



THE AMERICAN LEGION

# WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



Veterans helping veterans,  
families and communities

# WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



## America's largest supporter of veterans

The American Legion is the nation's largest and most powerful organization of U.S. wartime veterans and their families. Today, it counts 2.2 million members who operate through more than 13,000 posts across the United States and beyond.

Since its inception by Congress in 1919, The American Legion has delivered substantial improvements for veterans, families and communities. The Legion ushered in the modern VA. The Legion drafted and drove home passage of the GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Legion has brought into existence dozens of health-care benefits for veterans and programs designed to provide civilian careers after discharge.

The Legion works every day on behalf of U.S. servicemen and women. It is recognized as a leader in transition assistance from military to civilian life, providing resources for careers, education, child care and more.

The Legion is active every day. Examples include:

- **VA volunteers:** Millions of community service hours are logged by VA-trained volunteers, and more than \$1.5 million is raised annually to assist VA hospitals in local communities.
- **American Legion Baseball:** America's pastime is played out on fields each summer, providing healthy, wholesome activity for young people, some of whom go on to play Major League Baseball.
- **Charities:** The Legion's fundraising programs collect donations and turn them into grants for disaster victims, sports adaptive therapy equipment for wounded servicemembers and scholarships for children of military members who died since 9/11.

For those looking to make an impact in local communities, The American Legion has endless opportunities. The Legion's services can be classified under the organization's four pillars: **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; National Security; Americanism; and Children & Youth.**

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## PILLAR I: VETERANS

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation pillar is composed of programs, services and advocacy efforts that improve the lives of those who served, along with their families and dependents.

The Legion lobbies Congress for a well-funded, appropriately staffed VA that can handle benefits claims efficiently, quickly and accurately. Locally, Legion volunteers work individually with veterans to help them navigate the complicated benefits application process.

As the VA backlog continues, The American Legion is leading a national conversation about accountability to veterans and reforms aimed at veterans receiving timely appointments and the benefits they earned through their service.

The Legion conducts System Worth Saving visits to VA centers across the country. These monthly visits include a thorough assessment of the facility, and discussions with patients and staff at VA. This information is then compiled and published in a report.

The American Legion also works one-on-one with veterans to ensure they receive proper benefits. Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, free of charge, to veterans and their families.

The majority of service officer work involves claims for VA disability benefits, but these compassionate professionals also provide information, referrals and resources on education, employment and business, death benefits and other topics. [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers)

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The American Legion offers a free smartphone app that helps service officers and veterans get through the VA claims process. Go to [www.legion.org/mobileapps](http://www.legion.org/mobileapps)*

# WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

## EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

The American Legion conducts, promotes and supports hundreds of veteran career events nationwide each year. Thousands of veterans land jobs because of these efforts. Meanwhile, the Legion helps place hundreds of other veterans in job-training programs every year. Working veteran-to-veteran with The American Legion Small Business Task Force, along with the Small Business Administration, Department of Labor, VA and corporate associates, the Legion helps veterans understand the federal contracting process and offers personal guidance for career-seeking veterans. [www.legion.org/careers](http://www.legion.org/careers)

## VETERANS EDUCATION AND THE GI BILL

The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of the modern Post-9/11 GI Bill, providing veterans with education benefits that better meet today's needs. Following its passage, the Legion has continued to fight for even more improvements to the benefit, making it more helpful to National Guardsmen, reservists and those pursuing online education. [www.legion.org/education](http://www.legion.org/education)

## COMBATING THE CLAIMS BACKLOG

VA and The American Legion are working side by side to reverse a massive backlog of unresolved benefits claims. Through its Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) initiative, the Legion travels the nation to pinpoint problems and identify best practices in VA claims management. [www.legion.org/veteransbenefits](http://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits)

## VA VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Legionnaires collectively donate around 1 million hours of service a year at veterans health-care facilities, working through the VA Volunteer Services program. These volunteer hours save the federal government at least \$18.5 million a year and connect

Legionnaires with veteran patients and their families.  
[www.legion.org/volunteers](http://www.legion.org/volunteers)

## **BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS**

For veterans and families disputing benefits decisions by VA, The American Legion has staff representatives in Washington, D.C., who can help with the appeals process or strengthen a case, free of charge to veterans.

