JAMES W. OXFORD

2019-2020 American Legion National Commander

Greetings American Legionnaires. I want each of you to know that it is my honor and privilege to serve as your National Commander.

Well, it looks as if the summer of 2019 is just about over. I pray that you had a prodigious summer and are now ready for the new Department year.

We were pleased to start the year off with an official visit from our National Commander, James W. “Bill” Oxford. This visit included the west side of the state of Missouri, which comprises 19 different Posts. After our visit and on the way to the Kansas City airport, “Bill” had many suggestions and words of encouragement. I am sincerely grateful to him. I would like to thank the Zone 3 commander, Joe Cochran, Districts 3, 4, 5, & 7 and all the post that we visited for their hospitality during the National Commanders visit.

Good news. Congress passed the Legion Act Bill. The President signed the bill July 30, 2019. This act will allow approximately 6 million Honorably Discharged veterans to join an American Legion Post and have access to programs and benefits. This is an awesome victory for us all. Our goal is to have 100% in our membership. Please contact any veteran that you know and invite them to join the “American Legion Family.” Increasing our membership is our objective. Together we can make a difference in this country through the American Legion. There is power in numbers. Also, it is imperative that each of you pay your membership obligation. District Commanders, if you need assistance, please let me know. The “Kicking Mule” pin for the highest membership percentage can be yours with hard work.

I am always impressed as I visit different Posts and am amazed at how much I learn. Thank you for your service. I pray that we have our BEST SEASON yet and “God Bless America”

HALLIE WILLIAMS
Department Commander of Missouri

The Governor signed the legislation into law. The American Legion’s eligibility criteria immediately changes from seven war eras to two: April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership are changed.

Here are answers to 11 key questions about the new law and what it means for The American Legion.

Question: How does this affect the Sons of The American Legion (SAL)?
Answer: Veterans who were honorably discharged but whose service did not fall into the previous defined war eras may now join the American Legion immediately. To do so, eligible members may sign up at www.legion.org/join.

Question: I am among the veterans who were not allowed to join previously, so why do you want me now?
Answer: The American Legion’s founding fathers believed, “a veteran is a veteran,” an axiom that has held true throughout the organization’s more than century of service. Some veterans were ineligible to join because of the war eras that were defined by Congress. The recent bill passage and president’s signature changed that.

Question: What’s the impact on veterans who previously were not eligible for American Legion membership?
Answer: Veterans who were honorably discharged but whose service did not fall into the previous defined war eras may now join The American Legion immediately. To do so, eligible members may sign up at www.legion.org/join.

Question: How does this affect the Sons of The American Legion (SAL)?
Answer: The American Legion’s eligibility criteria states that veterans must have served during “wartime.” When Congress decides the U.S. is no longer in a state of war, the Legion’s membership eligibility period will close, which would allow approximately 6 million Honorably Discharged veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

Question: How does this affect the eligibility for The American Legion Auxiliary?
Answer: Members that served prior to the American Legion’s eligibility period may be granted eligibility by completing a petition process. This follows the same concept as the SAL, as noted previously. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is currently open to grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of eligible veterans.

Question: How does this affect membership for departments, districts, and posts?
Answer: This change opens up American Legion membership to thousands more veterans who likely live in your communities. They may become members immediately.

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Question: The current membership applications don’t address the eligibility change. How do we process those members?
Answer: New membership materials will be developed and provided as quickly as possible. Until then, it is recommended that prospective members from a previously undocumented war era write “Other Conflicts” in the eligibility date section and send it in to their department with the appropriate dues.

Question: What steps should departments, districts and posts focus on?
Answer: A good first step would be to review all recruiting materials to look for eligibility dates. Information on electronic media (websites, social media channels, etc.) should be changed immediately. It is up to departments to decide on the best way to handle printed materials, which updated ones are being produced.

Question: How does this change the eligibility requirements for The American Legion?
Answer: The only change is that Congress has reduced the number of eligibility periods from seven to two. They are April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941, and continuing. No other restrictions are changed.

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DEPARTMENT HISTORY

Greetings to the Department...first off, I want to thank you for electing me to full term as Department Historian.

As I stated last year, I can’t be at every event the Department Commander may attend. Please send me any photos you take of Commander Williams at any event of your Post and District. Also please send me your photos of activities during Veterans Day, Memorial Day and other public holidays.

If your Post has a Historian and a History program, outstanding! If not, you need to have one. The office of Historian is not just a block to mander at the completion of their term of office than a record of their...mander...limited Historian.

Thank you for electing me to a full term as Depart -

www.legion.org/leg-

Our support of scouting and flag Patrol, and Boys and Girls State.

