Vol. 30 No. 5

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Dispatch
January 2020 A National Headquarters Publication

EMBLEM USAGE

No touchy

The ins and outs of using The American Legion emblem.

By Clara Pon, Department of France, China Post 1 Auxiliary

No, I'm not referring to priceless paintings thousands of years old displayed in museums, the electric fence with its warning signs, or the tall holiday displays at department stores. I am talking about what you are not supposed to do with The American Legion emblem when you are using it in a design.

No "touchy" is National Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett's catch phrase when he gave a presentation to the 2019 National American Legion College class last November on the use of the emblem and the trademark name, The American Legion.

What does it mean? It means that nothing can be touching any part of the emblem. There is no set distance away.

Take the new Department of California image as an example. The California silhouette is not touching the top or bottom of The American Legion emblem. It's close enough and yet far enough to not violate the trademark and patent law.

I was informed that California's new image did get approved by American Legion National Headquarters for department use. Yes, the department must also request permission to use the emblem since the design was altered.

Many American Legion Family members don't think they need to concern themselves with the dos and don'ts of using the name or emblem of The American Legion. For the vast majority, that may be the case, however, knowing the basic fundamentals should be part of your American Legion knowledge.

The emblem is the organization's brand. It should be recognizable in the way most of us recognize the red wavy font of Coca Cola, lowercase font of amazon, and the child-like

See No touchy on Page 4

NEWS ALERT

Post honor ribbon

Honor ribbons are awarded to posts whose membership for the current membership year (as of Dec. 31) achieves an advance membership (for the year about to begin) equal to or greater than the final membership for the year ending. Certification forms must be submitted to the Membership Division by Jan. 31.

Access the certification form by downloading the Membership Awards Points Manual for 2020, ***legion.org/publications***.

Gen. John J. Pershing Honor Award

This plaque is awarded annually to the department with the greatest percentage of posts receiving the Post Honor Ribbon for achieving 100 percent or more of their previous year's membership enrolled for the coming year by Dec. 31, and having reported the achievement to National Headquarters no later than Jan. 31.

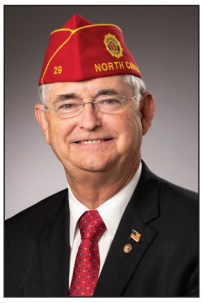
Access the certification form by downloading the Membership Awards Points Manual for 2020, ***legion.org/publications***.

2020 baseball season

Team registration for the 2020 American Legion Baseball season is open. Register online, ***baseball.legion.org***.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Your support improves lives



James W. Oxford
National Commander

Happy New Year American Legion Family! It's hard to believe that it's already been a year since the American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program provided more than $1 million in non-repayable grants to Coast Guard families affected by the longest government shutdown.

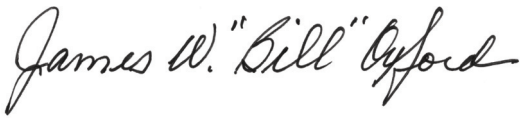
TFA grants, like the ones distributed to the Coast Guard families, are made possible through donations to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

Grants from the foundation not only provide vital support for military and veteran parents in unexpected financial crises, they also support American Legion service officers in their tireless efforts to obtain care and benefits for disabled veterans and families. These service officers provide free expert assistance to more than 700,000 veterans, widows and families as they navigate the complexities of VA benefits and services they have earned through their service.

The Veterans & Children Foundation improves lives for veterans, servicemembers and their families. It is essential that the foundation remain a resource for our comrades in need in communities throughout the nation. Whether funds are used to assist Coast Guardsmen who are missing paychecks, a veteran and their family who lost their home to a fire, or a military family struggling to make ends meet, the Veterans & Children Foundation needs your support.

For the remainder of my term as your national commander, I will be focusing on my fundraising goal of $25 million for the Veterans & Children Foundation. I am confident that with your kind contributions, we will indeed assist veterans, support military families and build a strong foundation for the future.

To donate to the foundation, please visit ***legion.org/donate***. You also may download the Veterans & Children Foundation brochure at ***legion.org/publications***.



MEMBERSHIP

Recruit three new members for 'A Foundation for the Future' pin

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

Legion Family Honor Ribbon

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

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

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

Download the form at ***www.legion.org/commander/ribbon***.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

111 revitalizations give DMS members a post home

More than 5,200 Legionnaires were transferred into local posts last year as a result of Legion Family efforts.

By Daniel S. Wheeler

In 2019, staff from The American Legion's Membership Division helped assist with 111 revitalizations across the nation. This resulted in the transfer of 5,292 Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS) program members into local posts, and recruitment of 176 new members.

