Vol. 33 No. 2

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Dispatch
October 2022 Veterans Strengthening America

MEMBERSHIP

# ROAD MAP TO MYLEGION

*Your guide to knowing how to use the membership site and access answers to questions you may have.*

By The American Legion

If you are a newly elected adjutant or commander at the post, squadron, county and district level, you now have access to the administrative side of mylegion.org through your individual account. This access occurs as soon as officers are reported and entered into The American Legion national membership database. Reporting of officers is done through the department using the department's officer certification form.

**Get started**

- Watch the MyLegion Training Series videos at vimeo.com/showcase/8339635 to help navigate and get the most out of the features and tools available at MyLegion.org.
- Visit legion.org/training/training-tuesdays for several PowerPoint presentations and videos on how to use MyLegion, from account registration to membership processing.

**Follow step-by-step instructions**

Visit mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Resources/Help for account registration, help with your account and help with My Groups.

If you have a MyLegion.org account, there is nothing more that you will need to do upon your elected officer position. If you have not registered for a MyLegion.org account, register an account with the email on your membership record. To verify the email on your membership record, contact your department headquarters or American Legion

*See Road map to MyLegion on Page 4*

## NEWS ALERT

### Digital Dispatch to replace printed version

Effective January 2023, The American Legion Dispatch goes to a digital-only format. Read more about this change on page 4.

### TALMA training videos online

The American Legion Media Alliance held its Media Training Workshop during the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee. The workshop presentations were recorded and are now available for viewing and promoting at the post, district and department level. Access the video presentations at youtube.com/americanlegionHQ/videos.

### NEF grants help with disaster relief

Eligible Legionnaires, American Legion posts and Sons of The American Legion members impacted by a natural disaster, such as Hurricane Ian and Fiona, can apply for a National Emergency Fund (NEF) grant — up to $3,000 to Legionnaires and SAL members and up to $10,000 for Legion posts.

Legion posts that assist with community relief efforts, such as serving as a shelter, providing meals and helping first responders, are also eligible to apply for a grant.

Download an NEF grant application at legion.org/nef.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

# CWF grants make a difference

**Vincent J. Troiola**
*National Commander*

Dear Legionnaires,

Your generosity has helped award nearly $20 million in American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants since 1954 to help youth-serving nonprofit organizations across this nation promote and operate their programs that provide direct care to children in need. Your donations have produced activity programs for kids with cancer, provided lifesaving flights for pediatric patients to faraway medical facilities for treatment, kept children with autism safe from leaving the house unnoticed, protected neglected and abused children, and more.

Legion Family members recently heard from three 2022 CWF recipients – Mercy Medical Angles, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky (PCAK) and the National Children's Cancer Society. The CWF grant to Mercy Medical Angels provided 7,235 free trips for children and a caregiver – 5,154 of the trips were for cancer treatment and 494 were for the child of a veteran. And PCAK provided a variety of resources that the CWF grant helped create that are available at ***legion.org/youth***.

Members of the American Legion Family are the prime contributors to the success and growth of CWF. Your support continues projects that improve the quality of life for our nation's children. American Legion posts, Legion Riders chapters, Auxiliary units and Sons of The American Legion squadrons are eligible for the CWF 100% per capita banner for the 2022-23 membership year. To qualify for the banner, a post, unit or squadron must donate at least $1 per member based upon respective official membership total for the 2022-23 year. Download the CWF 100 percent per capita banner, along with CWF promotional brochures, at ***legion.org/publications*** under Children & Youth.

Your donations make a difference. You are helping the betterment of children in this country.

MEMBERSHIP

# Expired membership incentive V.E.T.S. pin

To qualify for National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola's V.E.T.S. (veterans, education, teamwork and sponsor) expired membership incentive pin, American Legion members will need to reinstate five expired members into The American Legion for the 2023 membership year who were not a member during the 2022 membership year.

Please make sure that members have been processed before submission of this award. Pins will not be mailed until they are verified on the national database.

Forward the names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your squadron or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Download the expired membership incentive pin form at ***legion.org/commander/vets-pin***.

MEMBERSHIP

# Membership excellence "Be the One" pin

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola will award his national commander "Be the One" 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 2023 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2022 membership year. Transfers do not count as new members.

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 squadron 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 in the national database and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.

Download the "Be The One" membership incentive pin form at ***legion.org/commander/pin***.