The American Legion since its establishment has been involved with...canism. It is my hope that this...canism can get a little fuzzy.

The words “to foster and perpetuate a... achieved. Get the insurance you need at a price you can afford. Even if you are over age 65, you can pro tect yourself and your family from today’s soaring premium costs and increasing risks. It's easy. Just choose what you need from the Legionnaire....

Dental Hospital Help T ravel Accident Protection

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Charles W. Goodlin - Legislative Chairman

As we start a new legislative year I ask everyone in The Legion Family to go to The American Legion National Web site. To access www.legion.org/leg-

The American Legion umbrella can get a little fuzzy.

The American Legion since its incorporation and one of the most important assets we have is our American flag from physical desecration.

We accomplish this important civic responsibility through our children’s youth programs, youth education programs, Amer-

We support our scouting and flag etiquette training in our schools, colleges, and communities also is a critical piece of this puzzle.

If you are one of the committe-

I’m glad to have the opportunity to serve as Historian of our Department and I do appreciate any and all support you can give to help me carry out this responsibility.

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

3341 American Avenue – P. O. Box 179 – Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 893-2353 Fax: (573) 893-2980 Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
I am republishing a part of my May Legionnaire column, "Children & Youth," about the Legion's proposed changes to the distribution of this newspaper. We recently received two responses to the survey about the future of the Legionnaire, one of those responding preferred digital distribution, while 62% wanted to continue to receive print editions by mail. We need to hear from many more legionnaires.

ARE YOU READY TO GO DIGITAL?

At the February 17, 2019 Department Executive Committee Meeting the decision was made to publish only 3 editions of the Missouri Legionnaire in 2019 and 2020 fiscal years. One of the reasons the board replaces the March and June issues you are seeing is due to printing. With increases in the cost of postage and printing, the Legionnaire would have been at least $5000 over budget this year with our editionally focused paper copy. Over $12,000 per edition! This program is geared to the 5th grade students and select a winning entry from each District. The four winners of the Missouri Legionnaire. Many legionnaires have indicated that they would rather read the "paper" online than have a physical copy. The online version is available immediately after publication.

For some time, the latest edition of the Missouri Legionnaire has been available on the Department web page: https://www.missouri legion.org/missouri-legionnaire. Many legionnaires have indicated that they would rather read the "paper" online than have a physical copy. The online version is available immediately after publication.

We have two options for implementing a digital distribution of the paper: Opt In to Opt Out. Under the Opt In program regular mail distribution of the Missouri Legionnaire by mail or by e-mail will continue, and a postcard with an Opt Out code will be mailed to each legionnaire who is eligible to join the Legion! Under the Opt Out program, we will still mail a paper copy to any legionnaire who has not requested to receive the Missouri Legionnaire digitally. The exact dates for when the Missouri Legionnaire will be published only in digital format will be communicated by email and the Commander's Column newsletter. Legionnaires will be able to opt out of receiving the Missouri Legionnaire in digital format. There will in all probability be a reduction in the cost of postage and printing, the Legionnaire would have been at least $5000 over budget this year with our editionally focused paper edition.

Results of the Newsletter Competition

Getting the word out to Post members is an important job and actually improves the ability of a Post to successfully pursue and complete the many programs they create and adopt. Many Posts continue to do an amazing job of telling the Legion’s story and publicizing the four pillars that our organization is built upon. The Media and Communications Commission is pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Newsletter competition and Posts who earned Toot our Horn Awards. Winners were first announced during the Department Convention, and the winners were featured in the Post Mailings for June 2019 issues.

There were 21 Posts who earned Toot Our Horns awards for 2019, tying last year’s record. This total includes four Posts who received their first award. Post 14, Post 30, Post 338, and Post 376. Posts receiving their second or subsequent award, and number of years awarded were: Post 131, 10th; Post 133, 7th; Post 208, 8th; Post 230, 5th; Post 237, 2nd; Post 253, 8th; Post 312, 3rd; Post 359, 13th; Post 404, 10th; Post 416, 2nd, Post 445, 2nd; Post 464, 3rd; Post 478, 5th; Post 558, 4th; Post 626, 6th; Post 1111, 2nd; and Post 1214, 5th.

There were nine Posts who submitted their newsletters for competition this year. Although there is only one winner in each of the five categories, the Media and Communications Commission is pleased to publish every one of the Posts submitting their newsletter for competition for an outstanding job. There were no newsletters submitted for two categories, Category II and III. Winners of the annual Newsletter Competition are Daniel-Shorter Post 445, Edgerton in Category I (15-50 members), Malta Bend Memorial Post 558 in Category IV (201-500 members) and Pony Express Post 359, St. Joseph, in Category V (501 members or more). The Secretary/Service Officer’s Post 404 won for the second time in the Electronic Media category.