## **DISCHARGE REVIEW**

The American Legion offers free assistance to those applying to their service branches for corrections to military records and discharge statuses. Legion experts help veterans with claims for Combat Related Special Compensation and with the procurement of accurate records. [Email var@legion.org](mailto:var@legion.org)

## **HELP FOR HOMELESS VETERANS**

At the local, state and national levels, The American Legion provides support for homeless veterans and programs. Legion posts throughout the country build shelters or provide financial and volunteer support. At the national level, the Legion works with VA to raise awareness and allocate funds to help reverse the problem. [www.legion.org/homeless](http://www.legion.org/homeless)

## **FINAL RESPECTS**

The American Legion fulfills a sacred duty by honoring the memories of U.S. military veterans after their deaths. Legion honor guards salute their fallen comrades at funeral services throughout the country every day. Legion Riders provide motorcycle escorts and security at services for fallen troops and veterans. The Legion also works closely with the National Cemetery Administration, Arlington National Cemetery and the American Battle Monuments Commission to ensure their respect and honor are bestowed upon fallen servicemembers.



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American Legion Photo



## PILLAR II: NATIONAL SECURITY

The American Legion's positions on national defense, homeland security, border control and military support are all part of the long-held Legion value that the key to peace and world stability is a strong, well-resourced defense.

In order to protect America, troops and their families must have support. The American Legion plays a vital role in supporting the men and women who risk their lives to protect our freedoms.

American Legion posts throughout the nation adopt military units, deliver care packages, provide emotional support for families of deployed servicemembers and welcome the troops home.

Specific examples of their efforts include arranging transportation to reunite soldiers with their families for the holidays and organizing fundraisers to buy phone cards for use in combat zones.

Such assistance doesn't end when servicemembers return home.

At U.S. military installations across the country – including Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland, Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, and Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash. – Legion staff members help troops work through the medical discharge process and provide representation before medical examination boards to reconcile disability ratings.

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

*In a given year, American Legion posts collect more than 80,000 pints of blood through donation drives.*

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## OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

This program provides wounded servicemembers with rehabilitation equipment for physical therapy and entertainment in the form of special clothing, electronics, sports equipment, music and more. One hundred percent of donations to OCW go toward gifts for injured servicemen and women. [www.legion.org/ocw](http://www.legion.org/ocw)

## MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

The Legion's support of the U.S. military – from adequate funding for weapons systems to reasonable child-care services for deployed troops – is respected in the Pentagon, at the White House and on Capitol Hill.

## SUPPPORT FOR TRICARE

The U.S. military's health-care system and medical insurance program frequently face challenges in Washington. The American Legion persistently testifies on the need to keep TRICARE and TRICARE For Life viable and affordable benefits of military service.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The American Legion works with the Department of Homeland Security at the national, state and local levels to prepare for natural disasters. In many communities, American Legion posts serve as civil-defense shelters and havens of relief in the event of catastrophe or attack on U.S. soil. The Legion and DHS collaborate to help posts prepare their communities. [www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/disaster\\_07.pdf](http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/disaster_07.pdf)

## BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The American Legion opposes illegal immigration and amnesty for those who came to the United States illegally. The Legion advocates for strict border and port security as a defense against invasion or attack by foreign enemies, illegal drug trafficking and adverse economic impact. The Legion, however, strongly supports legal naturalization. Brochures on immigration and citizenship are available at [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)

## **NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND**

The National Emergency Fund has provided more than \$8 million in direct financial assistance to American Legion Family members and posts affected by natural disasters in recent years. The donations have enabled Legion Family members to rebuild their homes and their lives. [www.legion.org/NEF](http://www.legion.org/NEF)

## **BLUE STAR BANNERS**

The American Legion's Blue Star Banner was resurrected after 9/11 to acknowledge U.S. families with loved ones serving in the Armed Forces during wartime. American Legion Blue Star Salutes and other post-sponsored events to distribute the banners are effective expressions of homefront support for military families. [www.legion.org/troops/bluestar](http://www.legion.org/troops/bluestar)

## **BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM**

The American Legion conducts state competitions throughout the country for posts that donate blood or host blood drives. [www.legion.org/security/blood](http://www.legion.org/security/blood)

## **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The American Legion maintains a strong working relationship with the State Department to promote peace, human rights and trade on a global scale. The Legion urges the president and Congress to continue pursuing the "smart power" strategy of using military and economic strength in tandem with foreign aid and human-rights negotiations to fulfill U.S. foreign policy.