An example of a successful revitalization was last month in the Department of New Mexico's 9th and 11th Districts where national staff, department leadership, Legionnaires and Auxiliary members transferred 131 DMS members into local posts.

The revitalization was based out of Post 13 in Albuquerque.

Of those transfers, Auxiliary Unit 13 member Susie Moya had the most with 24. National Vice Commander Robert D. Liebenow presented Moya with his coin in recognition of her efforts.

About 1,100 post cards were sent to 2019 and 2020 DMS members prior to the revitalization. The cards encouraged members to visit American Legion Post 13 to transfer their membership into a local post, speak with a service officer or just to meet fellow Legion Family members. About 26 veterans visited Post 13 to speak with a service officer.

"We have learned over the years that transferring a Legionnaire into a local post greatly increases the chance for renewal," said Jay Bowen, American Legion Membership and Post Activities Committee chairman from Colorado. "Study after study has proven that our chances to retain all members, old and new increases dramatically when a post is active and gets their membership involved."

Bowen advises Legionnaires to send transfers or new members post newsletters and information on upcoming activities, such as a post dinner or breakfast. "Get them engaged to participate and take a role in the activity," he said.

In addition to making phone calls during a revitalization, Legion Family members often go door-to-door to bring back expired members.

Last October, more than 10 Legionnaires from the Department of Indiana's 11th District were stationed at Post 500 making phone calls and home visits. For those not home, an American Legion "Why You Should Belong" brochure was left behind and a calendar of events for Post 500, as well as a letter about the Department of Indiana's programs and scholarships.

Unit 13 member Susie Moya is recognized by National Vice Commander Robert D. Liebenow for her efforts in transferring DMS members into a local post.

"This revitalization effort is very important for our community and the Legion itself to let people know about our mission and purpose and to get them involved," said Post 500 Commander Johnette Lawson.

With a new year upon us, and a 2020 membership drive in full force to reach 100 percent membership by May 13, I encourage your post or district to reassert itself into the local community through a revitalization.

American Legion national staff are here to assist your efforts to grow membership.

For more information on how to conduct a post or district revitalization, contact the Internal Affairs and Membership Division at ***legion.org/membership/contactus***.

Have a membership success story?

Share: ***www.legiontown.org***

Dispatch

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font of Disney. Their color, font and design are all elements that make their symbols iconic and recognized.

A few months ago, I saw a group of men wearing shirts with the wrong Sons of The American Legion emblem on it. The Sons logo was in red, rather than light blue and somewhat round, rather than oval. It was obvious that they wanted to promote the organization by being noticed with their large, bright red logo.

However, it clearly was not the correct Sons logo.

Instead of promoting brand awareness of the Sons of The American Legion with the correct emblem, it was damaged by the change. According to the Name and Emblem Guide, the Sons of The American Legion emblem is an oval made up of four colors – gold, dark gold, light French blue and light brown – with the letters all capitalized.

Another important lesson that was shared by a National Legion College student for all to learn from was when she gave her new Legion business card to Bartlett and was told in return that she couldn't pass them out anymore – and that she didn't get approval to have them printed. Flabbergasted, she asked "Why?"

For starters, she didn't use the correct American Legion emblem. Oops! She downloaded a cool looking blue metallic version that's been floating on the Internet for some time now.

Secondly, they were professionally printed. She didn't print them off her printer, but through a retailer.

Unbeknownst to a majority of us, how business cards are produced determines whether or not you need to request permission from National Headquarters. Basically, if you go to Office Depot, Staples, Vistaprint or any of those types of vendors where you pay for it, you need permission to reproduce The American Legion emblem.

However, if you print them off your printer on business card stock, you don't need permission. There was no exchange of money. But you still have to use a proper American Legion emblem.

To submit an American Legion emblem usage request, go to ***legion.org/emblem/request***.

It seems that this particular topic has been neglected for some time now and hasn't been enforced resulting in widespread misuses, and in a way, abuse of the brand.

If you recall during the 2018 Spring Meetings, the National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 1: Rules and Regulations Governing Use of the Name and Emblem of The American Legion to clarify the rules and regulations of its use. National continues to ensure that its brand, its most valuable asset, is properly used, marketed and promoted.

If this still doesn't make sense on how it applies to you, then think of it this way. Let's say your name is Santa Claus and you wear a red suit and have a thick white beard. You are known for bringing presents to children all over the world for Christmas. On Christmas Day, someone decides to change your name to Santa Clown, dresses up in purple and green dotted suit with a painted face sporting a goatee and delivers used presents to children all over the world. Is that the brand image that Santa Claus is associated with? No.