The awards will be presented to the Commanders of these Posts at the Fall Conference. We hope to see more Posts submit their newsletters for competition next year.

By talking with people about the Legion and encouraging them to join, while working in Sarasota, I talked with a Navy recruiter who now has connected with a Post in Kansas City North. I talked with another recruiter who is now interested in getting into the Legion Riders. Neither one knew that they were eligible for The American Legion! In other words, we have a new eligibility period! An Avila University cafeteria chef is headed to the Department Executive Committee meeting asked! Our message is that anyone who has honorably served at least one day in the Armed Forces or a member of the Legion Riders or currently serving is eligible to join the Legion! Recommendations will be made to qualify for National Commander’s Membership Plan. Get the form on the Missouri Legion website or from your Post Commander or Adjutant. I have my "3 - Follow Me!" in my email in my values & are proud of our Legion organization, won’t you ask the people already connected to the Legion Riders who do not know if they would be interested in joining in supporting local veterans service agencies and helping veterans & supporting youth programs. I challenge everyone to talk to a member & then share your stories with me. Spread the word.

It’s been a real pleasure to participate in the activities of the American Legion for the generations yet to come!

Greetings

Adjutant Lowry has advised me it is time for another article for the paper. There have been a lot of activity in the Legion since my last correspondence. At the National Convention James W. “Bill” Oxford of North Carolina was elected as National Commander I was asked to give our own Rich Heigert’s nominating speech for National Commander and I am thankful for the opportunity to do so. It was then on to some constitutional amendments. First was the changing of the word wife in the Auxiliary’s eligibility part to spouse which means that veteran’s spouse, regardless of gender, is now eligible to become an Auxiliary member in the American Legion Auxiliary. The other change is that the National Commander is no longer elected by the IRs, for the American Legion to maintain non-profit status it’s language must become gender neutral.

There will in all probability be changes in the Department by the word Wars, “other conflicts” will be added if approved at the next National Convention in October. The Legion Act is one of the reasons, but this was going to happen anyway. The decision was directed by the IRS, for the American Legion to maintain non-profit status it’s language must become gender neutral.

As you know the National Commander was in Zone 2 this year and was asked to get the word out to all the Posts that an outstanding job in preparing for the National Convention was done by Commander Oxford. He was highly impressed with one place, the Post in Warrensburg, go way to LaRita. I would also like to thank the Riders who did an outstanding job and Commander Oxford was very impressed with the job you did. I would like to give a special thank you to the two riders who escorted us back to the hotel from the National Convention, with all the road closures and detours in the Kansas City area, I am sure the two Riders would have gotten back to the hotel without their help, thank you gentlemen.

The most important thing about this year’s project is the centennial. These coins are only available in paper copies, if you would wish to continue to receive the Missouri Legionnaire by mail, or if you would wish to receive the Missouri Legionnaire digitally by e-mail or by e-mail and by mail, you may fax it to 573-893-2980, or you may e-mail your preference to services@missouri legion.org.

By talking with people about the Legion and encouraging them to join.

October 2019
Law & Order and the Firefighter/ EMT Awards

Applications due February 7, 2020

Every year, Your Legion Post may be contacted by your Local Fire Department and or Police Departments to sign off on the nomination of an eligible person for the Firefighter/EMT Public Safety Award. All Nomination forms MUST be sent to Kenny Goth, Chairman of Law & Order/ Public Safety Committee at 7450 Ritter Rd., Edgerton, Missouri 65028. If you have any questions call Kenneth Goth @ (660) 885-5395.

Law & Order/Refreshing Coordinator/ EMT Officer who is affiliated with a tax supported entity and resides and serves within the State of Missouri is eligible for these awards. The request that only one (1) Firefighter/EMT & only one(1) Police Officer be involved in an incident, submit details on those involved.

Our Law & Order/Public Safety Committee will select one (1) Firefighter/EMT and one (1) Police Officer recipient for 2020. That person will be invited to the Department Convention to be held on July 11, 2020. They will receive the Award. The Missouri winners will then be nominated for the National Awards of The American Legion through the Missouri and or National Contest he/she will be invited to the National Convention to accept the award.

Before signing off make sure all information and documents is being submitted. All forms can be found on your Department 1 website. Or they should be submitted to: Kenneth Goth, Law & Order/Public Safety Committee, P. O. Box 179, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

No Cost LegionCare Overview

LEGIONCARE NO COST TO YOU ACCIDENTAL DEATH INSURANCE PROTECTION GUARANTEED** TO LEGIONAIRES

As a member of the Legion Family, you’re eligible for up to $5,000.00 in NO COST To You coverage. But your Confirmation is REQUIRED for activation.

