS

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**Vietnam Veterans, especially those born 1945-1965, are at high risk for having Hep C.** Many could have been exposed to Hep C due to unsterile vaccination procedures, or by coming into contact with contaminated blood during combat.

**The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recommends all veterans (born 1945-1965) get tested for Hep C.** The good news is: if you have Hep C, it can be cured. At your next appointment, ask your doctor to test you for Hep C.

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# McDonald seeks better partner in Congress

BY TOM PHILPOTT

VA Secretary Bob McDonald compares himself to a track athlete racing toward the last day of the Obama administration – and perhaps beyond, if asked – to transform the department into a high-performance organization.

“I’m running through the tape,” says the West Point graduate and former Army Ranger during a recent interview in his office, which overlooks Lafayette Square and the White House. “Everybody else here is as well.” But McDonald is frustrated that Congress hasn’t shown the same urgency since his first months in office in 2014. After a long summer recess and a month back in town, lawmakers departed again until after the November elections, failing to pass a dozen initiatives he views as essential to sustain VA’s transformation.

McDonald advised the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee in September that Congress needs to consider its own inaction on critical bills to understand why changes aren’t happening at VA at a pace veterans expect and deserve.

“My job is to shine a light on these things for the American public and for veterans,” McDonald says. “I think we have the strongest unanimity amongst veterans service organizations that I’ve ever seen. As part of this transformation we’ve invited them all in the tent. We’ve created community veterans engagement boards all around the country.”

“My VA transformation is not my plan,” he adds. “I didn’t sit in this office and make it up. I traveled over 300 different trips. I listened to what veterans were telling me. It’s their plan.”

Bitter partisanship in Congress has made the job of VA secretary increasingly difficult.

To McDonald, “it’s more obvious than it’s ever been” that criticism of his plan to transform VA, whether from Congress or a political action committee like Concerned Veterans for America, is more about some kind of political ideology than it is about what’s really good for the veteran.

The fight is between opponents of big government and those seeking to preserve and improve the Department of Veterans Affairs. It affected the

congressionally created Commission on Care. While testifying on the commission’s recommendations, McDonald chastised Congress for failing to pass critical legislation as the fiscal year ended.

VA endorses 15 of 18 recommendations and has been implementing many of them for months or years, McDonald testified. Of the three ideas VA opposes, one calls for creation of an independent

board of directors to govern the Veterans Health Administration. McDonald knows Congress hates the idea, too, and raised it to illustrate a larger point.

“The fact is we already have a governance board,” he told the committee. “Congress is our governance board. And if Congress worked the way it should, nobody would be talking about adding another layer of bureaucracy to VA.”

But Congress doesn’t, he says. It’s VA expanding access to health care, expanding use of community care, pressing to remove legal hurdles in the hiring of medical staff, and urging the closure of unneeded facilities that lawmakers insist on keeping open.

McDonald notes that the Senate committee approved in June an omnibus bill, the Veterans First Act, with many initiatives VA needs. But a senator appears to have a secret hold on it, blocking debate and a full Senate vote. Meanwhile, the House has passed dozens of separate bills on veterans issues that the Senate ignores. But it has also failed to consider other bills, or attached them to initiatives the administration opposes.

“I’m an optimistic person by nature and I believe that the legislation we need we will be able to get,” McDonald says. But the delays only hurt veterans.

From a side window, McDonald points to a hotel where he has lived for much of the past 28 months, away from his Ohio home. Will he stay on as secretary if the next president asks?

“Obviously I would consider it,” he says. “The reason I came out of retirement (after a 33-year career at Procter & Gamble) was to serve my brothers and sisters I served with in the military.”

*Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for nearly 40 years.*



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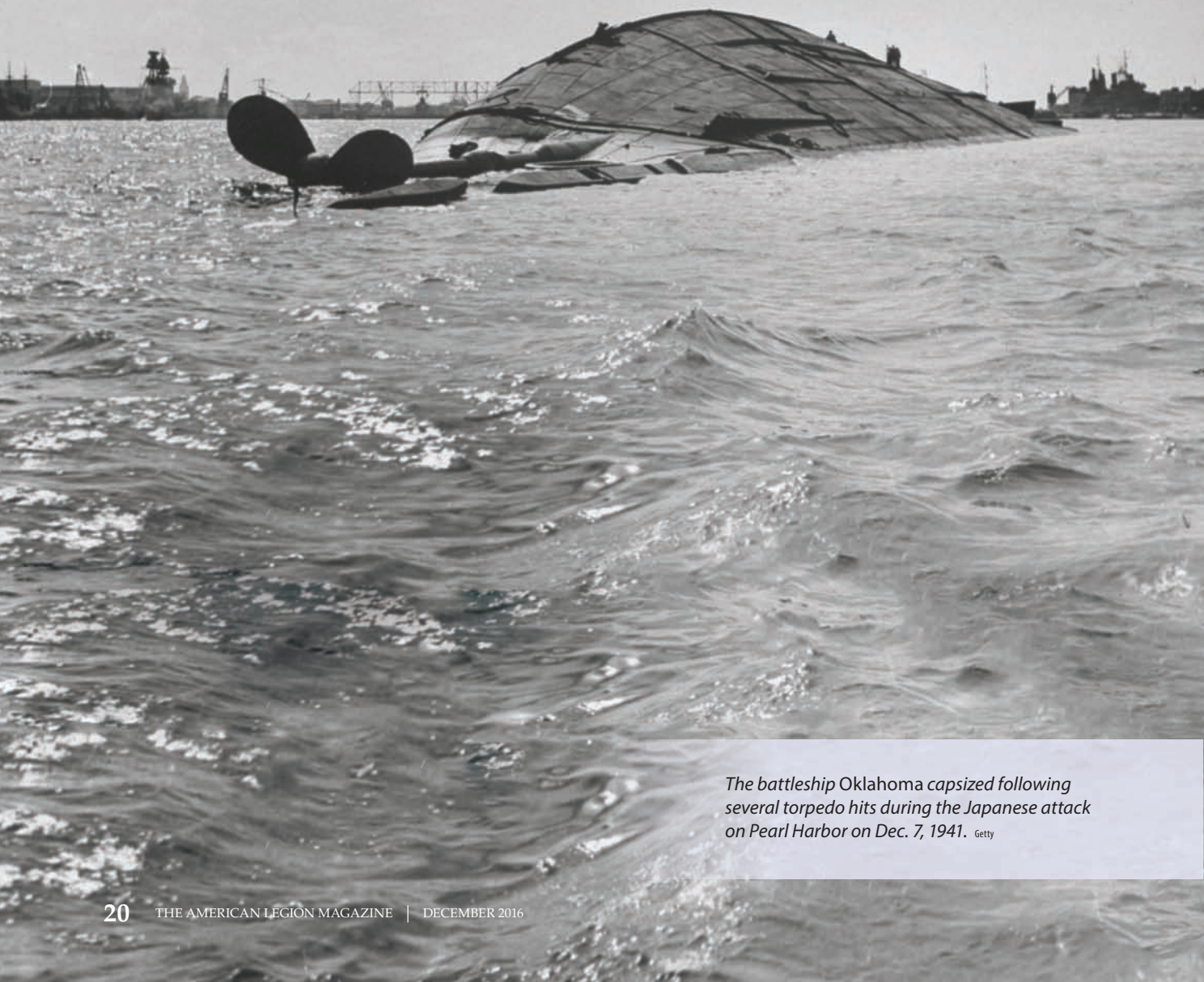
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# HOMIE AT LAST



*The battleship Oklahoma capsized following several torpedo hits during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.* Getty

## Seventy-five years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, men who died on USS Oklahoma are finally being returned to their families.

BY KEN OLSEN

**J**ohn England was last seen heading back into the depths of the crippled USS *Oklahoma* to rescue a fourth shipmate on Dec. 7, 1941. The 20-year-old ensign had come topside after an order to abandon ship, then returned to the radio room three times to guide other sailors to safety even as the ship was capsizing. Ultimately, 429 sailors and Marines – including England – went down with their vessel minutes after it was struck by a barrage of Japanese torpedoes. *Oklahoma's* losses were second only to USS *Arizona* on that day of infamy.

England's family received a telegram from the Navy on Dec. 16, stating that he was "lost in action." Helen England refused to believe her husband was dead. His mother, Thelma, likewise clung to a "thin thread of hope" that her son had been injured or picked up by an outgoing ship and would eventually get word to his family. England's grandmother wrote that his disappearance was "the most bitter sorrow I have ever known."

Sorrow is all they would ever know.

For more than 70 years, the family learned nothing more about England's fate, including the fact that forensic experts identified partial remains of him and 26 other *Oklahoma* sailors in the late 1940s, then reburied them in an unmarked grave at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

England's disappearance eventually splintered his family. His distraught widow cut ties with his parents. England's daughter refused to speak of her biological father to her own children other than a vague reference to him being a Pearl Harbor hero – unavoidable in light of the fact that the Navy named two ships after him.

"It was such a sensitive subject," says England's granddaughter, Bethany Glenn. "We knew not to ask about him."

**LIFELONG DREAM** England grew up wanting to serve on *Oklahoma*. As a young boy, J.C., as he was known, gathered the kids in his Oklahoma City neighborhood to launch a model of the battleship on a nearby pond. He moved to California with his



Bethany Glenn grew up hearing little about her grandfather, John C. England, whose death fractured his family. Photo by Ken Olsen

family after eighth grade and became a standout at Alhambra High School, where he served as senior class president and swept more than one sweetheart off her feet. "His dance card was always full," says Glenn, who eventually tracked down his high school classmates.

England met Helen at Pasadena Junior College and they eloped in January 1941. He received his Naval Reserve commission after earning his associate degree and sailed for Hawaii Oct. 3, 1941 – his pregnant wife's 19th birthday. Their daughter, Vickie Lou, was born a month later and Helen made plans for them to join England after Christmas.

England was filled with anticipation. In his last letter home, he implored his family to send news of his daughter. "I wish you'd write me and tell me what everybody thinks about the new girl in the England family," he wrote in late November 1941. "The only thing that gets me is that I'll be the last one in the family that gets to see her."

But England's mother knew he had other worries as well. "He was the youngest officer on board and he was so ashamed of the fact he was an infant," Thelma later confided in a letter. "But I was very proud of him."





*Jack Evans is pictured with his late first wife, Ruth.*

Photo courtesy Jack Evans

# ‘Burned into your memory’

***Pearl Harbor survivor Jack Evans witnessed the attack from the top of USS Tennessee.***

**BY ROBERT RANDALL RYDER**

As the nation prepares to recognize the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, few veterans are left who had a better overall view of the devastation than 92-year-old Jack Evans of La Mesa, Calif.

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, he was a 17-year-old lookout on the battleship USS *Tennessee*.

“We were burning all over,” recalls Evans, and he should know. Atop one of the ship’s main masts, 90 feet above the main deck and 150 feet above the water, he had one of the best spots in the harbor to witness the attack. “Everything was on fire,” he says. “Death and destruction (everywhere).”

*continued on page 24*

**MISSING** *Oklahoma* was anchored next to USS *Maryland* along Battleship Row when the Japanese attacked on that sleepy Sunday morning in 1941. The ship capsized 12 minutes after the first of several torpedoes ripped into its port side. A rescue team cut holes in the hull of the overturned ship and rescued 32 men. Thirty-five bodies were subsequently recovered and identified. Nearly 400 others were still missing.

The Navy righted *Oklahoma* and removed all the remains it could find beginning in July 1942. There were stories of fuel- and oil-soaked bones stacked on the deck as the military cleared the holds, says Bob Valley, whose older brother, Lowell, was working in the port engine room when the Japanese began pummeling the ship. Those jumbled remains were buried in graves in two Honolulu cemeteries.

After World War II, the American Graves Registry Service disinterred the Pearl Harbor casualties and took them to a laboratory at Schofield Barracks with plans to identify skulls, femurs, hip bones and the like, and return them to the next of kin. The task proved daunting in an era when DNA wasn’t even a concept. Nonetheless, the Schofield laboratory team proposed identifications for 27 *Oklahoma* sailors – including England – based on comparisons of military dental records with teeth found among the remains, says Heather Harris, a historian with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Because they were unable to identify complete skeletons, the government quietly decided to bury the partial remains of the 27 in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific – called the Punchbowl – and declare the casualties unidentifiable. England and nearly 400 of his shipmates were placed in 46 gravesites marked “*Oklahoma* unknowns.” It became the single largest group of unidentified casualties from the Pearl Harbor attack. And England’s family, like all the other families, was never informed.

**ADRIFT** A month after her husband was lost at Pearl Harbor, Helen England’s San Francisco apartment building burned, adding to a string of tragedies. Her mother had died when she was 12, her father when she was 16 and now her husband when she was 19. She left her infant daughter with her in-laws and drifted east.