## **FULL ACCOUNTING OF POW/MIAs**

The American Legion maintains unwavering support for the full accounting of all U.S. military personnel taken as prisoners of war, missing or killed in action on foreign soil. Official meetings of the Legion start with a prayer to honor our nation's POWs. POW/MIA flags, patches and pins are displayed at Legion events to demonstrate the organization's eternal vigilance. [www.legion.org/powmia](http://www.legion.org/powmia)

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## PILLAR III: AMERICANISM

For those looking to make differences in their local communities, The American Legion is a great place to start. From Legion Baseball to Boys State/Boys Nation to Legion Riders, there are plenty of opportunities to make your mark.

Take, for example, the experience of Pat Unger, commander of Tyler Cates American Legion Post 281 in Mount Juliet, Tenn. Unger's vision of creating a Legion Baseball team came true in 2012.

Post 281 Legionnaires provided support by supplying uniforms, attending games, serving refreshments and meeting players' transportation needs to and from games.

"The enthusiasm and camaraderie among the Legion members and players has been one of the most rewarding experiences for everyone," Unger says. "The experience of going to a baseball game and knowing that The American Legion is a driving force behind the teams is both gratifying and satisfying.

"American Legion Baseball is truly a rewarding and fun endeavor for any American Legion post to be involved with."

Legion posts and volunteers like Unger coordinate each season, culminating with the Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., watched by millions on ESPN3.

More than 100,000 young athletes compete for nearly 5,000 American Legion Baseball teams each year. Some of these baseball players go on to play professionally, including more than 60 who have been enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Major League stars Madison Bumgarner, Jacob deGrom, Albert Pujols, Alex Gordon and Justin Verlander all played American Legion Baseball.*

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## BOYS STATE/BOYS NATION

Young men throughout the country learn firsthand how government works during American Legion Boys State and American Legion Boys Nation. From each Boys State program, two delegates are selected to attend Boys Nation in Washington, D.C., where they form a mock federal Senate and meet with top officials in the nation's capital. [www.legion.org/boysnation](http://www.legion.org/boysnation)

## JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

American Legion youth air-rifle teams compete throughout the country for a possible berth in the National Junior Shooting Sports championships at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., each year. [www.legion.org/shooting](http://www.legion.org/shooting)

## ORATORICAL COMPETITION

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program gives thousands of young people the opportunity to hone their speaking skills and learn about the U.S. Constitution. Competitions at the local and state levels lead up to the National American Legion High School Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis, where top finishers are awarded more than \$138,000 in scholarships. [www.legion.org/oratorical](http://www.legion.org/oratorical)

## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

American Legion posts nationwide sponsor more than 2,500 Scouting units and provide thousands of dollars in scholarships. The Legion offers a national scholarship for Eagle Scout of the Year, and the Square Knot Award for Legionnaires who work for the Scouting programs in their communities. [www.legion.org/scouting](http://www.legion.org/scouting)

## EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

At the national, state and local levels, The American Legion provides access to dozens of scholarships and education programs. For more information about Legion-affiliated scholarships and application materials, visit [www.legion.org/scholarships](http://www.legion.org/scholarships)



## LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Opportunities to attend college should not be out of reach for children left behind because a parent died on active duty. This is why The American Legion established The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which provides funds for the children of military personnel who lost their lives on duty on or after 9/11.