$5,000.00 ACCIDENTAL DEATH PROTECTION MEMBER-ONLY BENEFIT:

Your beneficiary will receive $5,000.00 if you suffer a fatal covered accident while you are traveling to or from or participating in any covered event conducted for Legion business, or $1,000.00 for all other fatal covered accidents.

Your Department of The American Legion endorses this coverage to stand by your family with up to $1,000.00 cash benefits paid directly to your beneficiary, if you suffer a fatal covered accident at home, on the job, in your car, on vacation, while traveling, wherever you are.

For more information on this benefit please visit the LegionCare Insurance Trust website at www.thelilt.com

70 Years of Continuous Membership

At 96 years young Legionnaire Ralph Musmon a charter member of Daniel-Shafer Post 445 in Edgerton, MO proudly holds his 70 years of continuous membership certificate he received two years ago.
Greetings Riders!

With the 100th Anniversary activities and Convention behind us, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all! The American Legion Riders of Missouri for the outstanding things that you collectively and individually do for veterans, The American Legion Family, and the great state of Missouri! Thank you also for the opportunity to represent you as the Director for another year. I’d like to congratulate our reelected officers; Brian (Assistant Director) and Christine (Finance Officer) Sapp; Bob (Judge Advocate/Ride Captain) and Sherry (Secretary) Norris; and Cheryl Wright (Webmaster). I’d also like to welcome our two new officers Dan Lavoisette (Sergeant at Arms), and Mike Osborne (Chaplain).

A great big thanks goes out to Big Brian Keller, Missouri’s Rider of the Year and Ride Captain for the 2019 MO Legacy Ride. The Missouri Legacy Ride spotlighted not only The American Legion Legacy Fund, but the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion as well. The ride was instrumental in collecting and raising funds that supported the Departments donation of over $86,000. Thanks again to all involved.

Additionally this past year you have accumulated over 80,000 volunteer hours, over 600,000 miles riding for programs of The American Legion, and donated over $150,000.00 in support of Community State and Nation. Great job Riders!

Our Ride Captain for 2020, Bob Norris, has already begun planning and coordinating next year’s Missouri Legacy Ride. Please support him if he calls on your Post.

We have gained six new Chapters this year: Chapters 13 (Joplin), 94 (Troy), 152 (Ashland), 162 (Richland), and 400 (Fenwick). 2019 has been an outstanding year for growth! We have gained six new Chapters this year: Chapters 13 (Joplin), 94 (Troy), 152 (Ashland), 162 (Richland), and 400 (Fenwick).

I would like for all of you to take this opportunity to place additional emphasis on membership. Please renew early. Call on Chapter members who may be absent from your meeting or events. Give them several ways to get the Chapter dues to you. Remind your American Legion and Auxiliary members that they can renew on line. Keep them in the family!

Spread the word about the Legion Act, and the expanded eligibility dates for membership in the largest Veterans Support Organization in the world! Change out the membership application you carry in your vest to the new ones. Spread them around, and hopefully get some back.

When I speak with the Directors and leadership of the Chapters around the state, I often hear that they are learning their Chapter process and reporting requirements from “scratch.” I urge the Chapter leaders to develop some form of continuity that may be passed on to new leaders in your Chapters. A “Pass-on-Book,” if you will. And go out and work for your Post. Call on Chapter members who may be absent from your meeting or events. Give them several ways to get the Chapter dues to you. Remind your American Legion and Auxiliary members that they can renew on line. Keep them in the family!

The American Legion wants to ensure higher education is a possibility for children whose parents lost their lives while serving our country. Beginning with the 2017 award year, The American Legion expanded the scholarship to include children of VA-rated, post-9/11 veterans with a combined disability rating of 50 percent or higher. The American Legion and the Legion Riders offer support through the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship is a needs-based scholarship designed to fulfill a financial gap remaining after all federal and state educational grants/scholarships available to an eligible applicant have been utilized.

WHO
Children of U.S. military members who died while on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.
Children of post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the Department of Veterans Affairs also qualify.

WHAT
Each needs-based scholarship provides up to $20,000 in aid for undergraduate or post-graduate college. Recipients may reapply for additional annual awards up to six times.

I look forward to working the Legion Family, TAL Commander Hallie Williams, SAL Commander Justine Marsden and ALR Director Don (G-Man) Gerspach this year and meeting you as we travel the state.