Two years later, Helen married an heir to a prominent family she met while modeling in the New York City area. Once her new husband’s family discovered Helen had a daughter, they demanded she bring Vickie Lou to the East Coast and allow her to be adopted by their family to avoid the appearance of scandal, Glenn says.

Vickie Lou wasn’t told about her real father, nor did she meet England’s parents until the 1960s. Heartbroken at the loss of their granddaughter, England’s parents focused on USS *England*, which was christened by Thelma in 1943

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Seaman 1st Class Evans woke at 6 a.m. that Sunday to have breakfast and finish his cleaning duties. He was trying to decide whether or not he would attend church services when general quarters sounded at about 7:55 a.m. "We all thought it was a drill," he says. "We were kind of mad about it being Sunday morning."

Anger soon turned to surprise as Evans made his way toward his battle station. "I got up one deck higher and heard a 'fra-ump' and thought, 'What is this? Something is going on.' I picked up my speed, and as soon as I got to the main deck I could see that bombs had been dropped, planes were upside down ... (something) really bad had been happening. So I went up that ladder really fast to get to the top of the foretop.

"Just as I got there, what I thought was the first Japanese plane to drop a torpedo crossed over our fo'c'sle (forecastle) area. I was standing there on the foretop, and as he passed over the mast, in the rear seat (was a Japanese crew member). If either one of us would have had a potato we would have hit the other, it was so close. We were practically eyeball to eyeball."

*Tennessee* was docked in Battleship Row, a line of ships close together along Ford Island that offered easy targets for the Japanese aircraft. Directly behind *Tennessee* was the battleship *Arizona*, which exploded in a ball of flame when a Japanese bomb detonated in one of its ammunition magazines, ripping the ship apart and killing most of its crew.

"I wasn't looking at the ship at the time of the explosion, but I felt it," Evans says. "It felt like the foretop was going to snap off, it was that violent. As soon as I could I turned and looked, and of course the heavy smoke and fire ... was coming up to a great height. That's when I saw the great chunks of metal flying from the ship. I knew *Arizona* had blown up."

The one battleship that completely capsized, trapping some of its crew inside, was *Oklahoma*. Moored on the outer edge of Battleship Row, it was fully exposed to the Japanese torpedoes.

"It was fast," Evans says. "I suppose she had taken six or seven torpedoes at the time and there was confusion on board, obviously. It started rolling very slowly ... and once it started, the faster it rolled.

"I would say, from vertical to upside down, three to five minutes. Fast!

"It's a shock. You know there are a lot of people inside this ship who are going to be trapped. And here you are, looking at this death scene, and your mind is saying, 'My God, those men don't have a chance!' It's kind of



*John and Helen England met at Pasadena Junior College and eloped in early 1941. Later that year, he received a commission as an officer in the Naval Reserve.* Photo courtesy Bethany Glenn

and set a record for sinking six Japanese submarines in a 12-day period in May 1944. A second *USS England* launched in 1962.

"The Navy was very good about letting them know where the *USS Englands* were and what they were doing," Glenn says. "J.C.'s parents visited the ships whenever they were in port. I think that helped stave off their sadness."

Vickie Lou, however, almost never spoke of her biological father. "She only told us surface things – that he was a Pearl Harbor hero. That absolutely nothing of him had been recovered," Glenn says. "There was a cloud of sadness over everything."

Vickie Lou died in 2002. Two years later, Glenn's cousin discovered a couple of boxes marked "J.C.'s stuff" while cleaning out her own father's attic. She shipped the boxes to Glenn, who found everything from England's high school yearbook to years of correspondence between his mother and two of his former girlfriends. Glenn subsequently learned that her grandfather's death sent "a ripple of sadness" through his high school class. She also learned that her grandfather had been so well regarded, his high school had created the John C. England Award, the top honor given to a graduating senior.

The biggest discovery was yet to come.

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Evans served 34 years in the Navy, retiring with the rank of captain. U.S. Navy photo

burned into your memory. It's something you can never forget."

Fortunately, some of the men trapped inside the capsized *Oklahoma* were saved days later when rescue crews cut open sections of the bottom to reach them. Evans saw the first group pulled out.

"They all knew they were dead, of course, being (trapped) up there in the darkness, inside the hull," he says. "I talked to some of them, and they didn't expect to live. When the hole was opened, they raised their arms and screamed in relief and ran right into the water."

Though *Tennessee* was protected from Japanese torpedoes by being docked inside *West Virginia*, it didn't escape damage.

"We got two bomb hits, one on center turret No. 2," Evans says. "The bomb hit the center gun right at the base, penetrated to the bore and split the barrel. It sent shrapnel over to *West Virginia* and killed the commanding officer (Capt. Mervyn Sharp Bennion, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for refusing to leave his post even as he bled to death). Hit him right in the midsection."

Shrapnel also flew up into the foretop, wounding Evans in the legs.

"I didn't know it at the time, but it came right between my feet and hit a small stanchion right in front of me ... and splattered me and hit me in both legs," he says. "I guess it was about an hour later that somebody said, 'Hey Jack, you're bleeding!' I looked down and there were four dried tracks of blood in each leg. I had been hit a number of times, but I didn't notice it because I really had a load of adrenaline (flowing). I just didn't feel any pain."

It was late afternoon before Evans could climb down and report to sickbay. "They did a little repair work on it and plucked out some steel," he says. "They put some Merthiolate on it and said, 'Go back to work.'"

*Tennessee* lost five men that day. But Evans says it could have been much worse.

"There are a lot of what-ifs," he says. "First of all, that bomb that hit the center gun – if it

**A SURVIVOR'S CRUSADE** By the time Glenn was combing through family letters and calling his high school girlfriends, a Pearl Harbor survivor named Ray Emory had been pushing for identification of unknown Pearl Harbor casualties for more than a decade. It started when he swung by the office at the Punchbowl on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack and asked where the Pearl Harbor unknowns were buried. No one had an answer. So Emory got a clipboard and began walking the Punchbowl, mapping all the graves. "It took a couple of years," he says. "It was chaos."

Emory also compiled lists of all the Pearl Harbor casualties by ship, along with their medical records, and started pushing DoD to identify the unknown sailors. In the course of his work, he discovered records of the 27 *Oklahoma* sailors whose skulls and jawbones had been identified – and then reburied. That led to disinterment of a grave containing five of the 27 in 2003.

That same grave, however, also had the remains of more than 100 other individuals. DoD needed money, medical records of the *Oklahoma* casualties, DNA samples from family members, and new practices and policies for dealing with large groups of commingled remains before it moved forward. Emory, Valley and families of other men who perished on *Oklahoma* came together to lobby Congress, DoD and every office that had anything to do with military remains. "They were fully engaged and committed to seeing the rest of the *Oklahoma* unknowns disinterred," Harris says.

The Navy eventually hired a forensic genealogist to gather DNA samples from the *Oklahoma* families, Harris says. More than 80 percent of the families who lost a loved one on the ship came through. Gerald Lehman, one of the first five sailors exhumed in 2003, was identified with the help of a DNA sample gleaned from the seal of an envelope that carried a letter home to his mother.

**THE EMAIL** Glenn received an email from Bob Valley in 2008, after Emory recruited him to help locate the first group of *Oklahoma* families. She provided a DNA sample, as did her sister and her cousin, Katy Bemiss. Then Glenn and her cousin visited the grave where her grandfather's partial remains were said to be buried, wondering if he would ever come home.

"We were in the midst of not knowing which way this would go," Glenn says, because DoD hadn't yet decided if it would continue to exhume the Pearl Harbor unknowns. "I thought, 'I hope I don't have to bring a shovel here and start digging.' It was sobering." All along, she was more worried about Valley, who is in his 80s. "I don't want him to die before they find his brother."

There's hope. Thanks to the work of Emory, Valley and other advocates, DoD eventually committed to identify the men of *Oklahoma* and return them to their

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\* In studies of patients with genotype 1 chronic hep C infection, the percentages of patients cured after taking ZEPATIER were: 94% (90 of 96 patients); 94% (115 of 122 patients); 95% (273 of 288 patients); 95% (179 of 189 patients); 96% (76 of 79 patients); and 97% (93 of 96 patients).

† In studies of patients with genotype 4 chronic hep C infection, the percentages of patients cured after taking ZEPATIER were: 97% (64 of 66 patients) and 100% (8 of 8 patients).

## Important safety information

ZEPATIER is not for people with certain liver problems. Tell your health care provider if you have liver problems other than hep C. Also tell your health care provider if you have ever taken any medicine for hep C, have HIV or any other medical conditions, have had or are waiting for a liver transplant, or are nursing, pregnant, or trying to get pregnant. Tell your health care provider about all of the medicines you take. ZEPATIER may affect how other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how ZEPATIER works. Some medicines cannot be taken with ZEPATIER. Your health care provider can tell you if it is safe to take ZEPATIER with other medicines.

ZEPATIER may cause increases in your liver-related blood tests, which could be a sign of serious liver problems. Your health care provider will do blood tests to check your liver before and during treatment with ZEPATIER. Tell your health care provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms or if they get worse during treatment with ZEPATIER: loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, feeling tired or weak, yellowing of your skin or eyes, or color changes in your stool.

If you take ZEPATIER with ribavirin, be sure you read the Medication Guide for ribavirin. Common side effects of ZEPATIER include feeling tired, headache, and nausea. When ZEPATIER is used with ribavirin, common side effects also include low red blood cell counts.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088. **Please read the adjacent Patient Information for ZEPATIER and discuss it with your doctor.**

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## Patient Information

### ZEPATIER™ (ZEP-ah-teer) (elbasvir and grazoprevir) tablets



#### What you need to know about ZEPATIER

- Before you take this medicine, be sure you understand what it is for and how to take it safely.
- Keep this information.
- If you have questions about this medicine, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Every time you get a refill, look at the Patient Information. There may be new information.
- Your healthcare provider may prescribe ZEPATIER with a medicine called ribavirin. Ribavirin is also known as Rebeto!®, Copegus®, Ribasphere®, and Moderiba®. **If you take both ZEPATIER and ribavirin, be sure you read the Medication Guide for ribavirin.**

#### What is ZEPATIER?

ZEPATIER is a prescription medicine used with or without ribavirin to treat chronic (long-lasting) hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotypes 1 or 4 infection in adults.

It is not known if ZEPATIER is safe or effective in children under 18 years old, people awaiting a liver transplant, or people who have had a liver transplant.

#### Who should not take ZEPATIER?

Do not take ZEPATIER if you have certain liver problems.

#### What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ZEPATIER?

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems other than hepatitis C
- have ever taken any medicine for hepatitis C
- have HIV
- have had or are waiting for a liver transplant
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or trying to get pregnant. ZEPATIER has not been studied in pregnant women. We do not know if ZEPATIER will harm your baby while you are pregnant.
  - **Males and females who take ZEPATIER and ribavirin should also read the ribavirin Medication Guide for important pregnancy, contraception, and infertility information.**
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. We do not know if ZEPATIER gets in your breast milk and gets passed to your baby.
  - **Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby during treatment with ZEPATIER.**

#### Are you taking other medicines?

**Tell your healthcare provider about all of the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. ZEPATIER may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how ZEPATIER works. Some medicines cannot be taken with ZEPATIER. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take ZEPATIER with other medicines.

- Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with this medicine.
- **Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.**

#### How do I take ZEPATIER?

- **Take 1 ZEPATIER tablet at the same time every day.**
- ZEPATIER comes in a blister package of individually-packaged tablets. Keep the tablets in this package until you are ready to take your dose.
- Take ZEPATIER exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.
- Take ZEPATIER with or without food.
- Do not stop taking ZEPATIER without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- If you take more than your prescribed dose, call your healthcare provider right away.

#### What if I forget to take ZEPATIER?

- Do not take two doses of ZEPATIER at the same time to make up for a missed dose.
- If you are not sure what to do, call your healthcare provider or pharmacist. It is important that you do not miss or skip doses of ZEPATIER during treatment.

#### What are the possible side effects of ZEPATIER?

**Signs of liver problems. ZEPATIER may cause increases in your liver-related blood tests.** This could be a sign of serious liver problems. Your healthcare provider will do blood tests to check your liver before and during treatment with ZEPATIER. Tell your

healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms or if they get worse during treatment with ZEPATIER:

- loss of appetite
- nausea and vomiting
- feeling tired or weak
- yellowing of your skin or eyes
- color changes in your stool

#### Common side effects of ZEPATIER when used without ribavirin include:

- feeling tired
- headache
- nausea
- trouble sleeping
- diarrhea

#### Common side effects of ZEPATIER when used with ribavirin include:

- low red blood cell counts (anemia)
- headache
- feeling tired
- shortness of breath
- rash or itching
- feeling irritable
- stomach pain
- depression
- joint pain

#### If you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away, tell your healthcare provider.

There may be other side effects to ZEPATIER that are not listed. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088. For more information or medical advice, call your doctor.