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

# Help get a designated National Buddy Check Week

*The Legion-supported STRONG Veterans Act of 2022 supports mental health care and Buddy Checks.*

By Daniel S. Wheeler

The Support the Resiliency of Our Nation's Great (STRONG) Veterans Act of 2022 is legislation that The American Legion strongly endorses because it calls on the Department of Veterans Affairs to designate a "National Buddy Check Week." This is modeled after The American Legion's successful Buddy Check program, which nearly 4,000 local posts a year have used to help veterans in need since 2019. Checking on veterans in your community, whether their membership is paid up, expired or they're a potential new member, allows The American Legion to reach out to ensure basic needs are met.

Photo courtesy Glenn Harbison, *The News Observer*

In late August, members of American Legion Post 248 in Blue Ridge, Ga., conducted Buddy Checks on its 122-member roster through multiple mailed letters and phone calls. It was a way to verify accuracy of its membership roster and to check in on the well being of its members.

The post first mailed a letter to those on the roster. The letter, created by Post 248's new Senior Vice Commander, James C. "Jim" Callender, asked if the veteran was well, if they needed anything, and then it encouraged their participation at the post with programs. The response contact was to the post adjutant to "keep the information flowing in the proper channel," Callender said.

Several letters were returned, some stating that the veteran was deceased or no longer lived at that address. This helped with verifying the membership roster, bringing the active membership list to about 85 members.

After the initial letter, phone calls were made by Callender, Post Adjutant Chris McKee, Historian Howard "Catfish" Adkins, and post member Ronnie Rabun. The Legionnaires met at the post on Aug. 31, divided up the membership roster, and started making calls with a written script to help guide the conversations. Callender reviewed The American Legion's Buddy Check Toolkit, ***legion.org/buddycheck***, to help create the script.

"I asked the guys to read over the script before they made the first phone call to give them an idea of how the conversation should be structured," Callender said. "Who you are, why you're calling, that you're calling to check on them and thank them for their service.

"Basically, you just have a conversation. I can tell you that the vast majority of the people that we talked to, the conversation was very positive. They were glad that we called."

The Legionnaires were able to converse with about 50 members, including two members who are homebound. Those members said they didn't need help now, but "we told them if you do need assistance from us, that you can reach out to us," Callender said. "These members were passed on to our post service officer so he is aware as well." Another 18 voicemails were left, and the team identified members with incorrect or inoperative phone numbers, or no phone number listed on the roster.

A follow-up letter was mailed to those not reached by phone. It asked the member to contact the post adjutant and report that they are OK. Callender said calls are now coming in from that letter. "You need to use multiple means of communication with your membership," Callender said. "The post intends to conduct Buddy Checks once each quarter. And hopefully through this we will get more members to actively participate so that we can execute more Legion programs."

Let's get the STRONG Veterans Act of 2022 passed so more veterans, like those of Post 248, can be cared for. Support the STRONG Veterans Act at ***votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Campaigns***.

## Have a membership success story?

Share: ***legiontown.org***

Dispatch

Published monthly.
Printed by PRINTING PARTNERS, Indianapolis, Ind.

All American Legion publications are entitled and encouraged to reproduce all staff-written stories within, but please credit *Dispatch* as the source. Equal opportunity employer.

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From Road map to MyLegion on Page 1

Customer Service at 800-433-3318.

In My Groups, post and squadron adjutants have the ability to: export and print electronic membership roster; email members; view and edit member information; and access membership functions such as view members, see members renewed online, do a global member lookup, access reports and labels, process membership and manage Consolidated Post Reports and Consolidated Squadron Report.

**See known issues**

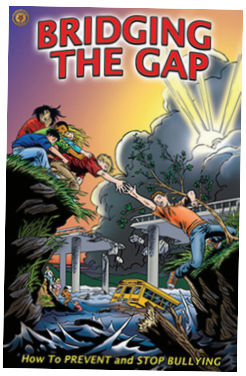
If you want to see if National Headquarters knows that there is an issue with MyLegion, visit the frequently updated Known Issues section under mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Resources/Help.

**Receive assistance:**

Send an email to **mylegion@legion.org** for assistance.

YOUTH COMIC BOOK

# Recognize, prevent and stop bullying




October is National Bully Prevention Month. And The American Legion has an educational comic book, "Bridging the Gap," to help middle school age children recognize, prevent and stop bullying.

"Bridging the Gap" features six main characters and includes two stories that are interwoven throughout the book. One story focuses on physical bullying and the other on cyberbullying.

Each story focuses on how to:

- Define and recognize bullying behavior
- Understand and protect the rights of others
- Prevent and stop bullying of yourself
- Prevent and stop bullying of others
- Stop cyberbullying

The comic book can be purchased through Emblem Sales, emblem.legion.org, Item No. 755.305. Cost is 75 cents apiece, or 59 cents apiece for the purchase of 100 or more.