Janice Hartley
Grand Chef de Gare
Grande du Missouri

Greetings, Legionnaires and Voitures:
Summer has gone, many of you are back to work – either an actual job or volunteering with your many organizations. A great honor has been bestowed on me as your Grand Chef de Gare for the forthcoming year. It is a great honor to serve you.

As a veteran with almost three decades of service, covering every era from Vietnam to the Gulf Wars, I am proud of how far The American Legion and this Grand has come in recognizing women veterans. It is with honor that I serve as your first female Grand Chef de Gare. I just hope that with guidance of the Chefs de Gare Passe’, I can make you proud.

The months of July, August and September have gone by so fast. Jim and I just returned from the 100th Promenade Nationale held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Several members from Missouri were there. I missed some who normally come to Nationale, but I knew The American Legion National Commander was visiting during the same time frame.

Both of our organizations are in a new fiscal year so let’s look at how we are doing in membership. Let’s start working on retaining our current members and recruiting new ones. I’ve already started. The Legion now has new membership eligibility. So go out and ask – all they can say is “no.” The same applies to the 40&8 – ask, ask, ask!

Thanks for all you do for Grande du Missouri, the Department of Missouri American Legion, SAL, and the Auxiliary.

God bless you and God bless America. Pray for all our servicemen and women, keep them safe.

Janice Hartley
Grand Chef de Gare
Grande du Missouri

Greetings Riders!

Missouri Legionnaire PAGE 5
National Commander Bill Oxford visits the Department of Missouri (Zone 2)
Sept 14–18, 2019
orations had to be original and prepared oration about some phase in the room followed as the eye in the room followed as the can be loud and this was never also were briefed as to their duties and recognized professionals were also to the contestants, seven highly Finals Oratorical Contest. Unknown they found themselves sequestered in honor and the center of attention at the (State Semi-finals), each student then their county competition and studies teachers teaching the United scholarship awards that can be used at the ability to think and speak clearly, teaches important leadership qualities, and appears in the Advisory List of Contest exists to develop deeper of the national contest completed. The Elizabeth Cardoza, a junior from departmental award of $1,600.00 and a Bronze medal was received a scholarship, through the high school competition, then their county competition and moved to their District and State level competitions. Each received medals and in some cases county and district scholarships. Elizabeth Gertz competed in the national contest completed. Additional $3,000 scholarship. February 16th soon became a ‘dream come true’ for all three contestants. United States department chaplains, so they found themselves the guests of honor and the center of attention at the state contest held in Jefferson City at the 2019 Spring Conference. This happened when each of them won their high school competition, then their county competition and moved to their District and State level competitions. Each received medals and in some cases county and district scholarships. Elizabeth Gertz competed in the national contest completed. Additional $3,000 scholarship. Family for what you do to help our Legion Baseball or the oratorical contest. So, four different speech/debate teacher is in a position in conjunction with what the social studies teachers teaching the United departmental award of $1,600.00 and a Bronze medal was ceremony, the 2020 National Oratorical Contest. Unknown to the contestants, seven highly recognized professionals were also here listening and receiving a briefing as to their duties as oratorical judges for the contest before the event began. In turn, each contestant presented a prepared oration about some phase of the Constitution of the United States, emphasizing the duties and obligations of a citizen to the United States government. The preparation of these orations had to be original and be between 8 and 10 minutes in length. In addition, each contestant was required to speak for 3 to 5 minutes on a randomly selected amendment or article of the United States Constitution. Each of the four contestants presented prepared orations, said Judge Benton, Chair of Department Oratorical Commission. Mattis Gertz, a junior at Smithton High School in Sedalia, Missouri, entered the national oratorical competition with her oration titled “The United States Department Chaplain The Perfect Recipe”. Her oration earned her a $2,000 scholarship and a Gold Medal of Honor for her oration in the national contest in Indianapolis, Indiana in April. There, she arrived to the first day of competition for a junior – and was awarded an additional $3,300 scholarship. Recognizing that this year and a $1,800 scholarship for second place was Andy Moore, a junior from Clark County High School in Kahoka, Mo. A scholarship of $1,600.00 and a Bronze medal was presented to the oratorical chair. Noting that the 2020 National Oratorical Contest was a very hard job”, said Judge Benton. Gertz competed in the national contest with students from Covington, Kentucky, who won their Legion state department level competitions, formed certificates, and scholarships of $1,800.00 and $1,400.00. Each contestant did not make the final round of competition received a scholarship of $1,800.00 and the second level, of $1,500.00 for each level of the national contest completed. The American Legion prizes scholarships to state winners and their chaplain at the national contest. The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. The contestant meets the guidelines established by the Department of State High School Activities Association and appears in the Advisory List of Contestant and Activity Committee of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The legion contest is a partner with the National Speech and Debate Association, the honor society for high school students. This 81 year old program provides a festival with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities and traditions of American citizenship. The American Legion High School Oratorical Contest presents a good and productive citizen of our great nation. This would be very valuable and productive if every high school student were to participate in this wonderful and valuable program.
AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