#### Where should I keep ZEPATIER?

- Keep ZEPATIER in its original packaging (blister package) until you are ready to take it. Do not take the tablets out of the original blister package to store in another container such as a pill box. This is important because the tablets are sensitive to moisture. The package is designed to protect them.
- Keep ZEPATIER at room temperature.
- Keep ZEPATIER and all medicines out of the reach of children.

#### General information about ZEPATIER

- Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information. Do not use ZEPATIER for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give ZEPATIER to other people, even if they have the same condition. It may harm them.
- If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. You can ask them for information about ZEPATIER that was written for health professionals.
- For more information, call Merck, the company that makes ZEPATIER, at 1-877-888-4231 or go to [www.ZEPATIER.com](http://www.ZEPATIER.com).

#### What are the ingredients in ZEPATIER?

The active ingredients are: elbasvir and grazoprevir. The inactive ingredients are: colloidal silicon dioxide, copovidone, croscarmellose sodium, hypromellose, lactose monohydrate, magnesium stearate, mannitol, microcrystalline cellulose, sodium chloride, sodium lauryl sulfate, and vitamin E polyethylene glycol succinate.

The tablets are film-coated with a coating material containing the following inactive ingredients: carnauba wax, ferrousferic oxide, hypromellose, iron oxide red, iron oxide yellow, lactose monohydrate, titanium dioxide, and triacetin.

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*The guided missile cruiser USS England served in every major Pacific engagement from Vietnam to Desert Storm.* Photo courtesy Bethany Glenn

families for burial by 2020. “This is the story of hundreds of people coming together to make this happen,” Harris says. But the work of one person – Emory – was crucial, Valley adds. “If it wasn’t for that, there never would have been any identification of the *Oklahoma* unknowns.”

Meanwhile, Glenn, her sister and her cousin started considering what they would do if England’s remains were retrieved. She told one of his high school girlfriends that they were thinking of leaving him in Hawaii with his shipmates.

“(She) burst into tears and said, ‘Please bring him home.’ She urged me to see if we could bury him with his parents in Colorado Springs.” They discovered that England’s parents had purchased a plot next to their own, complete with a headstone, in the event their son was eventually found.

In June, the Navy visited Glenn, told her that they had identified England’s skull, and gave her the option of waiting until all of his remains were found to bring him home. Her family didn’t want to wait. England’s partial remains were flown to Colorado Springs in August. During a private moment at the funeral home before he was buried with full military honors, Glenn and her sister tucked their mother’s ashes into the casket, finally bringing father and daughter together in a gesture of peace.

“I know she struggled with the heaviness she was born into,” Glenn told the hundreds of people who gathered for England’s belated funeral. “And this is why my sister Lisa and I decided to include her ashes in her father’s grave – as a way to heal the past and to bring long-awaited closure to our family.” 🌿

*Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.*

would have hit either side we would have been a second *Arizona*, because it was the ammunition magazine under turret No. 2 that caused *Arizona* to go up. And that’s exactly what would have happened to us, so we were lucky.”

Despite many of *Tennessee*’s crew having to fight fires, others shot at the Japanese planes the best they could. But the ship’s anti-aircraft was ineffective, Evans says.

“The ship’s anti-aircraft guns were old 5-inch 51-calibers, and that was not the top anti-aircraft gun of the day,” he says. “We fired a lot of anti-aircraft ammunition, but it wasn’t a real good spot to fight because you had all the masts from the other ships in the way and you had a mutual interference problem. I didn’t see a single plane come down that I could say was hit by a *Tennessee* gunner. And I couldn’t hardly believe that because I knew those guys were good. But that day they weren’t. They were late getting started and the situation was bad.”

There was no possibility of *Tennessee* getting underway and leaving the harbor. It was wedged between the half-sunken *West Virginia* on one side, the sunken *Arizona* behind and the *Maryland* in front.

“We were thankful because they screened us from the torpedoes, and the torpedoes caused most of the damage,” he says. “Those ships couldn’t go anywhere, either. Even though they weren’t blocked in, they were unable to get underway.”

As shocking as the attack was, Evans says he wasn’t frightened, and neither were most of his crewmates. “Most people just set their jawline and went about doing their jobs. There were very few who went into hysterics or anything of that nature. I really wasn’t scared. I think my folks brought me up to be capable of handling my own position.”

He remembers how frustrating it was to not be able to give the Japanese some of their own medicine. “It is so frustrating to be in a situation where there is so little you can do. You want to fight those guys, and there was no way to do it.”

Evans believes the Pearl Harbor attack was so successful because it was well planned and executed.

“I watched all those torpedoes go into those exposed battleships and they took about seven torpedoes each,” he says. “It was pretty smoothly done. They knocked out the opposing air very well. They knocked out the opposing battleships very well. I didn’t see any confusion on their part.”

During and after the attack, sailors moved quickly to help those in need. “There were boats everywhere trying to help, looking for people who had been blown into the water. There were a lot of people in the water. They picked up a lot of people.”

Fortunately, the Japanese did not press their advantage and send in a third wave of planes. Had they gone after one of the most of the important targets they missed at Pearl Harbor, the attack could have been even more devastating.



"The Japanese could have done as much or more (damage) against our war effort if they had bombed our tank farm (filled with fuel), which they didn't do," Evans recalls. "That tank farm would have grounded us because there would not have been any fuel oil for the ships, and for a long time, too."

*Tennessee* was one of the least damaged vessels at Pearl Harbor. It was able to sail out on Dec. 20, Evans' 18th birthday. It headed back to the United States for repairs and fought in several battles during the war.

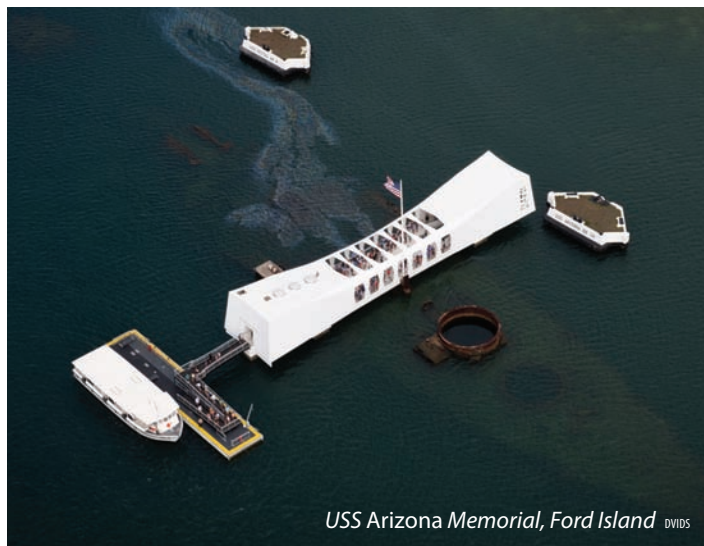
Evans remained on board until 1943, when he left for naval flight training school, his dream job. He was eventually promoted to ensign, and by the end of World War II he was a pilot flying twin engine anti-submarine aircraft known as PBYs and PBMs.

Altogether, Evans served 34 years in the Navy and rose to the rank of captain. Before retiring, he served at the Pentagon and commanded his own ship, *USS Pyro*, during the Vietnam War; it helped supply aircraft carriers and surface warships with ammunition.

Looking back at the attack on Pearl Harbor, Evans says he has no regrets. "If I was 17 and the situation occurred, I'd do it again," he says.

Evans will not be at Pearl Harbor this month to mark the 75th anniversary of the attack, but he does plan to attend local events Dec. 7, honoring fellow veterans and talking about the importance of military readiness.

*Robert Randall Ryder is a Marine Corps Desert Storm veteran. He worked as a senior reporter and substitute news anchor for WTVO, the ABC affiliate in Rockford, Ill., for almost 20 years. He writes about naval history for local and national magazines.*



USS Arizona Memorial, Ford Island DVIDS

## Pearl Harbor at 75

The American Legion will have a large presence at the weeklong commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Legionnaires will participate in remembrance ceremonies and other events Dec. 1-11, including:

- A Veterans Benefits Center from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 6 at Oahu Veterans Center, 1298 Kukila St., Honolulu. Veterans will be able to meet with accredited representatives to receive assistance with benefit claims, get updates on their appeals and more.
- The Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade on Dec. 7, in which American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt and members of the Department of Hawaii will participate.
- A System Worth Saving visit Dec. 8 and 9 at the Honolulu VA Medical Center.

Go online for full coverage: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

Learn more about the 75th Anniversary Commemoration:

[pearlharbor75thanniversary.com](http://pearlharbor75thanniversary.com)

## Legionnaires welcome home *Oklahoma* fallen

In August, Johnie Webb of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency told The American Legion's National Security Commission that 43 *Oklahoma* sailors buried as unknowns at the Punchbowl in Hawaii had been disinterred and identified as of mid-August. Another 388 await identification over the next five years. As remains are returned to their families for proper burial, members of the American Legion Family are there to pay tribute.

■ **Ens. Joseph Hittorff Jr.** On June 18, members of American Legion Hall-Jennings Post 153 in Kent, Conn., assisted the Navy with a color guard and pallbearers at Hittorff's funeral (pictured above). They also hosted a reception following the service.



Photo courtesy Dianne Lang

■ **Seaman 2nd Class Lewis Lowell Wagoner** Wagoner was laid to rest in Whitewater, Kan., in early October.

According to the *Wichita Eagle*, dozens of U.S. flags flew outside the funeral home, with an American Legion Rider beside each one. A Legionnaire played Taps.

■ **Seaman 2nd Class Rudolph Piskuran**

When Piskuran's remains arrived at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport

in October, members of American Legion Post 211 in Avon Lake were there to support his family.

■ **Machinist's Mate 1st Class Alfred Wells** Last summer, Patriot Guard Riders provided an escort for Wells' remains and his family prior to burial at Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Syracuse, N.Y.



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Illustration by Samuel A. Mimick

# ‘Were you in combat?’

*For many veterans, the invisible wounds of war are real and ever present.*

BY KEITH NIGHTINGALE

**F**or some, time in combat is just the length of a tour. For others, war is everlasting. Facets of a personal war are sometimes shrouded in the labyrinth of the mind, only to occasionally emerge for others to see. For all who experienced it, combat is a constant – sometimes controlled, sometimes not – like most life events.

The person you see across the room or sitting in the subway may be in a place you cannot go and dealing with issues you cannot see. But they are very real, these invisible wounds.

The smoke of battle may clear the field, but its residue lingers in the minds of those who first saw its shades, tremors and eruptions in a time since passed at a place far away. A spark of suggestion can bring it all back from the darkest recesses to the brightest light of recognition and reaction. In this way, war is always with you.

Each participant of war returns with a personal toolkit of controls and the unprogrammable impulses of memory, each to counterbalance the other.

A child looks at his father, newly returned from the most recent of many deployments, and asks, “Were you in combat?”

For those who have experienced the great difference between merely deploying and serving somewhere, and those who were seriously and mortally engaged, the answer would have to be, “Yes, but ....” The answer is not as simple as it may seem.

Combat changes people. It’s not a routine matter of leaving it all behind when one boards the plane to return home. Everyone has some secret file cabinets of the mind. They can be quite extensive and subject to unexpected openings, viewings and withdrawals. The human coping mechanism provides a variety of resolutions that each person draws upon to keep the cabinet closed and unknown to companions and relations.

On the surface, everything appears normal. Underneath, suppressive mechanisms are hard at work keeping the darkness contained. In many cases, the bearer is unaware until some specific

moment, gesture or scene turns the past into the present. Domestic relationships become adjusted as new aspects of a personality emerge. New obsessions, behavioral patterns, long moments of silence, inability to communicate as in the past, or just a distant eye on a quiet day indicating that the cabinet is opening: “Yes. I was in combat today, and I always will be.”

Walking through a farm field, the terrain takes on new significance. Fields of fire are mentally plotted. The best defensive positions are selected. Likely avenues of approach are scanned and noted. The new corn and soybean fields are seen as visual distractions as the mental military calculus unfolds. The fields walked as a boy with a father are no longer friendly.

Crossing the street, a judgment is made as to possible sniper placements, the best building access point, the location of covering forces and the best position for overwatch. Starbucks is just across the walkway, but there is an imaginary platoon securing its perimeter.

The most important game of the year is on the tube one bright Sunday morning. A phone rings, and a conversation unfolds. The game is ignored for a considerable time. A specific time and place are scheduled. If it conflicts with an important family event, that’s unfortunate. This is more important and has to be done. This person on the other end was with me one dark day.

The helicopter ambulance passes overhead. A quick glance opens the cabinet full and wide. Out pours a scene from some time ago. Dust, smoke, streaking tracers, sudden explosions and dark silence are accompanied by great pain. No one else sees this. It’s combat.