So, let's use the emblem correctly and with proper permission.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Legion provides over $1.1 million in grants to veteran families

In January 2019, The American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program broke a single-month record in grant distribution – $1,030,163. Of the grants distributed, $1,000,500 assisted children of active duty Coast Guard servicemembers who were financially affected by the federal government shutdown.

The government shutdown created a critical need of monetary assistance for active-duty U.S. Coast Guardsmen. And The American Legion answered their call for help by providing immediate financial support through the TFA program.

But the financial need for veterans and their families across the country was still there long after the government reopened.

Subject to an audit, so far 2019 numbers for TFA show that $1,143,000 was provided in cash grants that assisted more than 3,000 children of nearly 1,700 veteran families. And these grants are non-repayable.

The American Legion distributes one-time grants of up to $1,500 to eligible active-duty military and American Legion members in need. Grantees must have minor children in the home and the funds are designed to help meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities and health expenses so that children have a stable environment during a time of hardship.

The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance program is funded through the generosity of donations made by American Legion members and the public to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

National Commander Bill Oxford has made the Veterans & Children Foundation his primary fundraiser to help the foundation reach the goal of $25 million.

Donations to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation are tax deductible and can be made online at ***legion.org/donate***.

MEMBERSHIP

Buddy Checks help posts care for members

Over the course of two days last November, 14 members of American Legion Post 101 in Somers, Conn., made 375 phone calls. They conducted Buddy Checks by calling on members to check in on them.

"I found that conducting the Buddy Checks allowed me the opportunity to know a little more about our membership and their families, how they are doing and what we as a post can do for our veterans," said Post 101 Commander Mike Craddy.

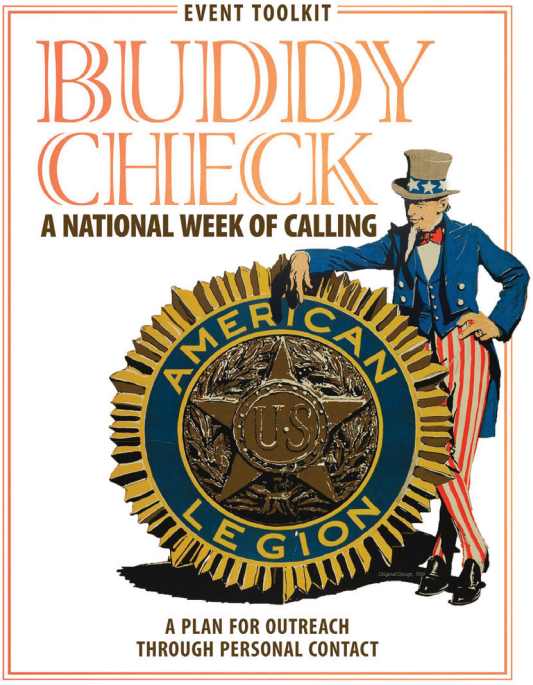
The phone calls identified members' needs for financial assistance, transportation, service officer help and visitation.

The Buddy Checks "allowed us to show to our membership that we care and that we are there for them," Craddy said. "This program gave me the ability to get a more accurate accountability of our members needs and adjust our agenda to meet those needs. I did not realize that several of our members had situations in their lives that required someone to listen, care or just to feel that someone had their back."

Resolution 18 calls for Buddy Checks to be conducted twice a year, but posts can conduct them at any time throughout the year.

A kit is available to help guide posts on Buddy Checks. The online resource contains information about Buddy Checks, tips, answers to FAQs and downloadable resources such as a flyer, scripts and more.

legion.org/membership/buddycheck



LEGION HISTORY

To Strengthen a Nation

Episode 6 of "To Strengthen a Nation," a video series on the history of The American Legion, explores the original reasons the organization made "Americanism" a pillar value.

Responsible U.S. citizenship, respect for the flag, constitutional understanding, voter participation, support for law and order and a number of youth programs arose from a founding interest to ensure that Americans not only had the resources and training to defend the country, but also understood the reasons why.

Watch Episode 6 and the entire documentary series on The American Legion's YouTube channel, *youtube.com/user/americanlegionHQ*.

The "To Strengthen a Nation" documentary series features two professional actors and American Legion members who travel the country to discover how The American Legion was formed, grew and continues to serve communities, states and the nation today.

DID YOU KNOW?

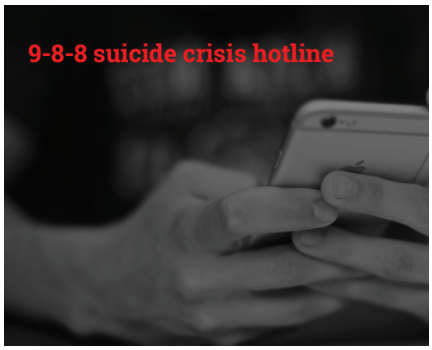
■ Owners of unused vehicles can donate them for tax breaks while also benefiting American Legion programs. Proceeds from each auction sale via Charitable Auto Rides Service, Inc. will go toward American Legion charities and programs. For more information on how to donate, visit *legion.careasy.org*.