MEMBERSHIP

# Enhanced Digital Dispatch to replace printed version in '23

Effective January 2023, The American Legion Dispatch goes to a digital-only format, reaching more officers and leaders of the organization more frequently with a greater portfolio of resources. The last printed version will be the December 2022 issue.

The Digital Dispatch currently has more than 30,000 subscribers and growing. Enhancements to the monthly e-newsletter and a more robust web platform is now in production to make the Digital Dispatch a more valuable tool for post, district and department leadership.

The digital format also allows Legionnaires at every level of the organization to receive information on such topics as membership recruitment and retention, program delivery and guidance for officers at every level. The printed Dispatch has been mailed only to post adjutants, department leadership and district commanders. The printed publication has about half the circulation of the digital version. The ability to go fully digital expands the audience reach to ensure that more officers – such as committee chairpersons and program managers – have access to information they need. It also offers the ability to deliver important information in a more timely manner.

An emailed Digital Dispatch is now sent monthly to subscribers, featuring a roundup of top headlines with clickable links to the stories that are housed on the Dispatch landing page, legion.org/dispatch. This will be the standard format moving forward with enhanced features now in development. The Digital Dispatch is free of charge for anyone who registers to receive it.

Don't miss out on receiving the Digital Dispatch now and in the future. Subscribe at legion.org/newsletters. You will be directed to sign in to your MyLegion.org account. Then you will opt in to receive the Digital Dispatch.

AMERICANISM

# Prepare for two youth programs: air rifle and oratorical contest

**Junior Shooting Sports**

The American Legion's Junior 3-Postion Air Rifle Tournament for 2022-23 is now underway. This competition provides American Legion-affiliated youth competitors an opportunity to test their marksmanship skills in competition with other junior competitors throughout the nation.

The individual tournament has two phases of competition – first round is state championships and second round is qualification for national championships. The first round and second round of the individual tournament are postal matches, whereas the national championship is an individual event that is a shoulder-to-shoulder competition. The team tournament has two phases of competition – first round is state championships and second round is recognition of top teams in the nation.

Register at ***legion.org/jssp-club-registration***. Registration ends Dec. 15.

**Oratorical**

During the American Legion Oratorical Conference with department program chairmen in September, Department of North Carolina Oratorical Chairman Joseph Reale Sr., shared a few ways to promote the Legion's Constitutional speech contest among high school students.

"We need to reach out to all the various school systems that are out there. And try to get in the door with all of them," he said. For homeschool students, Reale said each county should have a homeschool point of contact. "You can reach out to that individual and they have the rosters of all the homeschool students in that county. We need to use every means available to get into every type of school system that's out there."

Reale shared the following ways that can help promote the program:

- Visit high schools at the beginning of the year and bring Oratorical Contest flyers or brochures (available on ***legion.org/publications***) to history, English and speech educators. And discuss the scholarship money that students can earn through the program to help with college education – scholarships are available at the post, district and department level. The national competition awards over $203,000.
- Introduce yourself to the school principal, counselors and JROTC instructors.
- Invite educators to your post oratorical competition. "They get to see it live, hopefully feel good about it, and they will then become your spokesperson at the high school level and get more interested in it," Reale said.
- Advertise in the school newspaper and the local paper and radio.
- Attend PTA meetings to share with parents the scholarship benefits of the oratorical program.
- Invite oratorical winners to speak at your post about their experience with the program. "Use them as your best sales representatives at the schools that they come from," Reale said. "No one is going to be more enthusiastic than they are to tell their friends and other students what this meant to them."
- Invite other civic organizations to your post to meet oratorical winners and disseminate program information. Or take your oratorical winner to other organizations to speak, like the Kiwanis.

Attendees at the oratorical conference also shared their best practices. They advised others to:

- Use social media to promote the program, including creating a separate LinkedIn profile just for the oratorical contest.
- Attend eighth grade graduations where parents will be to speak about the program, so they are aware of it as their child prepares for high school.
- Ask high school student government presidents to read a quick blurb about the oratorical program during morning announcements to generate more interest. This is what Department of Florida Oratorical Chairman Mary West has done in Jacksonville.

Photo by Rachel Woolf

Photo by AJ Mast

RECRUITING

# Drive-by membership entices new joins

When 2022-23 American Legion Department of New York Commander Dave Riley had his personal vehicle wrapped with the Legion emblem, brandmark and six branches of service to include Space Force, Riley added an additional feature – a membership QR code.

The membership QR code is on the back of his vehicle. When someone scans it, they are taken to the Department of New York's join page.