In a quiet moment, he can hear past conversations unheard by others in the room. They are hard, cynical jokes with morbid senses of humor. He hears the talk and in his mind’s eye sees the faces of his fellow soldiers with shoulders against the mud dike of an unnamed village just barely discernible in the gray dawn.

We survived the night. Now we have to work on



the day. "One more day, God. One more day."

There's a pause in the room while everyone looks at him as he returns from his world to theirs.

The kitchen has always been the repository of the best family feelings. The aroma of a roast, a soup or a favorite pastry unlocks the most pleasant of memories. Sometimes, for whatever reason or stimulus, the aroma changes. It turns harsh with cordite, hot JP-4 and the ugly deep breath of a newly opened abdomen. Blood has a unique odor that lingers far longer than it takes to wash off the hands. The reason for the sudden grimace amid all the goodness is lost on the others in the room.

To clear his head, he walks out the door. The rich earth of his lawn and rose bed suddenly become that pungent odor of the village last cleared. Back from the war, he is still in combat.

Purple Hearts are awarded for wounds received in combat. Regulations require that they be the result of hostile action and require medical treatment. For those who receive the award, the wound is, or was, obvious.

There is no such provision for those who suffer mental wounds and the weight of each combat participant in the struggle to keep that dark cabinet closed. There is no Purple Heart for wounds not seen that often go untreated. They are wounds nonetheless.

"Were you in combat?" the child asks.

"Yes. I was in combat, and I am now." 🌿

*Keith Nightingale is a retired Army colonel, military history writer and frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine. He was in combat.*

## Legionnaire uses chess to help vets, PTSD patients exercise brains

The brain is an organ, like the heart, liver or lungs. If it can suffer illness or injury, it follows that it can be strengthened or healed through exercise.

One way to give the brain a workout is through chess. Studies show the game helps the brain by augmenting neural connections, exercising the left and right sides alike. This, in turn, improves cognitive and motor skills, communication and other brain functions.

Michael Lenox of Burbank, Ill., credits chess with helping him bounce back from a major stroke about 10 years ago. He has played the game since he was 8. While he was recovering in a Seattle VA hospital, a friend brought him an incomplete hospital chess set.

"My brain not only recovered, but improved," he says.

Lenox, who served 20 years in the Navy, later moved to Illinois. Inspired by his own journey, he started to share a message about what he had recovered – better mental concentration, planning and memory – thanks to chess. Lenox started a chess club at a local senior center to help

residents combat the beginning stages of Alzheimer's disease. Through the experience, he encountered The American Legion for the first time; he has been a member of Post 991 in Worth, Ill., for three years.

In 2015, Lenox was invited to start a doctor-prescribed therapy program at Chicago's Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, in which PTSD patients play chess with their therapists; the program has expanded to Hines VA Medical Center in Chicago to do the same for TBI sufferers and veterans with spinal cord injuries. Most participants served in the post-9/11 era.

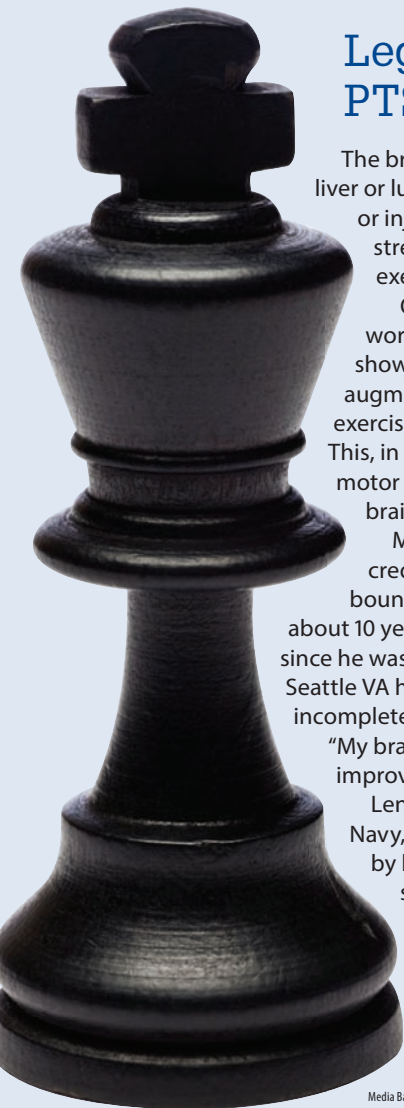
Lenox describes how one patient with a social disorder made what his therapist calls a "miraculous" recovery by organizing a chess program for children. That example goes to the heart of why he believes chess can help those struggling with post-traumatic stress: it boosts self-esteem and encourages social interaction.

"People's perceptions of those who play chess, even casually, is that they are intelligent," he says. "I can think of no other game that has this positive image worldwide."

Lenox pushes veterans chess tournaments in every venue he can: VA facilities, American Legion posts, and various chess groups of which he's a member. He founded the Southwest Chicago Chess Club and serves on the board of the Illinois Chess Association. He's also president of Illinois Chess Vets, which donates new tournament sets to VAMCs and can provide free starter kits to interested departments.

– Laura Edwards

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## Powers: NYPD peer support program worth duplicating in Legion

Sean Powers is an advocate of peer-to-peer counseling. A 10-year member of the New York City Police Department, he has seen firsthand the benefits of officers being able to talk about their emotions and concerns with fellow cops following a traumatic incident.

That same kind of peer support is available in The American Legion and its network of more than 13,000 posts nationwide, says Powers, an NYPD helicopter pilot during 9/11 and longtime commander of 9-11 Memorial Post 2001 in Manhattan. He became a peer counselor when the NYPD created its Membership Assistance Program in the 1990s. That program morphed into the Police Organization Providing Peer Assistance (POPPA), which became particularly valuable in the aftermath of 9/11.

POPPA was created as a volunteer peer support network to provide a confidential, safe and supportive environment for police officers and their families who had experienced traumas. Sometimes it is an outlet for an officer to vent. Other times it is a step to more professional help, including for those who may be contemplating suicide.

"I've absolutely, positively seen this work," Powers says. "That same peer support they give to



Photo by Amy C. Elliott

each other in POPPA ... is what we've got in our American Legion posts. We've done it before. We went there at night. We talked to our buddies. We talked to our friends. We talked about nightmares we had. They gave us that peer support."

When two people with a shared experience are talking, officer to officer or veteran to veteran, "you're not stopping them every two seconds (asking) 'What does that word mean? What was that acronym?'" Powers says.

"We need The American Legion to do the same thing (as POPPA). We have the number: 22 (veterans) a day who are killing themselves. If you had any other epidemic in this world that 22 people died from, there would be outrage everywhere. We have veterans doing it and nobody cares.

"That's why we need to put something in place where we have the confidentiality ... and somebody who knows what to talk about. It actually works."

— Steve B. Brooks

## New York posts create peer-to-peer program

In 2013, The American Legion TBI/PTSD Committee released "The War Within," a report of initial findings on the state of PTSD and TBI treatment for U.S. military veterans. One of the report's recommendations, adopted from the suggestion of an active-duty soldier and PTSD sufferer, was the development of "peer-to-peer support groups nationwide to encourage veterans to come into the Legion and have a place where they can organize and discuss their war experiences."

Arthur A. Clune Post 1533 in Mastic Beach, N.Y., did just that,



Photo by Gay Lometh

creating a pilot program for peer-to-peer support groups. The idea was then taken up by the Legion in Suffolk County, which comprises the eastern part of Long Island.

According to the Rev. Frederick H. Miller, Suffolk County vice commander and chairman of its PTSD committee, the program's thrust is peer-to-peer engagement, to reach the veterans needing help, and peer-to-peer support from Auxiliary members reaching out to the families of those veterans. Sixty Legionnaires and 41 Auxiliary members in 18 posts (all of which are setting up committees of their own) have completed training, based on the standards of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, used by police and fire departments to address PTSD in their ranks.

Miller is quick to clarify that peer counseling is not meant to replace professional therapy or medical care. "It is intended to reach those who would not normally seek help and get them to appropriate treatment, as well as provide peer support in an ongoing way," he says.

— Laura Edwards

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt, left, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill meet on board HMS Prince of Wales in the North Atlantic on Aug. 10, 1941. Getty



# Lead together Bleed together

*The close relationship between the United States and Great Britain is the cornerstone of a peaceful world.*

BY ALAN W. DOWD

**I**n 1946, during a speech in Fulton, Mo., Winston Churchill declared that “a special relationship” existed between the United Kingdom and the United States. Ever the visionary, Churchill believed this “fraternal association” would be characterized by “growing friendship,”

“intimate relationship between our military advisers,” “common study of potential dangers,” “similarity of weapons and manuals,” “the interchange of officers” and “joint use of all naval and Air Force bases.” He even mused about the prospect of “common citizenship.”

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Washington and London never got quite that far, but Churchill was on to something. Seventy years later, the “special relationship” binding America and Britain still serves as the cornerstone of virtually every major diplomatic and military project in which the United States engages – and by extension, the cornerstone of the liberal global order these united nations began building in 1941.

**‘EVEN TO THE END’** America and Britain were anything but united before the world wars. They fought in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and almost came to blows in the early 1900s.

Yet the foundation of close collaboration was always there. Less than a decade after the end of the War of 1812, Britain and the United States collaborated to secure this hemisphere against European intervention. When it appeared that European powers would try to reassert control over newly independent countries in South America, as historian John Lewis Gaddis notes, the British “suggested a joint Anglo-American statement ruling out future European colonization in the Western Hemisphere.” The Monroe administration turned “the British proposal into a unilateral pronouncement” – the Monroe Doctrine – calculating, rightly, that the British navy would in effect enforce U.S. policy because of a confluence of interests.

The United States bankrolled the British in World War I, fought alongside them in the decisive final year of the war, and by the 1930s the two nations were sharing intelligence about Japan. But it wasn’t until World War II that the great liberal democracies started to recognize that their relationship was indeed special.

After Dunkirk, Churchill shared his desperate dream of a day when “the new world, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.”

As Britain fought alone against Hitler, President Franklin D. Roosevelt opened the “great arsenal of democracy” to help Churchill fend off the Nazis. Then, in early 1941, Roosevelt’s envoy to Britain, Harry Hopkins, rose during a dinner with Churchill and quoted from the Book of Ruth: “Whither thou goest I will go, and whither thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,” he declared, dramatically adding, “even to the end.” Churchill wept openly.

Later in that pivot-point year of 1941, Churchill and Roosevelt rendezvoused in the North

Atlantic to craft a statement of shared values that would outline their war aims and bind their countries together in building a durable postwar peace. It was called the Atlantic Charter. By signing on to the Atlantic Charter, with its implicit rejection of imperialism, Churchill was effectively signing off on the dissolution of the British Empire. As historian Niall Ferguson observes, “The British regarded a transfer of global power to the United States as the best available outcome of the war.”

Ever since, the United States and Britain have stood together, bled together, led together.

During the war, British troops served under U.S. command, and Americans under British command. The two allies created a Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) to coordinate strategy, operations and tactics. In his history of World War II, Gerhard Weinberg notes that the CCS forced the Americans to adopt a standing structure for interservice coordination, and that yielded a vast web of subcommands, procedures and relationships that paved the way for the eventual creation of NATO.

The Anglo-American alliance deepened after the war, enfolding cooperation on trade and monetary issues, intelligence sharing, weapons procurement and development, military basing and training, and strategic military doctrine. By the mid-1950s, Britain and America agreed, in the words of a Pentagon memo, to “coordinate the atomic strike plans of the United States Air Force with the Royal Air Force” and share “atomic bombs in the event of general war.”

**FRIENDSHIP** Thanks to Anglo-American resolve, the Cold War was won without those bombs ever falling.

Although the two partners have had occasional disagreements – Suez and Vietnam come to mind – they have been nearly inseparable in navigating the postwar world. Together they rescued West Berlin, forged NATO and deterred the Red Army. They defended Korea at the beginning of the Cold War, liberated Kuwait at the end and faced down Moscow in the years between. They shepherded Eastern Europe toward freedom and stabilized the Balkans. They ousted the Taliban, disarmed Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein. Today, they are blunting the Islamic State’s advance and fighting jihadism.

Those in-between years included smaller crises that had a big impact. When Argentina

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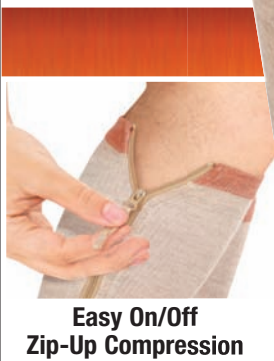
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<b>L/XL</b>	Fits Calves Up To 19"



invaded Britain's Falkland Islands, for example, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher vowed to reverse the aggression. President Ronald Reagan told his staff, "Give Maggie everything she needs." Washington allowed the British expeditionary force to use the U.S. air base at Ascension Island for resupply, provided Britain weaponry and logistics support, and was prepared to loan the Royal Navy the amphibious carrier USS *Iwo Jima*.