[www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy](http://www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy)

## LEGION RIDERS

The Legion Riders, with more than 1,500 chapters, have helped raise more than \$10 million for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. The Riders also perform a number of services for Legion-supported causes and provide support at military funerals. [www.legion.org/riders](http://www.legion.org/riders)

## U.S. FLAG PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

The American Legion is the nation's leading supporter of a constitutional amendment to protect the U.S. flag from desecration. Since a 5-4 Supreme Court decision in 1989 defined flag burning as free speech, The American Legion has lobbied alongside members of Congress, the Citizens Flag Alliance and the majority of the American people to return to the states the right to enact flag-protection laws. The Legion is also the nation's foremost authority on the proper disposal of unserviceable U.S. flags. [www.legion.org/flag](http://www.legion.org/flag)

## ROTC

The American Legion is actively involved in the support, organization and coordination of high school Junior ROTC and college ROTC programs throughout the country. [www.legion.org/rotc](http://www.legion.org/rotc)

## VOTER PARTICIPATION

American Legion posts serve as polling places, political debate venues and forums during campaigns. The Legion is a nonpartisan organization but takes an active role in the political process. [www.legion.org/vote](http://www.legion.org/vote)

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## PILLAR IV: CHILDREN & YOUTH

The American Legion's Children & Youth pillar is guided by three main objectives: strengthen the family unit, support organizations that help children in need, and provide communities with well-rounded programs to provide hope and opportunity for young people facing difficult challenges.

One program within this pillar is Temporary Financial Assistance. This program provides funds to veterans and military servicemembers' families who are struggling and have minor children at home.

For example, when health problems forced a Vietnam War veteran and his wife to quit their jobs, they still had to care for their five children at home. A local American Legion post in Washington state raised funds to help out and provided money through Temporary Financial Assistance.

After a fire at an apartment complex in New Hampshire left the families of five active-duty servicemembers homeless, The American Legion stepped in with \$500 in TFA funds for each family.

The American Legion provides temporary cash grants to hundreds of families in need each year. Posts make requests for funds from the TFA program, which annually distributes more than \$500,000 to help families.

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

*In 2015, the Legion's Child Welfare Foundation awarded \$640,395 to 24 nonprofit groups who care for the well-being of American youth.*

# WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

## FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Established during Operation Desert Storm, this program connects American Legion members with families struggling at home when loved ones are called to military duty. The program takes many shapes. Legion volunteers provide child-care services, yard work, car repairs or other forms of personal help. A dedicated hotline – **800-504-4098** - is available for families looking for assistance. [www.legion.org/fsn](http://www.legion.org/fsn)

## CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION

Nonprofit organizations that reach out to help young people in need are supported through American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants. The foundation provides grants to enhance communications for groups that tackle problems ranging from childhood neglect to substance abuse. [www.legion.org/cwf](http://www.legion.org/cwf)

## SOCIAL ISSUES

The American Legion opposes attempts to weaken U.S. laws governing the production and distribution of pornographic materials and takes a zero-tolerance stance on sexual exploitation of children. The Legion also works with local programs, law-enforcement officials and schools to prevent substance abuse among young people in their communities. Other issues of Legion concern include Halloween safety, suicide prevention, support for children of deployed troops, and control over excessive use of violence in the entertainment media.

# THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



- **The Sons of The American Legion:** Founded in 1932, the Sons honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires. There are more than 355,000 members in the United States. Members include males whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership. [www.legion.org/sons](http://www.legion.org/sons)
- **The American Legion Auxiliary:** As the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world, the Auxiliary's membership is around 800,000. With 9,000 units in the United States, members are fiercely dedicated to serving, helping and meeting the needs of veterans, their families and their communities. [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org)
- **Legion Riders:** With more than 1,500 chapters, Legion Riders have helped raise more than \$10 million for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. The Riders also perform a number of services for Legion-supported causes and provide support at military funerals. Participants must be members of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons. [www.legion.org/riders](http://www.legion.org/riders)



American Legion Photo

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## Benefits of Legion Membership



### THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

Members of The American Legion receive a free subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*, the largest veterans magazine in the nation. Every month, the magazine is filled with interesting feature stories, interviews, graphics, photos and ads of interest to Legionnaires and their families. [www.legion.org/magazine](http://www.legion.org/magazine)

### AMERICAN LEGION ONLINE UPDATE

Members are automatically invited to receive the free weekly American Legion Online Update e-newsletter, which delivers a comprehensive round-up of stories, photos, videos and other material straight to their email inboxes. To subscribe, go to [www.legion.org/subscribe](http://www.legion.org/subscribe)

### MYLEGION.ORG SOCIAL NETWORK

A social network just for Legionnaires is available through [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org). The network is built for veterans who want to communicate better with each other and with their posts. It offers a variety of services, including membership administration tools.



## LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Members stay up to date on congressional action related to American Legion resolutions and programs. Frequent legislative alerts, information about how to contact the media and elected officials, and much more including an e-newsletter are available.

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

## MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Membership in The American Legion gives Legionnaires access to discounts on a variety of products and services. Discounts are available through participating providers in the following categories: car rental, home services, financial and insurance, medical, moving and relocation, travel and other industries.

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

## FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES

The American Legion and USAA have teamed up to connect the nation's largest veterans service organization with the nation's top-ranked insurance and financial services company. Legion members now have access to the full range of financial and insurance services and a separate credit card. For every USAA membership originating through the dedicated Legion-USAA website ([www.usaa.com/legion](http://www.usaa.com/legion)) or by a special toll-free phone line – 877- 699-2654 – Legion programs receive a financial donation from USAA.

## AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM SALES

Members of The American Legion Family are invited to review the Emblem Sales catalog for the latest in patriotic merchandise, American-made flags and apparel. A catalog of products is shipped to members or they can visit Emblem Sales online anytime to safely place their orders. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

# WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

## Contact information

### MEMBERSHIP

(317) 630-1327, [ia@legion.org](mailto:ia@legion.org)

### VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

(202) 263-5759, [va&r@legion.org](mailto:va&r@legion.org)

### VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

(202) 263-5771, [ve&e@legion.org](mailto:ve&e@legion.org)

### LEGISLATIVE

(202) 263-5752, [legislative@legion.org](mailto:legislative@legion.org)

### NATIONAL SECURITY

(202) 263-5765, [ns@legion.org](mailto:ns@legion.org)

### AMERICANISM

(317) 630-1203, [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org)

### MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

(317) 630-1298, [magazine@legion.org](mailto:magazine@legion.org)

### THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

(317) 630-1298, [magazine@legion.org](mailto:magazine@legion.org)

### SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

(317) 630-1205, [sal@legion.org](mailto:sal@legion.org)

### AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

(317) 630-1327, [legionriders@legion.org](mailto:legionriders@legion.org)

## How do I ...

... find a post close to me?

Go to [www.legion.org/posts](http://www.legion.org/posts) to search our database.

... find an American Legion job fair close to me?

Go to [www.legion.org/careers/jobfairs](http://www.legion.org/careers/jobfairs)

... find a service officer?

Go to [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers) to search our database

Prospective members may fill out the membership application below and bring it to a nearby post. To find a post near you, visit **[www.legion.org/posts](http://www.legion.org/posts)**

Alternatively, those who meet the eligibility requirements, may join online at **[www.legion.org/join](http://www.legion.org/join)**

Or call **1-800-433-3318**

## The American Legion Membership Application

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip) \_\_\_\_\_ (Post #) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Membership ID# former member) \_\_\_\_\_ (Email Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (Dues) \_\_\_\_\_

### Please check appropriate eligibility dates and branch of service below

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aug 2, 1990 – Present         | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Navy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Air Force   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975   | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Marines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Coast Guard                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946  | <input type="checkbox"/> Merchant Marines 12/7/41 – 12/31/46 (only eligibility) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918  |   |



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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of recruiter

30-009 (2011)

## Receipt of Dues

(Please Print)



From \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's Phone # \_\_\_\_\_



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

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## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
1-800-433-3318

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

Follow The American Legion at  
 [www.legion.org/facebook](http://www.legion.org/facebook)  
 [twitter.com/AmericanLegion](https://twitter.com/AmericanLegion)



*Scan to join!*

**Who to contact:**