"All the younger veterans, everything is by their phones," Riley said. "They are going to scan it just to see what it is. It's the curiosity. Now, they can just scan the back of my car and join."

No verbiage such as "Join now!" appears on the QR code. Riley did that for a reason.

When veterans "see The American Legion vehicle (QR code), I wanted them to be curious to scan it. I wanted the curiosity of the QR code to get them to scan it and see what it was. They are going to scan it just to see what it is. They scan everything for the information."

The QR code was created at no cost by Department of New York Media and Communications Chairman Bob Stronach, who made it black and white so it can be sized to fit on a variety of membership marketing tools – email, pamphlets and business cards. Riley currently has the Legion application on the back of his business card but is looking forward to having the membership QR code there one day.

"The QR code is a lot easier and more efficient," Riley said. "They can fill out an application online while you're talking to them." Once veterans are directed to the join page through the QR code, "they can put their credit card in right then and there. I don't have to worry about (asking for or handling) any money. They can join then and there." Once a new member joins, they are placed in the department's holding post.

Riley said holding post members will be contacted for renewal purposes and to place them in a local post.

"Only time will tell to see what we get from membership off of it," Riley said. "If I get one person to sign up through the QR code, I'm 100 percent ahead of myself. It's just another membership tool in the toolbox."

MEMBERSHIP

# Welcome new members

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola has set a goal of 75,000 new traditional members for the 2023 membership year. To date we have recruited 18,693 new members into the organization at the local post level.

Welcoming a new member into your American Legion post is important to help create an active member and for renewal purposes. The American Legion has a New Member Kit for $6.95 a piece through Emblem Sales, ***emblem.legion.org***, Item No. 735.501.

The kit includes:

- A welcome letter from the national commander
- Certificate of Initiation
- Gold-plated membership lapel tack
- American flag window sticker
- Legion removable window decal
- Legion key ring

The American Legion Certificate of Initation also can be purchased through Emblem Sales alone. The item No. is 733.122.

How to conduct a new member initiation is located in the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies at ***legion.org/publications***. Remember to communicate with the new member. The post commander can give a them a welcome call, and introduce them to post officers at their initiation ceremony.

MEMBERSHIP

# Post Excellence Award with V.E.T.S. license plate

To qualify for the American Legion's Post Excellence Award and National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola's V.E.T.S. license plate, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90% renewal rate, and community activity.

The purpose of this award is membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to 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 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**: The post must attain at least 103% of their membership goal. 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.
- **90% Renewal Rate**: The post must renew at least 90% of their members that were on the 2022 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.
- **Certification for the award**: 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 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. The copy 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

MEMBERSHIP

# 100% American Legion Family Ribbon

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola will award his 100% American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by the 2023 100% membership target date. For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and/or any combination of an Auxiliary unit or Sons squadron. Each must achieve 100% membership to qualify for the award.

The department adjutant will transmit information to:

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

Download the 100% Legion Family Ribbon form at ***legion.org/commander/ribbon***.

MEMBERSHIP

# 103% membership award

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola will award his national commander "Be the One" membership incentive pin to any post, district, county, division or department commander, or membership chairman, who achieves 103 percent of their assigned membership goal for 2023.

Download the 103% membership award form at ***legion.org/commander/103percent***.

Dispatch
October 2022 Veterans Strengthening America

P.O. BOX 1055 • INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206

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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

# 2022 Veterans Day Speech

A guideline speech for Veterans Day, Nov. 11, will soon be available at *legion.org/publications* under Media & Communications for posts, districts and departments to use.

MEDIA

# Veterans Day news release example

(Name) American Legion Post #
123 Main St.
Anytown, Any State, ZIP code
Phone number

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Memorial Service and Parade Set For Veterans Day (Day), Nov. 11, 20XX (CITY) (Month date, year) – Two of the key events scheduled for the City of (name) to celebrate Veterans Day are scheduled for (day), Nov. 11.

The events begin with a memorial service at (time, location). The featured speaker will be (name, title). Also included will be proclamations from state officials, music by (unit), and (weather permitting) a flyover by the (unit) of the (state) Air National Guard.

At approximately (time), the annual Veterans Day Parade will kick off, following the traditional downtown parade route starting at (location) Streets and ending at (location). The parade will feature more than (number) units and nearly (number) people including groups from various veterans organizations, several marching bands from area high schools and the (military unit) Band. High School Junior ROTC units and other military and veteran-related groups will also appear. The parade will last approximately (XX) minutes.

The memorial service and parade are sponsored by (name). "(Quote about importance of remembering)," said (full name) commander of American Legion Post XXX in (city).

-###-

Media Contact: (name, cell, phone number; email address)