Thatcher returned the favor when Reagan asked Britain to allow FB-111s to deploy from British bases for airstrikes against Libya's command-and-control assets and terror-training facilities. "It made America realize that Britain was her real and true friend," Thatcher said.

In 1998, when the United Nations lost interest in enforcing its own resolutions, only Britain sent warplanes to assist the United States in targeting Iraq's WMD sites. Then, as Britain and America began to contemplate military operations to protect Kosovo, Prime Minister Tony Blair recalled Hopkins' toast during a summit with President Bill Clinton. This time, it was America's leader who wept.

When war came to America's shores, Blair rushed to its side. "America has no truer friend than Great Britain," President George W. Bush declared before a joint session of Congress soon after 9/11. Fittingly, Blair was on hand. Through the smoke and blood and controversy that followed 9/11, Blair recognized that the war on terror was not just America's war.

That war now spans 15 years, six national elections in Britain and the United States, four prime ministers, two presidents and too many fronts to count: Manhattan and Madrid, Kandahar and Karbala, Bali and Baghdad and Boston, Paris and Peshawar, Syria and San Bernardino, America's Pentagon and Britain's Underground, which brings us back to the depth of the "special relationship" today.

Fifteen years may seem like a long time to wage war, but British military commanders were ready for a lengthy war from the very beginning. In the autumn of 2001, Adm. Michael Boyce, then-chief of the British Defense Staff, grimly predicted that the war on terror "may last 50 years."

**COMBINED** As the struggle against jihadism takes on the characteristics of the Cold War – in its duration, geopolitical and geographic scope, ideological dimensions, economic and human

costs – it appears that the British and American militaries are moving beyond mere coordination and toward coalescence. Examples abound.

The British government's 2015 defense review confirms that the United States and the United Kingdom plan "to fly aircraft from each other's ships, and work together on operating them from the land and at sea."

Toward that end, U.S. Marines will deploy F-35s on combat sorties from Britain's *Queen Elizabeth*-class aircraft carriers. Already, British pilots are flying operational missions from U.S. aircraft carriers to maintain their proficiency until the F-35s are ready.

Scores of U.S. Coast Guardsmen are serving with the Royal Navy. Some 9,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the United Kingdom, and 750 British personnel in the United States – in 30 different states. For instance, the RAF has a special unit at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, operating killer drones. British submarines port at the U.S. base in Kings Bay, Ga. Likewise, Britain allows the U.S. military to maintain bases on the British territory of Diego Garcia, and a number of U.S. assets nest at facilities in the United Kingdom: refueling and reconnaissance planes, missile-defense radars, F-15s and soon F-35s. After Moscow's assault on Ukraine, the United States deployed B-52s and B-2s to Britain.

Britain recently opened a permanent naval base in Bahrain, which, not coincidentally, serves as headquarters for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet.

In 2011, the two allies formed a National Security Strategy Board to "develop a shared view of emerging challenges" and "how we should deal with them." The board is co-chaired by the British and American national security advisers.

In 2013, then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert raised the prospect of British assets being blended into the Pentagon's Global Force Management System, the process by which U.S. military chiefs determine where personnel and equipment are deployed.

"It would be unprecedented that two nations could bring together such a far-reaching strategic commitment," Greenert said. "It is feasible, but it would be totally unprecedented."

That same year, Britain's entire Defense Staff huddled with the entire U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff – the first reconstitution of the CCS since 1948. They convened again in 2014.

Somewhere, Churchill is smiling.



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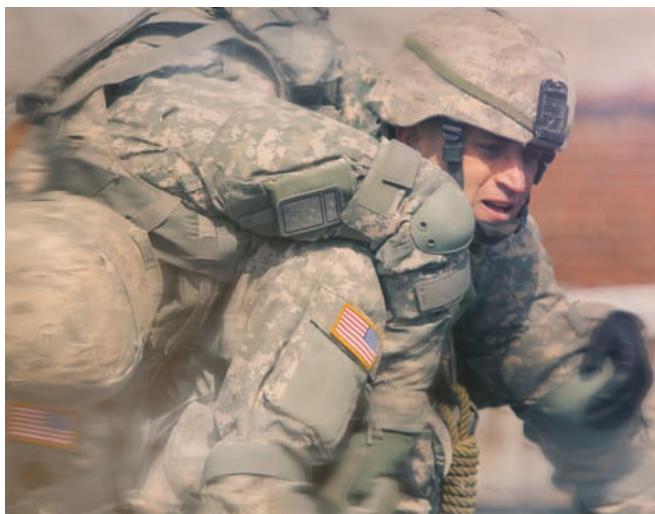
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**CHALLENGES** However, there are challenges confronting the “special relationship.”

There’s a sense in London that the United States has taken it for granted at times. When the Bush administration decided to go to war in Iraq, there was a perception that Britain was expected to fall in line, which triggered domestic political challenges for Blair.

When the Obama administration offloaded Guantanamo detainees onto the British territory of Bermuda, Washington failed to consult Britain. “This is not the kind of behavior one expects from an ally,” a British official declared.

Even worse, President Barack Obama publicly criticized Prime Minister David Cameron over Britain’s handling of Libya and Syria.

There’s a sense in Washington that Britain is retreating from the global stage.

Post-recession austerity measures undertaken by Cameron have led to deep cuts in Britain’s military strength. The Royal Navy ebbed from 89 ships to 65. Britain had two aircraft carriers in 2008 but has none today. The combat-aircraft fleet shrank from 189 warplanes to 149; the Joint Helicopter Command had 257 aircraft in 2008 but has just 164 today. The British Army’s Regular Forces have been whittled down from 101,340 troops to 84,240.

The 2015 defense review reverses some of these cuts. Before handing the reins to Theresa May in July, Cameron added \$18 billion to planned defense spending over the next decade. Two new aircraft carriers will enter service by 2020. And Britain is purchasing 138 F-35s, new midair refuelers and new heavy-lift planes.

However, much of the damage has been done. Between 2007 and 2014, British defense spending fell by 5.5 percent. After 2010, Britain withdrew thousands of troops from continental Europe, delayed upgrades to its nuclear deterrent, and pulled back from operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan (the House of Commons in 2013 blocked Cameron’s efforts to launch airstrikes in Syria after the Assad regime used chemical weapons, and Britain now has just 450 troops in Afghanistan, fewer than Italy, Turkey, Romania, Germany or Georgia). It also used accounting tricks (shifting monies from the Foreign Office to the military) to keep defense spending above NATO’s 2-percent-of-GDP standard.

Moreover, the White House worries that Britain’s internal debate over European Union membership – and consequent withdrawal from the EU in the wake of the so-called “Brexit”

referendum last June – is further evidence of disengagement. All of this has invited questions about Britain’s global role.

“Having the United Kingdom in the European Union gives us much greater confidence about the strength of the transatlantic union,” Obama said in 2015. (That only served to exacerbate British frustrations with Washington. By inserting himself into Britain’s politics, Obama drew criticism from 100 members of Parliament, who signed an open letter chiding the president.)

“We need an engaged United Kingdom,” says Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, expressing anxieties that Britain has taken “actions which seem to indicate disengagement.”

“I am very concerned about the GDP investment in the U.K.,” Army Gen. Ray Odierno adds. “In the past, we would have a British Army division working alongside an American division. Now it might be a British brigade inside an American division.”

When a Russian submarine was spotted off the Scottish coast, French and Canadian assets searched for the intruder, owing to the fact that Britain had scrapped its sub-hunting planes. Until recently, British operations against the Islamic State were limited to Iraq, prompting U.K. Defense Secretary Michael Fallon to observe, “The streets of Britain at the moment are being kept safe by American, Australian and French aircraft.”

However, in December, the House of Commons authorized airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Syria. Within hours, British warplanes joined their U.S. allies in the skies over Syria. Only the United States has conducted more airstrikes in Iraq than Britain. Moreover, Britain is basing a battalion of ground troops in Estonia as part of NATO’s defense of the Baltics. These are hopeful signs that Britain’s holiday from global leadership is over.

A strong Great Britain is key to the “special relationship,” and a strong “special relationship” is key to U.S. security. After all, Britain serves as a bridge to the world, a force-multiplier for U.S. power and a true friend in an unfriendly world.

As Churchill put it, the British Commonwealth and the United States, working together, have the capacity to yield “an overwhelming assurance of security ... not only for us but for all, not only for our time, but for a century to come.” 🌿

*Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America’s Purpose ([www.sagamoreinstitute.org/cap](http://www.sagamoreinstitute.org/cap)).*



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“Everybody hates bureaucracies, even those who work in them.”

– Robert Gates, writing in  
“A Passion for Leadership: Lessons on  
Change and Reform from  
Fifty Years of Public Service”

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, a member of The American Legion's 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee, received the first Peace Through Strength award in 2013. DoD

## INTERVIEW

# TOO BIG TO SUCCEED

*Former DoD and CIA chief Robert Gates says big institutions need to understand the management of change.*

BY JEFF STOFFER

For someone who loathes the fog of bureaucracies, Robert Gates has spent a lot of his life cutting through it. He served as Department of Defense secretary under two presidents of different parties. He led the Central Intelligence Agency as director and Texas A&M University as president. Most recently president of Boy Scouts of America, he also serves on numerous corporate boards and consults for others.

Gates is an Air Force veteran, a member of The American Legion's 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee and an Eagle Scout.

Almost every aspect of his storied career has been built on trying to steer hefty, complex organizations to be more productive, efficient and focused on the people they serve.

His 2016 book, “A Passion for Leadership,” shares some of the strategies he used to effect changes at DoD, CIA and Texas A&M. Within the pages are lessons for VA, political committees, the Legion, Boy Scout troops, school boards, church groups, community service clubs and even families – wherever individuals operate collectively to turn ideas into progress toward a shared mission.

Gates recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* about organizational leadership, VA-DoD collaborations, a membership turnaround in BSA, and more.

## What compelled you to write “A Passion for Leadership” at this particular time?

I realized, when I was getting ready to retire from the Defense Department, that there are countless books out there on leadership, management, managing change and so on ... but virtually none by anybody who had actually done it. And particularly by nobody who had done it at several different kinds of big institutions. I realized that the techniques I used for bringing change in three – four, if you include BSA – were essentially the same in all of them. Every organization shares a certain DNA, even if they are distant cousins. Therefore, the techniques for bringing change can be the same for everything from a Boy Scout troop or an American Legion post to VA or the Department of Defense.

## How important – and difficult – is it for big organizations to manage change?

I think every organization ends up accumulating barnacles. It doesn't matter whether it's a church board, Boy Scouts of America, a county council, a school board or any organization. What the book is about is the need for leaders in these organizations to undertake efforts to reform and change them, to be more responsive, more cost-effective, to

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better serve those they are designed to serve – whether it's a citizen or a customer. It's as true for a lot of businesses as it is for the public sector – local, state and federal.

### **If big organizations of a changing society are not functioning properly today, how badly do we really need them?**

Dealing with these organizations, particularly on the government side, at every level, is a source of daily frustration and anger for every American – just the line to get a driver's license, to get a permit to remodel your home, dealing with the insurance company, dealing with the credit card company. Or, if you're dealing with Medicare or VA, the IRS and so on. These organizations aren't serving people very well. And the whole point of the book is they can be fixed.

The failure to fix these organizations poses real risks to our society as people become more cynical about them. In a recent Pew poll, 18 percent of Republicans said the government "never" does anything right. The interesting thing is they wrote that in. It was not an option on the survey.

These institutions are vital to the operation of our democracy at every level of government. A perfect example of bureaucracy gone amok is what happened in Flint, Mich., with the water. How the hell did that happen? Who will be held accountable? And how do you fix it?

### **How does a big organization of many priorities determine what's most important?**

My experience is that the people you are serving – the people on the front lines, like the Scoutmaster – he's going to be the person to tell you, "Here's where you're falling short ... Here's where I need help ... Here's where you make life more difficult than it needs to be." A leader takes that kind of information, integrates it with his own instincts and values, then makes decisions and transparently tells everybody. By involving people in the organization to figure out what needs to be fixed, you've already involved them in the solution. Now they have a stake. It's their idea.

A key theme repeated in the book is enduring change, enduring reform. Anybody can do the flash-in-a-pan stuff. The question is, in a big bureaucracy or any organization where the people who are there were there before you got there and will be there after you leave – they can outwait you if you don't make them part of the solution.