The American Legion finished with 113 teams, same as 2018, so we held steady for the first time in several years. Because we had the most teams registered in our Region, we sent not only our State Champion (Sedalia Post 642) to the Mid-South Regional Tournament, but our runner up (Festus Post 253) went also. Festus won the Tournament and advanced to the World Series in Shelby, NC, the first team from Missouri to do so in ten years. The ALWS was won by Idaho Falls, Idaho.

We had no scholarship winner this year. There were no applications submitted. This is unfortunate because funds are available both from National and Department. All coaches and Posts should encourage submission of deserving players names. Information about scholarship eligibility and applications can be found at www.missourialamericanlegionbaseball.com, click on “Resources”.

The Baseball Commission will meet during Fall Conference at 12:00 PM on Friday October 18 in the Capital Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City. Anyone having an interest in the program or who has ideas/recommendations, please stop by and share. It is an open meeting. All are invited.

Any team interested in hosting the A State, AA State, or a AAA Zone Tournament in 2020 should submit a request, along with a check for $300 made payable to American Legion Department of Missouri Baseball to: Gary Stone, 3308 S. Arrowhead Drive, Independence, MO 64057. Requests are due by February 1, 2020. Checks from those not selected will be returned after the Baseball Commission selects Tournament sites.

2019 Department State Champions

AAA (15 and under) – Jackson Post 158

AA (17 and under) – Scott County Post 389

Information about American Legion Baseball can be found on our website, www.missourialamericanlegionbaseball.com, or the National site, www.legion.org/baseball. The National site is routinely updated with videos and historical facts that you might find interesting. I encourage all to check it out. I believe you will enjoy the content.

Thanks to all for your continued support.

Gary Stone
Department of Missouri Baseball Chairman

American Legion Basic Training

The American Legion’s official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation’s largest veterans service organization is now available online.

This pillar of American Legion service is filled with respect for the nation that those in the military have sworn to defend and build a culture of training and professional development that will grow the next generation of leaders. We need competent and confident legionnaires who will take our department to the next level as we enter the second century of our existence, and we can only do that by commitment to training.

I am going to work with our Dept. Adjutant and Dept. Commander to see if we can schedule training classes at the Annual Convention. A list of topics will be provided in advance but if you know of a topic you would like us to provide training on, please email me at mandlclark@americanlegion.org. We have an incredibly capable and knowledgeable group of officers and Post members that we can call upon to provide whatever training you need. In the meantime, we are standing by to provide training at your Posts and Districts so if you want training, we are only a phone call or email away.

If like me, you are tired of seeing the same faces and the same hands raising every time election comes around, join me in developing new leaders through training and build a culture of intergenerational experience needed. A good leader will make it a priority to develop, mentor, and educate their replacement. If we all accept this challenge and use the resources available to us, we can ensure a future beyond our current leadership. Won’t you join me in changing our culture?

Post Excellence Award

The American Legion’s Post Excellence Award has added new criteria to the evaluation for 2019. To receive this award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attendance at National meetings, 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, and the post will need to show that they have had members already active in these areas and will qualify without extra effort. Others, however, will need to increase their efforts in order to achieve this setting.

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

Membership: Post must attain at least 103 percent 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 is simple for a post to submit its CPR in a timely manner.

90% Renewal Rate: The post must renew at least 90 percent of their members that were on the 2019 roll.

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 the regional commander for certification. The regional commander will verify the post name, phone number, address and commander’s name. If possible, accomplish the last two criteria with copies of the pre-printed forms submitted. The regional commander will send 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. 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

For more information or to take the course go to: www.legion.org/alei
VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION UPDATE: NATIONAL, DEPARTMENT & GENERAL NEWS

Veterns regularly tell me of a friend that they knew in service, who has never applied for any VA benefits. The friend is just finding out that they are eligible for disability compensation benefits related to Vietnam Agent Orange exposure. This veteran had never joined a service organization. They are not enenlled in VA health Care. They don’t go online. They have stayed isolated from the veteran community. Consequently, they have missed out on years of benefits. It is profoundly sad to me.