■ Did you know that of the 12,000 American Legion posts, more than one-third – 4,600 – do not have an Auxiliary unit? In a new public service announcement, American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford and American Legion Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp are calling on posts to grow their Legion Family by starting units. Watch the PSA on *legion.org/legiontv*.
Posts that want to start a new unit can download the Auxiliary's how-to guide. *alaforveterans.org/start-a-new-unit*.

■ Before last month's holiday break, overall traditional American Legion membership was 16,154 ahead compared to this time last year. And 6,924 veterans have joined The American Legion under the Other Conflicts war era since the signing of the LEGION Act.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

New year for suicide crisis hotline and Blue Water Navy veterans



Last month, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation unanimously approved the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, **S. 2661**. The American Legion believes this as a positive step to improve access to mental health care for veterans in need.

The bipartisan act, supported by American Legion Resolution No. 377, would require the Federal Communications Commission to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental-health crisis hotline. Advocates for the hotline believe that designating a three-digit telephone number can transform access to mental health care.

"This easy-to-remember number would make it easier for Americans dealing with a mental health crisis to receive life-saving support," said Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. "With the Senate Commerce Committee's approval today, this bipartisan bill to create a three-digit suicide hotline became one step closer to becoming reality. I will continue to push Congress to create this three-digit hotline."

In addition to designating 9-8-8 as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, it would include a provision for the Veterans Crisis Line giving veterans fast and easy access to veteran-specific mental health support.

More than 45,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States, including more than 6,100 veterans, said Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Ill. "We need to do everything we can to prevent suicide, and that means improving the tools we have to help people who are suffering from depression or other mental health issues."

The act is sponsored by Gardner, Baldwin, Jerry Moran, R-Kan., and Jon Tester, D-Mont.

VA now processing Blue Water claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs began processing Agent Orange disability claims as of Jan. 1 for Blue Water Navy veterans.

The American Legion-supported Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law in June, states veterans aboard American vessels off Vietnam's coast between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange, a chemical herbicide, and might be entitled to disability benefits.

According to a VA press release, survivors can file claims for benefits based on the veteran's service if the veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with herbicides such as Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida if their parent is or was a veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period.

For more information, visit *benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp*.

MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES AND AWARDS

103 PERCENT MEMBERSHIP AWARD

American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford will award his national commander "A Foundation for the Future" membership incentive pin to any post, district, county, division, department commander or membership chairman who achieves 103 percent of their assigned membership goal for 2020.

Download the 103 percent membership goal form online:
www.legion.org/commander/103percent

POST EXCELLENCE AWARD

The American Legion's Post Excellence Award has added new criteria for the 2019-2020 membership year. To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90 percent renewal rate and community activity.

The purposes of this award is membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to the youth of the community, and increased visibility of the American Legion Family through service projects. A post achieving this qualification will have had numerous post members involved in planning and achieving these goals. Many posts are most likely already active in these areas and will qualify without extra effort. Others, however, will need to increase their efforts in one or more areas to qualify for the award.

The standard to be achieved in each area is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

The department adjutant will transmit information as posts qualify to:

The American Legion National Headquarters
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055

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PLANNER

February

1 Department submissions due for National Law Enforcement Officer (*legion.org/security/officeraward*) and National Firefighter of the Year (*legion.org/security/firefighter*) awards

2 Four Chaplains Sunday (Download brochure at *legion.org/publications*)

12 85 percent membership target date

ORATORICAL

March 6 is National Speech & Debate Education Day

The National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) founded National Speech and Debate Education Day to recognize and celebrate the positive impact speech and debate activities have on schools, students, organizations and their communities. Whether you're a former competitor, a family member or just love speech and debate, celebrate this day on March 6. Visit *speechanddebateday.org* to share your speech and debate story, and download posters and other graphics to show your support.

The American Legion and NSDA formed a relationship in 2010 to promote speech and debate among youth. Both programs provide students an opportunity to improve their skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and civic engagement.

The American Legion's Oratorical Contest on the U.S. Constitution teaches participants the history of our nation's laws and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. Through NSDA, students speak on controversial issues and current events. These students also are given the opportunity to express their opinions in an educational space that allows them to learn more about the world around them.

Between the NSDA and American Legion's Oratorical Contest, millions of youth have established communication skills to further their education and careers. Visit *legion.org/oratorical* and *speechanddebate.org* to learn more.