### **VA and DoD bureaucracy are often blamed for the breakdown of potential collaborations, like lifetime digital medical records. What causes that?**

I think one of the biggest obstacles is the mutually entrenched bureaucracies in DoD and VA. VA has its system. DoD has something else. I thought at one point (former VA Secretary Eric) Shinseki and I had reached an agreement where we could not necessarily merge those two but build a technological bridge between the two. One initiative we agreed on was to have just one disability evaluation, whether it was done by VA or DoD, so that these kids getting out of the military and putting in for a disability claim didn't have to go through the Pentagon bureaucracy and then repeat the entire process once they got in VA. That makes no sense.

### **How can an institution as big as VA achieve major reform?**

The key, it seems to me, is to boil it down to the essentials. What is the mission? The mission is to provide the best possible medical care for the men and women who have served. We are not accomplishing that. The problem is, dealing with 400 little things is not going to bring that change. It's got to be, in my opinion, a game-changer. I think that trying to fix VA by going into various individual components and trying to figure out who's doing what wrong is what I would call an instinct for the capillaries. What you need is an instinct for the jugular.

### **Another topic of interest to The American Legion right now is acceptance of alternative treatments for veterans suffering with mental injuries. What do you think prevents progress on that?**

I visited a military facility – it may have been Fort Bliss – and they had an innovative doctor there who was using the entire panoply of things, from acupuncture to aromatherapy, and a whole host of other things, to treat kids with post-traumatic stress. One of my former senior military assistants, Gen. Pete Chiarelli, runs this One Mind philanthropy that is basically trying to bring these leading authorities on brain problems together and share research. It's very frustrating for them because they won't. His greatest frustration is to get these different researchers to share the results of their work.

One thing that occurs to me, in this area, is that the one group that is doing some of the most cutting-edge research on brain-related problems is the National Intrepid Center (of Excellence) at Walter Reed. The center was built with funds from the Fisher family. They do treatment, but they are experimental treatments. They have some of the most advanced equipment in the world, in terms of this research, and the idea is the findings from what they are doing are dispersed to military hospitals all over the country. So it's basically a teaching and research entity at Walter Reed, and the question I would put to you all to explore is whether the findings and the results from the center at Walter Reed on brain issues is also being shared with VA hospitals. I would be willing to wager it's not.

### **How has institutional change improved participation in Boy Scouts of America, which was the first youth program officially supported by The American Legion?**

First of all, we really appreciate that The American Legion sponsors more than 2,500 Scout units. It looks like that for the first time in 40 years, we have turned a corner in membership. In a lot of areas, we are seeing absolute growth in the number of Cub Scout programs. School systems have now – because of changes in the leadership standards – opened up to us in a way they have not in 20 years. We are able to go in and recruit kids, even in places like Berkeley. Membership had been declining for about 40 years. This is the first time we've seen a significant shift. It will be interesting to see what the full results are in 2016.

*Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.*

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**"(I have) a large debt of gratitude to The American Legion ... It's something I use every day. What the Legion has given me is that daily dose of mental health cleansing right here in the comfort of my home."**

**John "Gunny Ski" Szczepanowski**, a triathlete and retired Marine who received a custom treadmill from the Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors so he could continue training

**"The American Legion scholarship has given me the ability to focus on my studies ... so I am able to pursue the opportunities I've been given after I graduate."**

**Daniel Bertolino**, recipient of an American Legion Legacy scholarship. His father, Staff Sgt. Stephen "Tony" Bertolino, was killed in Iraq in 2003.

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With The American Legion's centennial on the horizon, National Commander Charles E. Schmidt believes there's no better time for growth.

As the nation's largest veterans service organization, the Legion advocates for veterans on Capitol Hill, trains service officers to assist veterans with their benefits, volunteers nearly a million hours annually at VA medical centers and veterans homes, honors and remembers fallen comrades, and teaches young people proper respect for the U.S. flag.

To do all that – and much more – the Legion must have a strong membership base.

"With fewer members, our ability to care for veterans, support current military members and their families, and run wholesome programs for youth is severely compromised," Schmidt says. "It's hard to estimate just how much of an impact The American Legion has on a daily basis in communities across our nation. It's an

incredible legacy, forged through nearly 100 years of patriotic commitment."

But again, the Legion's influence is only as strong as its membership.

"We need every single member to re-engage in his and her commitment to the American Legion Family by renewing their memberships and signing up new members," Schmidt says. "It's time to join, or rejoin, the force. It's time to bring other veterans into the fold. It's time to renew your commitment to the Legion so we can build on our successes and usher in a new era of growth for all veterans, yesterday, today and tomorrow."

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# THE AMERICAN LEGION – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



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First Initial Last Phone

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State ZIP

Membership ID# former member Email Post # Date

Please check appropriate eligibility dates and branch of service below:

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☐ Vietnam (2/28/61-5/7/75)  
☐ Korea (6/25/50-1/31/55)  
☐ WWII (12/7/41-12/31/46)
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Signed by applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Name of recruiter \_\_\_\_\_

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D17010

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Received from \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ dues

Recruiter's name \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's phone # \_\_\_\_\_



# SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron No. \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Recruited by \_\_\_\_\_  
First Initial Last Initial Last

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State ZIP Phone

Veteran through whom eligibility is established \_\_\_\_\_

(a) Above is a member in good standing of Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of \_\_\_\_\_

OR (b) Above is a deceased veteran who served honorably from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Relationship of applicant to veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Has applicant previously been a member of the SAL? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion and apply for membership.

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Transmit \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ annual membership dues

Signed by applicant (or legal guardian if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility certified by \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed application to Sons of The American Legion department/state headquarters. Annual dues must accompany completed application. Ask local contact for amount due. For current detachment address, go to The American Legion department/state headquarters, or visit [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

D17010

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Squadron No. \_\_\_\_\_

Department of \_\_\_\_\_



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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Initial Last

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Unit # and Location \_\_\_\_\_

/ / ☐ Birth - 17 ☐ 18 and older  
Date of Birth (Required)

Have you been a member previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature of applicant (or legal guardian if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible through / name of veteran (if living, must be American Legion member) ☐ Living ☐ Deceased

American Legion member ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran's American Legion post name \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**Veteran served: (check all that apply)**

☐ WWI (4/6/17-11/11/18) ☐ WWII (12/7/41-12/31/46)  
☐ Merchant Marines (12/7/41-12/31/46) ☐ Korea (6/25/50-1/31/55)  
☐ Vietnam (2/28/61-5/7/75) ☐ Lebanon/Grenada (8/24/82-7/31/84)  
☐ Panama (12/20/89-1/31/90) ☐ Gulf War/War on Terrorism (8/2/90 until cessation of hostilities)

**Applicant's relationship to the veteran:**

☐ Mother ☐ Wife ☐ Daughter ☐ Sister  
☐ Grandmother ☐ Granddaughter ☐ Great-granddaughter ☐ Self

I certify that the above named individual served at least one day of active duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or is still serving honorably.

Post adjutant/officer membership verification \_\_\_\_\_ ALA 08/2016 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Received from \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ dues

Recruiter's name \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed application to American Legion Auxiliary department/state headquarters. Annual dues must accompany completed application. Ask local contact for amount due. For current department address go to: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Dues include a yearly non-refundable allocation of \$3.40 for American Legion Auxiliary magazine. **Membership pending approval of application.**





U.S. Navy photo

In this ongoing series, readers look back on the good, bad and humorous experiences of their initiation into the military. *The American Legion Magazine* is publishing our best submissions in print and online. Go to [www.legiontown.org](http://www.legiontown.org) and click on "Share Your Story," or mail your submission to Basic Training Memories, c/o *The American Legion Magazine*, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Photos are welcome.

## 'WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE?'

In July 1954 I was fresh out of high school and wanted to see the world. There was no money for college, so I enlisted in the Air Force and was shipped to Sampson Air Force Base in the Finger Lakes region of central New York for 11 weeks.

During my first off-base liberty, we went overnight to Rochester, N.Y. I met this cute girl and I think she liked me, but in 24 hours I had to return to base. The 11th week I received my promotion to airman third class – one stripe. I was restricted to the base, as I was to receive orders transferring me to "God only knows where." I received a telephone call from this girl, and she was coming to the base from Rochester just to see me that weekend.

I thought I could take her to the movies on base because they were playing a Charlton Heston film. I met her at the bus station, and we walked over to the theater, where there must have been 50 men in front of us. Then one of the basic trainees said to me, "Why don't you go to the head of the line since you have the rank, one stripe?"

I stood up to the ticket counter and flung my right arm across it so the clerk could see that one large stripe. "That will be for two," I said.

I put my arm around my guest and marched into the theater to a reserved section for those with one stripe or more. I felt like a young one-star general, and she loved me for it.

I never saw her again after her bus left for Rochester. I often wonder what happened to her.

– Bill Fadely, Edinburg, Va.



Media Bakery



## BASIC TRAINING MEMORIES

### MOW AND SNOW

One cold, wintry night at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in December 1945, I was awakened from a sound sleep at about 2 a.m. by the distinctive sound of hand-pushed lawn mowers. I learned later that a group of boots (recruits) returning from evening chow were caught smoking, and their punishment was to mow the grass around their barracks after they removed the foot or so of accumulated ice and snow.

– Harold E. Anderson, Louisville, Ky.

### CHRISTMAS DAY 1971

I was sitting on a bucket in front of Quonset hut barracks, eating prickly pear fruit and writing a letter to my honey. Camp San Onofre in California didn't allow us to have sharpened bayonets, so I used a razor blade to harvest this delicious fruit. That day was one of the best.

– James Kerley, Dallas

### EGGNOG IN AN EMPTY BARRACKS

I went into the Navy in November 1981, and spent Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's with Company 039 at Recruit Training Command in Orlando, Fla.

It was bad enough spending the holidays in boot camp away from family and friends, but Christmas Day is also my birthday. To make things worse, our company had work week during Christmas, and spent the day working in the enlisted dining facility.

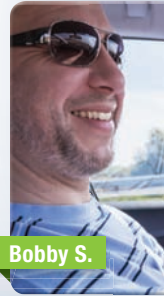
That night, before heading back to the barracks, we stole a few cartons of eggnog. We sneaked into an empty barracks in the division to drink it and share a little Christmas cheer.

– Joe Kabella, New Lenox, Ill.

## Veterans Discount

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## SERVICE

## Heroes to be honored at Veterans Inaugural Ball

Medal of Honor recipient Brian Thacker hasn't missed a presidential inauguration since 1977.

Next month, the Vietnam War Army veteran will once again attend the nation's inauguration ceremonies, including the Veterans Inauguration Ball – Salute to Heroes, which is hosted by The American Legion.

"It's an opportunity to be with my colleagues while you see the president being sworn in," he says.

For Thacker, veterans and other military supporters, the inauguration is a double draw.

"One of the things we fought for is the peaceful transition of power," he notes, adding that the inaugural is also an opportunity to engage policymakers on key veterans issues.

Without such connections, Thacker says, "veterans issues are just going to wither. In this town, visibility counts. You have to make your presence known, otherwise you get left behind. That's particularly true of veterans organizations."

Among those expected to attend the Veterans Inaugural Ball are members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, congressional representatives, celebrities, veterans group leaders and corporate citizens.

Typically, the president or vice president visits the ball for a single dance and to express the administration's views on key veterans issues, Thacker says.

Tickets are still available for the Veterans Inaugural Ball, which will be hosted by actor, "Price Is Right" host, Marine Corps veteran and Legionnaire Drew Carey. Tickets are \$300 and include the reception, dinner, dessert, entertainment



Medal of Honor recipient Brian Thacker Wikimedia Commons

and dancing. The black-tie event starts at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Renaissance Washington, 999 Ninth St. NW.

For more information on purchasing tickets, visit [www.legion.org/veteransball](http://www.legion.org/veteransball).

For information on sponsorships, premium packages and table purchases, email [info@salutetoheroesball.org](mailto:info@salutetoheroesball.org).

## LEGION SUPPORT

## Founding Fathers introduces coffee line



A new coffee producer is planning to donate a portion of its profits to The American Legion.

Founding Fathers Products has pledged to donate half its coffee profits to the Legion, following an agreement that began in May 2014. As part of the initial agreement, Founding Fathers Brewing Company started selling beer in June 2014, donating a minimum of \$1 per case to the Legion.

"I founded the company to create superior, American-made products that support military families with what I consider to be a heroic level of giving," said Phil Knutsen, chief executive officer. "We hope Founding Fathers will become the coffee of choice for patriotic, mainstream coffee drinkers."

Using 100 percent Arabica coffee, Founding Fathers Coffee offers five different flavored roasts: Morning Blend, Donut Shop, French Roast, Colombian and French Vanilla. It also offers four 100 percent organic blends: Peruvian, Sunrise, Barista and Mountain Java. The coffee will be available in single serve cups (pods). Ground and whole beans will be available soon.

Founding Fathers Coffee is available at Amazon.com, all military exchanges (in store and online), and general retail throughout the United States.