Please don’t let this happen to your veteran friends. Encourage them to access their VA Benefits. Sign up for VA Health Care. Start learning about VA Disability Compensation. Join Veterans Organizations. Share your knowledge and experience... Share the information as widely as you can. Leave brochures behind in your doctor’s waiting room, on the Grocery Store bulletin board and in the County Journals, Church Newsletters and so on. Contact me for brochures on veteran benefit related topics:


VA is NOT one Thing. Go to our National webpage and get publications directly from National. https://www.legion.org/publications#veterans_affairs_&_rehabilitation

Participate in the VA Registries and Registry Exams. VA has a Burn Pit and Airborne Hazards Registry, Agent Orange Registry and the Million Veteran Program. Please sign up to be a VA Volunteer at your closest VA Medical Center. Even if you only volunteer on special occasions, it is another way to be connected. Volunteers are a price-less asset to the Nation’s Veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Check out the VA website at https://www.volunteer.va.gov/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 30, 2018

VA amends regulations on VA pension and other needs-based programs

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently amended its regulations governing entitlements to VA pension and Parents’ Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, which are need-based programs.

“The amended regulations bring consistency to the pension process and ensure benefits are available for Veterans and survivors with financial need,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “They will help maintain the integrity of and provide clarity to our needs-based pension program.”

VA’s pension program provides monthly benefit payments to eligible wartime Veterans and their survivors with financial need.

The pension regulations, which were updated Oct. 18, cover the following:

- Establish a clear net-worth limit for income and assets for Veterans to qualify for pension.
- Establish a 36-month look-back period to review asset transfers at less than fair market value that reduce net worth and create pension entitlement.
- Establish up to a five-year penalty period to be calculated based on the portion of the covered assets that would have made net worth excessive, and
- Updates medical expense definitions for consistency with VA internal guidelines.

The changes are intended to ensure VA only pays benefits to those Veterans with a genuine need.

For more information on VA’s pension program, visit www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/###

PENSION EXAMPLE:

Live Pension is a Benefit based on financial NEED and the Veteran’s qualifying service. Each year Congress sets the income limit for Pension. These income limits are at three levels. The levels are as follows: Regular, Housebound and Aid & Attendance. Your level of pension is determined by medical evidence from your doctor.

In order for VA to pay a Veteran’s Live Pension his/her income must fall below the limit level. Pension income limits are relatively low and net worth is an issue. Net worth exceeds $127,061 within 36 month look-back period may disqualify a veteran, but let VA make that decision. For example, the primary residence is not counted as net worth. As of October 18, 2018 VA has a three-year look-back period to review asset transfers.

Maximum Annual Pension Rates (MAPRs) for 2019 are as follows:

- Single Veteran -
  - Level: Regular
  - Per month: $1,272.91
  - Per year: $15,275.00

- Regular
  - Per month: $1,387.33
  - Per year: $1,664.00

- Aid & Attendance
  - Per month: $1,881.41
  - Per year: $22,577.00

- Maried Veteran -
  - Level: Regular
  - Per month: $1,477.00
  - Per year: $17,724.00

- Housebound
  - Per month: $1,727.58
  - Per year: $20,731.00

- Aid & Attendance
  - Per month: $2,230.50
  - Per year: $26,766.00

Paid, “out of pocket” medical expenses that exceed 5% of the VA income limit ($676/year for single or $886 for married) can be counted toward reducing your income below the limit set each year by Congress (MAPRs). Medical expenses are what you’ve actually paid “out of pocket” for medical insurance premiums, doctor visit co-pays, prescription drug coverage and the like, not the amount you were billed or what you still owe.

Review the following example: The married veteran’s income from all sources is $2300.00 per month. Additionally, this vet doctor writes a statement indicating s/he is in need of Aid & Attendance and gives supporting reasons.

The couple’s combined recurring medical expenses are:

- $268.00 per month for Medicare Part B, X 2 (134.00 X 2 = 268.00)
- $79.00 per month for supplemental medical and drug coverage, like AARP or Blue Cross
- $200.00 per month for prescriptions and supplies
- $2,500.00 per month for home assistance with bathing and dressing, by Doctor’s order

- $3,227.00 per month gross, subtract the VA 5% deduction, leaves $3,153.16 per month

The appropriate remaining income after medical expenses is $500 per month ($3,227.00 - $3,153.16 = $853.16) which is $0). To figure the pension amount, take the Pension with Aid & Attendance maximum limit per month at $2230.50 less his/her approximate remaining monthly income of $50 per month, (remember, s/he doesn’t get both VA pension and other income)!

In this case the vet is 100% below VA’s limit each month. The live pension will be approximately $2230.50 per month.

Survivors’ Pension

In order for VA to pay a widow pay death pension, her or his income must fall below the limit for her level. Pension income limits are very low and net worth is an issue. Net worth in excess of $127,061 per year within 36 month look-back period may disqualify a widow, but let VA make that decision. The income limits for 2019 are as follows:

- Level: Regular
  - Per month: $756.50
  - Per year: $9,078.00

- Housebound
  - Per month: $924.58
  - Per year: $11,095.00

- Aid & Attendance
  - Per month: $1,209.08
  - Per year: $14,509.00

Medical expenses that exceed 5% of the income limit ($453/year for regular pension) can be counted toward reducing your income below the limit set by Congress. Medical expenses are what you’ve actually paid “out of pocket” for medical insurance premiums, doctor visit co-pays, prescription drug coverage and the like, not the amount you were billed or what you still owe.

Don’t wait to let VA know you will be making a claim for benefits. It can take you more than a few days to get everything in order in order to file your VA claim. However, because the date from which you will receive benefits is the date the VA receives a claims form, it is highly recommended if at all possible, that you initiate a claim process with the “Intent to File” by one of three ways: 1) Form 21-0966, 2) Phone 1-800-827-1000 or 3) On-Line (https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/homepage). VA will then send you a letter giving you a year to complete the claim. Then contact an accredited representative, such as a service officer, who works for a National or State veterans service organization (VSO) and have the VSO help you file the claim forms.

The Department of Illinois will host its 60th Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage and the 14th Annual Lincoln Playwrights Membership Challenge February 11-12, 2020 in Springfield, IL.

The Award will include: A possible, shared transportation from The Department Headquarters in Jefferson City and a location to be decided later, Room accommodations the night of the 13th, Breakfast and Luncheon on the 12th... Plus the following Lincoln Pilgrimage Membership Challenge Prize: a lightweight embroidered jacket, a paid pass thru the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, a Lincoln pin, and a membership reception.

This Award is for the Post Commander with the highest percentage of their membership goal to the 60th Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage Membership Challenge. Each year Congress sets the income limit for Pension. These income limits are at three levels. The levels are as follows: Regular, Housebound and Aid & Attendance. Your level of pension is determined by medical evidence from your doctor.

The Department of Missouri will award Five (5) Post Commanders a two (2) day trip to the 85th Anniversary Lincoln Day Pilgrimage to President Lincoln’s Tomb, held in Springfield, Illinois on February 11 & 12, 2020.

The Award will include: If possible, shared transportation from The Department Headquarters in Jefferson City and a location to be decided later, Room accommodations the night of the 13th, Breakfast and Luncheon on the 12th... Plus the following Lincoln Pilgrimage Membership Challenge Prize: a lightweight embroidered jacket, a paid pass thru the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, a Lincoln pin, and a membership reception.

This Award is for the Post Commander with the highest percentage of their membership goal to the 85th Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage Membership Challenge (February 11-12, 2020).
Delegates from the Department of Missouri attended the 101st Convention Celebration of The American Legion in Indianapolis, IN. August 22 - August 29, 2019. Past Department Commander Kerry Boardman served as the Delegation Chairman and Department Adjutant Lowry Finley-Jackson serving as the Delegation Secretary. Other delegates in attendance included NECman Kenneth Goth, ALT NECman Thomas Goodin, Department Commander Hallie Williams, Sr. Vice Commander Gary Grigsby, Zone Commanders Joe Cochran, Bob Maddox and Rose Noonan; Department Historian Jerome Goolsby, Department Sgt-At-Arms Darlene Coats, Department Asst-Sgt-At-Arms Albert Jackson, Past Department Commanders - Joel Hauck, David Voyles, Marvin Harper, Richard Heigert, Charlie Goodin, Dennis Woelpje, Elizabeth Gonzales and Cary Kellett; District Commanders Marilyn Hirsch, Douglas Millison and Lloyd Miller; Legionnaires - Von Abbott, Terry Beasley, Glenn Burnaman, Shane Cowgill, Shanna Detzler-Cox, John Gonzales, Larry Griffin, Troy Henderson, Melanie Klingeman, Michael Klingeman, Chandra Kottwitz, Susan Linan, Gary Maugh, Harold Naugle, George Shepherd, Sheryl Smith, Victoria Vernau, Wayne Wallingford, William Linnartz, Joe Teed. Guest from the Department of Missouri in attendance included: Robin Boardman, Gracie Bouws, Michelle Breesee, Ruth Voyles, Suzy Wallingford, Anita Grigsby and Julie Phelps. Post 230 and Post 642 participated in the Color Guard Competition. The American Legion Band of Greater Kansas City performs in The American Legion's Band Contest. The National Commanders Banquet featured the singing group The Fab Four (The Ultimate Beatles Tribute Band) James William “Bill” Oxford from the Department of North Carolina was elected National Commander. Missouri’s own Richard Heigert was elected National Vice Commander.