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of patriotism by acclaimed artist Jody Bergsma with the embroidered words: *Proud Veteran*. Adding to the comfort and style, the jacket has two front pockets, knit cuffs and hem and roomy fit with contrast woven lining. Imported.

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U.S. Park Service volunteer Paul Stancliff decorated a Christmas tree near the apex of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2009 in Washington. Ornaments and messages made by schoolchildren from across the country were used to adorn the tree, which remained on display throughout the holidays. *Getty*



Wikimedia Commons

## DEFENSE

### B-21 formally named 'Raider'

The B-21, the Air Force's still-in-development next-generation stealth bomber, will be known as the "Raider," *Air Force Times* reports.

The nickname is a tribute to Doolittle's Raiders, who took the fight to Japan's home islands in 1942 after the attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The last surviving Doolittle Raider – 101-year-old retired Lt. Col. Richard Cole, who was then-Lt. Col. James Doolittle's co-pilot on Aircraft 1 during the raid – made the announcement alongside Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James.

"I am very humbled to be here representing Gen. Doolittle and the Raiders at the naming of the B-21 Raider, and wish they were here," Cole said. "We are deeply honored."

James called Cole "one of the greatest men of the greatest generation."

The Air Force invited airmen to submit suggestions for naming the B-21, and Lt. Col. Jaime Hernandez and Technical Sgt. Derek White came up with the winner.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Rise of the 'nones'

- 23** Percent of Americans who self-identify as atheists or agnostics, or say their religion is "nothing in particular" (called the "nones")
- 16** Percent of Americans who were in the "nones" category in 2007
- 35** Percent of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) who are "nones"
- 71** Percent of Americans who self-identify as Christian
- 1.8** Percent of Americans who self-identify as Jewish
- 1** Percent of Americans who self-identify as Muslim
- 51** Percent of Americans who attend worship services monthly or multiple times per week
- 49** Percent of Americans who attend worship services rarely or never

Source: Pew Research



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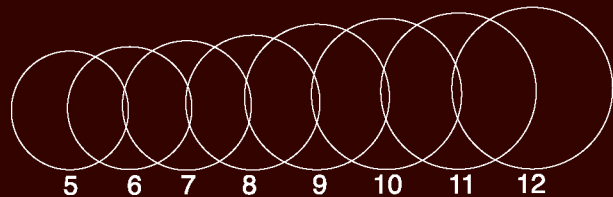
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## Selected resolutions from the Fall Meetings

### AMERICANISM

**17** Commend American Public Education Foundation programs

**19** U.S. Flag Code amendment to reflect current, accepted patriotic practices

### FINANCE

**4** Establish National Poppy Week

### INTERNAL AFFAIRS

**8** Use of the English language in all official meetings of The American Legion

**10** Veterans Memorial Identification Project

**11** Support and defend veteran and military memorials

**12** Commend Operation: Job Ready Veterans

### VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

**24** Improve SMC (k) payments for loss or loss-of-use disabilities

### VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

**20** Oppose efforts to downgrade low-level wage positions within VA

**21** Education benefit forgiveness and relief for displaced student-veterans

The full text of all 24 resolutions can be found online at [archive.legion.org](http://archive.legion.org).



Photo by Lucas Carter

“Our youth will lead by example in respecting our flag and respecting our national anthem.”

**National Commander Charles Schmidt**, on Resolution 16, which calls for all participants in American Legion youth programs to show respect for the U.S. flag at all times



Photo by Clay Lometh

### FALL MEETINGS

## Membership, flag respect top NEC agenda

At the American Legion National Executive Committee's Fall Meetings in October, National Commander Charles Schmidt paid tribute to two of his predecessors: H.F. "Sparky" Gierke and Thomas P. Cadmus, who passed away earlier this year. Schmidt also reflected on the decline in Legion membership between Gierke's election in 1989 and now: nearly 1 million members over 27 years.

"We cannot experience a culture of growth if we do not convince our existing members that renewal is in their personal interest, as well as the interest of their fellow veterans and community members," Schmidt told the NEC. "We are missing a sincere urgency to carry the legacy forward. And it's a great legacy the Legion has built."

His incentives include a "Carry the Legacy Forward" pin for those who recruit three new members for 2017; an honor ribbon for posts that achieve 100 percent membership for post, unit and squadron by May 30; and a monetary award for the department with the largest percentage increase of new members from Jan. 1 to May 31.

■ The NEC passed Resolution 16, which outlines expectations regarding flag respect for those involved in American Legion youth programs. Participants of Legion Baseball, Boys State, Boys Nation and other programs will show proper respect to the U.S. flag at all times, including during the national anthem. The resolution recommends department and post leaders of all Legion programs educate individuals in advance about this expectation; if youth cannot or will not meet it, they should not participate in Legion programs.

■ The National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission announced 10 System Worth Saving (SWS) visits for 2017, including VA medical centers in New Hampshire, Alaska, California, Arizona, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and Montana. Selection was based on challenges with access, wait times, high suicide rates and other factors. A town hall meeting will precede each SWS visit, giving local veterans and their families an opportunity to voice concerns about the health care they receive.

■ The Department of Indiana donated \$24,904 to the Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program.





## CAREERS



## Know the applicant tracking system

Every time you upload your résumé in response to a job

posting, it will be run through an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). This technology searches for keywords, phrases, work experience and other essential information that must be present in your résumé to make it to the desk of the hiring manager.

Here are a few essential tips to ensure that your résumé does pass the ATS scan:

■ **There is no standard ATS that all companies use.** Although Taleo is the most widely used, there are many others. Be certain to carefully review the instructions for each résumé you post.

■ **Most ATS will read Word files, some read PDFs, and all read text.** My recommendation: PDF whenever possible, Word next, and text only if a must.

■ **ATS searches for keywords that match the job description and requirements.** The more keyword matches, the higher you score and the more likely your résumé will pass.

■ **Use standard header names for each section to be certain all the information in that section is read.** This includes Summary, Professional Work Experience, Education, Certifications and more.

■ **Include standard contact information – name, phone and email – at the top of the résumé.** Do not put it into a header since ATS cannot read headers or footers.

■ **ATS cannot read images, tables or graphics.** These additions can be great for human readers, so no need to delete them. ATS will simply ignore them as long as those elements do not touch any text.

Companies use ATS because of the overwhelming number of résumés they get in response to most job postings. The technology makes it easier and faster to identify quality candidates. Follow the above recommendations – and other information you read online – and improve your chances of passing ATS and landing an interview.

*Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."*



Photo courtesy Kyle Geraghty

## CENTENNIAL

## Post 160, Seattle

According to Post 160's Centennial Celebration page, its early club room was called the Dugout Lounge – not in reference to baseball, but as a tribute to post volunteers who dug by hand a basement under the building. For decades, the Dugout Lounge was a popular place for veterans and others to grab a beverage after a meeting or a long day at work.

No longer a bar, Post 160's basement has been updated in recent years for a more modern look – again thanks to volunteer labor. Currently the space is used as an open office area by one of the post's community partners.

### Share your post's legacy

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

 [www.legion.org/centennial](http://www.legion.org/centennial)

## EDUCATION



## ACICS status and the GI Bill

**Q:** *I've been attending a school that is accredited by the Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS). I heard that if I attend a school accredited by ACICS, I may not be able to use my Chapter 33 GI Bill benefits. Is that true?*

**A:** GI Bill benefits may only be used at higher education institutions that are accredited by federally recognized accreditors. ACICS' recognition as a nationally accredited agency was terminated by the Department of Education because it allegedly failed to provide consumer protection measures. New legislation will allow a veteran to continue GI Bill benefits for up to 18 months while a school seeks alternate accreditation or program approval. You may want to re-evaluate your educational goals and decide whether or not your current school and program will meet your need for the next 18 months, and perhaps consider other options, courses and/or schools.

*Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. [askvalerie@legion.org](mailto:askvalerie@legion.org)*

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### RAPID FIRE



Bill Huntimer of American Legion Post 65 in Dell Rapids, S.D., runs net control for The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC). Photo by Clay Lonneth

### LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

## Over the air and far away

*South Dakota Legionnaire uses  
ham radio to fulfill Legion mission.*

Bill Huntimer's military service took him from his native South Dakota around the world. And though he's back in his hometown, over the radio waves he can still go just about anywhere.

Huntimer, a 34-year Legionnaire with Post 65 in Dell Rapids, is a longtime "ham" – a ham radio user – and original member of The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC). Founded in 2011, the club gives Legionnaires an opportunity to practice their ham skills while aiding communications during natural disasters. The club has approximately 3,000 members and 15 post clubs nationwide.

Huntimer enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1950 and was sent to Korea, where he participated in four major engagements. Nine years later, he switched to the Navy and went to Vietnam with the Seabees. Altogether, he spent 22½ years in the service before returning to Dell Rapids. "I was never broke or without a friend while I was in the military," Huntimer says of the "special family" he gained.

That's where he first got into ham radio, passing a licensing test on Midway Island. His job was tank mechanic, but he always liked electricity, he says. As an active volunteer in TALARC, he runs a "net" every month – a set time when he throws open his receivers (multiple antennae are mounted atop of his house) to 20 meters and repeatedly broadcasts his call sign and location, then listens for others to respond with their own. Call signs are issued by the Federal Communications Commission to identify individual users; Huntimer's is K1OCW, while TALARC's is K9TAL. He keeps a log of contacts and times, and turns it in to TALARC for posting online. Huntimer has only missed one net since 2011, for an American Legion convention.

In the summer of 2005, Huntimer put the Legion's disaster-relief mission into action following Hurricane Katrina, "passing traffic" for nearly a week. A responder on the May net, identified as "Nick," needed to let his family know he was all right. "Everyone in the country volunteered to take that call," but in the end it was Huntimer who did. Nick called him "an exemplary character ... helping people out when they need it."

Huntimer has served as post adjutant twice, county commander and department sergeant-at-arms, among other offices. He often uses the nets as opportunities to recruit for the Legion, asking responders if they served in the military.

He marvels at how much communication has changed in his lifetime, and says he's glad to be part of it today – as a helper, not just a consumer. "I like to do the best I can at any job I do," he says.

– Laura Edwards

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## PERSONAL FINANCE



## Believe it or not, the IRS is on your side

### FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

The IRS is there to help. Really. While most of us don't consider it a guardian of our money, the IRS shut down attempts to collect nearly \$200 million through fraudulent tax returns last year. The truth is that even while the agency collects our money, it also applies significant resources to protect us from getting scammed.

Still, those three letters inspire fear in many Americans, and crooks use that to their advantage. Criminals prey on taxpayers by pretending to be the IRS – and by claiming refunds that rightfully belong to you and me, and/or gaining access to our bank accounts.

It can happen to anyone. A couple of years ago, a family member submitted his tax return and was shocked when the IRS notified him it had already received one. It took months to fix the mess the fraudulent return caused. Recently, I've talked to a number of USAA members who've been caught up in these nefarious schemes, with outcomes ranging from large headaches to much worse.

Here's a five-step plan to keep your bank account safe and stay in good stead with the IRS and your financial institution:

■ **Safeguard your personal and account information.**

Don't carry your Social Security number with you, and lock it

away at home. Be wary online, especially when using a public Wi-Fi connection, and shred all sensitive documents.

■ **Add an extra layer of security.** Many banks and financial services providers allow you to add a rolling security code or text-generated notification to your phone. Those can protect you even if a crook cracks your password.

■ **Ignore phone calls and emails from the IRS, even if they seem legitimate.** Like other financial institutions, the IRS will not call or email you about financial matters unsolicited. If you suspect a scam, call the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at **1-800-366-4484**.

■ **File early.** If a fraudster files a tax return in your name, you're in a better position if the real submission is already in.

■ **Play it safe.** Have questions about a call, letter or inquiry? Go to the source by calling the IRS at **1-800-829-1040**. Don't use a number provided by a third party.

When you call the IRS, you may be on hold for a few minutes, but consider this while you're waiting: in addition to answering calls and processing tax returns, the IRS is busy protecting taxpayers from fraud.

*J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.*

🌐 [www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances](http://www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances)

## LEGION FAMILY

## Mission of honor

While in transit from Ohio to Utah, a battlefield cross honoring Gold Star Mother Tracy Beede's son broke. The artist, Susan Conkey, offered to send a replacement free of charge. But she feared it might break, too.

That's where American Legion Rider Joseph Richter stepped in. A member of Parma, Ohio, Post 703's Sons of The American Legion squadron, Richter drove the cross more than 1,700 miles to Vernal, Utah, to present it to Beede intact. The cross honors Beede's son, Marine Corps Sgt. Daniel Gurr, who was killed in action in 2011 while serving in Afghanistan.

Conkey looked into sending the cross via bus but was told it would have to go as cargo – again, risky. A trucking company wanted to charge \$400 to \$500 for delivery. On Facebook, Conkey said it was hard to believe that among all the motorcycle clubs, veterans groups and retired Americans who travel cross country nowadays, she couldn't find someone willing to transport a battlefield cross to a mother who lost her son in combat.

Richter contacted Mindy Hinkle, state chairman of Ohio's American Legion Riders, and told her, "I'll take it all the way, knock on the door and give it to (Beede)."



Photo by Steve Brooks

James Bryson, a Legionnaire and Patriot Guard Rider in Vernal who had escorted Gurr's body home, assisted with local logistics. Meanwhile, in Ohio, Post 703 raised money to help Richter with fuel expenses.

Towing a POW/MIA trailer to share that message, too, Richter traveled 1,769 miles – and in a public ceremony Oct. 4, he presented the cross to Beede. "I hugged her like I'd known her all my life," Richter says.

After receiving the cross, Beede placed Daniel's dog tags on it. "You're just as much a hero as he is," she told Richter.

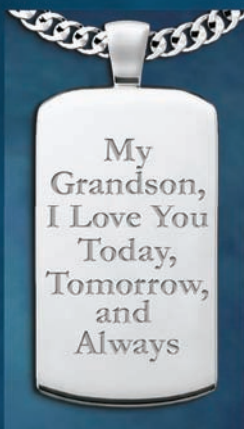
– Steve B. Brooks

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## How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org) or submit information via our website, [www.legion.org/reunions](http://www.legion.org/reunions).

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

## Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org).

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

## AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

**55th Wing Assn**, Tampa, FL, 4/19-23, Richard Ray, (941) 586-6911, [richardray55thwingassoc@earthlink.net](mailto:richardray55thwingassoc@earthlink.net); **485th Tact Msl Wing**, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/16-18, Chris "Bubba" Ayres, (719) 650-6089, [clemsonayres@gmail.com](mailto:clemsonayres@gmail.com); **664th AC&W Sqdn & All Radar Service (RSV) Vets**, Bellefontaine, OH, 6/22-24, 2018, Billy Stafford, (937) 592-2306; **AF Public Affairs Alumni Assn 24th Annual Membership Mtg**, Destin-Fort Walton Beach, FL, 4/27-30, John Terino, (703) 239-2704, [johnterino@afpaaa.org](mailto:johnterino@afpaaa.org); **C-119 Vets & 60th Trp Carrier Grp**, Branson, MO, 9/17, Paul Baldwin, (254) 694-2267; **Iceland Radar Sites - 667th, 932nd, 933rd & 934th AC&W Sqdns**, Tucson, AZ, 4/11-14, William Chick, [littlechick@msn.com](mailto:littlechick@msn.com)

## ARMY

**1st Trans Co, 106th Trans Bn (W.O. Darby, Kaserne, Furth, Germany)**, Fort Eustis, VA, 10/6-9, Alfred Austin, (910) 564-3259, [alfred.austin59@yahoo.com](mailto:alfred.austin59@yahoo.com); **7th Bn 8th Arty**, Lawton/Fort Sill, OK, 6/8-11, Wayne Faas, (641) 485-0083, [automatic8-faas@mediacombb.net](mailto:automatic8-faas@mediacombb.net); **383rd QM Det Aerial Supply**, Las Vegas, 4/10-17, John Richardson, (504) 912-2500, [jeri1945jer@gmail.com](mailto:jeri1945jer@gmail.com); **1438th Trans Co (Camp Atterbury, IN & Opn Desert Storm)**, Edinburg, IN, 6/10, Kevin Blair, (812) 372-1011, [kblair62@gmail.com](mailto:kblair62@gmail.com); **A Trp 2nd Sqdn 17th Cav 101st Abn Div**, Charleston, SC, 5/3-6, Leanne Casey, (817) 251-3551, [casey@militaryreunionplanners.com](mailto:casey@militaryreunionplanners.com); **Battle of Suoi Tre, Vietnam (50th Anniv)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 3/19-23, Jim Neeley, (360) 591-1939, [hotrod1930@comcast.net](mailto:hotrod1930@comcast.net)

## MARINES

**HMM-161 (Vietnam Era)**, Knoxville, TN, 5/18-21, Ronald Winter, (860) 550-3274, [rwinterbooks@comcast.net](mailto:rwinterbooks@comcast.net)

## NAVY

**Bon Homme Richard CV/CVA 31 & LHD-6**, Tucson, AZ, 9/26-10/1, Jim Kosinski, (805) 650-9134, [secytreasbhr@gmail.com](mailto:secytreasbhr@gmail.com); **Brownson DD 518/868**, South Portland, ME, 5/17-21, Guy Linscott, (207) 233-6531, [seabatt37@yahoo.com](mailto:seabatt37@yahoo.com); **Charles P. Cecil DD/DDR 835**, Rapid City, SD, 9/17-22, Greg Wells, (405) 365-1926, [glw513@yahoo.com](mailto:glw513@yahoo.com); **Diablo SS 479**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/11-14, Tim Calvert, (410) 592-6696, [tim479@aol.com](mailto:tim479@aol.com); **Knudson APD 101**, Corpus Christi, TX, 5/14-16, Wayne Reynolds, (386) 789-8612, [wjr502@cfl.rr.com](mailto:wjr502@cfl.rr.com); **NMCB 40 Seabees**, Newport, RI, 4/27-30, Blaine Pickett, (615) 331-1945, [wasp18bee40@gmail.com](mailto:wasp18bee40@gmail.com); **NMCB 62 Seabees**, Gulfport, MS, 4/28-5/1, Norm Hahn, (715) 379-8482, [normhahnjr@yahoo.com](mailto:normhahnjr@yahoo.com); **NSA Da Nang, Vietnam**, Portland, ME, 4/24-29, Bernie Uhrinek, (724) 353-9627, [jbrsar@salsgiver.com](mailto:jbrsar@salsgiver.com)

**VS-29**, Pensacola Beach, FL, 4/23-28, Don Barns, (850) 897-8946, [catdonb@aol.com](mailto:catdonb@aol.com); **Yellowstone AD 27**, Columbus, GA, 8/23-27, Paul Bowen, (352) 208-5400, [bowp@centurylink.net](mailto:bowp@centurylink.net)

## IN SEARCH OF

**3/16th A Btry Americal Div (LZ West & LZ Hawk Hill, Vietnam, Sept 1969-Nov 1970)**, Jim Daniel, (773) 551-5041, [jld1144@att.net](mailto:jld1144@att.net); **48th Med Bn 2nd Armd Div (Fort Hood, TX, 1959-1960)**, Gerard Leegwater, (952) 890-2645, [theleegs@mchsi.com](mailto:theleegs@mchsi.com); **74th Eng Cbt Bn (Korea, Oct 1950-Oct 1951)**, A.B. Barnes, (919) 246-4335; **139th Supply Co (HM) (GS) (Long Bien, Vietnam, Sept 1966-Sept 1967)**, Frank Collins, (603) 533-1695, [nhrunner66@gmail.com](mailto:nhrunner66@gmail.com); **275th/257th Sig Co (Wire/Radio Sections, Camp des Loges, Paris, 1962-1964)**, Walt Bollech, (302) 335-5378, [wtbolmira@aol.com](mailto:wtbolmira@aol.com); **575th Trans Co (Caserma Ederle, Italy, 1960-1971)**, Fred Dintino, (215) 643-7970, [info@575thtransco.org](mailto:info@575thtransco.org); **625th AC&W Sqdn (Fire Island, 1952)**, R.S. Spring, P.O. Box 378, Crown Point, NY 12928; **761st AC&W Sqdn (North Bend, OR, 1962-1964)**, Cleto "Jim" Jimenez, (626) 335-8343, [jimjimenez@gmail.com](mailto:jimjimenez@gmail.com); **ARADCOM Sentry Dog Handlers (1965-1967)**, Joe Gajewski, (215) 463-2133, [jgajewski11@comcast.net](mailto:jgajewski11@comcast.net); **ARD 22 (Okinawa & Sasebo, Japan and Kodiak, AK, 1944-1948)**, Floyd Nelson, (435) 438-2414; **Army Personnel (Giessen, Germany, Sept 1975-Sept 1978)**, Kay Massengill, [krmassengill@embarqmail.com](mailto:krmassengill@embarqmail.com); **C Co 70th Armd Inf Bn 20th Armd Div (Camp Campbell, KY & Europe, WWII)**, Arthur Sheridan, (630) 404-6696, [asher9150@aol.com](mailto:asher9150@aol.com); **HQ & HQ Trp 3rd Armd Cav Rgt (Baumholder, Germany, 1965-1967)**, Joseph Cordle, (415) 347-7725; **US Army Gen Ord Depot (Nancy, France, 1960-1962)**, Ronald Schouweiler, (503) 954-8793, [rschouweiler@yahoo.com](mailto:rschouweiler@yahoo.com)

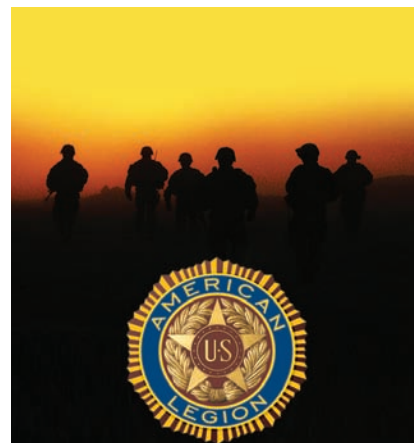
## TAPS

**William E. Barnett, Dept. of Nebraska**. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1991-2006.  
**Jeff Kauffman, Dept. of Ohio**. Dept. Cmdr. 2013-2014, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2012-2013, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 2014-2016 and Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2000-2012.  
**Theo Mainaris, Dept. of California**. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1974-1975 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1971-1973.  
**James H. Malone, Dept. of Alaska**. Dept. Cmdr. 1988-1989, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice

Chmn. 1986-1987, Nat'l Veterans Employment & Education Cmsn. Memb. 2002-2003, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2003-2006, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Memb. 1993-2002 and Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1988-1993.

**Ramona A. Naragon, Dept. of Maine**. Dept. Cmdr. 1999-2000, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1996-1997, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2015-2016, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1997-1998, Nat'l Media & Comm. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2015, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2008 and Nat'l Subcmte. on Resolutions Memb. 2016.

**Harry M. Slaughter, Dept. of West Virginia**. Dept. Cmdr. 1973-1974, Nat'l Constitution & By-Laws Cmte. Memb. 1974-1977 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1977-1979.



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b. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Paid/Requested outside-county subscriptions stated on Form 3541	1,995,019	1,969,247
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3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	4,311	4,283
4. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
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d. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county as stated on Form 3541	3,640	3,942
2. In-county as stated on Form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
e. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
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g. Total distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)	2,002,970	1,977,472
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Jeffrey Stoffer, Publisher



*What goes "Oh oh oh"? Santa walking backwards.*

**THE OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY** is a great opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for 20 minutes.

**THE LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR** was covering a crowd of parade-goers who were waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. On camera, he asked a 4-year-old girl if she had given Santa her Christmas list.

"No!" she said firmly.

"Are you going to talk with Santa?" the newscaster asked.

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Because the real Santa is at the mall."

**THE NATIVITY PLAY** was going as planned, with Joseph and Mary going from house to house asking if there were any rooms available. As every innkeeper told them no, a little voice called from the back, "You should have booked!"

**LET ME ASSURE YOU** that my holiday weight gain is in no way an indication of increased jolliness.

**A POLITICIAN** is someone who approaches every problem with an open mouth.



"You're charging me for carry-on?"



"I'm getting something high-tech for my parents. Something they won't be able to figure out and will eventually give to me."



"Don't worry. I've made a list, I've checked it twice – plus, it's backed up in the cloud."

**A MAN** met a friend at a football game as the first quarter was winding down.

"Why are you so late?" his friend asked.

"I had to toss a coin to decide between coming to church or the game," the man replied.

"How long could that have taken you?"

"I had to toss it 14 times."

**AN INSURANCE AGENT** writing a policy for a cowboy asked if he had ever had any accidents.

"No," the cowboy said, "but a bronco kicked in a couple of my ribs last year, and a few years ago a rattlesnake bit me."

"Well, wouldn't you call those accidents?"

"No, they did it on purpose."

**"ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER** was stopped in Germany by a police officer for riding a bicycle through a train station. Schwarzenegger may have gone unnoticed if he hadn't been frantically ringing the bell and shouting, 'Get out of the way if you want to live!'" – Jimmy Fallon





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	7WK-01N6F	WHAT WAIST?	WHAT INSEAM?	HOW MANY?
15	INDIGO DENIM			
02	TAN TWILL			
5A	MEDIUM BLUE DENIM			
6J	GREY HEATHER TWILL			
8V	ICE HOUSE BLUE TWILL			
01	BLACK TWILL			
03	NAVY TWILL			
LQ	BLUE CARPENTER DENIM			
08	LIGHT BLUE DENIM			
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